

Chapter 62

15th of April
Sabaody

[Bartholomew Kuma]

Class: Cyborg (94%) - Buccaneer
Job: Warlord of the Seas

Douriki: 12,766
Potential: SS
Fate: A

Moria's mind raced with questions. Did Kuma lose his humanity? The cyborg percentage had progressed significantly in just a few days. If he was a Buccaneer, what was his relationship with the World Government? Did he become a Warlord willingly, or was he coerced?

Moria's lips curled into a mocking smile again. "So, Kuma," he sneered, "have you come to rescue your little girl? It's touching, really. But tell me, what kind of father are you now, with so much of you turned into cold, unfeeling metal?"

Kuma remained silent, his eyes devoid of any emotion. The stillness was unnerving. Moria's gaze flicked to the data again, pondering the implications.

"Threat level reevaluation," Moria said in a robotic voice. Mmh...He probably had douriki-meter integrated into his systems and had already assessed Moria's strength. The fact that Kuma remained so passive suggested he knew he had grown stronger. Stronger than him. Moria's thoughts darkened. Would Kuma lose all his humanity when the percentage reached 100%? What kind of monster would he become?

Moria's grin widened, though the unease gnawed at him. He couldn't shake the feeling that he was staring into the abyss, and it was staring back, cold and unfeeling.

"Oh, look at her, trembling with fear," Moria continued, his voice dripping with mockery. "How does it feel to know that your precious daughter is terrified of you? Or can you even comprehend such emotions anymore? What happens when you're 100% machine? Will you still care about her, or will she be just another insignificant detail in your programming?"

For a moment, there was no reaction. Then, Moria noticed a slight twitch in Kuma's expression, a flicker of something deep within those cold, mechanical eyes.

Bonney, emboldened by her father's presence, felt a surge of defiance rise within her. The fear that had gripped her moments ago melted away, replaced by a fierce determination. She stood up, wiping the remnants of pizza grease from her lips, and glared at Moria with fiery eyes.

"Shut up, you disgusting freak!" Bonney spat, her voice trembling with a mix of anger and newfound courage. "My father is more human than you'll ever be! You think you can scare me? Think again. With him here, you're nothing but a pathetic shadow."

Moria's mind whirled with possibilities. He needed to exploit this situation quickly.

"Say, robot," Moria began, his voice laced with sarcasm. "You probably have something inside you to detect lies or something, huh?"

No reaction from Kuma. Hmm... Should he take the gamble?

Moria raised his hands in a gesture of peace, his form shifting into his smaller, more handsome appearance. "Alright, alright. Let's talk. Even if you can't detect lies, you know as well as I do that I could wipe the floor with both of you and kill you," he said, his voice smooth and confident. Of course, he did not say he would

be probably very hurt in the process. Kuma could be a bitch to fight. “But that’s not what I’m here for. I have a proposal.”

Kuma remained impassive, his silence unsettling. Moria continued, undeterred. “I have a subordinate whose Devil Fruit can make unbreakable contracts.”

Still no reaction.

“Here’s the deal,” Moria said, his tone growing more serious. “Kuma, you’re about to die. Your body might survive, but your soul? It’s gone. And I know you care about what happens to your daughter when you’re gone.”

A twitch from Kuma. Moria’s smile widened..

“When you die, who’s going to take care of her? The world is a scary place. She may be strong for a ten-year-old girl,” Moria watched as Kuma twitched again at the mention of Bonney’s age, “but she will be hunted.”

Another twitch. Bingo. Moria could see Kuma’s concern.

“So here’s my offer,” Moria said, his voice dripping with calculated sincerity. “We make a contract. You willingly give your soul to me, dying in the process. But in exchange, I will protect Bonney until she is sixteen. I will ensure her physical and psychological well-being. I will even make sure she becomes stronger to fend for herself.”

Bonney’s eyes widened in shock, her defiance giving way to desperation. “No, Father! Don’t listen to him! We can find another way!”

