

The Sound of the Sea (16+)

??? x Reader Lovestory

Von LadyMalice

Kapitel 6: Ch 1 - 5. Headstrong Determination

After meeting this peculiar person named Shanks, you'd made a big, important decision that once again should change your entire life. It was that one decision you'd never regret. It did not matter how many doubts you had had, it did not matter how hard it had been. This was your choice and you loved every second of it.

If you hadn't been that stubborn, you would have never grown this strong. How funny it was to remember that no one wanted to support your idea. Grandma was against it from the start. Even Kuzan was against you, although he knew your true desire. The only remarkable fact about Kuzan was that he tried to stop you half-heartedly, so you actually gave you the chance to leave. Nonetheless they've tried to chain you over and over again, but the seal got broken. You didn't give up and hold on to this goal, that you wanted to achieve thanks to that one man whom you wanted to thank and meet again.

Without Shanks you probably would never have lived the way, you did now. You got your way in the end. If you not, you would've been dead already. After all... 'he' was chasing you.

Mixed feelings ran through your body. If anything, they were mostly positive. You've never felt this lively for years. A long time ago you acted like a doll who was only waiting for orders. Rules over rules controlled every single step you made. You got punished for every disobey and mistake. This time, everything was different. You broke one of the most important rules that were entailed on you. Against your expectation your punishment didn't follow right after your radical decision. In fact, the rule maker didn't notice a single thing. Perhaps it was only due to your imagination that you got exposed immediately, when you broke a rule. Perhaps it was only your paranoia, that did not let you rest and made you act silly. Until now, grandma didn't know about your second job at the bar in the gamble quarter. You had always believed that she sensed liars right away.

However, she did not. And that was great. How lucky you were that you could meet up that weird bunch of dorks who awaited you every time with an incredible delight in

their faces. The first times you felt insecure and acted shy. But right after you got to know them, you felt at ease. It was unbelievable that this amazing redhead truly wanted you to join his crew. He did not talk about it right after meeting you, no. First he wanted you to get to know the others from his crew, so was able to watch you more and see, how you got along with them. It wasn't very likely that Shanks asked a random girl to join his crew, though his decisions were this carefree at times.

After receiving some teasing comments you'd started to take a liking to his crew. They didn't stare at you like the other men, although some seemed to think that you looked cute. In addition some of them made a little bit fun of you, considering your age, height and gender. Yet the more you spent time with them, the more their behaviour changed. It wasn't like that first evening, where their gazes looked hypnotized. Maybe you had mistaken their drunken state for that creepy one that you've encountered so many times... you were a mess that evening. It wouldn't be strange, if you confused something. Also some time had gone by, since you met him for the first time. One or two month, to be accurate. He told you that he had issues to take care of, aside from other various reasons which he did not explain. Preparations had to be done, before you could leave this island. So you didn't rush things and waited for his message.

As Shanks promised, he came to meet you up. He had sent you a message with the help of a homer beforehand, so no one else but you would get it. After all it said that he wanted to discuss the details with you about your agreement. Since he didn't joke about his demand, he talked matter-of-factly about everything that was important for this. Sitting at the café where you usually worked at the weekend, you stared at him with a wide open mouth and listened to his plans. In this short amount of time, that he had before meeting you, he had found out many details about you and your life so far. He even knew where Kuzan was at the moment, so they wouldn't crash into him. It was obvious that these people were outlaws. Yet, Shanks had never told you who he nor his crew was. You knew that he kept it a secret since you didn't want to break any important rule. You were interested, but also afraid that grandma would notice in an instant, if you knew. So Shanks hid it for the better and made you listen to every word he had to tell you.

Ah. The Excitement grew strong... just as your desire to leave this island. At that time you hadn't known why you wanted to leave so badly. You put the blame on those freaking rules that restrained you from living your life the way you wanted to. Who would live this life? No one! Of course you were grateful, but Shanks increased your vision and mind, so you could see more than you did before. By now, you knew that your grandma tried to keep control over you. You had never questioned her until this man had appeared in your life. A life with lots of burdens and restrictions, as you realised. Your own will had been reduced to zero, you hadn't been allowed to make any decisions on your own. It was just natural to ask grandma for advice every time you needed to take a decision. For the very first time since you'd started this new life you made a decision without her knowledge. She would go crazy, if she knew, that you interacted with a group of shady men who wanted to take you far away. Insane. That's what people would call you, if they knew about your plans. Why would you trust some strangers who buttered you up, so you would agree?

You didn't know why you did. No... there was no sane reason, why you did. The only thing that made you trust him was this prickling, positive feeling when he was around you. You could sense, that he wasn't one of the bad kind - which didn't imply that he had never done anything bad. He did, he was not the kind of hero that you could read about in every book. That's what you liked about him. He was sort of a hero, at the same, he was not. His keen looks and intimidating attitude emphasised his dominant appearance and were the opposite of the prince that every girl wished to have as a boyfriend. Also Shanks was - obviously - not part of the marine who loved to show off with badass admirals. Marine members were often portrayed as heroes. You held no grudge against the navy as Kuzan was part of it, but you didn't lost the feeling that something was off about these 'heroes'. In the end you preferred this mysterious stranger. You even trusted him more than the marine soldiers whom you met so far.

No. It was a liar that you didn't know. You didn't comprehend right away... but it was obvious that Shanks understood you and your wishes. Whatever blurred your vision, he cleared it up. So you could see the world that you were living in. And you realised, that it was full of mysteries that you wanted to solve. On this island however you wouldn't be able to do anything. It was corrupt to the bone. You've ignored this fact for a long time. But if marine soldiers got paid in order to ignore debt collector's doing, there was no hope left. Not everyone was bad on this island. But you didn't wish to live here in the first place. You simply had no choice. That's why you listened to your grandma so much, you didn't want to lose everything all over again. You still loved her, ignoring the facts how she had behaved and treated for the past two years. To put a label on your life, you would call it 'Golden Bird's Care' or simply 'absolutely controlled'. You had no desire to let it be this way. It was time for a change. A huge change, starting with preparations and training. Shanks informed you about the next steps that you had to take, before you would leave with him. That's why he called you, right?

~*POV Change - Shanks*~

Shanks watched [name] drinking her hot chocolate, while she nodded almost at every sentence he spoke. She was really something. He could sense that this girl was very rebellious and stubborn, yet at the same time she was obedient, restrained and responsible. There were so many reasons why he wanted her to join his crew. His crew however did not understand. They even dared to think that their captain simply wanted [name] to be his next toy. But as he was the captain, they didn't say any word against his decision. Since it was likely for this girl to join, they opened up and tried to get to know her. [Name] was really a charming and pleasant girl who knew how to play with words too well. Her sharp tongue made almost everyone of the crew fall silent because of her reactions to their teasing. Shanks would laugh about their attempts on making fun of her, although he stopped them, before it got out of hand.

"Are you still positive that you want to leave with us?", Shanks asked her with a serious expression. "Now that I've told you everything that you have to know, you must give me your final response." While he spoke, he watched her reactions. There was that one character trait, that destroyed her innocent appearance. Her personality

was twisted, no one could foretell what she was going to do nor say. However, it only appeared if he lured out her true self, not the doll-like faker that her grandma wanted her to be. Shanks liked her unpredictable nature. No enemy would be able to foretell what she might do next. At least, he believed that training would turn her into a strong fighter. Her outstanding traits were very promising.

"Yeah" [name] answered calmly. "I've had enough time to rethink this offer." Playfully she ran her fingers over the edge of her cup, while she supported her head on her hand. Her gaze lay on her hot chocolate, then she looked directly in Shanks' eyes. Her eyes sparkled with a beautiful hue of (e/c) that seemed to attract many men. Passing by dudes stopped at times, only to stare at the girl. If Shanks didn't sent them frowns, they -maybe- would approach her. He kind of understood what she meant with guys tended to flirt with her. Fine, she was a cute girl but yet to be a fine woman. There was no extraordinary reason why she got attention. However Shanks sensed the true reason. He simply needed proof. "But I have my own demands. Are you fine with them?"

Shanks smirked, when he listened to her requests. Simple wishes that he planned to fulfil. He even had already made arrangements for her training sessions. Expensive arrangements, considering who he had asked for this. It had taken an eternity to at least make him look at her. That difficult bastard wasn't very fond of Shanks' idea. Still, he had agreed due to a very interesting argument. The redhead almost chuckled as he thought about this. "I am, [name]", he replied casually, "I will introduce you a very special person who will take responsibility for your training. Prepare yourself, he's a... difficult fellow. You will have yet to prove yourself, before he agrees to train you." As he said these word, he saw [name]'s eyes widen. Heh, of course she would be surprised. He arranged many things in order to make her agree.

"So, I will start to train soon?", she asked excited, knowing that things would get rough. "So... so it's possible to train without my grandma's knowledge about it?"

"Yes and no." Shanks answered a crooked smirk. "We will have to convince that guardian of yours that you have to leave this island for... studying." It was a foul liar, but if [name] wanted to keep it a secret, then there was no other option. He tried to convince his friend to stay on this island, but the circumstances under which he'd agreed were steep.

"Oh... so there is no way of staying here?", she asked him in slight loss. Was this girl that afraid of leaving this island? Well, he knew about Joker and her experienced horror, but he had promised her to protect her. Would she give in to her fear? [Name] sighed and folded her hands. With one thumb she caressed her other, apparently she was in thoughts. "Okay, then. I am fine with this. But it'll be hard to convince her..."

"Don't worry about it" Shanks grinned widely, he was glad that she didn't gave up. The incoming challenges were in store for her. After receiving this special training, she would become a different person. A strong person with many life prospects. "Your personal trainer will convince her, since he has some deep connections with the world government. He's a warlord." As he saw [name]'s eyes widen in shock, he let out a warm laugh. "Are you afraid?"

"N-no! B-but why would a WARLORD bother to train this weak and inexperienced me?!" She shouted, at the same time she covered her mouth, afraid, that someone else would hear. But the people around them were ignorant. They didn't dare to eavesdrop on them. Plus the most avoided them because of the redhead's aura. They feared him. "I... my whole respect, Shanks-san, but how can I convince him to train me?" It was fascinating how much her eyes reflected her inner chaos. Shanks almost felt bad for seducing this girl to become a pirate. Yet the thought of wasting this talent caused him a headache. That was far worse than kidnapping this girl.

"Your only duty is to be yourself. Don't hide, stay calm and be yourself. I don't want to see that restrained side of yours", Shanks demanded in a commanding tone. "In order to get strong, you have to show your determination and skills. You're not as clumsy and weak as you think" On contrary, she hid her true powers since she didn't know how to use them. And he was the one who would show her. At least, if he had enough information about her ability.

"Got it" [Name] mumbled. Obviously she tensed up, while she stared at her empty cup. This girl had no idea what secret powers she held in her hands. Powers that he wanted to awaken so badly. But first he needed to convince that stubborn friend of his. Looking around he searched for him. The sun was setting. It was about time for that grumpy man to show up. Usually he was never late for a date, above all for an important one. Shanks let out a sigh and relaxed. He would simply wait for the signs that his friend had arrived. There was always a ruckus by his sheer presence.

Exactly in this second everything became quiet. No one made a sound while footsteps approached. A strong wind blew through the big plaza that caused a eerie feeling. Shanks smirked as he noticed how [name] reacted. Perfect. She had a sense for strong beings, she sensed the aura of that person. Yet she didn't show any fear. Her face only expressed one feeling: wonder. She looked up and opened her mouth, closed it directly after. Shanks winked at her. Afterwards he rose and turned to his right. His own expression got serious, as he caught sight of the special guest. "Damn, even here your reputation hurries on ahead.", the redhead laughed, although it sounded cold. His gaze was stabbing. But it was no comparison to that man's frown that curdled one's blood. For some seconds Shanks watched the frame of [name], expecting her to freeze in fear. To his surprise she did not. Her expression reflected another feeling...

