

Інформація

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One Piece: Другой Луффи

Аніме і комікси

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Додати

Автора

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Короткий зміст

Коли Луффі сідає на Трилер Барк і отримує чит, прискорюючий ріст, ситуація для Піратів Соломоної Шляпи починає змінюватися.

В майбутніх великих подіях Мугівары не будуть такими слабкими, як раніше. В «Трилер Барке» Луффі використовує Хаки Завойователя, щоб оглушити своїх ворогів, навіть заставив врасплох гігантського ведмеда вистрелом з повітря.

Після прибуття на архіпелаг Сабаоді Луффі представляє свою форму П'ятого Гіра, відому як Четвертий Гір: Баундмен, об'єднуючи її зі своєю формою Ніка і володіючи Хаки Завойователя.

Маючи підвищену фізичну силу, він без особливих зусиль перемагає Пасифіста одним ударом і одним ударом відправляє адмірала Кідзару в політ, залишив в здивуванні навіть Рейлі.

В час війни на вищому рівні Пірати Соломоної Шляпи, тепер зміцнені, здійснюють грандіозне з'явлення. Кожен учасник демонструє вражаюче бойове майстерство, що посилює їх грозне присутність. Коли вони воюють проти

Дозорных и Ситибукаев, все взгляды прикованы к Эйсу, который стоит на платформе казни.

В момент напряжения Луффи активирует свое Хаки Завоевателя, заглушая хаос на поле битвы шепотом: «Я здесь, чтобы положить конец этой войне».

Я буду обновлять одну главу ежедневно!!

Название MTL — «Открыта пятая передача на земле Сабаоди»,

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Goals and Bonus

Here are the goals and bonuses set for views and membership.

-> With every accumulation of 100 power stones, I'll release a bonus chapter.

-> With each new member that joins my Patreon, I'll release an additional chapter.

-> Upon reaching 100,000 views, I'll release one new chapters.

1. The Birth Of The Viceroy

In the first half of the Grand Line, also known as Paradise, we find ourselves at the territory of one of the Seven Warlords of the Sea, Gekko Moria, on his ship called Thriller Bark.

"I'm Monkey D. Luffy, and I'm gonna find One Piece!" declared Luffy amidst the chaos of his thoughts. The intense battle had quieted his mind, but now a strange force stirred within him, bringing his awareness back to life.

As Luffy's consciousness awakened, a voice echoed in his mind, speaking of his dire condition and the need for evolution. It mentioned the healing of injuries, a ten-day process of physical enhancement, the evolution of

his Conqueror's Haki, and the advancement of his Devil Fruit powers, all within the span of ten days.

With each proclamation, waves of energy surged from Luffy's body, swiftly repairing his wounds and setting in motion the evolution of his abilities.

Driven by this mysterious force, most of Luffy's injuries and fatigue were expelled from his body. Despite the severity of his battle wounds, his recovery was alarmingly rapid.

Although Luffy had regained some consciousness, he still lacked full control over his body, which remained in a state of partial recovery.

In the darkness surrounding him, a familiar voice reached Luffy's ears.

"Trade my life for Luffy's."

"My name might not ring bells yet, but I'm destined to be the greatest swordsman in the world. I offer myself."

...

"Is that Zoro's voice? Why the humility?" Luffy pondered.

Zoro never bowed his head, not even in the presence of Hawkeye, the world's greatest swordsman. Why now? Hadn't they defeated Gekko Moria?

But darkness persisted ahead.

...

"If you can't protect your own captain, what dreams can you aspire to?"

"Luffy, he's the one destined to find One Piece."

...

"Experience hell, Roronoa."

The voice, once gentle, now carried a hint of regret as if lamenting the impending withering of life before him.

A cluster of small, blood-red orbs burst forth, hovering slowly before

Zoro before merging into his chest. Zoro's visage froze momentarily before contorting in agony. Despite his indomitable will, a will tougher than steel. He screamed in pain—a rare occurrence.

The torment and exhaustion inflicted upon him by Luffy were overwhelming. Compared to the resilient rubber body of Luffy, Zoro, being an ordinary human, felt the pain twofold.

"Is this what Luffy goes through?" Zoro wondered. In this moment, he grasped the unimaginable suffering and injuries Luffy endured after each battle.

"How... do you still wish to proceed?" Kuma inquired.

To venture into hell, one must first glimpse it. But to willingly face it, the courage required far surpasses that of mere curiosity.

"Hoo, hoo, hoo," Zoro gasped heavily before speaking in a low voice, "I'll switch places."

Moments later, he confronted a massive ball of blood-red flesh condensed from exhaustion and agony. Without a word, Zoro's eyes remained eerily calm, the eyes of a man resolved to face death.

Without hesitation, Zoro plunged his hands into the colossal mass of flesh. Instantly, a wave of even greater agony surged through his body, filling Thriller Bark with his uncontrollable screams. However, all aboard the ship were unconscious except for one.

"Is that Zoro screaming? What's happening?" a voice pondered.

"Such agony... Is Zoro facing death? Impossible," another voice murmured.

"Wake up, body," Luffy growled, snapping awake despite the intoxicating relaxation. Zoro's screams pierced his senses, even through Observation Haki, conveying an impending sense of mortality.

"Second Gear," Luffy muttered. In an instant, his body steamed, and he

vanished from sight.

"What?" Kuma exclaimed, sensing something amiss. This marked his second surprise, the first being when Zoro offered his life.

A figure enveloped in dense steam soared overhead in an instant, swiftly pulling Zoro away from the bloody, spectral meatball he had thrust his hands into. In a mere ten seconds, Zoro's body was drenched in blood, with crimson streams flowing steadily from his wounds, while the massive meatball had only diminished by a third.

"What's happening? Zoro, what are you doing?" Luffy questioned, his heightened awareness registering the horror emanating from the bloody mass before them. Yet, moments ago, Zoro had plunged his hands into it without hesitation.

"Nothing," Zoro managed to utter amidst the excruciating pain. "Step aside, Luffy. This is a pact between men."

Zoro's resolve remained unshaken despite Luffy's intervention. He understood that Kuma's strength far surpassed Gekko Moria's, rendering them incapable of confronting him. Their only option was to honour their previous agreement: Zoro's life in exchange for Luffy's.

"Your accumulated fatigue and injuries, Straw Hat Boy, speak of a true companion in Roronoa. I've pledged to exchange his life for yours," Kuma stated calmly.

"I don't care about any agreement! This fatigue and pain are mine to Kuma, not Zoro's!" Luffy declared emphatically. "I won't let my crew suffer for my sake."

With that, Luffy pressed his hand directly into the massive, bloody flesh ball.

Boom.

For a fleeting moment, it felt as though time stood still.

The unbearable pain elicited a primal scream from Luffy's lips. At that moment, he understood why Zoro couldn't withstand the agony through sheer willpower alone. It was as if every ounce of pain from their previous battles had been condensed and unleashed in a single, overwhelming wave. This was a torment beyond ordinary comprehension.

Yet, despite the resounding screams echoing throughout Thriller Bark, Luffy's hand remained firmly embedded within the bloody mass.

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2. Conqueror's, Air Strike

"Luffy," Zoro's eyes widened, a difficult smile breaking through the blood coating his face. It was for this kind of unwavering loyalty and bravery that he would lay down his life for his foolish captain.

"Bearing the captain's pain is our duty, you idiotic captain," Zoro muttered through clenched teeth as he dragged his battered body forward. With determination etched on his face, he thrust his hand into the bloody mass alongside Luffy's.

At that moment, two distinct screams pierced the air.

"You," Kuma, standing nearby, was overcome with a profound shock, greater even than when Zoro had offered his life alone. He took a subconscious step forward before halting, witnessing the remarkable display of camaraderie and sacrifice.

Though somewhat absurd, any man of the sea would feel a deep sense of respect at the sight before them.

After a time, the bloody mass dissipated entirely. Luffy and Zoro stood side by side, their faces serene despite the blood streaming down their

bodies, pooling beneath them.

Their breaths heaved like bellows, each inhalation a testament to their enduring strength. Despite their grave injuries, they stood tall, refusing to acknowledge defeat by remaining upright.

Observing the two figures before him, anyone else in their condition would have succumbed to unconsciousness. Yet, here they were, not only conscious but standing resolute.

The bravery exhibited by these two severely wounded individuals was palpable, even causing the Shichibukai to contemplate stepping back.

Though weakened now, their resolve hinted at future greatness.

"One Piece and the world's greatest swordsman?" Kuma pondered. They possessed ambitions matched only by their unwavering determination and courage.

"As expected of Dragon's son, surrounded by such fine companions," Kuma mused aloud. "My task is complete, Straw Hat. This may be our final farewell."

With a gentle farewell, Kuma turned to depart, only to halt abruptly as a potent and ominous aura enveloped the air behind him.

Luffy lowered his hands, thick white steam billowing from his body. One of his eyes remained obscured in shadow, bloodied, while the other gleamed with a sharp intensity.

If Rob Lucci were present, he'd recognize that look—the same one Straw Hat wore when they clashed to the bitter end. Sharp and terrifying, a stark departure from his usual carefree demeanour.

"Is this Conqueror's?" Kuma questioned, still not quite reinvented. He could feel the overwhelming presence of Haki bearing down on him, oppressing his consciousness.

Conqueror's Haki—a rare ability possessed only by those destined for

kingship. Kuma pondered why this manifestation of Haki felt so potent.

Observing the transformation in Straw Hat's demeanour since their encounter with Moria, Kuma realized this wasn't the same rookie pirate from the first half of the Grand Line. Luffy's newfound momentum was palpable, and Kuma felt the weight of his adversary's strength.

"I can sense your emotions. You haven't threatened our lives, but you've harmed my companion," Luffy declared, devoid of murderous intent.

Instead, his tone conveyed a mixture of sadness and determination.

The injuries sustained by Sanji, Nami, Usopp, Franky, Chopper, Robin, Brook, and especially Zoro fueled Luffy's rage. Zoro had borne the brunt of the bloody fleshball's effects, teetering on the brink of death as a result.

Determined not to overlook this fact, Luffy refused to let Kuma off lightly.

"Furthermore, if you return like this, you won't have closure. Allow me to deliver a few punches," Luffy declared before vanishing in an instant.

Kuma, too, disappeared momentarily before reappearing in close proximity to Luffy. His massive form cast a shadow over Luffy as he raised his palm, the fleshy ball emitting a faint black glow as if compressing space itself.

"Rubber," Luffy's body stretched as he hung in mid-air, channelling energy into his right fist. A powerful force enveloped his fist and wrist as he prepared to strike.

"It's futile," Kuma's voice remained calm, confident in the defensive capabilities granted by his Devil Fruit power.

"JET Pistol!" Luffy unleashed his punch, aiming for the meatball. Yet, to his surprise, the anticipated collision never occurred.

Between Luffy's fist and the Kuma's meatball, an invisible space twisted

and contorted, as if forming a tangible barrier.

"What's that? A clash in mid-air?" Zoro observed the duel from a distance, his eyes widening in astonishment. Such a phenomenon, beyond human comprehension, unfolded before him, leaving him awestruck.

"It's Conqueror's Haki combined with Armament Haki? How is that possible?" Kuma's mind raced with disbelief. As a seasoned Shichibukai, he had witnessed countless battles among the strongest beings in the sea. Recognizing the technique used by Luffy, he was taken aback.

Only Conqueror's Haki could produce such an effect, yet Luffy, a rookie who had barely spent a year at sea, had managed to awaken and utilize it. This level of mastery was typically reserved for the Four Emperors.

"Though still inexperienced, I can rest assured," Kuma muttered softly, feeling a sense of relief.

Boom.

A tremendous shockwave erupted upon the collision, sweeping everything in its path. The forceful impact engulfed the surroundings, leaving chaos in its wake.

As the storm subsided, the aftermath revealed itself.

The figure of the Kuma had vanished completely.

"He was offering reassurance just moments ago?" Luffy's keen perception picked up on Kuma's emotions. Despite being a Shichibukai, he appeared genuinely friendly.

"Who is he, really?" Luffy pondered, feeling somewhat perplexed. A Shichibukai extending such kindness towards them was unexpected.

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3. Awakening And Change

Luffy quickly forgets about the Kuma's identity, as he has bigger concerns now—Zoro's injury.

"Zoro, are you okay?" Luffy asked, clearly worried.

"Don't worry, I'm not going to die," Zoro replied firmly.

"Hey, Luffy, fetch me my swords," Zoro requested.

"Your swords?" Luffy hesitated for a moment, realizing that Zoro's three swords were not with him.

Thankfully, the swords were close by. Luffy spotted them among the ruins after a few steps.

A swordsman without his swords—typically only happens in dire situations, like facing death. Zoro was convinced he was going to die and had tossed his swords here before facing his fate.

Luffy bowed his head, adjusting his straw hat firmly. Shadows clouded his eyes as he stared at the discarded swords.

If it weren't for that mysterious power, if they hadn't awakened in time, if the kuma had truly come with the intent to kill them... the outcome would have been dire.

"I'm still too weak," Luffy muttered to himself. "This won't happen again. I refuse to be this weak."

Beneath his straw hat, a determined voice echoed—this wasn't the first time.

It was the same with Aokiji before. The gap between them and the top players in this sea was immense.

Even though he had just gained mastery over three powerful and terrifying abilities, Luffy still couldn't gain the upper hand in the fight against the Kuma.

The Kuma's strength was fearsome. As a Shichibukai, he surpassed even Gekko Moria. And Aokiji, a Marine Admiral, was stronger than the Kuma.

The encounter with Aokiji and the Kuma made Luffy realize that this sea doesn't wait for anyone to become stronger.

The allure of the sea lies in its unpredictability. During the journey, you never know what or who you'll encounter.

This unknown holds the freedom's charm but also harbours endless dangers.

Luffy embarked on his journey prepared for battle, ready to face death.

But now, he had companions. He wasn't the lone traveller he once was.

He was the captain of the Straw Hat Pirates, bearing not only his own dreams and life but also those of his crewmates.

"If you can't even protect the captain, how can you aspire to be the world's greatest swordsman?" These were Zoro's words when he was unconscious.

"If you can't safeguard your crew, do you truly deserve to be their captain? Do you have the right to seek One Piece?"

Luffy removed his straw hat, gazing at it intently as if having a conversation with it. It felt like he was also conversing with the three renowned swords abandoned on the ground by their owner.

At that moment, something shifted within him—his consciousness since setting sail underwent a transformation.

...

After a while, everyone began to stir.

Kuma had evidently held back, or else, with his power, none of them would have survived.

"Luffy, Zoro, why are you both so badly hurt? I'll patch you up right away," Chopper exclaimed urgently upon waking, seeing Luffy and Zoro covered in blood.

They might seem eccentric at times, but when push comes to shove,

every member of the Straw Hat Pirates proves reliable.

"Hehe, I'm okay, Chopper. Focus on bandaging Zoro first. He's in worse shape," Luffy said with a grin, perched on a crumbling stone next to Zoro.

He didn't have much to do, even though his injuries looked severe. In reality, about half of his wounds had been absorbed by Zoro.

Thanks to the mysterious voice he heard while unconscious and the enigmatic power that repaired and fortified his body, Luffy's injuries had nearly healed.

Every passing moment brought a palpable sense of his growing strength.

It was evident—as the mysterious voice had hinted—that his body was evolving.

"Hey, I'm far from kicking the bucket," Zoro declared, mustering enough strength to sit upright and address Luffy.

With only typical injuries, Zoro's condition wasn't life-threatening. After a short while, he was able to speak more forcefully.

"Zoro, you're in bad shape. Stay put and let me bandage you," Chopper snapped, instantly angered, landing a punch on Zoro's head.

"Hey, Chopper, ease up. Zoro's badly hurt," Usopp interjected, covering his face, then shouting, "Zoro passed out! He's dying!"

"Calm down, Usopp. Zoro's tougher than that," Luffy reassured calmly, his steady demeanour instantly soothing the others.

"Luffy," Sanji uttered, looking at Luffy with a hint of astonishment.

Sanji sensed that Luffy had undergone some distinct changes. This transformation was subtle, noticeable only to companions who shared their lives day in and day out.

What puzzled him even more was what transpired during his coma.

Where was the Kuma when Luffy woke up? How did it vanish? And why did Zoro sustain such severe injuries?

While Sanji harboured doubts, others were more attuned to the subtle shifts in Luffy. Of course, not everyone picked up on it. Usopp and Franky, in their carefree manner, seemed oblivious.

On the contrary, Nami and Robin, being more observant, detected the changes most keenly.

"Has Luffy changed somehow?" Nami mused, her hand covering her mouth as she observed Luffy nearby. "He seems a bit more composed than before."

"It appears something happened while we were unconscious," Robin speculated softly, her gaze shifting to Luffy with a smile. "Regardless, it seems our captain has gained some insight."

For Robin, the changes in Luffy hinted at positive developments.

Later that night, amidst their discussions...

"Meat! I want meat!"

Luffy slammed his hand on the table, shouting loudly, much like an impulsive child.

"See? I knew something was off. He's still the same old Luffy," Nami remarked, shaking her head as she covered her face in exasperation.

"Well, it seems our intuition was off," Robin chimed in, unable to contain her laughter as she covered her mouth with her hands, her eyes narrowing in amusement.