Kuma, however, took off his glove. Moria tensed, muscles coiling in anticipation of a fight. But Kuma remained still, his eyes locked on Moria. One minute passed. Then two. Was he reflecting? Fighting for control against his cyborg parts?

Then, unexpectedly, Kuma reached out and touched Moria with his bare paw. Moria felt a surge of energy but forced himself to remain still, making a risky bet. Kuma's paw pushed against Moria’s chest, and for a tense moment, nothing happened.

Moria’s mind raced. Could Kuma push lies away, or something similar? The tension was palpable, but Moria maintained his composure, trusting his instincts.

Kuma’s paw lingered for a moment longer before retracting. Moria exhaled silently, feeling a mix of relief and triumph.

Finally, Kuma reached into his coat and pulled out a pen. The sight sent a jolt through Moria—Kuma intended to sign.

“No! Father, you can’t!” Bonney protested, her voice cracking with emotion.

Moria ignored her, retrieving the contract with a flourish. He began to write the terms meticulously, ensuring every detail was clear and binding. The pen moved swiftly, etching out the dark pact that would seal Kuma’s fate and secure Bonney’s future.

When he finished, Moria handed the contract to Kuma, who took it with a steady hand. He read it over, his expression impassive, then looked down at his daughter, his eyes softening for a brief moment.

“I do this for you,” he said quietly, his voice a blend of mechanical monotone and deep paternal love.

Jewelry Bonney huddled in the dim corner of the castle, her form resembling a twenty-year-old, yet her heart weighed down with a grief that felt endless. Tears traced shimmering paths down her cheeks, catching the faint light that seeped through the castle's grimy windows. Her father was gone, dead, leaving her alone adrift in Thriller Bark, under the dubious guardianship of Moria. Trust in her father's judgment warred with the sharp sting of his absence, leaving her feeling stranded and abandoned.

Her sorrow was interrupted by the echo of steady footsteps. Blinking through her tears, Jewelry saw a towering, muscular woman with striking red hair approach. The woman's attire—a sports bra and string—revealed a physique that spoke of raw power and resilience. Jewelry hastily wiped at her tears, trying to stifle her sniffles.

The woman, Selena, crouched down beside her, her presence both imposing and oddly comforting. Selena's face betrayed her unease, clearly unaccustomed to offering solace.

“Look, pup,” Selena began, her voice a gruff blend of roughness and awkward gentleness. “The boss told me about you, and what happened.”

Jewelry sniffed, her gaze searching Selena's face for any hint of deceit. She found none. Selena shifted, her hands twitching as if unsure where to rest them.

“I'm no good at this,” Selena muttered, almost to herself. “But I mean well, alright? Your old man... he trusted Moria, in his own way, to leave you here. And I know it's hard. Damn hard.”

Through her sorrow, Jewelry felt a flicker of warmth, sensing the genuine effort behind Selena's clumsy words. The woman's discomfort seemed to dissolve slightly as she continued.

“I promise you, pup,” Selena said, her voice gaining strength. “I'll take care of you. I'll make sure you grow strong and independent. You won't have to rely on anyone else. You got that?”

Jewelry nodded, her tears slowing as she absorbed Selena's words. There was an unspoken sincerity in the red-haired woman's eyes, a promise that transcended her awkward delivery. Selena extended a calloused hand, and after a brief hesitation, Jewelry took it. The woman's grip was firm, a solid anchor in the storm of her emotions.

“Come on,” Selena said, a faint, encouraging smile playing on her lips. “I'm gonna introduce you to my friend Lyra. She's... well, she's something else. You'll see.”

Together, they walked through the shadowed corridors of the castle, the weight of Jewelry's sorrow easing with each step.

15th of April **Sabaody**

Moria lurked in the shadows of Sabaody. He had just absorbed Bartholomew Kuma's shadows, feeling the surge of power return him to his former strength of 16,000 Dourikis, the level he had been at before the fucking penalties of the system. The eerie satisfaction of restored might coursed through him.