[Name] turned her gaze towards the approaching man like Shanks did. The silhouette of the tall black haired man came closer. He wore a stylish looking black coat, with wine-red sleeves that had a flowery pattern. His jacket was unclosed, so one could stare at his trained torso. A necklace with a golden cross-pendant hang loose around his neck. On his head he carried a black head with feathers, one could barely see his black hair. A tasteful beard was visible. Trousers, boots... the biggest eye-catcher was that sword of his, the hilt looked like a giant cross with beautiful patterns engraved to it. His appearance radiated power and dominance. Particularly his frown underlined his effect. These golden piercing eyes which could shatter every man's will to fight. He always had had this impressive impact.

"Red-Haired Shanks, I hope that my effort to come here wasn't in vain. I'd dislike to

slice you in half considering your poor body state.", he announced in a dangerous, sharp tone, causing everyone nearby to flinch. His penetrative glance wandered towards the girl beside Shanks who stared almost fascinated at the newcomer. At once he narrowed his eyes, he looked angry. "..."

"Aah, Hawk-Eyes . Come sit down! Let's drink!" Shanks greeted him smiling, while he ignored the grumpy expression on that scary man's face. He dragged another chair to his table and waited for the man to sit down. This man however refused at the first moment. He looked doubtfully at the girl, who couldn't avert her gaze. " *Mihawk* , come on. You'd promised, remember?" The man named '*Hawk-Eyes Mihawk*' harrumphed, sat down and crossed his arms. His frown didn't turned away from the girl in the meantime. Shanks sighed, ordered his drink and... wine.

"So." Shanks started, taking a mouthful of beer and grinned. "This is the person I've been talking about, Hawk-Eyes. [name] Evans, as they call her. I've told you her true name." Shanks wiggled his eyebrows. "Isn't she interesting?"

Mihawk stared his red-haired friend down. He could guess what Shanks was talking about. But he refused to accept to train a GIRL. This freaking redhead didn't mention that he was taking about a girl. He only mentioned her last name. "You are kidding, right?", he asked as if Shanks joked about her. As he spoke, [name] furiously knitted her eyebrows, since she realised what his problem was. Shanks however found this very amusing. She wasn't as stupid as she seemed. She had noticed this swordsman's pride, before he had complained about it directly.

With a cheeky grin Shanks leant towards Mihawk. "No kidding.", he reassured him, "Just take a good look at her. You're sensing it right?" With his words Shanks drank a mouthful, casually he stared into these frightening hawk-eyes with a strong-minded glint. For some seconds he turned towards his new comrade who visibly was tense. "[Name]-chan, would you get us some delicious meal?", he asked her softly. As she nodded, she stood up and left. In this moment Shanks grinned madly and demanded a dangerous request without any hesitation. "Hawk-eyes... throw your dagger at her."

Mihawk's eyes narrowed even more at his demand. It was obvious that Shanks went mad in his eyes. "Do you want me to kill her?", he asked sharply, "If she's untrained, as you told me Red-Hair, then she will die." Mihawk huffed, reached out for his glass of wine and sniffed it. Next he took a sip with a satisfied invisible smirk. At least the wine was excellent. His friend however was annoying. Shanks kept staring at him and that brat knew that he was going to get his way. "You are positive that I should kill her? I won't take any blame for this action. You're irresponsible as always and naive."

"Give it a try." Shank's confidence in that girl was unshakeable. This trust was that overwhelming that Mihawk loosened the mount of his hidden dagger that was his pendant at the same time. He showed it to Shanks who know nodded contently. Now everything was up to [name] and her instincts. If he hit her, Mihawk would instantly leave. If she sidestepped it, her training was almost within their grasp. Only for a second Shanks felt uncertainty of her skills. But in the next moment he shook this though off. That girl was special. She would survive this test.

Mihawk turned his attention to the (h/c) -haired girl whose back he could see. She stood inside the passage that lead inside the café. It was a wonderful day, that's why they'd decided to take a seat outside. Although there were more reasons to it. Shanks had planned this little event, so no one else would get hurt. He watched Mihawk aiming at the girl, waiting for the perfect moment. As he warned Shanks about killing her, he aimed at her head. His face was expressionless, when he threw the small, yet deadly dagger. The sharp dagger rushed in an unbelievable speed towards [name] who didn't move at all. She was distracted with talking with one of her friends whom she worked with. Shortly before the dagger reached the girl's head, she moved it to the side, so the dagger didn't even leave a scratch. Mihawk's eyes widened as the girl turned her head in his direction, she blinked and looked puzzled. "Would the mister please be careful with his belongings? The people have already been scared as hell!", she shouted, going inside the café - indifferent.

Oh, what a sinful yet delicious taste of victory. There was no reason to additionally mention how long he'd waited for Mihawk's reaction. Shanks' strong trust paid off. Moreover it proved his excellent sense for strong individuals. The only thing left to do was to boost this talent. With the next mouthful of beer he sighed deeply. Despite his faith he was happy that she stayed unharmed. It was almost a miracle that she passed her test so well. Not every beginner was able to dodge that deadly attack. Since he knew Mihawk well, he was aware that Mihawk's attempt on hitting her was real. There had been a chance of her getting hurt perilously. But this risk had to be taken.

The swordsman had to impute Shank's good sense to him. How bothersome. Now he had to listen to that redhead's ideas. The piercing gaze turned back to Shanks. With this he questioned his true intention of this action. "Red-Hair, you told me that she had no training so far. Why would she be able to dodge my blade?" He asked, took another sip of his wine and was far more interested than before. That was precisely what Shanks wanted. Now, that he caught Mihawk's interest, he could negotiate about her training. "Explain."

"She's interesting, isn't she?" Shanks replied with another question. Contently he drank his beer, while he watched his friend. Meanwhile [name] was in the kitchen with the cook, because Shanks had explained her that he would need time to discuss. She would take a while before he let Mihawk talk to her. Shanks cleared his throat. "As I said, she's a raw diamond. Her abilities need to be trained. Since I have not enough knowledge about that hidden power of hers, I first have to gather information. So I want you to teach her to fight with swords.", he explained matter-of-factly, "I would train her myself, but... there are reasons why I can't at the moment. Learning how to battle is necessary for her. Martial arts doesn't fit her."

"Why would I bother to train this weak girl? Red-Hair, don't forget that I have my pride. I won't harm a helpless female." He reminded his friend, although he acknowledged her potential. Sighing he crossed his legs and leant into the back of his chair. "I see no reason why you want her to learn swordplay. She doesn't even know who I am." So far every swordsman had dreamed of crossing swords with him. After all he was the strongest swordsman in the world. So far he won every battle, he stayed unbeaten. Before Shanks had lost his arm, he fought him a lot. It always had been a neat change. In any case he wouldn't replace Shanks' position with the girl's one. He

didn't intend on training her.

"Do me this favour, Mihawk." Shanks' voice reflected his feelings towards this plea. "This girl will become a strong fighter that will have great influence on the new era. It's the same with Luffy. The difference is their combat knowledge." Narrowing his dark eyes his gaze got even sharper. "Also [name] will become part of my crew. I cannot entrust this girl just to someone, I need the perfect coach for her who shows her the instinct and rules of battle. Moreover... someone needs to teach her about pride." Technically Shanks pointed out how much he idolized Mihawk's stance, skills and knowledge. He was convinced that his man could teach her matters that he himself could not. The redhead was able to do so... but first she needed to understand important factors like pride and the will to fight. One more reason was his soft nature towards her. He couldn't be strict as long as she was a kid. "I am too soft for this shit..."

"That's untypical for you, Red-Hair Shanks. You are showing weakness? What a shame, I am highly disappointed." Mihawk put his empty glass down. In the next moment his eyes flew open and he stared at his left, where the (h/c)-haired girl stood. He didn't notice her arrival at all. How did she sneak up without his awareness? In addition his dagger was only inches away from his nose, as if she calculated the distance. He couldn't hide his surprise. It'd been a while since someone approached him unseen. Silently he took his dagger out of her small hands and put it back to his original spot.

"Please don't speak bad of him" The girl requested with no fear, staring into that creepy frown of his. Her determination didn't waver although he looked with his well-known stare that broke every man's will. "Am I right that you've got a problem with my gender, Mihawk-sama?" She crossed her arms with an angry look on her face. In Mihawk's eyes she acted brazen, at the same time brave.

"I do not wish to have a disciple. It's a pointless burden that I won't take." He answered coldly. His stance got even cooler and more arrogant. There was no room for a stupid little girl. "If you had proven yourself worthy as a swordsman, I'd have considered to fight you. This man's recommendation doesn't come out of nowhere, it is always reasonable. Here, in fact, I don't see why I should bother with you." What a stiff response... Shanks sighed at that reaction. He had worried about Mihawk's reaction. That's why he didn't tell him that [name] was a girl.

"Excuse me?" [Name] huffed, clearly upset about his choice of words. "I thought Shanks-san would introduce me an experienced, intelligent warlord who is indifferent to gender. Not a selfish guy with a grumpy face" Shanks mouth opened by itself at these words. He held his laughter back, since it was the first time someone talked in this way to the mighty swordsman. [Name] was cheeky, but still he could feel the respect in her voice. Things got interesting. Would she be able to convince him?

~*POV Change - Reader*~

You. were. doomed. You not simply talked back to that scary guy, you even dared to

insult him back. But how could you not? He obviously had a problem with female and didn't appreciate Shanks' plea. You got angry about how he talked about this great man who radiated strength and hope. It had only been some time, since you met him, but you already felt attached to Shanks. You would stay loyal to this man who was ready to help you. Stubborn you glared into that scary frown. He had already attacked you. He would do it again, if you pissed him off. There was no more reason to hold back. "If I had been a boy, would it have changed anything?"

The warlord glared at you, he was speechless for the first moment. "You dare to raise your voice against a warlord's decision?", he questioned your behaviour. He was acting all mighty, well justified. After all he was powerful. But you didn't lose the feeling that there was something else other than indifference and arrogance. Mihawk turned towards you, so were face to face. Well, almost. That man was huge! "[Name] Evans is your name, isn't it, woman?"

Annoyed you clicked your tongue. Howsoever you nodded slowly. "That's what they call me here." you responded, you assumed that Shanks told him a little bit about you. It must have been hard to convince this stiff man to come here. You wouldn't let his attempt be in vain. There had to be a way to convince this guy about your abilities. After you had talked with Shanks about your past, you remembered how much you learned from the different plants and animals from the little islands around Crescent Island. That's where you learned your dodging skills from. Usually you reacted by instinct, but you also had a good awareness of your surroundings. Your consciousness was intent and sharp. Funny, you had only realised that after talking about it. You weren't as untalented as you thought in the past. No, in point of fact you had some starter skills. There was simply a need for training. "Although some of them call me witch. My true name is not known by them."

For a second you believed you saw him smirking at your response. But his expression didn't change. More like: it looked colder. "Witch? Tell me the reason, woman.", he demanded sharply. Gosh, you really found this attitude tiring. Shanks could've warned you much earlier. You had met so many different types of males, when you worked at the bar. He was one of those exhausting ones. Exhausting, but very interesting and cool. His looks were enough to adumbrate his power. Hawk-eyes crossed his arms, while he waited for an answer. In the meanwhile you saw Shanks pouring wine into the empty glass.