Indeed, their captain remained as worrisome as ever.

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4. Do You Want To Become

Stronger? Zoro

Unlike Moria, Kuma's strength ranked among the top among the

Shichibukai. If he decided to act, it would be nearly impossible for the Straw Hat Boy to escape.

"It seems the operation failed. The exact reason remains unknown. After all, Bartholomew Kuma is not currently under our direct control," reported the Rear Admiral.

Garp breathed a sigh of relief while Sengoku frowned, signalling for the Rear Admiral to step down.

"Bartholomew Kuma," Sengoku muttered to himself. He had heard of the exploits of this Shichibukai.

Originally a kingdom of kings, it was forced to undergo Vegapunk's transformation for undisclosed reasons by the World Government—the Pacifista project.

However, Sengoku always felt that Kuma's involvement was more complex than it seemed on the surface. Many secrets were hidden behind it, and even he, the Marine Marshal, hadn't fully grasped it.

"You can relax now, Garp," Sengoku assured.

"What do you mean? I don't understand, Sengoku," Garp deflected.

"Prepare yourself, Garp. Sooner or later, the Straw Hat Boy will meet the same fate as Fire Fist," Sengoku stated coldly.

Garp fell silent.

Garp felt helpless. His grandson's fate, and even his son leading the Revolutionary Army, were beyond his control.

"Ace," Garp sighed heavily inwardly, his expression grim. He had tried to avoid dwelling on these thoughts lately, but Sengoku's words had struck a nerve.

The atmosphere in the Marshal's office was thick with tension, almost palpable. Sengoku regarded his old friend with a troubled expression, eventually breaking the silence.

"Compared to the major players in this sea, the Straw Hat Boy is still insignificant. Given the current circumstances, the government shouldn't focus too much on him after this incident," Sengoku remarked, his tone heavy with implications.

Garp remained silent, quietly sipping his tea.

...

Meanwhile, as Sengoku predicted, after the Kuma took Gekko Moria, the World Government didn't invest much effort into minor players like the Straw Hat Pirates.

Following a night of celebration, Brook officially joined the Straw Hat Pirates as their ninth member, adding his musical talents to the crew.

After bidding farewell to the formidable Lola Pirates, Luffy and his crew set sail once more.

Nine days later, they found themselves in a warm-climate sea.

"Why did you seek me out?" Zoro questioned, his voice echoing in the top room of the Sunny watchtower as he practised swinging his knives with a massive barbell.

His swift recovery was attributed to both Chopper's exceptional medical skills and the fact that his injuries hadn't been severe enough to push him to the brink of death or cause lasting damage. Within about five days, his wounds had mostly healed, with no significant lingering effects.

During the encounter with the Kuma, it wasn't just Luffy who had truly awakened—Zoro had as well. As the captain and co-captain of the Straw Hat Pirates, their strength directly impacted the safety of the entire crew during their voyage.

Since recuperating from his injuries, Zoro had intensified his training regimen. Previously, he had been prone to bouts of heavy drinking and sleeping, but now he focused intensely on his exercises, with sleep being

only an occasional necessity. His newfound dedication demonstrated the strength of his resolve.

"I've realized I prefer it up here to the bow," Luffy remarked casually, leaning against the window and gazing out at the expansive view.

The room atop the watchtower offered an impressive vantage point, being the highest spot on the Sunny.

"Hoo, follow through, hoo," Zoro breathed deeply, his movements precise like a well-calibrated machine as he swung the towering barbell in his hands with unwavering consistency.

Sweat dripped from his body, forming small puddles on the ground, yet his focus remained unbroken—fixed on the horizon.

It was as if he could envision not only the imposing figure of Kuma but also the Marine Admiral named Aokiji, whom he had encountered before.

These seas were filled with formidable adversaries.

In the end, his gaze was set on the man wielding a colossal black blade, standing atop all swordsmen in the world.

His arm throbbed with pain, his body pushed to its limits, yet he persisted in his vigorous swings.

"To endure every hardship without faltering—that's my path of Shura," Zoro muttered through gritted teeth.

"It's tough going, Zoro," Luffy observed, his face resting on his hands.

"If you're just here to chat, then leave, Luffy," Zoro retorted, his tone firm.

Gritting his teeth, Zoro whispered, his determination palpable.

Luffy fell silent.

Moments later, as Zoro prepared to push himself beyond his limits, dragging his sore arm to swing once more...

"Do you want to get stronger, Zoro?" Luffy's sudden question broke the silence.

Boom.

The massive barbell crashed to the floor.

"Do you want a beating, or what?" Zoro seized Luffy's collar, shaking him vigorously and shouting, "I'm trying to train here, not have a chat fest!"

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5. Luffy's Strength, Zoro's

Frustration

In Sunny's watchtower room...

"Do you mean you've got some kind of power that makes you stronger and can boost others too?" Zoro, sitting cross-legged in front of Luffy, raised an eyebrow and asked.

"Yeah, when I was knocked out after taking down Moria in Thriller Bark, this power kicked in, beefing up my body and granting me some special abilities," Luffy explained.

"Special abilities?" Luffy looked intrigued.

"One lets me coat my body like a film, making my attacks and defences stronger. And the other gives me a kind of sixth sense—I can feel emotions over a wide area and predict attacks," Luffy elaborated.

"I can also release it to shock others and wrap it around my arms to strike from a distance. The mysterious voice I heard hinted it might be a form of Haki, but I'm not sure," Luffy added.

"I see, so that's how you managed to tangle with that Kuma earlier," Luffy nodded in understanding, recalling the clash between Luffy and the Kuma, which Zoro had witnessed.

Zoro had been impressed by the clash, initially thinking it was the Kuma's ability, but now realizing it was Luffy's newfound power, which was

undeniably formidable.

Under normal circumstances, the Kuma, Xiong Na, was much stronger than Moria, and even a fully fit Luffy wouldn't stand a chance against him.

"Let's test your ability," Zoro suggested suddenly.

"Test?" Luffy looked puzzled until he suddenly saw a sword materialize in front of him.

Boom!

Luffy's face was instantly covered by Armament Haki, and despite the sharpness of the famous sword, it only made a metallic clang against his skin. There wasn't a scratch on Luffy's face.

Still, the shock lingered.

Luffy's fear of sharp weapons like swords was deeply ingrained, but having a blade suddenly aimed at his face was a whole new level.

"Zoro, you jerk, are you trying to off me?" Luffy grabbed Zoro's collar angrily this time.

"I'm just testing," Zoro defended.

"There's no 'testing' with a sword," Luffy retorted.

The sounds of their scuffle echoed from the watchtower, drawing attention.

"Those two are really going at it," Nami remarked from under her parasol on the deck, sighing helplessly. "I thought Luffy had grown up a bit, but I guess I was wrong."

"Isn't this lively?" Robin smiled softly while flipping through a book. "It's quite energizing."

"I just wish they'd channel that energy into something less...violent,"

Nami lamented.

At the top of the watchtower...

Luffy and Zoro had cooled down, now analyzing the situation calmly.

"Your power, called Haki, can actually block sword attacks directly. And there's also a kind of precognition," Zoro observed.

"Yep," Luffy confirmed with a grin. "This power is pretty fascinating."

With that, Luffy closed his eyes and turned his back to Zoro.

"Zoro, go ahead and try to cut me with your sword," Luffy instructed.

"Are you serious?" Zoro raised an eyebrow in surprise.

"Yep, bring it on."

With his back turned to Zoro, Luffy's demeanour inexplicably shifted, emanating an unsettling calmness that seemed to Kumadown on the atmosphere.

Zoro couldn't help but notice the change in Luffy's demeanour but chose to remain silent.

The sword swiftly descended, though it was aimed with the back of the blade. Luffy, with his eyes closed, appeared to sense everything in the darkness around him. Not through sight or sound but through something deeper—vitality, emotion, or some other subtle form of perception.

Just slightly to one side, the back of the sword grazed against the fabric of Luffy's clothes. It appeared as if the blade had come dangerously close, yet Zoro could unmistakably feel that it hadn't made contact at all.

Zoro was momentarily taken aback by this revelation but quickly regained his composure. He struck with astonishing speed, but each attempt proved futile. Despite having his back turned and eyes shut, Luffy's movements seemed to anticipate Zoro's attacks beforehand.

One, two, and then three strikes of the sword passed harmlessly by. Even as Zoro employed his most familiar blade, Luffy remained untouched, maintaining his posture with his back turned.

"What... what's going on?" Zoro questioned, baffled by Luffy's

inexplicable evasion.

As he ceased swinging the sword, even Zoro couldn't suppress a tinge of frustration.

Throughout their journey, the difference in strength between him and Luffy had never been significant, with Luffy at most being slightly stronger.

But now, it was evident that Luffy surpassed him by more than just a margin.

Luffy's monster-like dodging ability, coupled with his earlier feat of withstanding a famous sword without a scratch, not to mention his powerful mid-air strike against the Kuma—everything pointed to Luffy's strength far exceeding Zoro's expectations.

"And it's not just that. My physical prowess has improved significantly, like this," Luffy demonstrated, stretching out his hand and extending his rubber arm to effortlessly lift all the exercise equipment in the room.

Zoro watched in astonishment as Luffy's strength surpassed his own by several magnitudes.

"And my speed," Luffy continued, his voice trailing off.

In an instant, Luffy, who had been standing before Zoro, appeared behind him.

Grinning broadly, Luffy remarked, "I don't even need to activate second gear. My speed is nearly on par with when I used to."

These were the changes over the past ten days.

Every day brought a qualitative improvement in Luffy's physical abilities, so much so that even he found it somewhat unbelievable.

"There's also the Devil Fruit ability. It seems there are two more interesting forms, but their power is quite intense, so it's not easy to experiment with them on the ship."

"Okay, okay, I get it, Luffy," Zoro couldn't help but interject, letting out a sigh.

The captain, who had been almost equal in strength before, had quickly left him behind in just a few days.

This left Zoro, who dedicated himself to mastering swordsmanship and honing his strength, feeling an inexplicable frustration.

But Zoro was Zoro, after all, a man who walked the path of a warrior. He swiftly adjusted his emotions.

"So, are you saying you asked me if I want to become stronger?" Zoro clarified.

"Yep."

"Can you make me as strong as you are now?" Zoro inquired.

"Perhaps."

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6. Combat Power Ceiling, Zoro

Evolution

Luffy's smile remained on his face as he spoke calmly.

Zoro stared at Luffy with wide eyes for a moment, then struggled to contain his excitement.

"What are you waiting for then? Use it on me!" Zoro exclaimed eagerly.

"Huh, I thought you, Zoro, would be against relying on external power like this," Luffy replied, sounding somewhat surprised.

"Why shun external power? If there's a better sword in front of you, why not use it?" Zoro shrugged.

"And besides, this sea is too perilous. I want the power to protect my crewmates. We're too weak," Zoro explained.

"No, the weak one is you, Zoro," Luffy countered solemnly. "I'm really strong now. Stronger than the bear I faced before, even stronger than Grandpa Aokiji."

"You jerk!" Zoro felt a surge of anger at Luffy's serious tone. He couldn't argue with it—it was the truth.

According to Luffy's words, Zoro realized the extent of Luffy's strength. Stronger than Kuma, even stronger than Aokiji and Garp.

Kuma was a formidable Warlord of the Sea, while the latter two were Marine Admirals—the highest-ranking combatants in the Marines. Garp, in particular, was a legendary figure, known as the Marine hero who had challenged the infamous Pirate King countless times.

In other words, Luffy's current strength had elevated him to the pinnacle of the seas.

"I'll do it then," Luffy declared, reaching out and pointing into empty space.

Zoro leaned in, curious, but saw nothing—a shimmering light curtain visible only to Luffy.

It was a system unique to Luffy himself, called the Combat Power Ceiling System. As the name implies, it could elevate a person's combat prowess to the utmost limit of the world.

However, it was restricted to members of the Straw Hat Pirates. Its primary function was to utilize evolution points to enhance an individual's physical abilities, skills, tactics, and even potential for growth.

In the past few days, Luffy had gained a deep understanding of the capabilities of this system.

It seemed that the system had been with him since his early days. Its logbook meticulously recorded every battle he had fought since leaving

Windmill Village. And it was through these battles that Luffy accrued evolution points.

Whether he emerged victorious or suffered defeat, battles yielded points, with victories garnering more. The number of points earned also correlated with the strength of the opponent faced.

For instance, despite not prevailing in his encounter with Aokiji, Luffy received the highest number of evolution points from that battle compared to all others.

Moreover, it wasn't just Luffy's battles that contributed to the accumulation of evolution points. Since he began recruiting crewmates, the system recorded the points gained from the entire crew's engagements in real pirate life.

Despite only a year having passed since setting sail, Luffy had already experienced numerous battles. Even though he had previously pushed his combat power to impressive heights, there were still plenty of evolution points to be earned.

Luffy located Zoro's image among the crew and selected him for evolution.

"Individual successfully scanned: Roronoa Zoro, the Straw Hat Pirates' first mate."

"Estimated cost: 10,000 evolution points. Proceed with evolution?" the system prompted.

"Evolution," Luffy affirmed, squaring his shoulders as he pressed against the shimmering light curtain.

With 20,000 evolution points still at his disposal, Luffy had more than enough to evolve Zoro.

"The comprehensive evolution of physical fitness begins. Estimated time: five days," the system announced.

"Conqueror's Haki evolution begins. Evolution complete."

"The evolution of sword skills begins. Evolution complete."

"Is this the power of the ability you gained?" Zoro wondered aloud, sensing an indescribable change take hold.

Everything around him seemed to shift.

A faint hum filled the air, and Zoro's treasured sword, the Wado Ichimonji, transformed instantly into a deep shade of black.

"Black Blade," Zoro murmured, staring in disbelief at the formerly inscribed word "Wado Ichimonji" now adorning his sword.

The Black Blade represented the ultimate form of all famed swords, yet even its previous owner had divulged little about its true nature.

He had always believed that the Black Blade was crafted from a special material. But when that special power enveloped the blade, the words "Wado Ichimonji" transformed into the Black Blade.

It was worth noting that both were hefty, sharp swords. However, the Shusui he had just dispatched to Longma surpassed the Wado Ichimonji in terms of weight and hardness.

"The blade's hardness and power transmission are indeed much greater," Zoro remarked, swinging the blade with precision.

This was also a hallmark of the Black Blade. When he wielded the Qishui previously, the sword energy he unleashed was several times stronger than that of Guiche. Now, the characters of Wado Ichimonji have inherited the characteristics of the Black Blade.

"Furthermore, I can clearly sense the improvement in my swordsmanship," Zoro continued, closing his eyes and executing fluid motions with the three blades in his grasp. Though he didn't exert forceful sword energy, his techniques were noticeably more refined and potent than before.

"I can already envision his silhouette," Zoro proclaimed upon opening his eyes, which gleamed with an intensity that was both bright and sharp.

Back in the restaurant on the sea, Zoro had once sparred with the world's greatest swordsman, Hawkeye. That duel had starkly revealed the gap between him and the pinnacle of swordsmanship.

But now, he could vividly recall the swordsmanship Hawkeye had displayed during that encounter. If another battle were to ensue, Zoro was confident that in terms of swordsmanship, he wouldn't lag far behind Hawkeye—if not surpass him.

"This is my Three-Sword Style," Zoro declared, gazing at the trio of blades in his hand. "One day, my name will echo throughout the heavens."

"Speaking of which, Zoro, your evolution is incredibly rapid," Luffy remarked from the side.

"When I first evolved, aside from Conqueror's Haki, it took me ten days to complete the process," Luffy explained. "But for you, it only took ten days to evolve your physical fitness. Conqueror's Haki and swordsmanship evolved instantly."

"What did you say? Conqueror's Haki? What have I evolved?" Zoro inquired.

"You've evolved your body, Conqueror's Haki, and swordsmanship," Luffy clarified.

"Conqueror's Haki?" Zoro mused. "So, the ability to coat my body and sword, predict movements, and strike through the air—all of that is what they call Conqueror's Haki."

"Soga, that's how it is," Luffy exclaimed, smacking the palm of his left hand with his right. But then he furrowed his brow in confusion. "But come to think of it, what exactly is Conqueror's Haki? I feel like I heard about Haki when I was really young, but it slipped my mind."

"I'm not sure either. I haven't heard of it," Zoro admitted with a smile.

"For something as specialized as this, it's best to consult an expert."

"An expert?" Luffy echoed, tilting his head in puzzlement.

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7. Conqueror's Haki

On the deck of the Sunny ship, Luffy slouched over the small round table shaded by an umbrella. Zoro stood nearby.

Before long, Franky, Brook, Chopper, and Usopp joined them, gathering around the table.

Sitting opposite Luffy at the center was Robin.

"Haki?" Robin's voice was calm and wise.

"I've heard of it when dealing with Crocodile," she continued. "It's more common in the New World but rare in the first half of the Grand Line and the other seas."

"It's a power only the strong can wield."

"There are three types: Armament Haki, Observation Haki, and Conqueror's Haki."

"Armament Haki is particularly useful against Devil Fruit users, especially Logia types. It allows you to hit them even if they're intangible."

"So, characters like Crocodile, Smoker, and Enel could've been hit directly," Luffy chuckled, remembering his encounters with them.

