

Chapter 56

12th of April
Dressrosa

Viola gazed at the sky, its azure depths kissed by the warm hues of the setting sun. The tranquil hush of the café contrasted sharply with her inner turmoil. Before her lay the signed contract. Moria and his orange-haired subordinate had departed in a rush, mentioning they needed to stop Doflamingo from another killing. Before leaving, Moria had locked eyes with her, promising to be in touch about their impending marriage.

Lost in thought, she brought her finger to her lips, sucking on the small cut she had made to sign the contract. The metallic taste of blood grounded her, a reminder of the gravity of her decision. Using her fruit to peer into her shadow, she saw three Shadow Soldiers, one exuding an aura of power surpassing two thousand Dourikis. Moria's commitment was clear.

Doubt gnawed at her. Had she acted too hastily? The opportunity had arisen suddenly, with no time for careful thought. Yet, this might be her only chance to liberate her people. Her Giro Giro no Mi powers had revealed a startling truth: Moria was mightier than Doflamingo. This was surprising...but it meant he could truly free her kingdom.

As she sat there, fingers tracing the edges of the contract, Viola steeled herself. She had survived countless trials and Doflamingo's tyranny, now stepping into another uncertain alliance. The promise of her kingdom's freedom dangled close, yet questions festered. What would Doflamingo do if he discovered her pact with Moria? What was she to make of this marriage? Political, undoubtedly. Yet her future husband was unexpectedly handsome and enigmatic, the only person whose thoughts she couldn't read. And maybe...he was already a Prince, wasn't he? Maybe she would make friends among her sister-wives? Viola slowly stood up, the silence around her profound.

Her movements began gently, almost imperceptibly, her feet gliding across the floor like the first whispers of dawn. Her face, framed by dark, flowing hair, was a canvas of sorrow and reflection. Eyes closed, brows slightly furrowed, lips parted in a soft sigh. Each movement was deliberate, a slow dance of mourning and remembrance. Her body swayed, hips shifting with a gentle, undulating rhythm that echoed her inner turmoil.

As she twirled, Viola's deep blue eyes opened, revealing a spark of resolve mingled with lingering sadness. Her movements began to shift, the melancholy giving way to a rising tide of determination. Her back arched gracefully, the curve accentuating her supple frame. Each step was a dance of sorrow and defiance. Her dress, a cascade of crimson and black lace, fluttered around her like a living flame, whispering secrets of her inner turmoil and rising strength.

Her hips swayed more provocatively, each movement a testament to her growing hope and resolve. The sadness that had initially guided her steps transformed into a powerful rhythm of determination. Viola's eyes, those deep blue pools of desire and unwavering resolve, caught the last rays of the setting sun, reflecting the fading golden light. Her hands traced purposeful patterns in the air.

With a final, graceful bow, she stilled, her heart still racing from the silent dance. The absence of music had not diminished the power of her performance; it had amplified the depth of her emotions, allowing her to convey a profound narrative through her movements alone. She stood tall, her dance over, but the fire it ignited burned brightly in her heart. The path ahead was fraught with uncertainty, but Viola knew she would face it with the same grace and determination she had brought to her dance.

Dressrosa would be free, and she would become its queen.

12th of April
Dressrosa

Doflamingo lounged in his office. Suddenly, he felt it—a tremor beneath the castle floor, signaling Pica's approach. His subordinate emerged from the stone floor, his massive form materializing with an uncharacteristic urgency. Panic and fury contorted his usually stoic face.

"Doffy!" Pica's voice, high - even higher than usual, cut through the silence. "Diamante...he's been defeated in the Colosseum. He's dead!"

Shock froze Doflamingo for a heartbeat before rage exploded within him. Diamante, one of his most trusted officers, dead? Who dared? Who could? Snarling, Doflamingo leapt from his chair and crashed through the stained glass window. Shards rained down as he soared into the open air, extending his hands. Threads hooked onto the distant spires of the Colosseum, and within seconds, he was there, landing with a force that shook the ground.

In the arena, Machvise and Lao G were battling a spectral samurai formed of shadows. They immediately ceased their fight and bowed their heads as Doflamingo landed, the furious vein on his forehead throbbing visibly.

"Who. Dared! Who dared ? Who dared to kill a member of my family?" His voice sliced through the air.

Lao G pointed to the unconscious, bleeding swordsman on the ground. Doflamingo's gaze locked onto the green-haired warrior. Blinded by rage, he drew his arm back, ready to strike...but a mocking voice pierced the tension.

"The Colosseum must be a big joke if people aren't even allowed to try and win. Zoro fought fairly and won, and this is how he's treated?"

Doflamingo's fury intensified as he turned to see a massive figure emerging from the shadows. Gecko Moria's grotesque silhouette loomed large, casting an oppressive shadow across the bloodstained sand. Silence fell over the Colosseum. The crowd, the fighters, even the air itself seemed to hold its breath as Moria stepped forward. Doflamingo's rage was incandescent. What? Was...this Zoro a member of Moria's crew?

"What are you doing here, Moria?" Doflamingo's voice was a low growl, barely restrained.

Moria grinned, his sharp teeth glinting in the harsh light of the Colosseum. "Oh, me? I'm just here to watch my beloved subordinate test himself against your precious Colosseum. And it seems he won," he said with a mocking laugh. "Fair and square."