"People seem to fear me.", you told him, not entirely sure what he wanted to hear from you. "I bewitch men and make them my slaves. They would kill themselves for me, if I wish them to." These were rumours about you. Too many times you had to listen what people told about you. "My voice and my glances make them fall on their knees. I can break every man's will." A bitter smile appeared on your lips. It had hurt... these rumours had hurt your feelings, when you heard them for the first time. "I possess a dark power, so they wish to see me drop dead. My sheer presence causes them distress. No reason for me to die though"

Mihawk sent Shanks a angry glare, as if something disturbed him. You wondered what might have enraged him. Perhaps he was always angry with everyone. With that grumpy face it was probable. "There is no reason to teach her swordsmanship. Her

ability is enough to defeat an army." What? Confused you blinked, what was he talking about? Did he see the same traits as Shanks did? Again some stranger was able to see things that you couldn't. Slowly it became annoying. Were you really this incompetent?

Shanks sighed and smiled. He supported his head with his hand. "I told you.", he reminded him. "I have no proof for that ability yet. She is able to swim, you know." What was he implying? Why was it so important that you could swim? Before you could reflect about this matter, he laughed happily. The meal was served that you ordered for them. You could read in Shanks' and even Mr Grumpy's eyes that they liked your choice. After taking a bite, Shanks spoke. "In this dangerous world full of obstacles and surprises a second alternative of combat style is a good strategic choice. Given that she has that power, she will learn to use it as soon as I find out, which one it is." Shanks took a enormous bite of the fried chicken. "Until then she has to master another fighting style. Considering if it's this kind of power, it could save her life in the future."

Mihawk turned back to the table and drank his wine. Without saying anything he started to eat. In contrast to Shanks he ate decently. "I see your point now, Red-Hair. You want to create a weapon of mass destruction? If I am right, then her power will be more than sufficient." Really, you had no clue what they talked about. You and a weapon of mass destruction? That evil Joker was one! But not you! You cleaved to your own arm, feeling insecure about the spoken words. You didn't want to become such a weapon... you had another reason why you were willing to train and fight. After some moments of eating you saw Shanks pointing at the chair next to him, so you sat beside him and were quiet. You didn't know what you could say. Shanks did.

"I wouldn't put it that way, Hawk-Eyes. Stop frightening her." His voice changed. Your eyes widened a little after you realised it. It sounded powerful. So powerful that one wouldn't date to oppose him. How strange... why did Shanks wanted you to hear this conversation? He could've simply sent you away. But he let you stay here, so you listened to their dialogue. "The navy doesn't want her to leave this island. Moreover they don't want anybody to know about her existence. You can clearly feel the reason. It affects everybody with a weak mind." Shanks chuckled. "More or less everybody. Even you, my dear friend, feel attracted."

"Nonsense." Mihawk spat angrily, although he kept on eating and listening. He didn't like the thought of being influenced by an untrained ability. Yet, the given information was interesting. Even to you. Kuzan had never mentioned things like these. Perhaps it was an order from above. He had always told you that his duties and the mechanism inside the navy were difficult. "It's shameful that a woman could use such power to destroy man. If that girl used her power in a sword battle, she would lose her honour." For a breath of air he looked at you. You blinked. You could see that familiar glint in his eyes, but it was the reflection of... your own eyes? Huh? His eyes mirrored that strange shimmer... "This woman doesn't know anything..."

"She's a raw diamond who wants some nice attention plus a good cutting." He winked, although his eyes mirrored his graveness. His aura felt dangerous. "A while ago I've broken her chains that restrained her power. I will find someone who can teach her,

how to make use of that power. If I'm unlucky, I'll have to ask the Pirate Empress" Shanks sighed. He really didn't want to ask that woman for help. She was also difficult.

"Red-Hair, you will turn this girl into a war weapon." Mihawk asserted, after he swallowed his piece of meat. These two really didn't bother about their location. The most people stared from afar at them, apparently they knew who they were. No one was brave enough to come near. Besides it was evening, so only a few lanterns enlightened the plaza. Some candles were lit by a waiter. As soon as he finished, he rushed inside. Only you were close to those two... what a awkward picture it must be. A little girl between two scary looking giants. Being distracted, you didn't notice how Mihawk watched you. "She's still untouched. Let her live her peaceful life."

"I won't" Shanks refused now somewhat angry. "They control her. That god damn world government controls every step of her. Why would she live a fake life? You did not see her tears, when I noticed that something was off. She had no idea what was wrong with her."

"You claim to be her saviour?"

"No. But I am the one who offered her another option. She had the choice, Mihawk. She choose our side.", he growled. Again you felt that powerful aura around him. His gaze... it was the same as that time. He was using... his Haki, right? So dominant... "Think about it. Would you rather give her to the world government who would abuse her power as soon as its awakened?"

Mihawk stopped in his movement. "I am not the one to judge this.", he answered slowly. With a huff he poured more wine into his glass, took it and drank.

"This era will end. Not today, not tomorrow... but it will in the next few years. When the time comes, she will bloom. I will make sure that she's on our side without forcing her to. If you're not ready to take this burden, then another great swordsman will." Your red-haired friend sounded upset as well as resolute. "She needs another way of fighting than this questionable ability. You exactly know this."

With a heavy sigh Hawk-Eyes put down his cutlery. "You're an exhausting man, Red-Hair.", he told him. "You dragged me into this little mess without my approval. If the government finds out, whom I'm interacting with, they will go berserk." Mihawk moved his head into your direction. For some moments he was silent. "[Name] Evans. Why do you desire power? Why do you want to learn how to battle?"

Astonished about his question you held your breath. Then, after relaxing a little bit, you answered. "I don't want to be weak anymore" This much of information wouldn't be enough. Every idiot would know this. "I don't want to rely on others. I can't always hide myself in the back." With a determined glance you looked at him. Your eyes glowed. "I desire power so that person will never be able to hurt my family anymore. I want to punish him for what he has done to me and all of my friends." You gritted your teeth. Before you met up with Shanks, you thought clearly about your desire to fight. And you had found your reason. "I want to protect my family and friends! I won't let them ever again die in front of my eyes! Rather I would die for them!" You almost

shouted, but you refrained from doing so.

Mihawk's expression didn't waver at your reasoning. "Revenge?" Again he crossed his arms, but this time he didn't have that repellent stance. He lifted his eyebrows, while the corner of his mouth got dragged down. "So that's the feeling I've sensed.", he mumbled to himself.

"So what's your answer, Mihawk. I cannot lose more time than this." Shanks called for an answer. It was time for Mihawk to choose. You gulped at this thought. You were convinced that his man would be a great teacher if he wanted to. But he was kind of capricious and obstinate. There was a high chance that he would decline.

"Fine. You have convinced me. I will take care of her." He sighed and closed his scary eyes. "However, if she's not strong enough, I will stop training her. If she complains or refuses orders, it'll be the same. I'll send her immediately back." Mihawk stared at you. "I don't bother about weaklings. You need a strong mind or else I'll throw you out."

Shanks and you blinked in disbelief. This warlord has just accepted their request. This moody man would train you! With a loud laugh Shanks lifted his cup of beer. "Then it's settled. Let's party then!"

Hawk-Eyes shook his head in annoyance. Then he bent towards you, what made you flinch. "Listen, [name] Evans, this is no game. I am only willing to do this due to your determination and promising abilities. As long as you have the will to fight, you will receive special training.", he told you, "Playtime's over. You must grow up." He fumbled in his pocket. In the next moment you held a little piece of paper in your hands. A number was written in a beautiful handwriting there. "This is the number of my Den-Den-Mushi. That foolish Red-Hair told me, you would receive yours after this meeting." He throw a piercing glance towards the mentioned man, who drank happily. "Before I am willing to train you, you will get trough strength and endurance training. If you're ready, this man will bring you to my home. There will the real training start." Mihawk relaxed and leant back. His arrogant stance was back. "Also take into consideration what kind of sword you want to fight with."

Eagerly you nodded and pressed the small paper on your chest. This thing was your key to power. It was mindboggling that this swordsman would take care of you.

"Relax, [name]-chan. We will prepare you for your training, so you won't get kicked out" He winked at you. "He might look like a cold bastard, but he's a good person!" He laughed, while Mihawk sweatdropped. He clearly hated to lose his cold-hearted reputation. "Now we've got time to convince your strict guardian. Then your new life will begin."

"I won't disappoint you!" You exclaimed happily and grinned. Great!

After meeting the terrifying warlord who was the best swordsman in the world, you started to follow a specific training routine that he shortly explained to you.

Unfortunately things didn't go as smooth as planned. Your new daily routine didn't remain unnoticed. Since you started preparing for your training with Mihawk, you were barely at home. More precisely: you only slept there at late night. Of course you had to be there at day, if grandma got sick or had any special wishes. For you, it meant less part-time working and more care for grandma. There was no reason to avoid nor slacken training. Probably it would've been better to tell her lies, why you were so busy all of a sudden. Like longer shifts at your job... study group activities...

You couldn't know that she was checking every step of you. You heard from Shanks, that for some reason the word government observed you. But you had no idea, that grandma did the same. Some day - probably about three months had passed - she stopped you from meeting your future-captain, who took very good care of you. Since he was part of your life, you'd changed. You were far more self-confident and self-reliant, but also developed some negative traits, e.g. you've gotten extremely cheeky and had a very sharp tongue. Your appearance also changed a little bit: from the restrained, decent dressed girl into a brave, headstrong girl with her own sense of fashion. You still liked the dresses from your grandma, but it was time to refrain from her a little.

Back to the point: she noticed, although you tried very hard not to show any difference. In front of her, you acted and dressed like you always did. In front of others you showed your true self that got stronger with each time you met your favourite redhead. There was no way she could find out what you were doing lately. If she asked the neighbourhood, they would reply nothing special. You weren't stupid, you didn't act all mighty in front of people she knew. There was a high chance of them telling her. For the rest of the people of your quarter: they didn't care. They had no reason to put special notice on you nor knew your grandma. At your work, everyone liked you the way you were. Only bad customers received rude replies after provoking you. So what did she want?

"[Name]-chan, hold on a second" she asked you, as you were tying your shoes. You looked up, since you were kneeling and preparing to leave.

"What is it, grandma? I'm in a hurry", you answered, not aware of what would come next.

"Why are you in such a hurry, honey?" She returned the question, crossing her arms and looking directly into your (e/c) orbs. "Today you have no group activities and no shift at Joe's Café."

You froze in your movement. Wait? Did she really check all of this? You rarely told her what you were up to. She had trusted you until now. "I am meeting up with friends...", you answered and knitted your eyebrows. "Is something wrong with that?"

Grandma's look wasn't satisfied at all. You could clearly see that she was expecting something else. The shadows caused by her brows laid over her eyes as always, so you couldn't see them. It made it hard to interpret her expression correctly. The only thing that pointed at her mood was that long, straight line that was supposed to be her mouth. She pressed her lips together, so they formed a strict line. You almost couldn't

distinguish her lips from her skin. She was obviously tense. "May I ask whom you're meeting with?"

You blinked and stood up. You put your hand casually on your hip, not quite sure about that question. "Grandma... what's wrong?" You giggled. Hopefully she would get fooled by your carefree attitude. The last thing you wanted her to hear what you were up to. "It's not like I'm going on a secret date"

"I worry about you", she answered calmly, "Lately, you've been rarely at home at daytime. I can't imagine that school is that hard on you. You're too clever for having any problems. Hence you don't have private lessons." For a moment there was silence. She moved in front of you and touched your cheek with her slim, bony fingers. "And I see no reason, why you would work so much. Especially at night. It's dangerous for a young girl..."