Robin nodded. "That's right. Crocodile, being a Logia user and a former Warlord, would certainly understand Haki."

"Observation Haki works differently," Robin explained. "It's not about the five senses but a deeper intuition, allowing one to anticipate and dodge attacks."

Zoro pondered this, recognizing his own mastery of Observation Haki. It gave him an instinctual sense of an opponent's next move beyond mere sight.

"Conqueror's Haki is rare," Robin continued. "It's said to be the mark of a king, capable of overwhelming others with its sheer presence."

Luffy interjected excitedly, "Like Shanks! He saved me once from a Sea King just by glaring at it!"

"Yeah," Luffy continued, "And there's Grandpa Hammer, too. He scared off a giant bear just with his gaze."

Luffy suddenly recalled where he first heard about Haki: back when he, Sabo, and Ace were kids in the Goa Kingdom, a grandfather wielding a wooden hammer had used his intimidating presence to ward off a bear, teaching them about the power of Haki.

"Why did you suddenly bring up Haki?" Robin, being perceptive, noticed Luffy's change in demeanour.

Zoro, standing silently behind Luffy, felt it wasn't his place to speak on this matter. It was up to Captain Luffy to decide whether to reveal it or not. After all, Haki was a concept beyond the understanding of most people, even those familiar with Devil Fruit's abilities.

Luffy didn't hesitate to explain, "I gained a special ability in the Thriller Bark."

He then revealed White Fang, smiling proudly.

The revelation left everyone stunned, even the composed Robin.

"Can Admiral defeat this power?" Robin's question carried weight. With her vast knowledge, she understood the significance of Luffy possessing such an ability.

Admirals represented the pinnacle of combat strength within the Marines.

The adversaries they faced would likely have bounties exceeding three

billion.

Luffy's bounty of 300 million berries might seem impressive, but the gap between him and an Admiral is immense, like a vast moat separating them.

Previous encounters with Aokiji and other powerful foes made this difference painfully clear.

"Admirals are so cool!" Chopper and Usopp gushed, their eyes sparkling with admiration.

"Hey, Luffy, can you help me get stronger?" Usopp eagerly asked, his goal being the simplest: to become a brave warrior of the sea. With strength, he believed he could achieve this.

Chopper leaned in, sharing Usopp's enthusiasm. Despite being a doctor, he also desired strength, partly to shed his image as a pet and earn a higher bounty.

"Yeah, the sea is full of wonders," Luffy remarked, reflecting on the endless possibilities it held.

Sanji took a drag from his cigarette, exhaling calmly. He embodied the role of the resourceful strategist, his composure unwavering.

Rather than being impressed by the strength displayed, he focused on potential hidden dangers.

"Are there any side effects to getting stronger?" he inquired.

Luffy pondered for a moment before responding, "Probably not. I feel great like my body's been upgraded."

As captain, Luffy hadn't tested the ability on himself, so he couldn't use it on the crew without knowing its effects. Zoro had been willing to try it because he had already tested it on himself. Luffy realized he could have shared this ability earlier, but it hadn't occurred to him until now.

Nami looked at Luffy, moved by his words. Despite his occasional

foolishness, he proved reliable when it counted. She couldn't help but recall the moment Luffy had placed his straw hat on her head in Cocoyasi Village.

"In that case, I have no objections. It's a positive development. If possible, I recommend using those 'evolution points' to boost our strength as soon as possible," Sanji suggested, his demeanour shifting from carefree to serious.

"After what happened before, we need to acknowledge a harsh reality: as we approach the New World, our strength seems to diminish," he added, his words punctuating the solemn atmosphere that had settled over the group.

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8. Sanji Evolution

The encounter with the bear had left a deep impression on everyone, not just Luffy and Zoro, but also Sanji.

Sanji's frustration was palpable, even more so than Zoro's. While Zoro had managed to face the bear twice, Sanji's single kick had left him injured while the bear remained unscathed. As one of the top three fighters in the crew alongside Luffy and Zoro, being outperformed by both of them stung.

Despite his usual role as the crew's chef, Sanji harboured a simmering anger. "Hey, Luffy, your ability to enhance strength requires special points, right? How many people can you enhance?" he inquired.

"After upgrading Zoro, there are still about 10,000 points left, so probably only one more person can be promoted," Luffy replied, sitting up straight and crossing his feet on the stool.

"At first, I used 20,000 evolution points for my enhancement, and Zoro

used 10,000. For you, it's probably around 10,000," he explained, noting the discrepancy in the amount of evolution points required for their enhancements.

It seemed that Luffy's abilities stemmed from more than just his Rubber Fruit. While it exhibited traits of both Paramecia and Zoan Devil Fruits, it also had another form reminiscent of the mythical Zoan fruits, granting him incredible power even without fully utilizing it.

"Does that mean there's room for one more person?" Sanji wondered to himself.

"I don't need it for now. I'm not much of a fighter, I prefer reading. Just think of me when you have spare points," Robin interjected with a gentle smile, sensing Sanji's determination to improve.

Seeing Sanji's resolve, Robin relinquished her spot without hesitation. In the past, she wouldn't have passed up any chance to enhance her strength, but now, with dependable comrades by her side, she could focus on her studies without worrying about combat.

"I'll pass too. I've never been much good at fighting," Nami added with a wave of her hand, content to leave the enhancement to others.

"I don't need much improvement either. I'd rather focus on enhancing my mechanical transformations," Franky chimed in.

"Ha! Same here, I don't even have a physical body to enhance," Brook added with a chuckle.

One by one, almost everyone opted out of the enhancement method, preferring to pursue their own interests instead.

In truth, who wouldn't want greater power? But they selflessly chose to forgo it for the sake of their comrades who needed it more.

"Everyone," Sanji addressed his companions, sincerity evident in his gaze. Surrounded by allies with whom he had fought countless battles, empty

words seemed unnecessary. Their actions would speak louder than any speeches.

"Individual scan successful. Straw Hat Pirates Chef, Vinsmoke Sanji."

"Estimated evolution cost: 8,000 evolution points. Proceed with evolution?"

"Evolve."

"Comprehensive physical fitness evolution initiated. Estimated completion time: five days."

"Conqueror's Haki evolution initiated. Evolution successful."

"The comprehensive evolution of kicking skills has begun, and the evolution was successful."

Apart from physical fitness, the other evolutions progressed swiftly. In the blink of an eye, Sanji felt like a completely different person.

Zoro and Luffy were the first to notice the change. Their keen senses picked up on the sudden shift in each other's aura. It was akin to transforming from a harmless kitten to a fierce tiger.

With the top three combat powers of the Straw Hat Pirates now evolving, only Zoro and Sanji lacked the comprehensive evolution of physical fitness. However, their physical evolution was significantly faster than initially expected, completing in just five days.

"Is this Armament, Haki?" Sanji pondered aloud. "It feels like there's a protective barrier around my foot, making it weightless."

He demonstrated by kicking, generating countless afterimages in the air.

When his foot collided with an iron sheet, the impact was felt deep into the bones, yet his flesh remained unaffected by the force.

"If I were to kick that bear again..."

He wouldn't repeat the embarrassment of breaking his bones like last time, that's for sure.

A day later, ships sailed on the sea, but it wasn't just the Sunny anymore.

Alongside it was a small boat, a floating takoyaki stall.

The owner of this mobile stall was none other than Hachi, the merman who once fought alongside Luffy in Cocoyasi Village. Over time, he had changed his ways and now travelled the sea, selling takoyaki.

Accompanying him were Camie, a beautiful mermaid, and Pappagu, a talking starfish. They had crossed paths with Luffy and the crew by chance that morning.

While navigating near the Red Line in their shark submarine, they encountered a massive sea beast. Luffy swiftly dispatched it with a punch, causing Camie and the others to emerge from the creature's mouth. They had also rescued Hachi from a man named Duval, who bore a striking resemblance to Sanji's wanted poster.

In gratitude for their assistance and to make amends for his past actions, Hachi offered to make takoyaki for the crew for free. In addition, he provided them with directions to Fish-Man Island, expressing his thanks to Luffy.

"No way, I still can't believe it! Why does that guy Divalu look so much like Sanji?" Luffy laughed heartily as he sat in front of the small takoyaki stall.

"Hey, Luffy, he doesn't look like me, he just resembles the sketch on my bounty poster," Sanji retorted, poking Luffy's cheek with a stern expression.

"Haha! He looks exactly like you, you smelly cook!" Zoro chimed in, nonchalantly sharpening his sword while munching on takoyaki.

"What? You wanna start something here, moss-head?" Sanji countered, balancing on one foot while holding a takoyaki in the other hand.

Without missing a beat, Zoro drew his sword, and the two locked eyes in

a heated standoff.

Unfazed by their squabble, Luffy devoured takoyaki at lightning speed.

"It's crazy how much that guy resembled the sketch on Sanji's bounty poster," Chopper commented from the sidelines.

"If it weren't for Sanji, he would've met a very interesting fate," Robin added with a serene smile, her words carrying a hint of profundity.

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9. Sabaody Archipelago

After finishing their meal, Luffy brought up the topic of how to reach Fishman Island.

Once they saved Hatchan from Duval's Flying Fish Riders, Hatchan offered to guide them to Fish-Man Island.

"In regular situations, there are only two ways to reach the New World," Camie explained from the deck of the Sunny.

"One way is through the big city atop the Red Line, where Mariejois is, and then into the New World."

"Walking through a city above the Red Line? What about the ship?" Nami asked, surprised.

"Usually, you'd leave your ship behind temporarily or ditch it, then buy a new one on the other side of the New World," Camie clarified.

"No way! Walking isn't an option. The Sunny is my pride and joy. I'm not abandoning her," Franky declared firmly.

He wasn't willing to give up sailing the Sunny to the New World; it meant everything to him.

"Yeah, Sunny's like one of us," Luffy added, treating the ship like a comrade.

"Actually, Luffy, you don't need to worry. This route isn't feasible for

pirates because Mariejois is where the world nobles reside. To pass through Mariejois, you need approval from the government."

"The second way is to head to Fish-Man Island," Camie continued.

"Deep beneath the Red Line, about 10,000 meters down, there's a massive hole. Most pirates use this deep-sea passage to reach the New World."

"So for pirates, Fish-Man Island is also the ultimate gateway to the New World," Camie explained, holding up her index finger with a smile.

"But what does this have to do with the Sabaody Archipelago we're heading to?" Nami inquired.

"Directly 10,000 meters below the Sabaody Archipelago lies Fish-Man Island. We can restock at Sabaody and then head to Fish-Man Island, New World" Hatchan explained, avoiding Nami's gaze with a hint of guilt. It's not so much guilt as it is a lingering sense of remorse for Hatchan. He still carries the weight of the bad deeds he committed under Arlong's influence in Nami's hometown of Cocoyasi Village.

Hachi isn't inherently evil; after his defeat, he's been striving to make amends for his past actions towards Nami.

That's why, knowing that the Sabaody Archipelago poses a danger to the merfolk, Hatchan wants to take Luffy and the others there.

"10,000 meters deep? The Sunny can't dive. Besides, even a submarine wouldn't withstand the water pressure at that depth," Franky remarked, visibly surprised.

Previously, near the Red Line, Luffy, Robin, and Brook attempted to reach Fish-Man Island by diving with the Shark Submerge III.

However, their efforts were futile; at around 5,000 meters deep, the Shark Submerge III was on the verge of being crushed by the immense water pressure.

A depth of 10,000 meters in the ocean is a zone completely inhospitable

to human life.

"Don't worry about that. After we reach Sabaody, we can get the ship coated. With a coating, any ship can dive. Then we'll head to Fish-Man Island," Hatchan assured them hastily. "I know a top-notch ship coater, so that you can count on that."

"In that case, we'll rely on you, Hatchan," Luffy said with a smile.

His Observation of Haki allowed him to sense emotions, and he could feel the guilt in Hatchan's heart, along with a myriad of other complex feelings.

However, he didn't say much.

In this situation, Hatchan's usefulness might only come into play if Nami chooses to forgive him.

Luffy isn't foolish; he simply operates on instinct and intuition rather than overthinking things.

In fact, his emotional intelligence is quite high in its own way.

I'm not sure what Nami and Hachi discussed next. I only saw Hatchan's face, and the embarrassment he felt towards Nami seemed to fade away, replaced by excitement and a happy smile.

"This seems like the best plan," Luffy thought to himself as he sat on the bow, smiling.

Since gaining Observation Haki, his ability to perceive emotions had sharpened, and he could sense that each of his crewmates carried some burden from their pasts. Some had managed to find relief, while others still carried their burdens deep within.

Nami fell somewhere in between. Despite being rescued during her most desperate times, the pain lingered.

Hatchan's presence and Nami's forgiveness seemed to heal those wounds further.

"Hey, everyone, look! That's Sabaody up ahead!" Camie suddenly exclaimed with excitement, pointing ahead.

Everyone gazed ahead, their faces adorned with involuntary smiles.

"Wow, amazing! This is Sabaody, huh?" Luffy exclaimed, his laughter ringing out.

Before them lay a dreamlike island enveloped in a massive bubble. The warm sunlight bathed the colourful bubbles, casting the entire island in a radiant, dreamy brilliance.

Even Luffy, who had encountered numerous fantastical islands before, couldn't help but be awestruck by Sabaody at this moment.

"It's so beautiful," Nami gasped in astonishment, her hand covering her mouth.

Girls always seemed to have a soft spot for such stunning sights.

"Sabaody, just as it's written in the books, truly is an island of dreams,"

Robin remarked, closing the book in her hand with a gentle smile as she gazed at the Sabaody Archipelago in the distance.

"I wonder if we'll find any special ingredients on this dreamy island,"

Sanji pondered aloud, lighting a cigarette and letting out a light puff of smoke.

"Ugh, I'm so tired. I could really use a good nap... and maybe some fine wine," Zoro grumbled, letting out a big yawn.

A little while later, under Hatchan's guidance, the boat slowly entered a current port in the Sabaody Archipelago.

Sabaody Archipelago consists of seventy-nine mangrove trees linked by bridges, creating rivers for boats to navigate throughout the entire area.

"The whole area of Sabaody, from No. 1 to No. 30, is considered off-limits. The ship coater we're looking for is located in the Unlawful area at No. 13. And absolutely avoid No. 60 to No. 69, as that's where the

Marines are stationed," Hachi explained as the Sunny sailed along the river, navigating through the numbered mangroves.

"Due to its proximity to Marine Headquarters at Marineford, the Marine presence on Sabaody is quite strong."

As they sailed past mangroves numbered between 40 and 49, Hachi pointed out, "This stretch is known as the famous Sightseeing Street in Sabaody. And adjacent to it, from No. 30 to No. 39, is Sabaody's playground."

"Sightseeing street?" Nami's eyes gleamed with the desire to shop.

"Playground?" Luffy's eyes sparkled with excitement, eager to explore and have fun.

The desire to play is also reflected in the eyes of others, like Usopp, Chopper, and even Camie.

"The playground of Sabaody Archipelago has been a dream of mine since childhood," Camie said, her face reflecting a mix of emotions as she gazed at the distant red trees.

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10. Shakky's Bar

"A playground as a dream?" Nami's instincts picked up on something amiss, but she was deceived by Hatchan's explanation. Robin, however, wore a pensive expression, and even Luffy's smile faded slightly.

"It seems like this island isn't as idyllic as it appears," Luffy mused to himself. In the past, he might not have noticed such subtle nuances, but his observational skills had sharpened considerably. He could sense the longing in Camie's heart, tinged with both sentimentality and fear.

Similarly, Hatchi seemed burdened by guilt and fear.

The fact that this seemingly dreamy island scared both Hachi and Camie

spoke volumes. Despite their brief interaction, Luffy considered both Hatchi and Camie as partners, so he subconsciously paid attention to their demeanour.

As a result, the usual playfulness in his heart diminished.

"Hey, Hatchi, you mentioned that the coater is in the mangrove area at No. 13," Luffy inquired, "Is there a place to dock the boat in that area?"

"Of course," Hatchi responded, a bit puzzled by Luffy's question.

"Throughout the Sabaody Archipelago, there are hidden ports for boats around every red tree."

"Then let's dock the Sunny in the 13th area first. We can arrange for the coating right away, or we can explore Sabaody together," Luffy suggested with a smile. "It wouldn't be fair to have someone constantly guarding the boat on this island. Oh, by the way, Hatchi, can the coater you mentioned help with boat security?"

"Absolutely, Uncle Rayleigh is quite formidable," Hatchi affirmed confidently.

"Rayleigh?" Robin frowned involuntarily. The name seemed oddly familiar.

"However, there's no rush. We can stop the boat here for now; it's not a lawless area," Hatchi suggested.

"No, let's head to Red Tree No. 13 first," Luffy insisted, his tone firm.

The rest of the crew noticed the unusual seriousness in Luffy's demeanour. In typical situations, the carefree Luffy would have already dashed off the boat to explore the island.

"Luffy really has changed," Robin remarked to herself, recalling the history of Sabaody. Despite the gravity of the situation, she couldn't help but feel that it was a positive change.

Being cautious when necessary was crucial, especially for Robin, who had

experienced the horrors of the world while hiding from Xiaodong.