He had sent his newly acquired Shadow Clone to escort Jewelry Bonney back to Thriller Bark. Moria had given explicit orders to Selena to nurture her. Perhaps, with time and the right guidance, Jewelry would grow strong and decide to stay in his crew. A future asset, a potential ally—who the fuck could predict how the tides of fate would turn?

His attention shifted to the pressing matter at hand. Urouge had informed him of a slave auction scheduled for today. If Moria's memory of Bege's reports served him well, this was one of Joker's auctions—Doflamingo's handiwork. The opportunity was ripe for disruption. If he could wreak havoc on the auction or seize control, it would weaken Doflamingo, inciting his wrath. An enraged Doflamingo would be more likely to break the Warlord's code and attack Moria directly, giving Moria the chance to retaliate with impunity.

Cloaked in shadows, Moria shifted his form. He created a new visage, a creepy child that appeared no older than twelve, though his skin remained as pale as death. Keeping to the shadows, he moved through the alleys and hidden pathways of Sabaody, avoiding detection with practiced ease. As he approached the entrance of the auction house, he slipped past guards and onlookers with silent precision. Of course, they would never let a fucking kid inside. Cloaked in shadows, he moved effortlessly through the darkened passages, his form barely a whisper in the night. He arrived in the main room, blending seamlessly with the shadows.

The room was packed with Knights and Royal Guards. What the fuck? Moria thought, scanning the crowd. He looked around him, taking in the scene: leering nobles, old bourgeois women, merchants—all gathered to indulge in their twisted pleasures. Ah, fuck... Quoi que—maybe this was an opportunity.

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He looked around him, taking in the scene: leering nobles, old bourgeois women, merchants—all gathered to indulge in their twisted pleasures. The air was thick with anticipation and the murmurs of the attendees. He overheard snippets of their vile conversations.

"I hope there are some fishermen in today's lot. It's been a long time since I bought one to eat," a corpulent merchant sneered, his jowls quivering with excitement.

"Indeed," an old bourgeois woman chimed in, her wrinkled face twisted in a sinister grin. "The last one I had was quite the delicacy."

The room was packed with Knights and Royal Guards. What the fuck? Moria thought, scanning the crowd. His eyes drifted to the honor seats, where three fucking Celestial Dragons sat: Saint Rosward and his two children.

Ah, fuck... But—maybe this was an opportunity.

Rosward, an older man with a curly black mustache and a fluffy gray beard, wore black shades that had been shattered recently. His thick white suit, adorned with medal-like knobs, shimmered under the lights, and a bubble over his head set him apart from the common rabble.

[Saint Rosward]

Class: World Noble

Job: Asshole

Douriki: 4

Potential: E

Fate: C*

Next to him sat Charlos, wide-faced and obese, perpetually picking at the snot hanging from his nostrils. His appearance was repulsive, a grotesque parody of nobility with his full-body white suit and green collar.

[Saint Charlos]

Class: World Noble

Job: Dumb and cruel cunt

Douriki: 1

Potential: K

Fate: B*

Then there was Sharlia, with her dirty blonde hair styled in an upward curl and heart-shaped earrings dangling from her ears. She wore a veil over the lower half of her face and light orange-tinted shades over

her eyes. Her thick white suit, like her father's, had a flower-like pattern and lace at the top. Despite her haughty demeanor, there was a twisted allure to her—a cruel beauty that made her both tempting and dangerous.

[Saint Sharlia]

Class: World Noble
Job: Dumb and cruel cunt

Douriki: 5
Potential: E
Fate: C*

If only he could have her on her knees... No, too risky. But one of his quests was to eliminate three Celestial Dragons. If he had an opportunity today...

Moria's gaze lingered on them, his mind racing with possibilities. Sharlia... her cruel beauty - she was not beautiful but the concept of having a Celestial Dragon ! Of keeping one as a pet - was a twisted temptation. Moria couldn't afford to indulge, yet the idea of breaking her spirit was tantalizing.