"Grandma, really. Don't worry so much" With a smile you put your hand on her fingers. You looked into her eyes, so she would hopefully believe you. You were good at deceiving others, you rarely refused to gaze in one's eyes. Many got nervous by doing so, while you did not. You weren't afraid to show yourself. It was hard to read you anyway. Generally only a few were able to, mainly Shanks. A long while ago your grandma saw you through at once, but this changed. Perhaps this was the reason why she tried to control you. You couldn't know the true reason. "First of, I found a new hobby . So I am mostly not at home. But if you need me, I am always going to be here for you. Second, I want to save some money. I don't want to be a burden anymore."

"There is enough reason to worry."

You piped down. Her answer reflected how much she ignored your reasons not to worry. Astonished you didn't know what to answer at her statement. "There is?", you finally replied.

"Yes. That's what I want to talk about." At this response you looked reflexively at the grandfather clock, checking if you had enough time. "Don't worry about the time, dear. I won't let you go so fast." With this, you stared at her, not sure, what she meant.

"What?", you asked in disbelief, "What do you mean?"

"Honey, you've been meeting up with shady guys, don't you? Are they the reason, why you've started to jog in the morning? ... why are you training?"

So... She was controlling you. Anger blazed up inside of you, as you realised how right Shanks had been. Every time he tried to tell you, you refused to listen. You had trusted your saviour blindly up to this day. Now, you had to admit that it was wrong to trust someone blindly at all. It was the same with your friends. They could never keep a secret. That one time you shared one, it was spread across the whole quarter, because they found you weird. And now even your grandma was against you, not trusting you at all. Discontent you crossed your arms. "Are you spying on me? Have you no faith in me at all?"

"Don't get me wrong, honey. I do trust you... but I worry about your well-being."

"Is that enough of a reason to spy on me instead of **asking** me?", you responded angrily. "Grandma, I am no small kid anymore. I can look after myself without getting into real trouble."

Grandma sighed at your words. Apparently she wasn't happy about your reaction. "Then why didn't you tell me from the start?", she answered with another question - again. "You know... it was the same with..."

"Stop it, already!", you shouted angrily. "Why do you **always** compare me to your son!?" Every time... every time she repeated the same thing over and over again. It made you sick. Your feeling of guilt grew with every 'mistake' you had done so far. Seeing her teary face broke your heart. This time, it annoyed you. How many times did she want to abuse that guilty-feeling?! It was enough! You clenched your fists. You so wanted to leave and meet Shanks... but you knew that more problems would follow, if you didn't listen to her at least for now.

Your grandma seemed shocked by that behaviour. So far you'd never talked back to her, you had always been obedient. "Honey... stop shouting.", she asked softly, "I don't want you to be angry with me. I have no bad intentions... I know that you are rebellious at times, so I simply need to check..."

"Grandma, why are you spying on me?" You demanded an answer. There was no reason to follow every one of your steps, that was way overdone.

"For your own good", she replied stiffly. "[Name]-chan, I don't like the way, you're developing at the moment"

"I am highly aware of what's good for me" You retorted, "Stop controlling me! I don't do anything bad!" While you answered, you felt strange. Something was odd here. You kept glaring at grandma, but somehow you couldn't move more freely. Blinking you tried to turn away, but you couldn't. In this moment grandma grabbed your wrist and pulled it towards her. After a brief glance, she sighed heavily. Shit! You wanted to hide that much longer! She shouldn't know about the loss of your bracelets.

"Who broke them?", she asked now, confusing you.

"Wh-what do you mean? I-I took them off"

"You can't take them off by yourself. So who broke them?" Your eyes widened at that information. So it had been on purpose. You couldn't believe what you were confronted with. Shanks had told you, didn't he? He had even known that you weren't able to take your bracelets off. So he broke them in order to free you. You've felt a lot better after he did. "[Name]-chan, who broke them?" Your rage grew with each question.

"Does it matter?!"

"It does matter, because you endanger your surroundings, [name]-chan!", grandma shouted angrily at you. Startled you gasped. Why would she say that?! Was Mihawk right? Were you some sort of dangerous weapon that she wanted to hide? What was it? You felt lost. Nothing made a sense anymore! Was she good and you're bad? Or was it the other way round? "How can you act so carelessly although I taught you different?!"

"... why am I the dangerous one?" you quietly asked, shooting angry glares at her. In the meanwhile you had clenched your fists so hard that your nails dug into your skin, causing them to hurt some parts of your skin. Eventually blood started to drop. "Why am I the one who needs to live inside a cage!? I don't get it... what's wrong with me!? Why am I getting chained?"

"Don't get me wrong, honey. I am not your enemy. Did you already forget how many times you passed out? The bracelets were for your sake!" She tried to explain to you. "You don't know what's sleeping inside of you... if you change your lifestyle, it could get out and-"

"So what's inside of me?" Your voice sounded even in your ears dark and angry. Wrath laid inside of it. Hence your grandma flinched at the sound, she felt not only worried but also scared. She knew that she fucked up here. "Tell me. What's my sin for being kept inside a golden cage? Because I survived the Tragedy of Crescent Island?"

Grandma's lips parted, closed and parted again. She searched for the rights words, so you wouldn't get any madder than this. Your aura flickered with your growing rage. "[name]-chan..." She stepped up to you, while you backed off. Finally, you could move again. "Please, I don't say that you are dangerous... I don't want to harm you... but I couldn't let you act freely, if your ability went out of control again." She touched your hand, but you pushed her away, as if you got burned by the touch. With a sigh she looked into your eyes. "Please, understand me. I saw your ability once. It is dangerous. Don't act so carefree and endanger others lives. It's not fair, if they got hurt by your reckless behaviour."

"How do I endanger them? I train my body and my willpower. What's the sin?" Annoyed you threw your small bag over your shoulder, then you crossed your arms. You had enough of this shit. Her words were merely excuses to tie you up. You'd already made a decision. Her preachment wouldn't change anything. "I won't put on any more weird things that made me feel weary."

Your grandma crossed her arms behind her back, straightening yonder a little. "That jewellery is helping to suppress your powers. You told me yourself, that you are scared by them. Why did your opinion change?", she asked, but you refused to answer. Discontent she pulled down the corners of her mouth. "Little lady, I am not your enemy.", she underlined again. "I am here for your sake. I want you to have a peaceful life, like you wished to have. I didn't do anything that possibly could make you unhappy, didn't I?"

"Beside of treating me like a pet with thousands of rules? You spied on me!"

"If you're old enough, you'll understand. Until then, you won't meet that man again. He does no good to you."

"You won't stop me seeing my friends", you growled and pushed her aside, afterwards you opened the door of the hallway. You took everything you needed, so there was no reason to stay here. "I won't come home tonight", you informed her, not even sending her a glance.

"[Name] Evans, you will stay. Or else I'll get Kuzan and you will really get into trouble. These people are bad guys! Why don't you listen to me?! I did warn you!" Her voice rang tiredly, although she was stubborn and tried to hold you back by your grabbing your wrist. "[name]-chan, please. They want to abuse you..."

"How would you know? You only see the danger coming from me and not from them", you replied coldly. Still, you refused to look at her. You kept your stubborn stance. With a skilled move you got free of her hand and rubbed your wrist. "And by the way, grandma." You turned your head in her direction, but still refused to look at her. "I haven't broken any rule. I am meeting with **friends**. I don't know what their profession is.. but they aren't strangers to me. I am training in order to self-defend myself, because some guys tried to harass me. Happy?" With this you left her. Dumbfounded she stood here with an open mouth, she couldn't believe what just had happened. In the end you avoided one of the most important rules and she seemed not to have any power over you left. Someone strengthened your spirit that was free again. That could get a huge problem...

Unknown to you your grandma gritted her teeth and got a *Den-Den-Mushi* out of her small pocket. It was time to take action before something bad happened.

"Forgive me, little lady."

After the first real quarrel with grandma time went by in a fast pace.

It was almost unbelievable that your life had been quiet and boring almost a half a year ago. You nearly forgot how miserable you had felt, being a pet inside a cage. Before you'd met Shanks, you did believe that things were right the way they were. It wasn't noteworthy for a girl like you to be quiet and restrained. Showing yourself from the best side was a must, a duty. Your grandma attached importance to first-class behaviour. For though you weren't descended from noble blood, she wanted you to act faultless.

All rich kids acted that way since their parents were noble and strict. However, it didn't change the fact that the most of them were douche bags. Arrogant and very hateful towards 'poor' people. You'd experienced some... terrible things. You even became the target once in a while due to their moody behaviour. Oh, how happy you were that you would never again bow before these kids and endure whatever they did to you nor your friends. You had watched them quietly, with growing anger inside, when they harmed your friends. They acted mighty, as if they were from another

league: they stood above you. But that was a lie. It's been a long desire to beat the shit out of them. But how could a girl like you do so? You had no strength and you weren't athletic. Talking big with no actual power to do something lead only to your own trouble. Luckily, this was about to change. No more weakness, you would become strong.

Over this period of time you had troubles with your training. Since you weren't that fond of sports and lacked sport-related activities, you had a hard time. At first, your effort to train your endurance was low. Although you wanted to get stronger and leave this island, the incentive wasn't big enough to make you move. You always had hated running senselessly in circles... and you hated push-ups, everything related to training made you sick. Mihawk gave you a huge list of things of what exactly you had to train. Only looking at it frustrated you. How would you be able to do all of this? Was it that important to learn a little bit of swordplay? The first two weeks you slacked off, standing up early in the morning for a jog wasn't to your liking. You had to stand up early for school already, standing up much earlier for sports? Nah!

Unfortunate for your inner temptation Shanks noticed and gave you lots of reasons to work out. In the very first moments, he had talked to you, you felt scolded. But in the end he laughed, stroked your head and told you, to give your best. Miraculously it did good. He cared about you and encouraged you. Plus... the thought of training with the best swordsman in the world let you shiver. It would be no good to ignore the demands of this guy. Also you really wished to leave with these dorks. At your meetings with the redhead and his crew, you heard a lot about their adventures. Their company kept you bright and happy. It was such a different world in comparison to yours. You wanted to live in that free world where you were able to find your happiness. Not only Shanks, but also his and later your friends tried to inspire you. Their rooting for you was very cute and motivating. You hold their and Shanks' words dear. So you tried your very best, stuck to your training regime and made huge progress with each passing month.

Your grandma wasn't able to stop you. No one would be able to.

Even though 'they' did try.

There was this one incidence at your school, when you were training at your school's gym. You often stayed on at school in order to use the gym for yourself and make use of the sports equipment. Since you didn't want stupid viewers, you picked days where no club occupied the hall. So you were all by yourself. No one should see, what you were trying to do, given that you were pretty clumsy. Your attempts on working out ended up in some little failures and accidents. It wasn't rare, that you hurt yourself a little. Bruises and scratches belonged since to your everyday life. Of course you had some troubles at first: You had to do this alone. Neither Shanks nor Mihawk would help you at your own preparation for the real deal. It was kind of a test for you, before you were allowed to leave. You didn't know how to begin. But you learned little by little. And practising at school was beneficial. The school's equipment was perfect for a uncomplicated start. With simple exercises you worked on your endurance and strength.