"I understand, New," Hatchi acknowledged, leading the way to park the boat at a hidden port near Mangrove Tree No. 13 before disembarking.

To err on the side of caution, Zoro and Franky remained on deck to guard the ship. After all, they were in a lawless area. Zoro dozed off on the deck while Franky took advantage of the time to conduct repairs and maintenance on the Sunny.

"After you find Uncle Rayleigh and Miss Shakky, everyone can disembark and have some fun. They'll keep an eye on the Sunny," Hatchi suggested as he led the way.

He now wore a large coat, concealing his four arms underneath.

Meanwhile, Camie had put on shoes and a long skirt to cover her tailfin.

This series of cover-ups intensified Robin's sense of seriousness.

Not far from where the boat was docked, there was a long staircase leading up to a small bar. Below the steps, several pirates were impaled into the ground with their heads hanging upside down.

"This place feels rather unusual. Is this the lawless zone?" Usopp shivered, standing behind Luffy.

As they ascended the steps, Chopper's eyes widened in shock, his tongue sticking out in surprise.

"Huh, Shakky's Ripped-off Bar? That name sounds suspicious," remarked Luffy.

"Don't worry, Miss Shakky is actually very kind," Hatchi reassured them calmly, pushing open the door of the bar and stepping inside.

"Excuse me, Miss Shakky," Hatchi addressed the woman inside.

"Oh, it's Hatchi. Just give me a moment to deal with these fellows," Miss Shakky replied, holding a cigarette between her lips as she grabbed a pirate by the collar. The pirate was unconscious, blood staining his face.

Around Miss Shakky, several other pirates lay sprawled on the ground.

Chopper let out a horrified scream as he looked at the scene before him.

Outside the bar, a few more human signposts were found on the ground beneath the long steps.

Once the lights were turned on inside the tavern, the atmosphere changed from gloomy to warm and inviting, giving off a cosy vibe.

"Miss Shakky, you're really strong. Were you a pirate before?" Luffy asked, observing Miss Shakky with interest.

Through his observation of Haki, Luffy could sense that the bar owner possessed a formidable aura that was not much different from that of a Shichibukai. With such strength, she could easily be considered a major player in the New World. It piqued his curiosity to see someone of her calibre running a bar in the first half of the Grand Line.

"Yeah, it was a long time ago, but I retired ages ago. By the way, little Monkey, is your surname the same as the Marine hero Garp?" Shakky inquired curiously.

"Yeah, he's my grandfather," Luffy replied casually as he helped himself to the food in the refrigerator.

"No wonder. When I was a pirate, I was often chased and captured by Garp," Shakky chuckled, reminiscing about her past.

"It's quite an achievement for Miss Shakky to evade capture by Garp," Nami remarked, a hint of surprise in her tone. They were well aware of Grandpa Luffy's identity and his status within the Marines. He was a prominent figure known worldwide.

"Forget about it, that was forty years ago. It's all in the past now, and I'm just an ordinary bar owner," Shakky sighed, flicking her cigarette into the ashtray.

"Forty years?" The crew was taken aback. Given Shakky's appearance, she

couldn't have been much older than thirty at most.

"How old are you, Miss Shakky?" Usopp asked, curious.

"Haha, a woman's age is a secret," Shakky replied with a soft smile.

In many ways, her demeanour resembled the calm and composed nature that Robin aspired to. However, there were distinct differences between the two. While Robin's tranquillity stemmed from her knowledge and scholarly background, Shakky's was derived from her life experiences.

Her mysterious and adventurous past as a pirate, coupled with her strength, allowed her to face most situations with a sense of calm.

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11. Supernovas And Celestial

Dragons

But Ms. Shakky clearly didn't want to share more, so Luffy and the others didn't push further.

"By the way, Shakky, where's Rayleigh?" asked Luffy.

After chatting for a bit, Hatchan remembered why they had come.

"We're here to ask him for help with coating," Hatchan explained.

"Rayleigh?" Shakky blew out some smoke. "Haven't seen him in six months. Who knows where he's off to? Probably chasing after some new lady. But don't fret. He's likely still on the island somewhere."

Shakky chuckled.

"Anyway, enjoy your time here. It's a good period for pirates. The Marines are stretched thin right now."

"Marines weakened? What's going on?" Nami inquired suspiciously.

Sabaody is pretty close to Marine Headquarters, so her concern was valid.

"And who are these Celestial Dragons?" Luffy added.

Hatchan had mentioned them earlier with a serious tone.

"One question at a time, guys," Shakky chuckled, trying to keep up with their curiosity.

Shakky smiled softly and explained, "The Marines have been scaling back their forces lately. I'm not exactly sure why. It could be to deal with a powerful pirate or for some other reason."

She wasn't entirely clear on the details. Despite being an intelligence officer, she no longer had the vast network of information she once did as captain of the Nine Snake Pirates.

"Regarding the Celestial Dragons, they're the most untouchable figures on this island. You'll understand when you see them. Despite being a nuisance, they're the world's nobles. If provoked, a Marine Admiral will intervene."

"Admiral?" Nami and Usopp's eyes widened in horror.

They had only encountered one Admiral before, Aokiji, whose overwhelming power still haunted them. His icy presence had nearly crushed them, saved only by Aokiji's mercy.

The thought of provoking an Admiral by tangling with the Celestial Dragons was daunting, to say the least.

However, this fear was mostly felt by Chopper, Nami, and Usopp.

"Admirals, Celestial Dragons... it's all so intriguing," Luffy chuckled, excitement gleaming in his eyes.

He couldn't help but look forward to another clash with an Admiral. His current strength was a mystery even to himself, a vast improvement since his last encounter with Aokiji. He yearned to test his limits against the world's top fighters.

Shakky couldn't help but admire Luffy's fearless spirit.

"You're truly something else, Luffy," she remarked.

Chopper and Usopp, however, were quick to voice their reluctance to

face another Admiral.

"Speaking of Celestial Dragons, why do they hold such immense power?"

Sanji inquired, echoing the curiosity shared by the rest of the Straw Hat Pirates present, except for Robin, who was already familiar with the answer.

"Because they're the world's nobility. Legend has it that they're descendants of the creators, and it's their ancestors who established the World Government," Shakky explained.

Hatchan couldn't hide the fear in his eyes as he spoke up.

"If the Celestial Dragons are harmed, the World Government will spare no effort to retaliate. This is Sabaody, so an Admiral would swiftly intervene."

"So, Luffy, promise me you won't provoke them, okay?" Hatchan pleaded.

Luffy nodded, but his gaze hinted otherwise.

"You're itching for trouble with those Celestial Dragons," Hatchan observed, growing increasingly uneasy as he looked at Luffy.

"Haha, maybe we won't even cross paths. No need to worry," Luffy replied nonchalantly. "As long as they don't harm my friends, I'll keep my cool, right?"

Camie was nearly speechless at Luffy's remark.

After a brief exchange, Luffy and the others stood up.

"Thanks, Miss Shakky. Take care of the Sunny for us," Luffy said with a smile.

"You can count on me, Luffy. Enjoy your time on the island," Shakky replied, a cigarette between her fingers.

"Alright then," Luffy waved as they headed out.

"Oh, wait a moment, Luffy. Take this, it might come in handy," Shakky said suddenly, retrieving a newspaper and a stack of wanted posters from

under the bar and passing them to Luffy.

"What's this?" Luffy asked, slightly puzzled.

"These are the current supernovas gathered on Sabaody, and you're one of them. Take a look," Shakky explained, blowing out a puff of smoke.

"Ah, thanks a lot," Luffy replied absentmindedly, handing the newspaper to Nami before they left.

As they departed, Shakky's expression darkened.

"It looks like things are about to get messy on Sabaody again."

Luffy and the others headed back to the Sunny, fetching Zoro and Franky who were still on board. With Shakky's assurance, they felt confident that the ship would be safe. Shakky's strength was formidable; only the likes of a bear or an Admiral posed a threat to them.

This time, Luffy decided against splitting up. Sabaody wasn't safe, especially given its proximity to Marine Headquarters and the Celestial Dragons. It was likely that an Admiral might intervene. Since Sanji and Zoro hadn't fully honed their skills, it was best to stay together. This way, they'd be better prepared to face any emergencies.

"Supernova Eleven gathered in Sabaody?" Nami exclaimed, walking along a forest path in Sabaody with the rest of the group.

She was flipping through the newspaper Shakky had handed them, and that headline caught her attention.

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12. Kid, Apu, First Meeting

"The term 'supernova' refers to rookie pirates who have risen quickly and earned bounties of over 100 million Berries," Nami explained, her surprise evident.

"If you consider the timeline, these individuals have spent roughly the

same amount of time at sea as Luffy, yet their bounties have already surpassed 100 million Berries," she continued.

"Luffy and Zoro are among them," Nami added.

"What? So there are still nine pirates like Luffy and Zoro on this island?"

Chopper exclaimed, taken aback by the revelation.

Despite their numerous adventures and accomplishments—defeating two Shichibukai, infiltrating Enies Lobby, and defying the World Government—only Luffy and Zoro had earned the title of supernova among the Straw Hat crew.

It was hard to fathom that there were nine others with similar reputations.

"Nine," Nami confirmed, glancing at the newspaper. "But it's unusual for so many supernovas to be gathered in Sabaody. Normally, there are only two or three here on any given day."

"The fact that there are eleven this time is incredibly rare," she added.

"These bounties are the ones Ms Shakky managed to gather about the other nine supernovas," Nami explained, putting down the newspaper and picking up the reward list.

As the crew examined the list, they were once again shocked by the revelation of the Supernova Eleven.

"Zoro's bounty is surprisingly low among them," Nami noted.

Usopp set down the reward list, visibly surprised.

Given Zoro's undeniable strength and their daring exploits, it seemed perplexing that his bounty ranked so low.

"Interesting, a countdown?" Zoro remarked, taking a sip of wine with a sharp smile.

Even he couldn't deny feeling a twinge of competitiveness. While he didn't equate bounty with strength, being second to last among the

supernovas still irked him.

"Three hundred and fifteen million, someone has a higher bounty than Luffy," Chopper exclaimed, astonished.

"Who's got a higher one?" Luffy leaned in eagerly. "Eustass Kid?

Impressive. I think I've heard of him."

"No, this guy seems ruthless," Usopp muttered, covering his head.

Compared to Luffy, Kid's presence exuded a starkly different aura—one of brutality and bloodshed.

However, the excitement over the supernova bounties quickly faded from Luffy and the others' minds.

Sabaody's captivating bubble culture fascinated all newcomers to the island. Additionally, its proximity to Marine Headquarters ensured safety in areas such as sightseeing streets, shopping districts, and playgrounds, aside from the restricted zones. Being the final island in the first half of the Grand Line, Sabaody served as a crucial hub for nobles and businessmen awaiting approval for land deals from Mariejois.

Consequently, tourism and commerce flourished on the archipelago.

Before long, Luffy and the others found themselves enthralled by the abundance of goods available everywhere.

Meanwhile, in the No. 1 mangrove area of Sabaody:

In the slave prison behind the population auction, an elderly man with silver hair delicately lifted an exquisite silver jug, giving it a slight shake before speaking.

"It seems that a few formidable individuals have arrived on this island.

With the Marines reducing their presence, it appears the seas are about to quiet down once more."

"What are you muttering about, old man?" Beside him, a massive giant, his eyes slanting down to meet the elderly man's gaze, inquired.

"Oh, nothing, just the ramblings of a retired old man," Rayleigh replied with a smile, raising the jug to his lips and taking a sip.

"The wine's nearly finished, time to head out," Rayleigh remarked.

...

"What's this?"

Sabaody Commercial Street.

A red light caught Luffy's eye. Reacting instinctively, he leaned to the side just as a massive explosion rocked the area.

Seconds later, a thunderous boom echoed through the street. The nearby bar's wall exploded, sending a large stone hurtling towards Luffy.

Remarkably, he didn't flinch.

Had he not moved, the stone would've struck him directly.

Amidst the thick smoke, a figure somersaulted through the air, landing behind Luffy.

"A pirate? Clearly not here by chance," Luffy mused, tilting his head in confusion.

"You're quite the nuisance. I've decided to end you here," a voice growled as the smoke cleared, revealing a man with a scarlet hedgehog's head emerging from the shattered bar wall. Tall and muscular, his features exuded ferocity.

With a pair of sunglasses perched atop his head, emanating a menacing aura, Apoo sauntered forward, drawing a dagger from his chest with a bloody scent wafting from it. Though he faced Luffy, his words were directed at the figures behind him.

"I don't like you either. Come at me if you dare, Kid," Apoo taunted, flashing a grin as he waved his long arms.

"Oh, by the way, Kid, I just remembered," Luffy interjected, standing between them and suddenly recalling the identity of the man with the

scarlet hedgehog head before him—Eustass Kid.

With a bounty of around 300 million Berries, Kid was undeniably a supernova of higher standing than Luffy. Curious about Kid's placement on the bounty list, Luffy had specifically checked Chopper's copy.

It was only then that he recognized Kid.

"Who's this fool standing in the middle? Seems familiar," Kid remarked, eyeing Luffy with disdain.

Kid frowned as he observed Luffy standing between him and Apoo.

Though lacking Observation Haki, Kid's battle-honed intuition tingled with a palpable sense of danger emanating from Luffy. This potent aura flooded his keen fighting instincts, signaling that Luffy was no ordinary adversary.

"Captain Kid," Kid's younger brother spoke up, stepping forward with a look of alarm. He swiftly retrieved a reward list and presented it to Kid.

"This is Straw Hat Luffy, a supernova with a bounty of 300 million.

Among the eleven supernovas gathered in Sabaody Archipelago, he's considered the most notorious pirate after the captain."

"Interesting," Kid remarked, a cruel smile curling his lips. "His bounty rivals mine? This just got more intriguing and irritating than that annoying Apoo."

With that, Kid's dagger levitated into the air, hurtling towards Luffy like a bullet, propelled by Kid's intent to engage in combat.

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13. One Punch, Instant Kill, Huge

Gap

The dagger, propelled faster than bullets, soared towards Luffy. Yet, with a slight tilt of his head, Luffy effortlessly evaded it, the blade grazing past

his ear. However, to Kid's astonishment, the dagger swiftly looped back from behind Luffy at breakneck speed, aiming for his back.

"What an intriguing ability. Are you also a Devil Fruit user?" Luffy inquired with a wide grin, his eyes brimming with curiosity.

With a series of deft movements, Luffy effortlessly dodged the dagger's relentless assaults, his body moving with fluid grace. The levitating knife, faster than bullets, danced around him like a juggling act, unable to make contact with his body.

Throughout the exchange, Luffy remained composed, his gaze fixed unwaveringly on Kid, as if analyzing his opponent's abilities.

In contrast, Kid's complexion grew increasingly grim. "Why can't I land a hit? He wasn't even focused on the dagger," he muttered, his doubts mounting.

Kid's attacks, typically launched from blind spots and manipulated with remarkable speed, were easily dodged by Luffy.

"The Straw Hat kid? Does his ability revolve around evasion? That doesn't match the rumours," Apoo remarked, perplexed by Luffy's seamless dodges.

Observing the skirmish from a nearby barrel outside the bar, a man with a hat rested on his head and a long knife slung over his shoulder spoke in a low, magnetic voice.

"The one wearing the straw hat is indeed a formidable pirate with a bounty of 300 million."

Boom!

A massive explosion rocked the opposite end of the street, sending billows of smoke billowing into the air. Emerging from the haze was a monk wielding a colossal pencil and sporting wings on his back. His imposing figure exuded both impact and pressure as he charged forward,

his target being a masked man deftly somersaulting through the air.

"It's the peculiar monk Urouge," the onlookers in Sabaody exclaimed in surprise.

"And his opponent is the Killing Samurai, Kira," another bystander noted.

"A scythe? What an intriguing weapon," Zoro commented with an interested smile as he observed Kira from the sightseeing street nearby.

Swordsmen proficient in sickle techniques were a rarity, and Zoro couldn't help but feel a twinge of excitement at the prospect of facing such a unique adversary.

"Seems like some are too weak," Sanji remarked, lighting a cigarette and blowing out a puff of smoke.

"These supernovas are quite the rowdy bunch, causing trouble wherever they go," he added with a shake of his head.

Indeed, despite being in a supposedly peaceful area, the supernovas wasted no time in engaging in combat, stirring up a considerable commotion.

"One troublemaker after another. A bunch of uncouth ruffians," Capone Bege muttered with impatience from inside the dining room, which had been pierced through by the ongoing battle.

"Where's the pizza? Food, come here!" A young woman with long pink hair and heart-shaped lipstick sat at the dining table, pounding her fists on the table in a crude and voracious manner. Oblivious to the battle outside, her sole focus was on the food before her.

Meanwhile, the bloodthirsty glint in Kid's eyes intensified. "Let's see if you can dodge like a monkey," he sneered, a cruel smile curling his lips as he extended his right hand towards the sky.

"Magnetic Force!" he bellowed, unleashing an invisible energy that permeated the surroundings.

Sensing the disturbance, everyone present, particularly those armed, felt a shift in the air.

"Huh?" Zoro, who had been observing the scene with a hint of boredom, glanced at the three renowned swords swaying at his waist due to the magnetic force.