Doflamingo's eyes blazed with rage. "You dare bring your filthy self into my domain?"

Moria ignored the question, turning to the crowd. He gestured grandly as a Shadow Soldier emerged, lifting the unconscious Zoro onto its shoulder with ease. "Is this your so called King ? Even his strongest warriors can't stand against a man that was in the blues a few weeks ago..."

The crowd was stunned into silence. Doflamingo's fists clenched, threads twitching at his fingertips, ready to tear Moria apart. But something held him back—a flicker of caution, or perhaps, just the sheer audacity of Moria's challenge. He felt something through his haki...Moria had grown strong. Very strong. Probably stronger than him. Moria continued, his voice booming.

"You see, Doflamingo, your family is weak. You are weak. My subordinate has proven it today. And during the coming war, everyone will see just how powerful I am, and how weak you are."

Doflamingo's rage reached a boiling point, but he hesitated. Moria was goading him, and Doflamingo knew it. But the humiliation burned deeply, his pride wounded before the eyes of his followers and the Colosseum spectators.

Moria smirked, sensing Doflamingo's hesitation. "What's wrong, Doffy? Afraid to face the truth? Well, don't worry. You'll get your chance. Until then..." Moria's form began to dissolve into shadows, taking Zoro with him. "Remember this day, and remember your humiliation."

As Moria and Zoro disappeared, the Colosseum erupted in a mix of shocked whispers and nervous chatter. Doflamingo stood there, trembling with suppressed fury, his pride shattered. He swore under his breath.

"I'll kill you, Moria. I swear it on everything I hold dear. I will kill you."

Hidden Quest - The Obsidian Night : [?]
0/3 → 1/3

— — — —
13th of April
Amazon Lily

The three Vice Admirals disembarked with their troops, boots thudding against the wooden docks of Amazon Lily. Bastille's peloton moved with the precision of a well-oiled machine, a testament to their rigorous training. Doberman's troops spread out in a defensive perimeter, their eyes hard and unyielding, scanning for threats. Onigumo's men fanned out in an intricate pattern, their movements silent and deadly.

As Bastille touched the ground, the eerie silence unsettled him. The vibrant jungle of Amazon Lily was strangely quiet. No warriors of the Kuja tribe had come to challenge or welcome them. Bastille reached out with his Haki, probing the surroundings, but felt nothing.

"This is strange," Bastille muttered, his eyes narrowing beneath his mask. "There's no one here. I can't sense anyone through my Haki."

Onigumo sniffed the air, his face twisting into a scowl. "There's the stench of burnt corpses and death," he remarked. Without hesitation, he transformed into his hybrid form. His body elongated, his hair sprouting spider-like limbs that moved with eerie grace. The red plume on his helmet fluttered like a banner of war.

One of the Marines fiddled with a radio set, his face pale. The equipment crackled with static. "Vice Admirals," he gulped, "for some unknown reason, we are in a field where the radio does not work. The Den Den Mushi... it's completely unresponsive."

But their soldiers, seasoned veterans, showed no fear. Their expressions remained stoic, their hands steady on their weapons. They had faced the worst the Grand Line had to offer and survived; this would be no different. Suddenly, they felt a presence at the edge of their Haki, a faint but distinct signature that sent a chill down their spines.

Onigumo and Doberman exchanged a glance, their eyes reflecting a mutual understanding. "We'll check it out," Doberman said, his voice a low growl. Onigumo nodded, his spider-like limbs tensing in readiness.

As the two Vice Admirals moved toward the source of the disturbance, Bastille stayed behind to command the troops. "Stay alert," he ordered, his voice firm. "We're moving toward the center of the island, to the main city. Maintain formation and be ready for anything."

The Marines marched forward, their disciplined steps a stark contrast to the wild, untamed jungle around them. Bastille's eyes scanned the surroundings, every sense on high alert. As they advanced, the feeling of dread grew stronger. The air was thick with the scent of decay, and the jungle seemed to close in around them. Bastille's grip tightened on his weapon, his mind racing with possibilities. What had happened here? Where were the Kuja warriors? And what had become of Vice Admiral Momonga?

— — — —
13th of April 1522
Amazon Lily

The Shadow Moria had left on Amazon Lily sent him a message, and Moria smiled as he teleported to the Kuja's ex island.

[Onigumo]

Class: Marine
Job: Vice Admiral
Fruit: Kumo Kumo no Mi

Dourikis: 5,192
Potential: S
Fate: A

The twisted foliage cast long, grotesque silhouettes that seemed to pulse with life, responding to his every whim. Hidden deep within the island's dense jungle, his eyes gleamed with glee as he observed the intruding marines.

[Doberman]
Class: Marine
Job: Vice Admiral

Dourikis: 5,765
Potential: S
Fate: A

As the Vice Admirals and their troops advanced cautiously, their faces tense and eyes darting, Moria relished the anticipation of the impending chaos. His long, bony fingers twitched with excitement, ready to unleash the nightmarish creatures lurking within the darkness.

Bastille
Class: Marine
Job: Vice Admiral

Dourikis: 5,967
Potential: S
Fate: A