To your misfortune some of the pupils noticed your doing and came to "check it". You were doing some exercises as push-ups and squats, when a group of 5 pupils arrived at the gym. Of course they wouldn't leave you be. It was the nature of human kind to be curious and intolerable. You didn't even look up, as the group approached you. You weren't interested in an unnecessary fight. Plus you really had no time to slack off. You did it enough already. But the group seemed to think otherwise. As you stood up to stretch, the three girls started to giggle. The other two males grinned and eyed you up from tip to toe. You were accustomed to gazes like these. Most males stared awkwardly at you.

These guys did it for another purpose. It may sounded cliché, but there were in point of fact bullies that had a private problem with particularly you. You had no idea what might enrage them so much that they tried to find your weak spots. But usually their attempts on hurting you failed, since you ignored them all the time. It was hard though. Their words hurt, but you learned to get on with them. Why bother with idiots, if there were many other things to think of? It wasn't odd, that they tried to hurt you: Destroying your belongings, harassing you with words or even shoving you around, literally.

"Why is Mc Chubby trying to work out? Are you suddenly interested in your appearance?" The raven-haired girl asked you, which made you look up and turn your head in her direction. Ah, it was that bitchy-looking girl. She was the one who tried to lure every attractive guy into her bed. Some of your female friends gossiped about her, but you'd never lost a word about it. Her behaviour was cheap, but it gave you no reason to bully her. But as it seemed there was a reason to target you. Strangely they aimed at your body shape.

"Does it matter?", you questioned, ignoring the other girls and pushed past them, so you could grab your drink and get a mouthful. You got the bad feeling that they wouldn't simply leave after making fun of you. Yes, you were probably the worst at sports and were always the last one at running. But that was only a fact, no hindrance to get over it.

The raven-haired frowned, she had always had a problem with you. Many of the guys ignored her, when you were around. Your simple presence got their attention without doing anything special. Besides, you didn't even want it. And that was one of her reasons to bully you. "Give up, pig. No diet can cure your ugliness." You blinked at these words. Was she jealous of something? You looked at her with no interest at all, although you listened to her. "Don't give me that look, bitch!"

"Do you have business with me or are you simply here to make fun of me? If it's the latter, please be so nice and leave. I have no time for this." You almost sounded monotonously. Your own glance said enough already, but you guessed that they wouldn't comprehend anyways. "Tomorrow's also a good day for nonsense, right?"

Yes, it wasn't clever to provoke her. Especially with her friends gawking at you, while she turned red. She didn't expect you to say something like that. She wasn't used to your reaction at all, since you rarely opened your mouth to speak. In fact, that was the reason why. Just... you felt the urge to change it today. They always aimed for you, so

why not shoot back? You almost smirked, when the girl came near you and shoot you glares. "Don't speak so high. Everyone knows that you're a fat slut that gives everyone a good fuck for some berry.", she cursed and grabbed your hair, what caused you to wince. What? Did people really talked trash so much? "Hey, listen to me!" Pulling your hair she grinned at you in arrogance. Her friends giggled at your visible discomfort.

"Don't they tell the same about you?" You asked annoyed, tried to free yourself from the grab and grow slowly angry. You didn't want to pick up a fight, but she was provoking it. You were so sick to the back teeth. Always someone told shit about you, because of your looks' effect. You didn't do it on purpose, couldn't they just leave you be?! "Would you leave now? I don't want to hurt you."

The raven-haired girl hold her breath. Then she gritted her teeth and pulled your hair even stronger. "What did you just say, bitch?! I don't even get why men would look at you! You're ugly, you're fat and these freaking, glowing eyes... they scare the shit out of everyone!"

"Hey, maybe we should ignore her, Sis" One of the guys suggested, only to get an evil glare. He was one of her personal 'slaves' who she slept with. She always had two guys around her. You had no interest in her doings, but you observed a lot of people in your free time at lunch. Her name? It was of no importance. What you knew, was, that she was one of those school bitches who loved attention. She loved having power over others. And, she wasn't the first one who targeted you. Females hated you, while males tried to get your attention. Weird world. You guessed that it was all about envy and the like. But what was that about your eyes? You thought that it was their eyes that started to glow, if they looked at you...

"Let me go" That was your last warning. You had no time for her accusations. Maybe you did not know how to fight, perhaps you would get beaten up here. But you wouldn't listen to her anymore. This would be the last time she dared to harass you. "Let go."

"Nope! First beg me on your knees for pardon!" She laughed, pulled even stronger at your hair that were a mess by now and waved her two slaves over. "Come here. Have some fun with the bitch. I am sure, she wouldn't mind to mess her up. She does it anyways with everyone." She laughed almost hysterically.

"Yeah, I've heard that she does it even with old men... she has no standard..." Another of the girls mumbled, looking at you in disgust. The other hugged herself and shared the same expression with her friend. "I can't believe how cheap she is. Acting like a saint but in the shadows she's the worst slut in town. She doesn't even deny it."

"I've warned you.", you mumbled. Anger raged within your voice, while you stared at the raven-haired. With a fast move you hit her directly in her stomach which caused her to stumble back and let you go. You used the re-owned freedom and refrained from them. Some of your hair strands hang lose in your face. "You better leave now.", you growled. At least you could hope that she got scared, but far from it. She coughed and stared with hatred at you.

"You piece of shit, how dare you!?", she screamed. Great... no teacher was here at this time. You would have to deal with them until they got tired of you. Before she could lose another word, you ran towards her and gave her another blow. This time in her face. How could you possibly ignore what they accused you of being a slut?! When you hit her face, she fell on her bum and whined in pain. "What are you looking at!? Beat her up! She fucking hit my face!"

Well... fuck. Those two were as broad as gorillas and trained. Time to test your progress that you'd made. Both of them ran towards you, while the girls ran towards the raven-haired and helped her up. There was no way of avoiding a battle. You could try to find your way to the exit, but they wouldn't let you pass. They probably ran way faster than you did. A half year of training couldn't turn you into a pro, right? So, you were aware of your situation. How to handle them? How to handle... You saw a chance, how you could win the fight. In the corner of the halls lay some iron stabs that were usually used for building up some equipment.

"Get her!" The raven-haired screamed. Startled by her anger the boys ran towards you. In the next moment they tried to hit you, but you dodged by going on your knees for a second. Then you spun to the side, so you could sprint towards your target. But before you could get there, one of them grabbed you by your wrist and pulled you back. The other gulped, he was timid about beating you up. But after he saw the angry glare of his 'girlfriend', he kicked you in your stomach. You bent due to the sudden pain. You had no time to react, as both hit you many times until you fell on your knees.

This was the time, when you stood up and hurried to the stabs. Grabbing one you wiped away the blood under your nose. Such bastards... they were always on the move in packs. No difference, where you were. Always complete packs approached you and tried to hurt you. Your body hurt, although you trained so much to endure this kind of stress. You did struggle and kicked them -actually one of them had already gotten a dark bruise at his eye -, but they outnumbered you. Even the raven-haired kicked you, cowardly she hid behind her guys. Breathing heavily you glared at them, the stab in your hand and blood dripping from your nose. Everything hurt. Naturally, so far you hadn't been treated this way. Damn, you even tasted your own blood. At times like these you wished that Kuzan were there for rescuing you. But he wasn't and you still didn't know how to defend yourself. You bared your teeth, then ran towards one of the guys. As he dodged your attack, you swung around and hit the other by his leg that gave away, causing him to fall down. His partner however seemed pissed. He grabbed your stab and tried to pull it away. But you used this chance to kick him hard between his legs. "Sorry, bastard", you growled, when you wrenched the stab from his hands. His scream was ear-piercing, but heavily deserved.

"You fucking bitch!" The raven-haired cursed, while her friends helped the boys up. It was so unfair that you had to fight alone versus so many. How could you possibly know how to handle them? Every body part hurt and you felt that only the adrenaline that rushed from your veins prevented you from passing out. Your vision got blurry. Why did it happen every time you felt stressed? It wouldn't be any good to pass out here. Probably they would beat you up even more. Shit! Your legs trembled from the pain and the stress. "You will so pay for this."

With these words you saw the other guy jumping at you, but you denied his attempt by stepping aside. You gave him a strong kick, so he flew on the ground. Without hesitation you ran towards the raven-haired who blinked in confusion, when you pressed the stab against her throat which caused her to stumble back against the wall. "Get fucking lost already", you snarled angry. "I don't this beat-up, you jealous piece of crap." Usually you watched your tongue, but why should you treat these cowards well? You pressed the stab even stronger at her neck. The pressure would leave a mark for sure.

"Bitch!", she yelled pressed. "Because of you my lovely future-husband ignores me! I don't get why he even looks at you ugly whore!"

"Get. Lost." You silenced her coldly by pressing the stab even stronger against her. For a short amount of time you rethought her worlds. "I don't care about your beloved one. Take him. No reason to beat me up... isn't it enough that you gossip about me?" Pure anger vibrated through your voice. You glanced at the others who winced in fear. "Let me alone or else I will hurt YOU and break your legs!" A final frown for the raven-haired who started to cry. Then it seemed to be over. You shook your head, lowered the stab and threw it on the floor. The girls looked scared as hell, they wouldn't do anything weird. You sighed and felt the pain growing stronger. There would be so many bruises this time. You heard the guys groaning in pain at the same time as they stood up. Time to go home...

"You won't get away!"

Your eyes widened as you foresaw what blow was incoming from the raven-haired girl. You literally saw your head getting hit by your own weapon. Blood splashed in all directions, when the others screamed out of shock. Before it could happen, you moved to the side, almost falling over your own legs. The stab hit the ground next to you, while the hateful gaze of the raven-haired lay on you. Scared you made some steps backwards. What was wrong with her? Why would she try to kill you?

"He wants to propose to you! I won't let him! Get her!" Her eyes glowed in a strange matter but it wasn't like the ones of the guys. It displayed her hatred towards you.

Confused about her behaviour you felt your wrists get grabbed by both of the male. You fought back desperately, but you had no chance. The guys held your arms and made you cross them behind your back. They forced you on your knees. Then - for few seconds - everything turned black. Only a dull sound was heard. After you felt a warm liquid running down your face. She struck you at you head which almost made you lose consciousness. Again you felt sharp pain. That stupid girl didn't stop to beat you.

"Good." She breathed hard. "Now use her, as you like! She won't tell anyone anyways. She will be too scared! Learn your lesson, bitch! Stop snatching away MY boys!" She was screaming by now. Her hatred had no end. "NO ONE dares to hit me!"

You barely could hear her words, but you felt them. When you crushed on the floor, hands touched you and turned you on your back. The thought of losing your precious treasure made you almost cry. For the whole time they beat you up you didn't cry. And

now, you wouldn't either. Words... weird sounds... you felt like your clothes got ripped apart. This world was so cruel. You were always targeted by someone and this time, they went as far as this. You shut your eyes, waiting for the torture to start.

But nothing happened.

No, that was wrong. Something did happen... you heard screams at the same time, as you passed out. The only thing you remembered was that you suddenly felt different and much, much better than before.

Screams... painful screams echoed in the hall.

Then silence followed.

Black, cold silence.

"..."

"[Name]-chan..."

You looked up, as you recognized your own name and in the end the speaking voice. For a short amount of time so stared into its direction. You opened your mouth, but no sound left it. You were tired. You were so tired. And your body felt as if it was set on fire although something wet was dripping of your skin. The liquid was viscous and smelled unpleasant. It was all over your body. Even your hair had another colour because of the foreign fluid. More awkwardly: inside your mouth was that awful iron taste. It tasted like blood. More precisely: it was blood. Irritated you slowly looked down, realising that you were drenched in red. All around you was blood and... an arm. Alerted you turned your head to the side, noticing different limbs spread over the floor. One or two bodies... a female.. a male... oh, on the wall was the second male that tried to hurt you. He got pierced by the stab that you had used before. Now he hang loose on the wall, right next to the basketball basket. It looked like something ripped them into pieces... something that had big claws. Blinking your gaze fell on your own hands that heavily hurt. They also were covered in blood. It wasn't your own, since there were no cuts on your body. What did happen?