"Manipulating metal, huh? Still far from handling my blades," Zoro muttered, focusing his Armament Haki to steady the shaking swords. In an instant, they stilled.

"Hey, Luffy, wrap this up quickly. If you don't, I will," Zoro called out, a tinge of impatience creeping into his tone. "I've got ingredients to buy, so let's not waste too much time."

Sanji calmly took a drag of his cigarette before speaking, "Resolve the battle quickly? It's been a while since I've heard those words."

Kid laughed scornfully as he gathered over a hundred swords in the air, creating a dense forest of steel. The onlookers, recognizing the imminent danger, scattered in fear of being caught in the impending onslaught.

"Captain Hawkins, take cover! We're within the attack range," a blond man nearby warned, arranging tarot cards in the air before him.

"Fate has issued a warning; the chance of getting hit is only one percent," Hawkins interpreted, visibly surprised by the revelation. "But the Straw Hat Boy's odds are...100%?"

As Kid unleashed his attack, dubbed "Magnetic Force: Pointed Gun," countless metal weapons shot forth like a barrage of lasers, surpassing the speed of bullets. The overwhelming assault resembled a forest of steel descending from the heavens.

"Cover all visible hiding places," Luffy commanded calmly, his playful demeanor replaced by a serious expression in an instant.

With a light touch to his hat, Luffy vanished from sight as if swept away

by an invisible tempest. The onslaught of metal weapons disintegrated into pieces as if consumed by the invisible force.

In the blink of an eye, Luffy reappeared behind Kid, delivering a devastating blow with a heavy fist. A heavy thud echoed through the air, sending a shockwave rippling across the faces of onlookers.

Kid's body crashed to the ground with a resounding impact, creating a momentary stillness in time. A deep crater formed beneath him, sending thick clouds of smoke and dust swirling around.

Using Kid's body as a stepping stone, Luffy descended gracefully, wearing a relaxed smile on his face. Behind him, the fallen metal weapons littered the ground like scattered leaves.

"And Captain Kid..." Kid's younger brother froze in shock, disbelief etched across his features. Trembling, he wanted to rush to Kid's side, but fear of Luffy's presence kept him rooted in place.

"Captain Kid...is he...is he dead?" A chorus of exclamations filled the commercial plaza as the realization of Kid's fate sank in.

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14. Zoro Makes A Move, Another

Instant Kill

The bustling square suddenly turned eerily quiet.

Everyone there, except the Straw Hat Crew, went completely silent.

Shock and disbelief painted across every face.

Was Eustass Kid taken out in mere moments?

No one doubted Kid's strength.

Even though the other supernovas believed bounties didn't always reflect true fighting ability.

Kid was the first to target fellow supernovas with bounties, proving his

strength. He was among the top few supernovas.

Facing off against the Straw Hat boy with the second-highest bounty, everyone anticipated a close fight or a quick test.

But the outcome was swift and unexpected.

Kid couldn't even land a hit on the Straw Hat Kid, who, with just one punch, swiftly defeated Kid, who had the highest bounty.

"Seriously, is the Straw Hat captain that powerful?"

Luo's calm demeanour vanished, replaced by sheer astonishment.

"Has another monster like this emerged among the pirates?"

On a nearby rooftop, X Drake's eyes clouded with fear as he watched Luffy.

"Wait, are you serious? That speed and strength, is this truly a pirate from the first part of the Grand Line?"

In the distance, the peculiar monk Urouge was busy with a giant pencil, completely forgetting about his clash with Kira.

The incredible speed made it impossible for anyone to track such a devastating punch. Even with his toughness, he didn't dare to face another blow.

"Straw Hat taking out Supernova Kid with just one punch? That's major news."

In a shadowy alley, a photographer snapped shots of Luffy.

In one photo, Luffy casually pressed his straw hat down, while behind him, Kid lay unconscious in a deep pit, eyes rolled back.

Meanwhile, Hawkins, Law, and Capone Bege watched from afar, shocked but amused.

News headlines and reporters were already spinning the story.

A new emperor among pirates emerges, widening the gap among supernovas.

Though a bit exaggerated, sensationalizing news wasn't new to grab attention.

"All done, let's go," Luffy said, lifting his hat and strolling towards Zoro and the others, a grin on his face.

He didn't spare a glance at the unconscious Kid behind him.

Supernovas seemed too weak for him now.

If Kid's ability wasn't so intriguing, the fight would've ended with Kid's first attack.

"Are you kidding, Kid? Get up!"

A furious shout echoed in the distance.

Kira, who had faced off against Urouge earlier, seemed to have just regained his senses.

Glancing at Kid sprawled behind Luffy, his voice dripped with anger.

He couldn't fathom that the man he followed was only at this level.

It was too humiliating to be taken out by the Straw Hat Boy, also a supernova with a lower bounty.

Whoosh.

Kira kicked off fiercely.

Like a swift arrow, in an instant, he covered a distance of 100 meters and stood beside Luffy.

In the sunlight, his sickle gleamed with a chilling light as it aimed for Luffy's neck.

But Luffy seemed unfazed.

Clang.

A faint sound of a blade being drawn echoed.

Suddenly, everyone felt a thick, terrifying aura, like the abyss's Shura.

"One Sword Style: Draw the Sword, Sleepless Night."

A deep voice resonated.

A sword flash, too fast for the naked eye to catch, erupted from the ground at an angle.

All eyes caught just a brief glimmer of light.

Then, in a sudden blur, Zoro materialized behind Kira, smoothly sheathing the Third Generation Ghost into its scabbard at his waist.

In an instant, Kira's sickle shattered, and a gaping wound tore across his chest, from shoulder to waist.

Blood sprayed, his mask cracked, and Kira spat out a mouthful of blood before crashing to the ground.

"At this level, attacking our captain so recklessly is disgraceful," Zoro said calmly, his hand resting on the trio of famous swords at his waist.

"So cool," Usopp and Chopper exclaimed, stars practically twinkling in their eyes.

Seeing Kid's earlier appearance had unsettled Chopper and Usopp. After all, he was a pirate whose bounty exceeded Luffy's.

But now, witnessing Luffy and Zoro's strength firsthand, they realized how formidable their crewmates had become.

It was truly terrifying, a far cry from before.

"With just one punch and one slash, he took down two supernovas with higher bounties," Nami said, stunned, covering her mouth.

"Truly dependable," Robin replied with a soft smile.

Under normal circumstances, Luffy and Zoro were formidable, but it was unheard of for them to instantly defeat two supernovas.

Pirates with similar bounties typically possessed comparable strength, especially among supernovas.

The only explanation was the remarkable enhancement of Luffy's mysterious ability, which had completely transformed them.

Pirates of the same calibre now couldn't even last a moment against

them.

"Could they really reach Admiral-level combat prowess?" Robin wondered aloud, feeling hopeful.

Despite understanding her reasons for joining the Straw Hats after Enies Lobby, she remained concerned because of what she represented.

In a full-scale conflict with the World Government, the current Straw Hat Pirates stood no chance.

But if they could attain Admiral-level combat strength, everything would change.

"The Admiral is the pinnacle of combat power recognized by the World Government. Even the government itself cannot underestimate Admiral-level strength.

Now, the entire commercial square was paralyzed with shock.

"Instakill, another instakill," someone muttered.

After Straw Hat swiftly defeated Kid, Roronoa took down Kira, who had a higher bounty.

"Is he truly the second-in-command? Such terror and dominance," Urouge exclaimed, sweat beading on his brow.

Though Zoro's attack was swift, the murderous aura and overwhelming force lingered in everyone's hearts.

Now, Zoro had fully evolved with Conqueror's Haki and refined swordsmanship.

His path was that of a Shura, radiating a terrifying aura of death.

And yet, he hadn't even used his full strength. If he did...

Everyone present would be directly overwhelmed by his aura of death.

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15. World Nobility, Celestial

Dragons

"Are all the Straw Hat Pirates monsters?" Capone Bege's eyes widened with fear, no longer showing the indifference he had moments ago.

Initially, he thought these supernovas weren't much stronger than him.

And indeed, neither Kid nor Urouge, nor the one named Kira behind them, had given him much cause for concern. But the actions of the two Straw Hat crew members sent shivers down his spine, leaving him unable to resist.

"Is the ship ready?" Capone Bege couldn't help but ask. Truth be told, this island already felt dangerously hostile to him.

"Boss, even with the fastest coating, it'll still take three days. We've only been here for two," his younger brother in a black suit and sunglasses replied.

"It's really bad luck. Stranded on an island with such lawless monsters. I have a feeling that if we don't leave soon, something terrible might happen," Capone Bege lamented.

He wasn't the only one with that feeling. Everyone present felt it upon seeing Luffy and Zoro, who seemed like monsters themselves. The other supernovas, who had been itching for trouble, now contemplated staying silent.

The overwhelming strength of the Straw Hat Pirates instilled a sense of frustration in these supernovas, who hadn't encountered such power in a long time.

"You're incredibly strong, Luffy," Camie remarked admiringly as she met them.

Luffy shrugged off the praise. "Nah, it's just that they're too weak."

Luffy scratched his head sheepishly and chuckled.

"Let's go. Next time we meet, it'll be in the New World," Law said, his

expression serious as he rose from the barrel.

Hawkins, standing nearby, wore a grave expression. "The next encounter foretells a major disaster. The likelihood of an event threatening my life is ninety-five percent."

"Such a high chance of danger! Captain Hawkins, we should run!" his younger brother exclaimed nervously.

Hawkins' predictions were usually spot-on. But this time, the exceptionally high probability signalled imminent peril.

"It's too late. This is fate. Fate is absolute and unchangeable," Hawkins stated calmly.

"What could pose a threat to a supernova's life?" Luffy's heart raced with worry.

But just then, the people on the nearby commercial street suddenly dropped to their knees in unison. Panic rippled through the crowd.

"The Celestial Dragons are approaching!" A cry of fear echoed from afar, spreading like a tidal wave.

"Celestial Dragons? What a bother. Let's steer clear of them," Capone Bege muttered, flicking ash from his cigar as he stood up and made his way toward a dark alley.

Meanwhile, Apoo leaped energetically, landing on a rooftop behind a concealed chimney.

Even Kid's younger brother, overcoming his fear of the Straw Hat crew, swiftly moved forward. He dragged the unconscious Kid and Kira to safety, hiding them in nearby buildings.

"What are they up to?" Luffy glanced around suspiciously.

On the commercial street, the crowd parted, clearing a path as they all knelt down. Meanwhile, the supernova pirates hid in the shadows.

"Celestial Dragons?" Despite being warned that provoking them could

summon Admirals, Luffy didn't seem too concerned. His disdain for nobility, coupled with his confidence in his newfound strength, made him eager to confront Admiral-level opponents and prove himself.

Not only him, but Zoro stood beside Luffy in the middle of the road while the other supernovas hurriedly evacuated.

As the Celestial Dragons came into view, Law, who had been hiding nearby, observed Luffy and Zoro's puzzlement. They showed no signs of avoiding the situation.

A dreadful possibility crossed his mind. He exchanged a serious glance with Hawkins, both realizing the potential danger. The Straw Hat Pirates, especially these two, were known for their defiance of authority.

"What's going on, Zoro?" Luffy asked, perplexed by the kneeling crowd around them.

Zoro shrugged. "Dunno," he replied casually, still holding a bottle of wine.

Having been away from Shakky's bar and unaware of the Celestial Dragons, Zoro was as clueless as Luffy.

The Celestial Dragons approached ominously.

There stood a corpulent man with a round face, curly black hair, thick lips, and a perpetually runny nose, eliciting sincere disgust from those around him. Despite this, no one dared to show their revulsion. Fear gripped them all, forcing them to bow their heads in submission, unwilling to meet the Celestial Dragons' gaze.

On Sabaody Archipelago, the presence of Celestial Dragons could easily summon Marine Admirals if things went awry.

"Please, Celestial Dragons, spare us," whispered the kneeling crowd, their unease palpable as they listened to the slaves of the Celestial Dragons shuffling nearby.

Encounters with these moody and powerful beings always left everyone on edge. Their whims could lead to the death of anyone present without consequence.

Yet, amidst the tension and fear, an unexpected voice rang out on the quiet street.

"Hahaha, Zoro, check out that guy! He's dressed so oddly, with soap bubbles on his head! How amusing!" Luffy stood in the middle of the road, pointing and laughing at the Celestial Dragons.

The sight of the bloated figure, adorned with soap bubbles atop his head, amused Luffy to no end.

"Indeed, quite intriguing. Perhaps it's a local custom here on Sabaody," Zoro remarked, taking a sip of wine. "Like some sort of street performer or a festive parade costume?"

Nami, hidden in the shadow of the alley, couldn't help but feel angry at the two fools openly mocking the Celestial Dragons in the midst of the street.

"Disaster," Usopp and Chopper exclaimed, horror written plainly across their faces.

They understood all too well the recklessness of their captain and the two fools, Zoro included. With them here, the fate of the Celestial Dragons was all but sealed.

The arrival of Admirals on this island seemed inevitable now.

The surrounding area fell into an eerie silence, punctuated only by the cold sweat dripping down the faces of those kneeling on the ground.

It had been years since anyone dared to show such blatant disrespect to the Celestial Dragons in public.

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16. Beating The Celestial Dragons

"Even idiots have their limits," muttered Jewelry Bonney, observing the scene before her. Even the supernovas lurking in the shadows felt a cold sweat trickle down their spines.

Challenging the Celestial Dragons openly in the street was a bold move. Given the Dragons' arrogant demeanour, conflict was inevitable. And with the Straw Hats' formidable strength and rebellious nature, it was certain that the Celestial Dragons would be overthrown.

If the Celestial Dragons were attacked, repercussions would ripple throughout the Sabaody Archipelago.

"The Straw Hat Pirates probably lack even this basic sense," Apoo remarked from his hiding spot behind a chimney.

"Are you trying to provoke me?" Luffy and Zoro's voices cut through the tense silence, echoing clearly in the quiet street.

Saint Charlos, seated upon his slave, his face contorted in rage beneath the soap bubbles, felt deeply insulted by the civilians' comparison of him to a street performer and a courtesan. This was an affront to his lineage, the blood of the Celestial Dragons.

With a snarl, Saint Charlos raised his golden pistol, aiming it directly at Luffy's head.

Luffy's smile faded instantly, replaced by a chilling intensity in his eyes.

"Did you make up your mind when you raised that gun?" he asked, his voice devoid of its earlier joviality.

Luffy lowered his head slightly, his gaze piercing, reminiscent of the moment when Shanks faced down a bandit king with a gun. In truth, he had harboured resentment toward the man before him for some time.

The people around him felt an indescribable mix of fear, resentment, and anger towards the Celestial Dragon. Even Camie, Xiao Ba, and Pappagu

behind him were consumed by an abyssal fear as the Celestial Dragons raised their pistols.

"Rot in hell, scum," Saint Charlos sneered, his face twisted with cruelty as he pulled the trigger.

Boom. Bullets flew.

Yet, Luffy walked toward Charlos, calmly dodging the bullets with a slight turn of his head.

"No way, Straw Hat," Jewelry Bonney's heart raced as she watched.

Bang, bang, bang. Three more shots whizzed past Luffy's ear, but he continued his steady advance.

Before long, Luffy stood before the Celestial Dragons, his sharp gaze sending shivers down Charlos's spine. Fear turned to rage in an instant as if the superior had been affronted.

"Dispose of him at once!" Saint Charlos barked, and several men in black suits moved to obey.

"Yes, Lord Charlos," the men in black suits obediently replied.

Just as they were about to move forward, a menacing aura swept over them, causing several to collapse to the ground, eyes rolled back.

Meanwhile, Zoro took a sip of wine and calmly observed the scene.

Though he often clashed with Luffy, he was fiercely protective of his captain. When Luffy faced off against Charlos, Zoro made sure no one dared to interfere.

"Let me ask you something. When you raised that gun, did you decide to face the consequences?" Luffy's gaze bore into Charlos.

The Celestial Dragons before him evoked the strongest emotions Luffy had felt since awakening his Haki. The fear and resentment in the air were palpable and overwhelming.

"You scum! I am a Celestial Dragon! You dare to defy me, kneel!" Charlos

bellowed, his superiority complex intact despite running out of bullets.

He lunged at Luffy, but Luffy effortlessly dodged, the pistol grazing past him.

With a raised fist, Luffy made his move.

Capone Bege broke out in a cold sweat while Law watched nervously, a mix of anticipation and anxiety evident in his eyes.

"No way," Apoo muttered in disbelief from his vantage point on the roof.

Boom. Luffy's punch shattered the soap bubble in front of him.

"Fly high for me," Luffy commanded, feeling the impact of his fist against his target's face.

The force behind the blow was tremendous. A shockwave rippled out from Luffy's fist, cutting through the air with a white streak that seemed to split the entire commercial street. White circular waves emanated from the impact point, creating a sonic boom.

Even without activating his second gear, Luffy's strength was formidable.

"Ah, sending scum like that flying is so satisfying," Luffy remarked, withdrawing his fist and adjusting his straw hat with a broad smile.

"It's weak, but it doesn't seem like an acrobat, does it?" Zoro pondered, perplexed by the scene before him.