"[Name]-chan, oy. Do you hear me?" A warm hand turned your face towards the one you knew so well. A worried look was all over his face, when he checked you and warped his coat around your frail, injured body. A second later he lifted you up. After he caressed your cheek, whispering something about "Everything will be okay".

'Warm' you thought leaning your head against his chest. He was warm, although he could freeze anyone to death. Your stupid, icy brother."Kuzan-nii", you whispered weakly. So tired. You felt so unbelievably tired. "Where am I?"

Kuzan's expression was serious as he watched your face. He could clearly see that you didn't remember anything that had happened. Or maybe you did? He observed every

so little of your reactions and tried to find out what caused this bloody chaos. He didn't look surprised at all to see you like this. Aside from his worried expression he looked cool. Kuzan was used to see dead bodies but his calm attitude didn't fit in this situation. You were the only one alive as it seemed. As you didn't see the other two girls, you assumed them to be alive. You didn't care anyways. You felt agitated but at the same time satisfied. Confused about yourself you grabbed Kuzan's shirt, since you needed some comfort. This taste in your mouth caused you to grimace. It didn't disturb you as much as it should, though. It was simply unaccustomed and maybe wrong. Maybe?

"[Name]-chan, you're safe now.", Kuzan whispered softly in your ear. He carried you out of the hall where a lot of marine soldiers ran in. Some held buckets filled with water and wipes, other weird, big spray cans. You were convinced that they were here to clean up the hall. The area was locked by the marine soldiers. At every entrance soldiers were placed, so no one could enter the building. Looked like they would hide the incident and get rid of every trace. "Don't worry, no one will find out about this." Hearing his words, you looked up into his face. Your vision was still blurry, but you recognized his facial features. Kuzan smiled kindly. He read your mind by looking in your eyes. "Confused as always, hm?"

"Kind of", you whispered raspy. "What... happened?"

"I'll tell you. This time, I'll tell you.", he mumbled. He turned his face straight forward. First, he had to get you out of here. Then he would tell explain you what had happened. Therefore you left the school area, you headed towards a building that you could identify as marine accommodation. So he didn't bring you to your grandma's house. This was unusual, since he always took you home. It seemed like you would get interrogated. Somehow Kuzan's glance revealed you that you wouldn't extradite you. "But first you will take a bath."

You nodded exhaustedly, while he carried you to his own room inside the building. When you arrived, you moved towards a small door that led inside the bathroom. Kuzan put you on the laundry basket. After he let water pour into the bathtub and checked the temperature. This man could be very caring if he wanted to. For many he seemed cold-hearted, but to you he was one of the kindest persons you knew. Although he was a navy admiral his idea of justice was different and more simple than the '*absolute justice*' that the navy usually represented. He was a fair man who hated to execute orders which he counted as wrong. "Can you do it on your own?" You blinked. You were so lost in thoughts that you didn't notice that he moved on front of you. With a shy nod you signalled him a 'yes'. He smiled and gently stroked your head which cause you to flinch. His eyes narrowed. Carefully he pushed some of your sticky strands of hair to the side, so he could see your wound. "Please be careful. I'll get a doctor."

Again you nodded. With this he left you alone. You lowered your gaze and thought about the bloody scene in the hall. You did remember that there was this group who harassed you. You fought bravely back but you lost in the end, because of this hate-filled girl that struck you with the stab. Then... then the guys tried to... You shuddered. Quickly you took of Kuzan's coat and your disrupted leftovers of your clothes. With an

eased sigh you realised that you didn't get touched. Your lingerie was indeed drenched in red but it wasn't torn nor removed. You were so happy that you didn't lost your precious virginity. You were one of the few girls who didn't give in to some random guy at young age. There was no chance you would get weak because of a good-looking guy! You wanted to get to know the person first, before he would be allowed to touch you.

Carefully you removed your lingerie and slid inside the warm water. "Ouch!", you hissed. Your body hurt. You looked down and saw a lot of bruises which started to darken. Great... in a few days Shanks would come to pick you up and now you looked this bad. Another sigh followed. Then you cleaned your body and took all the time you needed. You couldn't stop yourself from spacing out. The thought of getting harassed in this way was horrible. How could one held so much hatred towards you? The guys didn't mind of trying to... such jerks. That was one reason why you hated man. They always looked at you with disgusting lust, filled with dirty ideas. Not a single one treated you special, they always wanted this one thing. Plus the most looked like pigs. You didn't know if you would let a handsome guy touch you... you were a girl after all. There had to be a guy who could make you weak right? You remembered the poster of one handsome pirate you had found a long time ago and gulped. Maybe someone like him... yeah... but no pig would ever be allowed to touch you.

It was time to be less restrained and show them their place.

"[Name]-chan, are you alright?" You heard Kuzan from behind the door. Ah, right. You had been bathing for a while now. You should get out of it.

"Kuzan-nii, do you have clothes for me?"

"Yes. I will put them on the laundry basket, if you allow me to come in for a second."

"No peeping, mister. But okay.", you shouted, feeling a lot better. You still were tired, but it wasn't as bad as before the bath. You had turned your back to the door, when you heard Kuzan come in. He was still chuckling about your answer, but he didn't look into your direction. You could see it, since you leered at him over your shoulder. After he left, you got out of the tub and dried yourself. Then you took the clothes he had left for you. "An uniform? Really?", you mumbled, but didn't complain any further. You put on the white skirt, light blue top and the white jacket. You had formed your tower into a turban that held your hair, ignoring the light pain caused by the weight. Putting on your shoes you left the room and saw Kuzan waiting for you. He leant on the wall behind him. The doctor was waiting next to him.

"There you are." The doctor went over to you, lead you to a chair and checked you. Hence he got rid of your towel and checked the wound on your head. After treating you, he gave you some medicine that you instantly consumed and left. Lots of bandages covered your skin and a part of your head now. You thanked the doc, as he disappeared through the door that he closed. You looked at Kuzan.

"Are you feeling better?"

"Yes. Thank you.", you whispered and bowed slightly. With a graceful move of his hand he pointed towards his bed. You nodded and made yourself comfortable there. When you sat down, he also did on his armchair. Next to him you could see a huge bookshelf. In general, the room was simply furnished. A bed, an armchair, a small desk and two chairs... some pictures on the wall and lights. To you, it was boring. But you knew that Kuzan only slept here. There was no need to decorate this small room. After checking out his room, you noticed that he watched you. Shyly you looked down and waited for some kind of telling-off. To your surprise it didn't follow. Actually he had other plans with you and other topics that he wanted to talk about.

"Ararara... you have some talent for this sort of trouble...", he noted and scratched the back of his head. He leant forward, so that he could support his arm on his leg. "Fortunately no one heard you, since there was nobody at school. No one will know about this incident." This information confused you. There was a reason to hide this, right? Was it possible that you were the reason? "Where shall we start?" This question confused you even more.

"I... don't know. Kuzan... am I the one who did...?"

"Please relax.", he asked softly, interrupting your question. "First of all: Are you being bullied at school? Was this the first time that you were followed by someone?"

You sighed and pressed your hands on your lap. It was a topic that you didn't want to talk about. It sounded so poor that you were bullied and didn't have the guts to resist them. At least, before you started to work out. "It was the first time that they followed me in order to beat me up", you mumbled, being ashamed of that fact.

"Why didn't you tell me? You could've tried to speak with your teachers..." He started but noticed in an instant, why you didn't ask for help. "[Name]-chan..."

"The teachers at this school don't care.", you told him in a low voice. "The first time they didn't take me seriously. After some attempts I gave up and handled them in my own way. Grandma was showing no mercy everything related to school. I've come to the conclusion that grandma doesn't understand me the way that I believed she would. It's no big deal. I am used to this... almost everyone treats me like a weirdo."

"Why did you not tell me? Don't you trust me anymore?" He asked seriously and stared into your eyes. His gaze was so intense that you weren't able to avert your eyes. "I won't tell her anything of this, just please explain..."

"You were busy... I didn't want to ruin the good mood, when I was with you. I didn't want to think about this problem." You confessed and tensed up a little. "I trust you, but I don't trust grandma anymore." Kuzan lifted one of his brows, but didn't say anything. He signalled you that he would continue listening to you. "I don't remember when the bully started, but the girls at school got really bitchy. They despise me for no reason... but apparently there is one. Maybe it has to do with my 'charismatic' looks." The way you pronounced this little word made clear that you didn't believe this statement at all. "They got jealous because boys then to ask me out. But I think there's more to their hatred. I made no friends with anyone at school. Only the kids

from our quarter are nice. The school's full of douche bags."

"You endured too much of unjustified, bad treatment. Tell me next time, please. I do care for you."

"Sorry."

"Did you know these guys? I mean the group who dared to hurt you.", he asked. He still wanted to find out what caused this 'accident'.

"No, not directly. She's not part of my class. I saw her some times, since she was one of these bully-squads who stalked me. But usually I could ignore them... this time they had a serious issue with me.", you told him and wondered, why it escalated this time. Moving your fingers a little you tried to recollect your memories. It felt like it happened a long time ago, although it had been a few hours since the incident. "They became aware of my training and caught me at the gym. First, they tried to make fun of me working out... then the raven-haired girl got mad. She told me, it was because of my attitude and some random guy whom she fell for. She was talking about something like him being in love with me and that he wanted to propose to me. I don't know... it was weird stuff." You breathed out and heard your own voice trembling slightly. "And... there was one more thing..."

Kuzan stood up, moved towards you and in the end sat down next to you, so he could wrap his arm around you. Gently he pushed your head on his chest. He caressed your head and kept calm. That was Kuzan for you, he always knew how to put you at ease. "Tell me."

"They accuse me of... of being a slut. I would sleep with everyone who is willing to have sex with me. No matter what age...", you mumbled. These words had hurt you. You weren't this kind of girl.

"I can understand that you can't ignore her accusation. Don't worry not everybody thinks this way. Also it doesn't matter. We know it better, right?"

"It still hurts... just because of my stupid charm. This is like a curse. It's not like I am a beauty like the women in the fashion magazines."

"You are a beautiful, stupid. But it's true that your ability is a true problem.", he mumbled at the end of the sentence. "But never mind. [name]-chan, what happened to you?"

"..." You took a deep breath. "Well... she raised a quarrel. She tried everything to anger me. After she was successful in enraging me, she sent her two 'slaves' who beat me up. This coward hid behind them and kicked me... somehow I beat them up and won the fight with the help of... that stab... you know which." Your voice got even lower, but you were confident that he would understand you. "I told them to leave and threw away my weapon. But then... she grabbed it and hit me. The strike almost turned off my lights... damn..." You instinctively touched the spot where you got hit and flinched. The painkiller hadn't start to take affect so far. "After... afterwards she..."

the girl ordered her monkeys to..."

"I see." Kuzan interrupted you once again and hold you close to him. He kept on caressing your head in all caution, so he wouldn't accidentally hurt you. "That explains your clothes." You could hear his anger and even feel it. The air around him got cold. You didn't mind, your body was heated from the bath anyways. It was nice. When you opened your mouth, he silenced you with one of his fingers. "I can't... I don't want to imagine how scared you had been.", he mumbled, pressing his face into your hair. You gulped and were shocked by his statement. You had tried to avoid this thought as long as possible. But he spoke the truth. It had scared you to the bone. Blinking you realised that tears were falling down your cheeks. With a low sob you pressed your face in his chest and hold on tight on his shirt. It felt so good to let out your frustration. You really needed this.

After some moments you pushed him away and rubbed your eyes. "Thank you... I feel better now", you whispered and showed a small smile. Your smile grew even wider. Kuzan held a small lollipop in front of you and had a soft expression on his face. He always seemed to know what you needed. You took the candy and licked it slowly, before you pushed it in your mouth. A while ago you had noticed that this kind of candy had a calming effect on you and Kuzan remembered that. He was your true hero. "Thanks", you mumbled, while sucking the candy.

"I'm glad to hear that.", he answered with a gently smile. He was glad that you were fine now. The lollipop helped to distract you from your dark thoughts, at least he hoped so. There were a lot of other problems to solve. "But I am afraid that there's more than this bunch of assholes who harassed you. At least... you didn't get..." He stopped, then shook his head and crossed his arms. "Look. There is this problem..." He obviously changed the topic because of good reasons. You didn't want to talk about it any further as well. But what was he implying now? Interested you turned your head towards him. "Listen carefully now, [name]-chan. What I am about to tell you is something that everyone tries to hide from you. I am acting against orders but I can't keep on watching you suffer."

Your eyes widened at this information. So even Kuzan knew that something was wrong with you. For a second you felt rage, but in the second you understood that he was trying to help you. He was the only one who was always honest with you. You remembered the date you had had with him where he promised to look after you and take the blame for whatever you would do. You decided not to make a scene and wait for an explanation why you got treated like a monster. Your grandma didn't explain her stupid behaviour but Kuzan would. It was about time that someone enlighten you about your 'power'. Shanks and Mihawk also had hinted at something like this. You were so sick of being in the dark. "Will you really tell me the truth?", you asked quietly. It was almost too good to be true. Nervously you toyed around with the lollipop in your mouth.

Kuzan nodded. He folded his hand and supported them on his legs. A frown underlined the seriousness of this matter. "How do I explain this?", he asked himself. It was difficult to explain you the 'problem' with you that he found out some years ago. Grandma had always hidden this fact. She didn't allow anyone to tell you about

this, but he was sick of keeping it a secret. A long time ago you were a lively flower that wanted to get to know the world, but this attitude changed with the time going by. He felt bad for you. He knew that he could free you from this cage, but he didn't. He had always believed that you weren't strong enough to handle this thing inside of you. With this incident he had changed his mind. He would tell you everything you needed to know. "You possess some special powers, as you have already noticed.", he started, thinking about how to couch this matter.

You kept listening and didn't stop him from talking. It was true, that you had a lot of questions that you wanted to ask him. However, it was the best to let him say everything he wanted to. So you looked at him und noticed how nervous he felt about this issue. How strange... usually Kuzan never showed what he thought so frankly. After some moments he continued. "Okay. Listen. This power of yours is unknown, so I can't explain you, what it is and where it comes from. I guess it is a Devil-Fruit-Power but it's not proven." A small pause followed. "You can swim and you don't get weakened by water in general, so it doesn't look like it is that kind of power. Additionally, you own no superhuman powers. You aren't strong as a giant nor any other traits distinguish. However, you own special abilities that no one can explain. You are extraordinary charismatic to almost everyone. That's one reason why you attract men so easily. But I guess, that you know that already." He gave you a crooked smile, displaying the discomfort he was feeling. "But that alone is no reason to treat you like this. Still... there is a reason, why grandma tries to control you. It's because of the thing inside of you. I don't want to call it this way... but inside of you sleeps indeed a monster."

You stared at him in disbelief while your candy almost fell out of your mouth. There was no way that was true. So you really were danger to everyone around you? Why did life hate you so much? Was there no sign of happiness for you in the future? Would you get chained again, because of this thing inside of you?

"Please, keep listening", he asked you kindly. "The navy got a report about you. As an admiral I heard about it right away and got confused, because I know you. You are neither a monster nor a killer. At any rate they wanted to keep an eye on you. That's what you found out a while ago, right?" You nodded astonished. How could he know? Was he reading your mind again? "You don't look surprised by the statement." Yes, he was. "Back to the point: There is no explanation why this thing is sleeping within you. They... they assume the root lay in your home-island. We have only little information about Crescent Island. Since the reports' qualities were low, they can't say who lived on this island. By who they are talking about the ancestry, race... To sum it up, they think that you are only half human. The other half is this animal-like thing that awakens 'randomly'." He sighed at his own words. "They don't believe me, when I told them that it is caused by stress. Every time it had occurred, some guys tried to molest you. It only happened with male and you didn't do it on purpose. Somehow it reflects your attitude towards men like them. I can understand you at this point."

"So... in the end... I am the monster. I am a danger to my environment. Is this why the navy didn't punish this pirate?" You felt exhausted and tired again. Would this never end?

"In my eyes you aren't, [name]-chan. They act wrong. Instead of finding out what this power is, they chained you. I wasn't very fond of this idea, but what could I do? You are safe here... I had to play along in this stupid game." He was annoyed, when he remembered the order of his boss. "In the meanwhile I tried to find out about your power, but I didn't find a single trace. I am sorry."

"Don't be. I trust you... you're not at fault here.", you mumbled, still feeling insecure and bad about all of this. You exhaled slowly. Then you saw how his gaze fell on your wrists.

"You took them off." He stated not surprised at all. "That's why it happened again." You gave him a doubtful look, when he continued speaking. "As I mentioned... every time some guys tried to molest you, you changed into this second form. No one has seen your other side, since no one survived it. This time - however- two girls of the group did... but they forgot everything through the trauma of the blood. They passed out, before they could see your other form." He stopped for a second. "I wonder about this power of yours. The bracelets were made of a special material that we usually use for Devil-Fruit-users. They held back your second form for a while. But unknown to the most, it didn't help much. There has been already an incident that I've covered for you."

"I feel like I am the bad one here... these guys tried to hurt me. But at the same time... I... I.. did kill...", you stuttered at the end of your own sentence. The thought of being a murderer haunted you. You didn't do it on purpose! You didn't even remember it! "Am... am I not going to be punished? I mean... I k-killed..."

"No.", he answered bluntly, "You won't. It's not your fault that you are this way nor you chose this life. This I how... I try to atone for this one failure." Confused you blinked and stared at him. "As you realized, Joker didn't get any punishment. I gave my best but it's hard to get him... the problem is that he will become a warlord anytime soon. So he won't be punished for everything he has done so far. I can't believe it myself that the world government ignored this tragedy. It's almost like they allowed him to eradicate your home from existence." He clenched his fist so hard that you believed he would bleed. Actually they froze. That always would happen, if he got angry. "I am sorry, that I can't fulfil my promise. I will keep on trying, but..." He sighed and cut his own thought with this. "I want you to be happy. There is no way that I will extradite you to the navy. No one knows what they would do with you. In their eyes you are a threat. A monster with an unknown degree of destructive power and abilities."

"..." You were speechless. You had guessed that Kuzan didn't accomplish anything. But you would have never thought that he was ready to go this far for you. The whole time he had been your saviour. Summarized it meant that every time you passed out, something bad happened... and Kuzan got you out of trouble. The gratitude you were feeling was never-ending. This man showed you so much kindness that you were moved to tears. This admiral worked against his superior in order to make you happy. You almost broke the lollipop with your teeth because of the feelings that overwhelmed you. "Kuzan..."

"Don't worry about me. They don't know.", he reassured you. "But we've got another problem now."

"... aside from this... incident at school?"

"Yes. The marine headquarter was informed about the loss of your bracelets. Also there was some information about pirates who intend to kidnap you." Kuzan looked into your eyes, as he informed you about the problem. '*Shit*' you thought. '*He knows that it's true.*' Without responding to any of the statements you averted your eyes and stared at the floor. Ugh, you felt bad. After you heard about his loyalty, you couldn't tell him what you intended to do. "[name]-chan. What was the reason, why you had a quarrel with grandma?"

"So you know about it... is that the reason, why you are here?", you asked him quietly, instead of giving an answer.

"I am here, because I had a bad feeling about the information we got. It will harm you to leave this island in your state. You can barely defend yourself."

"Because of grandma."

"I know that. Geesh, I should've done something much earlier regarding your wishes." He rubbed his temple with his fingers. "You started to work out, as you told me. Why did you change your mind and went against grandma's rules. Usually you didn't dare to go against her."

"I've met someone who will lead me to my happiness", you whispered somewhat anxious. "This person freed me from the chains... and promised me to get me, as soon as I have finished my preparations. I will learn how to fight... for this, I will leave this island."

"Who? Who are you trusting so much?" Kuzan asked you irritated. You weren't that naive to fall for such a stupid trap. "Pirates? Are you possibly trusting pirates? If it's for training, then come with me. Come to the navy-school and become part of us. It's safer..."

"Kuzan-nii, do you hear yourself? You don't want me to join." You stated what apparently confused him. Some seconds later he smiled and lowered his gaze. Again you spoke. "If you would've suggested this before telling me all of this... before I had met this great person, I would've thought about it. But now..."

"I understand you, [name]-chan. Honestly, I don't know what is the best for you. The navy acts really stupid at times, but it's the only way to attain something without getting punished by the world government. No one would chase you nor treat you like a monster." Kuzan sighed heavily. He was debating with himself over this matter. "If you leave, I cannot longer protect you as much as I did so far. Also... I cannot let you go. Orders are orders", he mumbled in annoyance. After he used his hand to turn your face towards his, so he could directly look into your eyes. "Who?"

"Is that important?", you asked him stubbornly. You didn't want to reveal who was fault at your decision to leave the island. "I've decided long ago that I want to leave this forsaken place. You can't hide my crimes forever. It's about time for me to learn how to fight... to find out... what this thing inside of me is. I appreciate that you've told me this much. I will be careful now and try to learn to control myself." You told him and stood up. Then you walked over the door. You could feel the floor freeze under your feet.

"The navy fears what you could become if you get trained. They discussed whether you should join us or keeping you locked away from the world. If they become aware that you left, they will search for you. You will be a wanted-"

"I don't care about this shit anymore! I want to be free!", you shouted and shut your eyes. You clenched your fists which were trembling. "Is it so wrong that I am fed up with living inside a cage? How can I go on living this life after I've heard so much?! This truth freaking hurts!"

"I know. I hope that you won't hate me. However... it's your choice. But I hope that you won't get in trouble with pirates... I don't want to see you as my enemy in the future." Although his voice was cold, you could feel the warmth coming from him. He wanted to best for you. He wasn't like grandma, he had a sense for the right kind of 'justice'. "Please, [name]-chan. I can help you... I simply won't listen to my superiors, if it's about you..."

"I've made up my mind, Kuzan-nii. I won't ever hate you... and I hope, you won't either. I will leave this place. Officially I will transfer to an university." You went over to his desk and scribbled a number on a small paper. You gave it to him without looking at him. "That's my number. Sorry for being a nuisance. Thank you for everything you've done so far", you whispered. Then, you took out for lolli for a moment, looked into his eyes and smiled cutely. Tears were streaming down your face, since you knew this was a 'farewell'. "I love you, stupid, icy brother!" As these words left your mouth, you felt a sharp pain in your chest. Your heart felt like it was squeezed by something, with made you tremble. But you ignored the pain and still smiled. Thus you turned and ran out of his room. It would be hard... and you had to deal with everything that you'd heard. You didn't mind, as you knew that Kuzan was on your side. He didn't stop you from running away, right? So he wouldn't be really against your decision. You smiled, although the tears wouldn't stop.