Unable to perceive emotions, Zoro mistook the Celestial Dragons' appearance and the reactions of the onlookers as unique to Sabaody.

"But it doesn't matter. Such weaklings."

Zoro yawned, taking a sip from his wine bottle. The warm sunshine of Sabaody beckoned him to find a cosy spot for a nap.

"What's going on? Why's it suddenly so quiet?" Luffy questioned, sensing the unusual atmosphere.

Around them, the kneeling civilians looked up in shock while the distant supernovas stood frozen in disbelief.

"The Celestial Dragons got beaten?" The stunned silence was broken by a cacophony of voices.

"Run!" Someone shouted, and in an instant, the civilians scattered, fleeing for safety.

Soon, only Luffy and a few supernovas remained in the once-bustling street.

"I'm finally free. You're pirates. Get out of here," a weak voice spoke beside them.

It was the slave, the man who had been used as a mount by the Celestial Dragons.

The man, tall but emaciated, bore welts and fresh blood on his face.

"Are you alright? Your injuries look severe," Luffy inquired, concern evident in his voice.

"I'll be fine. Death will be a relief for me soon," the man replied calmly, no longer kneeling but sitting on the ground in a relaxed manner. "You should flee. If you confront the Celestial Dragons, Admirals will come to this island. You won't stand a chance."

"Celestial Dragons, Admirals... Oh yeah, Shaky mentioned them. But why talk about dying? We have top-notch doctors. Don't worry, you won't die from your injuries," Luffy reassured with a grin.

The slave man looked at Luffy, taken aback. "You're not like other pirates."

"It doesn't matter. This collar is about to explode. Without the key, it can't be removed," the man explained solemnly.

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17. Legendary Characters

Ding dong, ding dong.

The sound, like a countdown, echoed through the empty street square.

"What's that sound?" Luffy looked around suspiciously.

"It's the collar that keeps slaves from running away. If they stray too far from their master for too long, it blows up," Hatchan explained with a grim expression.

Back when he was with the Sun Pirates, Hatchan had saved many slaves and had seen plenty of these collars before.

"It's come to this at last. Still, no chance to go back home," the slave man muttered with a mix of resignation and relief in his eyes.

Ever since he'd been captured by human traffickers and forced into servitude by the Celestial Dragons, he knew it would likely end like this.

But the hope of returning home had kept him going.

In the end, he wouldn't get to see his wife and kids one last time.

Ding dong, ding dong. The frequency of the collar's triggering sound kept increasing, like a countdown to the end of life.

"I'll handle this, Straw Hat," Rayleigh stepped forward from the shadows, brandishing a long sword.

"With my powers, I can remove the collar without setting it off. Just watch..."

Boom.

An explosion rocked the commercial street, cutting off Rayleigh's words mid-sentence.

Luffy, however, acted swiftly. He placed his hands on the slave man's collar and ripped it off forcefully, tossing it aside without triggering the explosion.

But according to logic, ripping it off should have set it off immediately.

"What were you saying?" Luffy turned to the bewildered law, his expression tinged with doubt.

He'd been focused on trying to manipulate Armament Haki to remove the collar so he hadn't caught what Rayleigh was saying earlier. Plus, he didn't recognize the man with the long knife.

"How did you manage that?" Law asked, still taken aback.

"Just a bit of Armament, Haki," Luffy replied with a grin, flexing his arm.

"I haven't used it much before, but it worked out this time."

With a hearty laugh, Luffy clapped the freed slave on the shoulder.

"Looks like luck's on your side, old timer!"

"Collar's off?" The slave stood frozen, disbelief and gratitude written all over his face.

After a moment, he buried his face in his hands, tears streaming down.

"Alive, free... I can finally go home."

Watching the emotional scene, Camie gripped Hatchan's sleeve tightly, still shaken by the experience.

Seeing the weeping man, she saw a reflection of her own past as a slave.

"Armament Haki... has Straw Hat really mastered it?" Rayleigh pondered.

He'd spent time in the New World and knew a lot about Conqueror's Haki.

While many in the New World had mastered Armament Haki, it was rare in the first half of the Grand Line, especially for a relatively new pirate like Luffy.

Furthermore, compared to the users of Armament Haki he's encountered before, none have demonstrated such mastery.

But after pondering for a while, Rayleigh brushed aside the issue. Haki was a tool of the strong, but it didn't necessarily surpass abilities.

Ultimately, it came down to the strength of the user.

Now, the priority was escaping.

Playing with Celestial Dragons might be tempting, but it was also

dangerous. Most folks on Sabaody wanted them gone, but few dared to act on it.

Enter the Marine Admiral.

"It's not safe here anymore, Straw Hat captain. You should leave this island quickly," Rayleigh advised before parting ways. "If we meet again in the New World, I'd like to work together."

Rayleigh harboured a grudge, but it wasn't the time. The Straw Hat Pirates were strong enough, and rookie pirates like Luffy fit his plans for allies. But it was too soon to act.

Sabaody was too close to Marine Headquarters. The local Marines likely reported the incident, and an Admiral would be on their way soon. The discussion could wait until they were free from the Admiral's reach.

With that, Rayleigh departed with his Heart Pirates.

As for Luffy, he watched Rayleigh leave, puzzled. "Who's that guy?"

"Trafalgar Law, one of the supernovas. His bounty's 200 million berries, making him one of the stronger ones," came the explanation.

Nami chimed in from the side to explain.

Sanji, wearing a calm expression, turned to Luffy. "What's the plan, Captain? The Admiral will be here soon."

Despite his confidence in their strength, Sanji couldn't shake off the shadow cast by encounters with Admirals like Aokiji. Facing them head-on stirred a hint of guilt in him.

Luffy grinned, initially contemplating a direct confrontation with the Admiral. But he sensed the fear in Camie and Hatchan, and that gave him pause.

Considering their feelings, Luffy scrapped the bold idea. "Let's find Uncle Rayleigh first for coating. As for the Admiral, it's a big island—we can hide for a couple of days."

Luffy adjusted his hat with a playful smirk. "Besides, being chased by an Admiral sounds kinda fun, doesn't it?"

"Not funny at all," Nami retorted, landing a punch on Luffy's head, which, being made of rubber, didn't hurt him.

"But can we even find Rayleigh now?" Hatchan interjected, sounding anxious. With such a vast island, locating someone was no easy task.

"Don't worry about that," Luffy reassured, his excitement evident. He shared a knowing glance with Sanji and Zoro.

"You guys feel it, too, right? Zoro, Sanji?" Luffy glanced at his crewmates.

"Hard not to, with that ominous presence lurking around the island," Zoro remarked, his hand resting on his sword hilt as he sipped his wine. He gazed towards a particular direction of the island, a smirk playing on his lips.

"Just a brief moment, but that aura felt monstrous. Rayleigh must've known about it long before. It's probably that legendary figure," Zoro continued.

Sanji let out a light exhale, maintaining his composure. "Didn't expect someone of such stature to be hiding out here."

"What's with all the mystery?" Franky piped up, pushing his sunglasses up. "I think I might have an idea, but it doesn't match what's written in the books."

"I have a hunch, too," Robin added, her expression pensive. "It might not be confirmed yet, but it's worth investigating."

"We'll find out when we get there. Let's go take a look," Luffy declared, his curiosity piqued.

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18. Marine Shakes, Kizaru Moves

After a while, in the No. 1 mangrove area, amidst the bustling population auction within a slave prison, Rayleigh straightened up in his dark cell.

"I didn't expect to be discovered so quickly. How intriguing. Have you come to find me? Are they all retired, or have they been located?"

Rayleigh mused aloud.

"What's going on, Uncle?" asked the giant cellmate next to Rayleigh, sensing the tension.

Rayleigh, known for his exceptional abilities, smiled softly. "No, I just felt like stepping out."

As he rose, a formidable aura swept through the area, silencing the commotion outside the prison. Rayleigh couldn't help but focus on this powerful presence.

"It's been a while since I've sensed a spirit this strong," he remarked.

Boom. With a mighty punch, the heavy iron gate was violently blown aside, allowing sunlight to flood the previously dim prison.

"I can't stay hidden," Rayleigh muttered, his own aura beginning to gather.

But when he saw who was approaching, he couldn't help but be momentarily stunned.

"Straw Hat, kid?" Rayleigh muttered in disbelief. Even in this vast sea, he couldn't deny the familiarity of that straw hat—the very same one Roger once wore.

"Mr. Rayleigh, back in East Blue, I heard a kid say the exact same thing Captain Roger did," Luffy explained, a determined gleam in his eye. "So, I made a bet on the New World—with my arm and this hat."

Shanks's words from twelve years ago echoed in Rayleigh's mind. "It's finally happening."

As he gazed at the man grinning in the sunlight, wearing that iconic

straw hat, it felt like seeing a familiar figure once more. Rayleigh keenly sensed the passage of time and the dawn of a new era.

"The wheels of change are in motion," Rayleigh mused.

"Rayleigh, it's really you!" Hatchan's surprised voice broke the moment.

"It's been too long, Hatchan," Rayleigh replied, lifting his glasses to wipe away a tear. Age often makes one sentimental.

"This is my friend, the Straw Hat crew. They're heading to the New World, and we need your help with coating," Hatchan explained to Rayleigh, unaware of the elder's emotions. He stepped out from behind Luffy to address Rayleigh directly.

"Leave the coating to me since he's Hatchan's friend," Rayleigh declared with a bright smile. "But we'll need the tools. Go back to Shakky's and fetch them."

With no other choice, everyone agreed. Despite the imminent threat of the Admiral's arrival, Luffy's calm demeanour reassured Nami and eased her nerves.

"You're really strong, Uncle," Luffy remarked as Rayleigh passed by.

"Just an old man outpaced by time. Can't hold a candle to the courage of you young folks," Rayleigh replied with a soft smile.

Meanwhile, in the marshal's room at Naval Headquarters, tensions ran high.

"What? The Celestial Dragons attacked on Sabaody?"

"Who's responsible?"

"It's Straw Hat again."

Sengoku's voice rose in anger as he slammed the phone bug onto the table, shooting a fierce look at Garp.

"Your grandson strikes again, Garp. Another incident was caused by your family. What's going on? Are you trying to start a war?" Sengoku

growled, the distance between them the only thing preventing a more heated confrontation.

Garp couldn't contain his laughter, even as a stray drop of saliva splashed onto his face.

"Haha, that's my grandson for you," he chuckled, wiping away the tears of amusement. "You're proud of this? Those Celestial Dragons deserved it. I've been itching to give them a taste of their own medicine."

Sengoku massaged his temples, feeling a headache coming on. "Exactly. I'll have to report this to the higher-ups. You need to explain yourself, Garp."

"Arrange for the Admiral to handle it," Sengoku continued, addressing the situation.

At this, Garp's expression shifted slightly, a hint of disdain flickering across his lips, though he remained silent.

"Sengoku, let me handle this," Kizaru spoke up, setting down his tea cup.

"The Celestial Dragons were attacked right under Marine's watch. If we don't take action, the higher-ups won't be pleased."

As the only active Admiral present, Kizaru's words carried weight. With Akainu and Aokiji absent and Sengoku untouchable as the Marshal, Garp's status as a Vice Admiral complicated matters. Additionally, his familial ties to Luffy made it difficult for him to handle the situation impartially.

So, it fell upon Kizaru to take charge despite his reluctance to do so.

"Then I'll leave it to you, Kizaru. Use the Pacifistas to assist you and seal off Sabaody," Sengoku instructed, casting a serious glance at Garp. "We must eliminate the Straw Hats."

"Understood," Kizaru responded, rising to his feet and heading for the door.

"Are you not worried, Garp?" Sengoku asked once Kizaru had left, his tone grave.

"Worried about what, Sengoku?"

"With the Admirals dispatched, this situation is different. Given the Straw Hat boy's strength, they won't escape this time. I've told you before if you had kept a tighter rein on your grandson, we wouldn't be in this predicament."

There was an underlying meaning in Sengoku's words, hinting at not just the events unfolding on Sabaody but also the fate of Fire Fist Ace in Impel Down.

"Luffy is his own man. Every person must take responsibility for their own choices. This is his journey, and he's fully aware of the risks," Garp responded. "And I have faith in him."

After a moment of silence, Garp burst into laughter. Sengoku shook his head, choosing not to pursue the matter further.

With an Admiral personally leading the operation to capture a rookie pirate who had barely spent a year in the Grand Line, it seemed unlikely that any problems would arise.

The strength of an Admiral and that of these newcomers are on completely different levels.

Kizaru may not have Garp's leniency nor the bear's compassion from before. He won't go easy.

The fate of the Straw Hat Crew seems sealed.

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19. The Legend Of The Past

Sabaody Archipelago.

Mangrove Area No. 66.

This is where the Marines are stationed.

Despite their forces being depleted due to preparations for war, the Marine base now operates with greater power than ever, with the secret troops being deployed.

"Move quickly! Seal off Sabaody and apprehend all pirates on the island!" shouted a Marine officer in the base's passageway as soldiers rushed past him in an orderly fashion.

"PX-1, PX-2, PX-3, PX-4, move out! Your mission is to eradicate all pirates on the island!" commanded Zhan Taowan, wielding a massive axe.

In response, the four Pacifistas, their red eyes gleaming, acknowledged the order and left the Marine Base with purposeful strides.

Zhan Taowan followed closely behind, his expression unreadable.

"This will be a good opportunity to test the Pacifistas' capabilities," he mused.

These humanoid weapons, created by Vegapunk and based on the Shichibukai bear, were theoretically stronger than even the Supernovas. However, actual combat tests were still needed to confirm their effectiveness.

...

Meanwhile, at Shakky's Ripped Off Bar.

"Hey, did you hear that? The Vice-Captain of the Roger crew?"

The entire bar erupted in disbelief, except for Zoro, Sanji, and Robin, who remained composed as if they had already suspected.

"Liar! Dark King Rayleigh is legendary! His name's known far and wide across the seas. I've heard tales of Dark King Rayleigh since I was a kid," Nami exclaimed incredulously.

"Yeah, she's right," Usopp chimed in, confirming Nami's disbelief.

While the reputations of other big pirates might be limited to certain

regions, the fame of figures like Roger and the pirate king crew had spread worldwide.

"Uncle, you're so powerful! I can't believe you were the vice-captain of the Rpirate king's crew," Luffy exclaimed in awe.

"You didn't figure that out sooner? I thought you would've sensed it," Sanji remarked, slightly bemused.

With their experiences and perceptions, coupled with the terrifying aura and the name Rayleigh, it wasn't hard for them to piece together Rayleigh's true identity. However, considering Luffy's tendency to overlook such details, it made sense.

"Haha, being the vice-captain of the Roger crew was decades ago. Now, I'm just a regular coater, Uncle Rayleigh," Rayleigh replied calmly, taking a sip of his wine with a smile.

"But wait," Luffy interjected, his curiosity piqued. "If the pirate crew of the pirate King, Gold D Roger, was arrested along with him, why is his vice-captain here on this island?"

"That's fake news spread by the Marines to bolster their reputation. Roger, he surrendered himself," Rayleigh revealed after a moment of silence, his tone calm yet carrying weight.

"Surrendered himself?" Nami echoed, her disbelief evident.

Rayleigh proceeded to unveil the truth, a revelation that shook everyone present.

"Roger had been suffering from a terminal illness for some time. After our final voyage, the Roger Pirates disbanded. When I saw him again, it was a year after we had gone our separate ways. He surrendered to the Marines."

With a steady voice, Rayleigh recounted the events between the two legendary figures. His perspective offered a glimpse into the reality

behind the façade perceived by the world—an account imbued with the weight of history and the winds of change.

"Roger, with the last embers of his life, ignited a flame that spread throughout the world," Rayleigh continued, his words resonating with profound meaning. "That night, I laughed like never before, and I felt sorrow like never before. Our captain lived a truly remarkable life."

Rayleigh fell silent, his glasses seemingly fogged up, concealing his true emotions. The bar was silent, all eyes fixed on him as if drawn by the sunlight streaming through the door.

At that moment, it felt as though one could follow that light back to the legendary era and witness the farewell between two legendary pirates.

Rayleigh bore the weight of a great era on his shoulders.

"It feels like we've just heard an extraordinary tale," Nami remarked after a pause.

Rayleigh's words carried a sense of grandeur and awe yet also an inexplicable feeling of unreality. The sheer legendary nature of the story seemed to distance it from reality.

"Is this Roger's?" Luffy whispered, his hand instinctively resting on his hat.

"Yes, that's the one," Rayleigh confirmed, smiling as he gestured to Luffy's hat.

"This hat? Shanks gave it to me," Luffy explained.

"I know. I really miss it. Roger gave that hat to Shanks, and Shanks passed it on to you," Rayleigh chuckled.

"Luffy's straw hat is from the Pirate King?" Chopper exclaimed in disbelief.

Initially thinking that Shanks's straw hat was significant enough, the revelation that it originated from the legendary pirate King, Roger, added

an even deeper layer of meaning.

"Uncle, you know Shanks too?" Luffy asked, taken aback.

"Why didn't he tell you?" Rayleigh responded with some surprise. "Shanks used to be an apprentice on our ship."

"The trainee crew on the Roger's ship has now become the Four Emperors, quite a powerful connection," Franky remarked, clearly surprised by the revelation.