Only a few days were left, before your life would change to the better.

Unknown to you, Kuzan had frozen his complete room. He lay on this hart bed and stared at the ceiling. He was smiling in defeat, even though everything inside of him wanted to go after you and stop you from your stupid dream. "The youth is so reckless.", he mumbled. "If I had told you the whole truth... would you hate me then?" He closed his eyes. There were a lot of things that he couldn't tell you yet. But he would eventually. "Grow strong, [name]-chan. Grow strong and become happy. You deserve it, my little stupid sister." Kuzan understood you well. He wouldn't stop you with all his might, even if he had to. You were chained for years now. It was time to let you free. Suddenly he cursed. "Fuck this charm. She got me again. How can I not let

her go with these beautiful, honest eyes of her?" He laughed, then sighed in defeat. "Arararara... how am I going to explain this? She still didn't tell me who she will join for her adventure..."

He looked at the paper in his hand.

"Good luck, [name]."

Finally. The day of your departure had arrived.

After the incident at the gym, you dropped out of school and made preparations for your leaving. You had packed a bag with your most important belongings and some clothes. The most important thing was your little jewellery box. Kuzan had gifted it, when you turned twelve. The wooden box had your favourite colour and was decorated with beautiful clams and pearls. A huge (f/c) jewel was on the top of the cap. A small, silver locked stopped anyone from opening it. You had the only key for it. For the last time you opened it and looked at the few things that you held dear. One of them was a necklace that you got from a very nice old geezer who you met through Kuzan. There were many small items that you connected with some good memories. More weird items, less valuable jewellery. You smiled and toyed around with a small self-made puppet, made of painted wooden pearls, twines and buttons. You chuckled and noticed the folded paper that you had pushed aside. It fell on the floor. Lifting it up, you opened it and blushed a little.

Heh, you would take it with you. There was no chance that you would throw away the picture of this hottie who you liked from the first time you'd seen him on a poster. You had torn the image of him from a magazine that was all about pirates and other criminals. Honestly said, you didn't know who he was, but it didn't matter. Staring in these hypnotizing eyes made you feel better somehow. Maybe it sounded crazy, but at times you talked to this man. No, it was crazy. Nothing new, right? You were about to leave with some powerful criminal and you would get trained by the best swordsman in the world. There was no chance that you were sane.

Giggling you put the picture back to its place and closed the small chest. You stored it inside your bag. After you looked around and checked, if you got the most important stuff. Soon you would leave this place, it was even possible that you wouldn't return at all. But you didn't feel sad about it. There were only a few things that gave you a reason to return. No matter how angry you were at your grandma, you still loved her. Without her, you wouldn't have lived such a nice - but controlled - life. Maybe - if she forgave you - you would return and pay her a visit. Maybe. You sighed and moved towards your door. Grandma tried to lock you away, but nothing stopped you from your goal. Even Kuzan had tried to convince you to stay, although you had already talked about it.

A noise. Surprised you turned towards your open window from which a soft breeze blew in. A shiny, white almost transparent bird was sitting on the sill. It hopped around, searching for something. A small package was attached to its frail looking

body. It was... and bird made of ice. "Huh?" You moved towards the bird who looked around curiously. After it spotted you, it stopped moving. When you reached it, you carefully touched the head of the bird that closed its eyes. "Kuzan..." You smiled and took the small letter that was attached to its neck. Leaning against the sill with your back you read the content. Gee, Kuzan's handwriting was as messy as always.

*'Dear [name],
I hope you'll get this before you disappear into nowhere. The content of the package is my farewell gift for you. Please be a good girl and don't cause too much trouble. It would be a pain in the ass to be responsible for that.'*

You chuckled while you read the first lines. *'That will be hard'* you thought. Your curiosity grew so much that you decided to open the package. Looking up from the letter, you noticed how the bird started to melt and disappear into a sparkling dust. "What a show-off.", you smiled. You took the packet and opened it eagerly. Silver keys, a little map and three lollipops were inside. He remembered your tick that you had developed a while ago. This certain candy had a calming effect on you. You liked to play around with it and that you could take it out your mouth to fumble with the stick. Also... it stopped you from trying out to smoke. You needed something to compensate for the stress that you had and lollipops were the solution. Besides, male seemed to like them too... Whatever. Grinning you put one in your mouth. They were even savoured of your favourite flavour. Great! You played with the sweet with your tongue and felt happy. Nice, but what about the keys? You continued reading.

*'I don't know if the old woman will survive all of this and I don't know, if she wants to see you ever again, should you truly leave. These keys are for your own home. I've bought you a small house near the beach. I kept the third key, so I can visit it and keep it clean. I hope you accept my present and will return once a while to your home. Got it? You will always have a home, even if you leave.
I put a map there, so you'll find it.
Become strong and become happy. I will always see you as my little sister.'*

*Yours,
Kuzan'*

Wow. This man was just unbelievable. You held the keys in your hands and smiled. "Thank you...", you whispered and put them in your pocket. Your heart beat fast, as you thought how much love Kuzan showed you. Happy. You were so happy that you met him. At the same time a weird, painful feeling appeared in your heart again. You pressed your hand on your heart and gulped. Why did you feel pain, when you thought about your loved ones? Was it because of your trauma back then? You shook your head and put yourself together. A last glance to your room, then you left.

You ran towards the east side of the harbour where Shanks and his crew were waiting for you. It took a while to get there. But you were so excited, that you made it really fast. You could see them from afar and waved your hand. "Heeeey!" You shouted and grinned widely. It was such a strong feeling to see them now. Your excitement grew with each step that you made towards them. But there was no time to hold a chitchat. Kuzan had mentioned one more thing in his letter.

'PS. A dozen of navy ships will arrive soon. Warn your mates, if you want to make it out alive.'

"Hello everyone!", you shouted, when you finally arrived and grinned. "Here I am!"

Shanks moved his head in your direction and smiled widely. "Good to see you.", he greeted you. His crew chanted your name and greeted you in their way. Each of them smiled at you and showed how happy they were to see you. You felt at home in some strange way. But there was no time to enjoy this.

"Shanks-san, the navy is on its way to this harbour. Someone told them that...", you started, but he silenced you with a laugh.

"I know, I know. Come on, hurry. It's time to leave." He reached out his hand for you that you took. With a jump he pulled you with him on his extremely cool looking ship. You looked around and gaped at the sight. You were on a real ship. You would leave this forsaken place. Your heart felt like exploding. While you were busy with your own emotions, Shanks read your mind and smiled at your behaviour. Afterwards his expression got serious. "Come on, guys! We need to hurry. In some minutes the navy will arrive. We have no time for a fun brawl.", he shouted, while the crew saluted and run off to their duties. With great interest you watched them do their job. Everyone knew their position and did their task without hesitation. You felt like the ship started to move. Excited you left your bag and ran towards the railing. You could see how you the town got smaller the further you moved away.

"[Name]-chan, how do you feel?" You looked up and saw directly into the mature face of Shanks. He looked even cooler than before. This man was the key to your happiness and you were glad that you met him.

"Great", you exhaled and leant on the railing. The wind softly stroke your cheeks and hair. The salty taste was refreshing, you had always love the scent of the sea. "I am happy that I met you. I can finally be myself." Shyly you smiled and pushed a strand of hair behind your ear.

"No more rules. At least, I won't take away your freedom. You need to listen to me", he laughed and grinned. His smile was so catching, like his aura. Shanks watched you. He was amused about the dreamy look in your eyes, while you watched the smaller getting island. His gaze travelled over your shiny (h/c) hair, when he noticed the bandages. His expression grew serious. Curiously he stroked away your hair from your neck, causing you to shiver and wince. "What is this? Are you hurt?", he asked confused.

You pushed your hand on your neck and felt nervous due to his intimate touch. You blinked. Then you bit your lip, because of the discomfort that the question caused. "There was some accident at school. It's no big deal. I am used to this... training and stuff, you know" You laughed nervously and hoped that he wouldn't detect the unease in your voice.

"Did someone tried to hurt you?" Shanks sounded somewhat angry. He sighed as you didn't answer right away. He put his hand on your head and stroked it gently. "Please tell me later. I want you to trust me, so my first order is that you are not allowed to lie to me. Got it?"

You gulped and stared at the floor. "I... am not part... of your crew, yet.", you mumbled and earned a strict glance. "Yes, sir." Your voice got even lower. "I'll tell you."

"Good girl" He crouched down a little so that you were eye to eyes with him. Shanks' eyes displayed a warm shine that let you feel comfortable. "[name]-chan, you are part of us now. We are your new family. Don't feel shy about telling us everything. You don't have to but don't forget that we will always listen, okay?" You nodded slowly. You could feel the truth behind his words. "But for now... let's enjoy our trip. It'll take a while until we reach Hawk-Eyes' home.", he told you and stood up. Then he moved away from the railing. "Excited about your first adventure with us?", he asked shouting. His crew noticed and looked at you.

Blushing, you nodded. "Yeah!" Before you followed him, you looked a last time at the island. You always had known the island's name and also the city's one. But since you had always desired to leave this forsaken place, you didn't bother memorizing it. Many knew this island, since it was a paradise for criminals. A legal one, as you guessed. Many rookies docked at the harbour, had a good, relaxing time in the gamble quarter and continued their journey. You had worked at the bar for a long time now, you had seen enough. The bar... your boss had actually been sad, when you explained him that you would leave. He didn't fire you. On the opposite, he told you that you could come back whenever you wanted and work there. Heh... how ironic. Kuzan gifted you a house at this island, so maybe you would return to relax here yourself. This time, as a free woman.

"Sorry, grandma. Farewell... *Gularia*, the island of the lazy blaze of glory."

You turned away from the smaller growing image and followed Shanks to the others, who prepared a big meal with lots of sake. Shanks gave you a huge cup of your favourite drink, like you could taste. With a smile you took a mouthful and enjoyed the babble of the crew. What a nice atmosphere. This would be the perfect change of pace. "Thank you...", you mumbled, you even couldn't finish your sentence, since you felt so much happiness. Shyly you looked up and saw the wide smiles of the crew and the redhead.

"Welcome! Let's get along!" They chanted in unison.

Shanks drank his sake and sighed contently. "Let's create a good memory, [name]-chan! Your first adventure shall be the best one! Your very first adventure with us!" Again the crew chanted in unison. You'd really learned to like them. The few time you had spent with them were more than enough to adapt to their life. Shanks took a huge bite of the grilled meat. "[name]-chan" You made a soft sound, so he would know that you were listening although Lou started to tell you one of their past stories. "We will bring you to Mihawk. There, you will train until you attain full age. If you make it, we will come and get you. Then our deal is fulfilled and you will become a

true member of my crew."

You nodded smiling and looked up to the mast of the ship where the jolly roger of Shanks' was pictured on his flag. The symbol of the 'Redhair-Pirates'. So in the end you broke one of the most important rules in order to achieve happiness. But... there was this one thing that you couldn't ignore. Pirates were dangerous. They loved only three things and none of them contained true love between two beings. *'Don't fall in love with a pirate.'* The words still rang in your head. But that topic wasn't important now. You wanted to enjoy your first journey far away from home.

"I will become strong, Shanks-san.", you told him with such a strong determination that your eyes started to glow. "I won't disappoint you for taking care of me."

With this promise your journey began.

~Location: Gularia, South-Blue. Next target: Kuraigana, Grandline~