"Speaking of which, you guys are from East Blue, right? Buggy was also a trainee crew member. He and Shanks were quite close. They were always together back then," Rayleigh reminisced with a laugh. "It's been decades, and I wonder what became of Buggy. I still think about him from time to time."

"Buggy," Zoro and Nami's expressions immediately soured. The idea of that clown remaining on the pirate king's ship seemed utterly incongruous to them.

The two styles didn't seem to match at all.

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20. The Great Escape Begins

"Haha, looks like you've had your fair share of run-ins with him already," Rayleigh chuckled, glancing at their expressions.

"He's the type who always keeps you guessing. You might cross paths with him again down the line," he added.

"Probably not," Nami muttered almost instinctively.

She was about to dismiss Buggy as just another small-time pirate from East Blue. But Rayleigh's words reminded her of Buggy's connection to the legendary treasure, One Piece.

"I always get the feeling he'll pop up where you least expect him," Nami

sighed.

In a way, dealing with Buggy proved to be quite a challenge.

"Oh, by the way, Uncle Rayleigh, about the One Piece?" Usopp blurted out suddenly.

Zoro and Sanji's expressions darkened, but they didn't intervene. Only one person present had the authority to halt Usopp's line of questioning.

"Stop it, Usopp," came the firm command.

Luffy's calm yet resolute Haki-infused voice cut through Usopp's words.

"But, Luffy," Usopp began, but Luffy's determined gaze silenced him instantly.

"I don't need to know the outcome of the journey, the uncertainties along the way, or the freedom I seek. My dream is something I'll discover on my own," Luffy declared, his tone serious and composed yet carrying a powerful sense of determination that resonated with everyone present.

"I get it now. Don't spill the beans, Uncle Rayleigh. I must've caught some weird illness that kicks in whenever I hear cryptic news," Usopp joked, attempting to lighten the mood.

As one of the original members of the Straw Hat Crew, Usopp had always understood Luffy's unwavering resolve. But in the presence of Rayleigh and the revelation of the nearly attained great secret treasure, he momentarily lost his composure. However, he quickly regained his senses.

Their collective dream went beyond just the pursuit of One Piece. They had come together because of Luffy, each with their own aspirations for the journey ahead.

Along the way, it became evident that their voyage wasn't solely about chasing after a single elusive treasure.

"That's something only Luffy could say," remarked one of them,

acknowledging the unique spirit driving their adventures.

Sanji couldn't help but sport a familiar smile.

Despite their captain's usual carefree demeanour, he always exuded a sense of reliability during critical moments.

Zoro, Nami, and the others wore expressions of expectation, mirroring Sanji's sentiment.

However, Robin remained conflicted, her expression betraying her inner turmoil.

Eventually, she gathered the courage to speak up.

"Mr. Rayleigh, you're familiar with the hidden history spanning a hundred years in this world, aren't you?" Robin inquired, her usually composed demeanour replaced by palpable anticipation and nervousness, her body trembling ever so slightly.

"Robin," Nami, who was closest to her, looked on with concern.

The concealed century-old history held connections to the fabled final island. Unlike Usopp, no one among the Straw Hat Crew dared to interject Robin's line of questioning, recognizing the weight of what she carried.

Robin bore the collective will of thousands of scholars from Ohara—a burden heavier than any present could comprehend.

A hush fell over Shakky's bar as Rayleigh rose from his seat, his head bowed slightly. His glasses caught the sunlight, obscuring his expression behind a veil of light.

Rayleigh let out a sigh before responding, "Ah, yes, we're well-acquainted with all the historical texts, the entire history of this world."

"We've meticulously studied every historical record and sent them off to the final island."

"But you see, a young lady from Ohara, it's still too early for you. Even if

you possess knowledge, you're powerless to alter the course of events, much like we were in our time."

"Therefore, it might be best to rely on your own strength to reach the final island. Witness the vanishing history of the century and uncover the truth of this world with your own eyes."

"Perhaps the conclusions you draw won't align with ours, and that's perfectly alright."

After a moment of silence, Robin exhaled heavily. "I understand."

Though she didn't receive the exact answer she sought, it sufficed.

The weighty atmosphere lifted.

Rayleigh then swung open the bar's door and announced, "I've nearly finished preparing the tools for coating. I'll guide your ship to a secluded spot. The coating process will take about three days. During this time, you should make yourselves comfortable here on the island."

"Comfortable? I doubt we'll have that luxury," Nami remarked with a hint of resignation in her voice, her good mood dampened by Rayleigh's words.

"Oh? Something happened?" Sanji inquired, his curiosity piqued. "Come to think of it, right after we got back from the auction, the Marines seemed to be acting strangely. Any idea what's going on?"

"I have no idea," Luffy replied, folding his arms and cocking his head to the side. "It seems to have started after I punched a Celestial Dragon."

"No, it's definitely because of you," Nami interjected, giving Luffy a dazed slap on the head.

Luffy's statement momentarily stunned Rayleigh, the seasoned veteran.

Breaking the silence, Miss Shakky burst into laughter. "Haha, little Monkey, I've got a soft spot for you. You're just like us, always stirring up trouble wherever you go."

Rayleigh chuckled, shaking his head. "You lot won't have an easy time these three days. Find a good hiding spot immediately; an Admiral isn't someone to be taken lightly."

"Right," Luffy replied nonchalantly, sporting a carefree smile.

Zoro and Sanji remained composed, but Nami, Usopp, and Chopper seemed visibly nervous, clutching their heads in apprehension.

"Camie, Hatchan, you two should stay here," Shakky advised, noting their strength.

"But we want to help," Hatchan expressed a hint of disappointment, though he understood the limitations. The island wasn't exactly welcoming to Merfolk like them, and their strength might not be much help anyway.

"Don't fret, Hatchan. After three days, we're counting on you to guide us to Fish-Man Island," Luffy reassured him before swinging open the bar door with a broad grin. "The grand escape begins! This is going to be fun, everyone!"

Luffy's carefree demeanour contrasted sharply with the serious expressions of Shakky and Rayleigh as they watched the group depart.

"Do you think Little Monkey and the others stand a chance against the Admiral's pursuit?" Shakky pondered, idly twirling a lady's cigarette between her fingers.

"It's going to be tough," Rayleigh admitted, his smile fading slightly. "The Admiral is a formidable opponent, and even with Luffy's Conqueror's Haki, the odds are stacked against him."

"But I'll intervene at the right moment. You can count on me," he added.

"As reliable as ever, Rayleigh," Shakky chuckled, acknowledging his steadfastness.

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21. The Arrival Of Kizaru, The Strength Of The Pacifists

Rayleigh gazed at Luffy and the others, a profound meaning shimmering in his eyes.

Perhaps, through these minor setbacks and challenges, they would emerge stronger. The imminent confrontation with the Admiral would serve as a valuable wake-up call.

Once they reached the New World, they couldn't afford to maintain their current relaxed state of awareness. As for whether Luffy could defeat the Admiral, Rayleigh didn't dwell on it.

Dealing with Shichibukai like Crocodile might be feasible with sheer determination, but facing an Admiral was on a whole different level.

"It seems my old bones are in for another workout. It's been a while since I faced off against a Marine Admiral," Rayleigh remarked with a smile, his hand casually brushing against a long knife hanging from his waist.

Meanwhile, at the Mangrove area port on No. 20 Sabaody:

"It's a warship."

"Is the Marines mobilizing so quickly?"

"What's going on? Why are there so many warships?"

In this lawless zone where pirates abound, the sight of a warship docking sent waves of panic through the crowd.

Their anxiety only escalated when they spotted a figure standing on the ship's hull—a man who instilled fear in even the boldest of pirates:

Admiral Kizaru.

As the warship fired, shells exploded onto the ground of Sabaody, scattering light in their wake. Pirates scrambled in terror, their panicked shouts filling the air.

"Moshi moshi?" Kizaru's voice echoed, but he seemed more preoccupied with a small phone bug in his hand than the chaos around him.

Surrounded by a ring of pirates, Kizaru stood nonchalantly in their midst, seemingly unfazed by their presence. Yet, it was the pirates who, under the weight of Kizaru's imposing aura, found themselves frozen in place, unable to move.

"It's odd. Why isn't the phone bug responding?" Kizaru mused, his tone slow and whimsical, giving off the air of a rather eccentric uncle.

"Never mind. By the way, do any of you know where the straw hat boy is?" Kizaru's smile remained intact as he addressed the trembling pirate before him. "Please tell me, or I'll have to arrest you."

"Go to hell, Admiral!" one pirate finally snapped under the intense pressure, raising a pistol and aiming directly between Kizaru's eyebrows. The shot rang out, hitting its mark with pinpoint accuracy. But instead of blood and brain matter, only a glimmer of light appeared on Kizaru's forehead before quickly fading away, leaving him unscathed.

"If you're clueless, then there's nothing more to be done," Kizaru remarked, maintaining his easy smile as he delivered a swift kick.

The radiant burst of light knocked down all the pirates in its path before colliding with a thick, red tree, effortlessly shattering it.

"Monster, he's a monster!" a fortunate pirate who avoided the attack exclaimed, his voice trembling with fear as he witnessed the devastation around him.

"It seems I'll have to find him myself. How troublesome," Kizaru muttered, paying no heed to the fallen pirates as he strolled leisurely towards the heart of Sabaody, his Admiral's cloak swaying casually.

In the lawless expanse of Sabaody, Kizaru's demeanour remained calm and composed, as if he were merely out for a leisurely stroll.

Meanwhile, in Area 24 of Sabaody:

The bustling food street, once renowned for its delectable offerings, now lay in ruins. A blinding light pierced through the chaos, sending shockwaves rippling through the streets.

One by one, restaurants crumbled under the onslaught of the brilliant light, reducing the once-vibrant area to rubble.

Apu somersaulted backwards, landing amidst the ruins with a solemn gaze fixed on the towering figures before him.

"What manner of monsters are these? Aren't they Shichibukai bears? Why are there two of them emitting lasers as well?" Apu questioned, eyeing the bear-like beings standing before him. Occasionally, red light shimmered in their eyes while lasers emanated from their hands and mouths.

"Karma," Urouge's voice boomed as he emerged from behind, his massive form dwarfing the pacifists. With a swift punch, he struck one of the pacifists, only to find his blow met with a resistance harder than steel.

"It's futile. I won't entertain your questions. I am the sternest man alive," Sentomaru, wielding a massive axe, declared, addressing Apu. "These are creations of Vegapunk—humanoid weapons known as pacifists. They rival the cost of a warship and are more than capable of handling newcomers like you."

Apu couldn't help but grumble, though Sentomaru's explanation shed light on the adversaries they faced.

"Humanoid weapons?" Apu surveyed the surroundings, realizing that the food street was a gathering place for most of the supernovas.

Among them stood Capone Bege, Urouge, Drake, Trafalgar Law, Kid, a recently awakened Kira, and Hawkins, who seemed unperturbed by the pacifists as he delved into his divinations.

"Let's band together and take down these two metal giants first," Apu suggested, receiving nods of agreement from the other supernovas.

The pacifists' speed was blinding, their tracking abilities impeccable.

They hadn't intentionally congregated here; rather, they found themselves cornered and forced together during their pursuit.

"Don't delude yourselves into thinking you can handle the pacifists with your current strength," Sentomaru warned, his voice booming.

"PX3, PX4, eliminate them!" Sentomaru commanded.

In moments, electric currents crackled from the pacifists' mouths, releasing a paralyzing aura that left the supernovas immobilized. Urouge lay on the ground, reverted to his normal size, blood seeping from two wounds on his shoulder. Drake, having abandoned his Allosaurus form, bore a gaping hole in his chest. Law leaned heavily on his knife, breathing heavily.

Only Apoo remained relatively unscathed, relying on ranged attacks.

The dire condition of Kid and Kira prevented them from contributing much to the fight.

"I underestimated you. You've managed to defeat PX3 and PX4,"

Sentomaru remarked, peering down at the battered supernovas.

"Is this the Marines' secret weapon? Not much to brag about, if you ask me," Kid retorted weakly before trailing off.

But his words were cut short as two colossal figures loomed ominously behind Sentomaru.

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22. Second And Third

Commanders

"Just when you think it can't get any worse, huh?" Kid's expression

twisted into a grimace of frustration.

Dealing with these pacifists was proving to be far more challenging than they had anticipated. These machines were specifically designed to apprehend pirates, boasting incredible speed, power, and an uncanny ability to track their movements.

Their defence was formidable, thanks to their unknown composition, rendering them impervious to the attacks of even the most capable users.

Their offensive capabilities, particularly their laser attacks, were devastatingly effective against supernova-level defences.

Despite the combined efforts of all the supernovas present, they had struggled to overcome just two of these pacifists, sustaining severe injuries in the process. Now faced with two more, their situation looked dire.

"I'd heard about them back when I was in the Marines, but I never imagined they'd be this formidable. Damn Vegapunk and his twisted creations," Drake muttered through gritted teeth, clutching the gaping wound in his chest.

"If it wasn't for the Straw Hats..." he trailed off, leaving the rest unsaid, his thoughts lingering on the debt owed to their fellow pirates.

Now, as a supernova aiming to infiltrate the New World and make a name for himself among the Four Emperors, Kid should have been going smoothly. However, faced with the current predicament, he couldn't fathom how he would escape this encirclement.

Sentomaru's ability to manipulate water might have provided a means of escape, but with the other supernovas already ensnared, his identity as a pirate would be painfully obvious.

As photons condensed on the palms of the two pacifists, aiming directly at the weakened supernovas below, despair threatened to overwhelm

them.

"Damn it, is this the end?" Law's grip tightened on his long knife, his expression twisted with frustration.

But just as the lasers were about to be fired, the pacifists abruptly turned away, directing their attacks elsewhere.

"PX1, PX2, what are you doing? Why aren't you finishing off the pirates below?" Sentomaru bellowed in confusion.

The supernovas below were already on the brink of defeat; just two more shots, and it would be over. Yet, the pacifists' sudden change in behaviour puzzled him.

Could there be a glitch in Vegapunk's capture command? Sentomaru pondered anxiously. Such errors couldn't be tolerated, especially considering the pacifists' importance in the impending war.

"Capture the Straw Hat Boys. They're our top priority," PX1 declared, the red light in its eyes flickering as it turned its attention elsewhere.

With keen perception, Sentomaru spotted the Straw Hat Boys heading their way, drawn by the commotion caused by the pacifists' lasers.

Leading the charge were Roronoa Zoro and Blackfoot Sanji, racing towards them at top speed.

"PX1, PX2, take them down!" Sentomaru commanded, gesturing with his massive axe as the two pacifists behind him lowered into position.

Like giant cannons, they unleashed bright light waves from their mouths, each containing formidable energy and penetrating power akin to powerful bombs.

As the light waves hurtled towards Luffy, Zoro, and the others, Luffy's eyes flashed with determination. With a swift sidestep, he narrowly avoided the barrage, the shockwaves from the explosions blasting behind him.

Beside him, Zoro and Sanji dodged effortlessly, their movements fluid and precise, as if they had anticipated the trajectory of the light waves.

"Shichibukai bears? Something doesn't feel right," Zoro remarked, his hand gripping Shusui's scabbard while the other poised on the handle.

With a subtle push of his thumb, the black blade gleamed ominously.

"Hey, Moss-Head, take a good look. These aren't your typical Shichibukai bears. There's something off about them, and they don't even seem alive,"

Sanji remarked, eyeing the pacifists in the distance with suspicion. "What the hell are they?"

"Whatever they are, since they've attacked, let's take 'em down," Zoro grinned, ready for action.

As the pacifists in the distance rushed towards them with bright light waves still gathering in their palms and mouths, Kid observed the impending collision with a half-kneel while Law looked on with a serious expression. If Luffy couldn't handle these two pacifists, escaping the island would be out of the question.

"Fascinating," Luffy remarked casually as the pacifists closed in. Beside him, Zoro and Sanji exchanged a knowing smile before accelerating sharply.

A dark aura surrounded Zoro's hand as he prepared for an attack. "One strike," he whispered confidently.

"Banquet Set Meal!"

With a swift leap into the air, Sanji unleashed his signature move.

"Black Flash! Death Lion Song!"

Zoro followed suit, his blade slicing through the pacifist with precision.

"First Grade: Rough!"

In an instant, Zoro appeared behind the towering pacifist, his sword still unsheathed.

Meanwhile, Sanji descended gracefully, landing beside Zoro with a flicker of flame from his lighter as he lit a cigarette.

"It's a bit tough, not the most satisfying chop," Zoro remarked as he sheathed his sword.

"In terms of raw ingredients, it's a bit hard, but the flavour's just right," Sanji quipped, releasing a puff of smoke.

As the defeated pacifists behind them sparked with electrical currents and exploded, the duo stood victorious.

"So suave, Zoro, Sanji," Luffy cheered, impressed by their prowess.

Chopper's shout echoed from a distance, expressing admiration for Zoro and Sanji's impressive display.

"Those two are seriously cool!" Usopp chimed in, sharing in the excitement.

It was undeniable that compared to their first encounter with a bear, Zoro and Sanji's actions were now effortlessly stylish and effective.

"The Straw Hat Crew," the supernovas muttered in disbelief. They couldn't comprehend the ease with which the Straw Hats had dispatched the two pacifists they had struggled against.

Just moments ago, Kid and Kira had fallen in an instant, and now, facing the same adversaries, the Straw Hats hadn't even broken a sweat.

It seemed the gap between them and the Straw Hat Crew was insurmountable.

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23. Shocked By Sentomaru,

Kizaru Made A Move

"Seriously? PX1, PX2."

Sentomaru shouted from atop the wreckage, his face filled with disbelief.

Pacifistas, those mechanical soldiers made by the Marines, were crafted by Vegapunk after studying the Warlords.

Even in their basic form, they could easily handle pirates with bounties over 100 million, as shown in past trials.

But now, facing Roronoa and Black Leg Sanji, they'd be taken out in one hit. This wasn't the usual strength of Grand Line pirates.

"Did you order these attacks?" Luffy spotted Sentomaru, with the two Pacifistas seemingly at his back.

"Straw Hat!"

Senmomaru, striding like a sumo wrestler, stepped forward, extending his hand.

"Prepare yourself."

Sentomaru roared, thrusting his palms forward, sending an invisible shockwave towards Luffy.

"Haki?"

Luffy tilted his head just a bit, and the invisible shockwave left a massive crater behind him.

That sensation definitely Armament Haki. This guy, though he might look girlish, isn't weak. Only someone with exceptionally strong Armament Haki could release it like a shockwave.

But compared to him, it's still not enough.

"Second Gear."

Luffy flicked his arm while sprinting.

Like a pump, his rubbery arm bounced slightly. Then, his skin grew brighter, as if boiling at a high temperature, blood rushing through his veins like steam in a powerful pipe.

White steam enveloped his body and the area around him.

Using Second Gear, especially since Enies Lobby, puts a heavy strain on

his body. Overusing it could even endanger his life. But now, after evolving, he has a better grasp and optimization of his abilities. With the current Second Gear, there's almost no risk when activating it, just like entering a normal state.

Whoosh.

Upon entering Second Gear, Luffy's speed skyrocketed. He twisted slightly and vanished from sight.

"Vanished? So fast! Where?"

Sentomaru, Vegapunk's bodyguard, may not be as strong as an Admiral, but he's definitely no pushover. The moment Luffy disappeared, his vigilance peaked.

"Right in front."

Sentomaru's sharp senses caught a glimpse of Luffy.

He thrust his palms with force, his Armament Haki reaching its peak.

"Prepare yourself."

A potent wave of Armament Haki condensed into an invisible air column, striking forward.

Luffy's form flickered.

In an instant, he appeared before Sentomaru, covering an incredible distance.

A crimson light glinted in his eyes.

His Observation Haki, able to foresee the future, had already predicted this moment.

But he didn't bother to dodge. With his current strength, evasion wasn't necessary.

In midair, Luffy extended his left hand towards Sentomaru while his right hand clenched into a fist, gathering power.

He resembled a loaded gun, aiming with one hand and ready to fire with

the other.

White steam enveloped his entire body.

"Gommu Gommu no, JET pistol."

In the blink of an eye, Luffy's body seemed to be struck by an unseen force, contorting and expanding outward.

His right hand remained in position, seemingly motionless.

Yet, before him, a deafening sonic boom erupted, etching the moment into memory.

It was as if an invisible barrier stood before Luffy, shattered by his punch.

"Is that Armament Haki? It's intense," Sentomaru exclaimed, visibly shocked.

In an instant, all of his armoured defences were shattered.

A more formidable Armament Haki, infused with compressed air, struck him directly in the stomach.

Despite preemptively hardening his entire body with Armament Haki, he couldn't withstand the overwhelming force.

"Ahhh!" Sentomaru roared, attempting to steady himself.

But his efforts were futile.

In a heartbeat, his feet sank into the concrete ruins, leaving a long trail as his body was sent flying.

However, he didn't soar too far.

A golden streak in the sky swiftly closed the distance and caught Sentomaru mid-flight.

Luffy's Armament Haki, not fully unleashed, was absorbed by an unseen force, dispersing into a shockwave.

After demolishing several towering buildings, the force dissipated entirely.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here, Sentomaru?" A carefree voice

rang out, and a tall, gaunt man clad in a yellow and white striped suit appeared before them.

He sported sunglasses and a stubbly beard, giving him the appearance of a somewhat dishevelled and weathered uncle.

"Old man, you've finally arrived."

Sentomaru coughed up a mouthful of blood.

"If you were any later, you'd be collecting my corpse."

If it weren't for that Straw Hat kid just now, he wouldn't have bothered concealing his presence and would've launched a direct assault.

If it weren't for the Straw Hat kid only throwing one punch, and if Sentomaru hadn't hardened his body with Armament Haki in time for defence, that single blow would've rendered him powerless.

That's not the kind of power expected from rookie pirates in the first half of the Grand Line; it's too immense.

Even in the New World, it's rare to encounter such sheer force. Each blow is delivered by renowned heavyweights.

Though he's not solely a fighter, his strength is undeniable, and his defense top-notch. Yet, he was still sent flying with just one hit.

Straw Hat, he's a monster.

But even a monster has its limits.

Because the real monster is on his way.

Sentomaru knows full well that the Admirals represent a level of strength beyond ordinary comprehension.

And it's Kizaru who's arriving.

Of the three Admirals, he boasts the most seniority and mysterious prowess.

With the talent of the Straw Hat kid, given a few years in the New World to train, he might even surpass an Admiral. But facing one too soon is

simply unfortunate.

"I've been searching for you as well, but this den-den mushi seems to be malfunctioning. No response," Kizaru lamented, scratching his head in confusion, paying no heed to anyone present.

24. One Supernova At A Time

"I've been telling you, old man, that black den-den mushi is a wiretapping bug, and the voice you're hearing is from another device," Sentomaru exclaimed, exasperated.

"But it doesn't matter now. Please, old man, apprehend all the pirates here."

"Supernovas? What a hassle," Kizaru muttered, scratching his head in frustration.

"The main concern is the Straw Hat Crew. If they slip away, it'll be difficult to justify," Sentomaru reminded.

He knows Kizaru's demeanour well; if he doesn't mention it, the other party might not exert full effort.

"I see," Kizaru responded, wearing a troubled expression as he pocketed the den-den mushi. He glanced at the opposing supernovas and began to approach slowly.

His leisurely strides seemed casual, yet with each step, a palpable aura of dread weighed heavily on everyone's hearts.

"Now that's an Admiral for you; that courage is unmatched," Zoro remarked, a grin of excitement spreading across his face as he adjusted the green bandana on his head and rested his hands on the trio of famous swords at his waist.

Sanji's feet emitted a faint glow resembling molten iron, streaming from toes to ankles.

"Zoro, Sanji, hold back," Luffy ordered.

"Let me handle this," Luffy declared, clenching his fists with excitement.

The lingering despair from his encounter with Aokiji hadn't completely faded. He wasn't the same person as before, but now he possessed enough strength to protect his crewmates.

Facing an Admiral was his chance to prove his strength.

Compared to Luffy's determination, the other supernovas seemed somewhat resigned.

They were all inherently rebellious and fearless individuals.

If they had faced an Admiral before encountering the Pacifistas, they might have tried their luck directly. But the humanoid weapons shattered their pride, not to mention the appearance of an even more monstrous Admiral.

"I'll take the lead," Apoo announced, being the least injured among the supernovas. He cast a glance towards the rear, preparing to flee.

His speed was impressive; in the blink of an eye, he had already covered a considerable distance.

But Kizaru didn't seem to notice. Casually slipping his hands into his pockets, he quipped, "Have you ever been kicked by light speed?"

Before anyone could react, he transformed into photons and vanished on the spot.

In an instant, he moved countless times faster than any form of high-speed movement.

A brilliant light erupted, and time seemed to slow to a crawl in an instant.

Apu tilted his head slightly, struggling to keep his eyes open against the blinding radiance. Then, in a transition from slow to incredibly fast, a flash of light pierced through the air.

In a heartbeat, a dark red shockwave expanded in a hemispherical

pattern. Kizaru's form descended leisurely, his Admiral's cloak billowing around him.

Within the crimson surge, Apu's body was hurled into the air and then crashed back down, his eyes rolling back as blood spurted from his mouth, rendering him unconscious.

Kizaru's descent was deliberate and languid, a stark contrast to the lightning-fast kick he had just executed, imparting an eerie sense of unreality.

All eyes of the supernovas remained fixed on Kizaru.

Yet, without a blink, Kizaru's figure flickered in their vision, disappearing in an instant.

"What are you all staring at?" A lascivious and nonchalant voice echoed from behind.

Kizaru scratched his chin, sporting a perplexed expression, as a streak of light flashed from his heel, nearing Drake's waist.

Drake had no time to react. Before he could turn his gaze, the tremendous force at his waist sent him hurtling like a cannonball.

After careening through the wreckage for nearly a hundred meters, he lay motionless, consciousness completely lost.

"You."

In a matter of seconds, Apoo was swiftly dispatched, and before anyone could react, Drake met a similar fate.

Kid and Law quickly assumed defensive stances. Kid generated a current-like magnetic force in his hand while Law's palm faced downward, creating a small hemispherical space.

This was the Admiral, the true monster. Only witnessing it firsthand revealed its terrifying nature. Dispatching them in mere moments was as effortless as breathing.

"You supernovas are like formidable monsters, one after another, terrifying," Kizaru remarked with a hint of distress.

In an instant, his body transformed into a streak of light. Within the blink of an eye, all the standing supernovas, save for Luffy and his crew, were sent flying.

In the presence of an Admiral, supernovas appeared as feeble as infants taking their first steps. This held true even for the supernovas in their prime, let alone those who had been significantly weakened by encounters with Pacifistas.

"It's frightening. These supernovas possess incredible power. I can't afford to let them run amok," Kizaru commented, tilting his head slightly, his hands still in his pockets.

There was something about his demeanour that exuded provocation yet seemed oddly nonchalant, perhaps owing to his unique temperament.

"He truly is a formidable man. His strength surpasses mine at present," Luffy observed, impressed by Kizaru's prowess.

The intensity in Zoro's gaze waned slightly as his vigilance heightened. It wasn't out of fear but because he had a partner standing behind him.

After just a brief skirmish, Zoro knew all too well that he was no match for Admiral Kizaru.

"Green seaweed head, it's a shame our judgments rarely align," Sanji remarked, his gaze fixed on Kizaru with utmost seriousness.

No matter how strong their Haki or skills, if their physical prowess and speed fell short, it amounted to nothing. They were only now realizing the vast gulf that separated them from fighters like Aokiji and Garp.

"This is the Admiral. What an intriguing ability," Luffy remarked, clenching his fist tightly and grinning. Even if the supernovas were dispatched in seconds, it didn't faze him.

Meanwhile, Nami, Chopper, and the others in the distance were on edge. The presence of an Admiral instilled a sense of hopelessness in all weaker individuals.

With unparalleled speed and strength, Kizaru seemed invincible.

"Luffy, can they really take on an Admiral?" Nami asked nervously.

"Is there such a monstrous being in the sea? My nonexistent heart is about to leap out of my chest," Brook quipped nervously, attempting to lighten the mood.

"Now, we can only trust in Luffy and the others," Robin stated calmly, despite being the Straw Hat crew's most wanted member after Enies Lobby. However, her faith in her comrades, especially the captain, was unwavering.

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25. Don't Pick Off The Shoots,

Their Era Has Just Begun

"Hey, old man, watch out! The Straw Hat crew ain't like other supernovas," Sentomaru warned, his expression serious.

Sentomaru's words made Kizaru pause and think. Despite his confidence in himself, the Straw Hat boy had left a strong impression on him during their brief encounter.

"Yeah, I know. They're something else. That kid's got some serious talent for his age," Kizaru acknowledged, eyeing Luffy in front of him. The Straw Hat family's talent was beyond remarkable.

Just moments ago, Luffy had demonstrated Armament Haki. If he continued to hone his skills in the New World, he could easily become as powerful as one of the Four Emperors.

Mr. Garp, the revolutionary dragon, and now the Straw Hat kid—all

members of the same formidable lineage. It sent shivers down Kizaru's spine.

With these thoughts weighing on him, Kizaru's demeanour shifted. He went from feeling obligated to deal with the Straw Hats to genuinely considering capturing Luffy and locking him up.

This pirate was too much of a threat to ignore.

With a sudden burst of speed, Kizaru vanished into photons, reappearing before Luffy in a flash of light. But Luffy, with his Observation Haki, saw it all coming.

He wrapped his arm in Armament Haki and prepared to counter.

"JET Bullet!"

But as he launched his attack, Luffy's expression changed. The speed and force of Kizaru's onslaught were overwhelming.

"No, too fast... too heavy..."

BOOM.

The clash between Luffy's fists and Kizaru's brilliant light-speed kicks was intense.

From the point of impact, streams of energy shot out in all directions.

Each tiny burst created shockwaves that rippled through the surroundings, showcasing Kizaru's immense destructive power.

However, this clash was brief.

Despite his surprise at Luffy's ability to intercept his attack, Kizaru wasted no time in retaliating. With a swift punch, he sent Luffy flying back, his body crashing through ruins and triggering a massive explosion.

"Luffy!" Zoro and Sanji cried out in alarm as they watched their captain get launched away.

Then, before their eyes, two more figures were sent flying by Kizaru's brilliant rays of light, creating more chaos and destruction.

"Luffy, Zoro, Sanji!" The remaining members of the Straw Hat crew cried out in worry and horror as they witnessed their comrades being thrown around like ragdolls.

"Wow, the old man's really something," Sentomaru remarked, a rare smile breaking through his serious demeanour.

Only Kizaru remained standing on the grass, a hint of doubt flickering in his eyes. As an Admiral, his senses were razor-sharp, and something about this encounter seemed off to him.

Kizaru could sense that his attack hadn't had much of an effect.

The thought of his recent kick flashed through his mind. He had noticed the partial Armament Haki on Luffy's foot, indicating that the kick hadn't made physical contact with flesh.

He recalled Zoro's swift swordplay, which had intercepted most of his light waves with ease. Even Sanji's powerful kick had managed to slightly impede him.

"All Observation Haki, Armament Haki?" Kizaru couldn't help but wonder.

The fact that Luffy, Zoro, and Sanji had been able to keep up with his speed suggested the use of Observation Haki. And the Armament Haki they wielded had allowed them to block most of his attacks.

Despite appearances, they hadn't been kicked away; they had used the kicks to mitigate the force of his blows. It was a stark contrast to the supernovas he had toyed with earlier.

Moreover, despite looking somewhat embarrassed, the trio showed no signs of actual harm.

"Fascinating to effortlessly block my attacks," Kizaru muttered, his expression shifting slightly.

Even though he hadn't used his full strength, his attacks had been far

more potent than those he had previously directed at other rookies. Yet, all three of them had managed to hold their ground.

This realization made Kizaru take the situation much more seriously.

"Ah, underestimated him," Luffy muttered as he rose from the rubble amidst the ruins.

Brushing the dust off his body, he adjusted his straw hat, deep in thought. In the recent battle, he had found himself at a disadvantage, getting kicked around by Kizaru.

It wasn't that Kizaru was inherently stronger; rather, Luffy had undergone significant improvements in just ten days. The gap between Kizaru and the opponents Luffy had faced before was vast, and he had underestimated the Admiral's speed and power.

It felt like going from fighting opponents of equal strength and speed to suddenly facing someone ten times faster and stronger—a jarring realization.

If he hadn't been caught off guard, even without accessing his higher gears, Luffy believed he could have held his own better. But for now, he needed to focus on the present.

Meanwhile, not far away, Zoro and Sanji also picked themselves up, showing signs of embarrassment but remaining undeterred.

"Just as monstrous as expected, Admiral, but not unbeatable," Zoro remarked with a grin, his three swords at the ready. "I'm actually kind of excited."

"Hey, Zoro, that's my fight!" Luffy interjected, watching his friend's enthusiasm with amusement. "And there are still two interesting tricks up my sleeve that I haven't shown yet."

"I never thought I'd end up being someone's stepping stone," Kizaru muttered, shaking his head in disbelief. "That newcomer's strength is

truly monstrous. It's downright intimidating."

Feeling the need to take the situation more seriously, Kizaru opened his hands, conjuring countless photons out of thin air. With a swift motion, they coalesced into a sleek lightsaber in his grasp.

"The Amazon Cloud Sword," he declared, admiring the blade's elegant design—a straight blade composed of four radial rays of light and a photon ring.

Without hesitation, Kizaru transformed into photons and vanished from sight, his speed seemingly slowing down time itself. He lunged towards Luffy, intent on delivering a decisive blow.

But just as he moved, a brilliant sword wave sliced through the air from afar, like a majestic silver dragon cleaving the grassland in two.

"Ah, here comes trouble," Kizaru remarked, his body severed by the sword wave. Yet, in moments, he reformed nearby, looking somewhat perturbed but maintaining his calm demeanour.

"Pluton Rayleigh," he addressed the man who had suddenly appeared before him.

Rayleigh stood tall, his silver-white hair ruffling in the wind, a serene smile gracing his face.

"Don't pluck the buds prematurely, Kizaru. Their time is only just beginning," Rayleigh advised, his words carrying a sense of wisdom and assurance.

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