Chapter 55 : The Blue Captain

Atsuma fought fiercly as fast as he could. The three that were fighting him were doing their best to keep up, but it was proving to be useless. They were beginning to get tired, while Atsuma seemed to never run out of energy. Atsuma knew it was only a matter of time before they revealed a weak point in their attack that he could exploit. This fight would be a victory for Orange. That is, he thought that, until he saw it. The site sent a cold shiver down his spine. It was a good thing the Blues had also stopped fighting, because Atsuma had left himself wide open from the horrific site.

There, in the middles of the field, was Baas. Only, it wasn’t Baas. His body was there, but there was no goofy smile. There was no gleam in his eyes. In fact, his eyes were not open They were closed. He was also not standing, he was being held up by a large Blue. He looked almost as though he were…

“If you don’t want to your young friend here to lose his life, I would suggest you give up!” The blue band said with his sword to Baas throat.

Atsuma felt relief. To threaten Baas’ life, meant that he still had one to be threatened. But his relief feeling did not last long. His brain soon comprehended the situation the group was now put in. He looked to his left over at Koroko and Pandora. Their eyes were fixed on him. Waiting for his decision as they always did in these situations. It was his job to make decisions like this. He took a look to his right at Sheina and Keely. They were looking at Baas. Their eyes pleading, hoping nothing would happen to their friend. Atsuma took a sigh. Then…

He dropped his sword and raised both his hands in the air.

“We surrender.” He said with an intense look in his eyes.

Koroko and Pandora looked each other. Then, Koroko let his sword fall to the floor. Pandora did the same with her bow. They both, simultaneously, raised their hands in the air.

Sheina and Keely quickly followed the examples set forth. The thuds could be heard as their pairs of weapons hit the grass.

All those associated with Atsuma now had their weapons down and their hands in the air. All accept Baas, who’s body was still being held up like a lifeless doll.

The fight was over, the Orange team had lost.

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“Ouch, hey, not so tight.” Atsuma yelled at the blue Band tying his bonds. It was the female whom he had been fighting earlier. She took pleasure in responding to his request.

“Oh yeah, like we’re really gonna tie your hands loosely.” She said sarcastically. “Would you have tied our bonds loose had you won?”

“No.” Atsuma said smirking. “We would have just killed you.”

The female got a little irritated at that, but kept her sinister smile. She gave Atsuma’s head a little push as she walked past him toward her group.

All of Atsuma’s group were now kneeling with their hands tied behind their backs. From left to right there was Atsuma, Koroko, Pandora, Sheina and Keely. Baas’ unconscious body was lying near the group of Blue who were in the middle of discussing and congratulating. The center of the group was the large man who had defeated Baas. Apparantly, his name was Resol. But the members of the group tended to call him Reese.

The female whom had tied Atsuma’s bonds came and patted Reese on the back.

“Good job man.” She said with a confident grin.

Reese put his left hand behind his head in embarrassment.

“Thanks Decson.” He replied to the female. “I told you guys.”

“Yeah.” Said one of the males. “You did. How did you beat him anyway?”

“I just did what the captain said.” Reese shrugged. “I analyzed my enemy. It turns out, whenever he goes for the killing blow, he hesitates.”

“Fighting like a Leader.” Decson said. “Great job.”

“Don’t get too cocky though.” Another male said. “After all, he is an amateur.”

Another male finished his thoughts. “Wearing all white like he’s some kinda white band. What an idiot!”

The entire group laughed simultaneously at the stupidity of the kid.

Though the Blues were enjoying themselves, the Oranges and Grey were feeling some different emotions.

“Ats.” Koroko spoke.

“What?” Atsuma answered.

“I’m bored. They haven’t tied up our legs. Can I go and get Baas.”

“No way Koroko.” Pandora said. She then moved her body so that it made hard contact with his. “You can’t put Baas in danger.”

“These are Blues, Panda. They probably won’t know what hit them before I get over there.”

“No.” Atsuma said getting his teammates’ attention. “These guys fight different than the Blues we’re used to. My guess is, they would be ready for us if we tried something.”

Atsuma then turned and looked at his team. “Until we get Baas back, I don’t want anybody trying anything. Besides, these are Blue bonds. They’re not the easiest to get out of.”

Koroko let out a loud sigh. “To think that that kid would be outdone by one Blue. Still, he is just a kid.”

“Baas was probably caught off guard.” Atsuma concluded. “These guys may have thrown a surprise he couldn’t take.”

“What’s gonna happen to us Atsuma?” Sheina asked.

“Well… given that these are Blues, they’ll probably take us to their base to interrogate us for information.”

Atsuma was silent for a second, but then a smile got on his face.

“I’m actually looking forward to that.”

The group looked at Atsuma confused.

“The Blues base is in the middle of the lake. That means there’s only one way we can get there. By their boat.”

Pandora and Koroko smirked when they heard him say that.

“Why is that good?” Keely asked.

“Well…” Atsuma answered, “I have my history with blue ships. But, I also want to meet this captain of theirs. I think I know who we’re dealing with.”

“Oh really?” Koroko asked half jokingly.

“Yeah. At the moment, there’s only one Great One in the blue country. I’m betting with their different method of fighting that is actually… good, that this is that person’s crew.”

“You would guess right.” Decson interceded.

Atsuma looked up to see her and the rest of the Blues looking at them and smirking menacingly.

“So, you want to meet the captain.” Decson continued. “Well, don’t worry, we’ll grant you that wish. But when we do, well, you know how the saying goes. Be careful what you wish for.”

The rest of the crew snickered at the comment of Decson. The Oranges and Keely simply stared.

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The prisoners of the Blues were brought through the forest toward the great river of Wig-Or-Log. First came a blue, then a prisoner. Baas, being still unconscious, was thrown across the shoulder of the guy who had defeated him. As they were walking, an Orange would make an occasional comment.

“So… what’s your captain like?” Koroko asked.

“One of the greatest Leaders you’ll ever meet.” The man in front of him said. “Not once has there been a person whose plans have worked so many times in…”

Koroko interrupted the man’s praising with fake snoring. He then pretended to wake up from his fake nap.

“I’m sorry.” Koroko said. “You started talking about a Blue so I got bored.”

Though the man groaned in annoyance, some snickers could be heard and they were not all from Atsuma’s group. Atsuma could appreciate that. This is why the Blues weren’t so bad. Unlike the Golds, they were pretty loose.

It wasn’t long before the line of fighters exited the forest to behold a huge ship. Everyone had recently seen a ship similar to this one, so there was no marvel. None, except for Keely’s. Living in the Grey territory her whole life, this was quite a fascination for her.

“How in the Wig did we miss that?” Koroko asked jokingly. “So much for our Far’s supposed scouting skills. Panda, you’re fired.”

Though he could not see her, Pandora squinted hard at Koroko.

The enormous ship was docked near the shore of the lake with a plank extending down from the deck, to the grass. The Blues lead their prisoners up the plank onto the deck of the ship.

Analysis. It’s what the Center had trained Atsuma to do best. He immediately took notice of the deck. Looking around, it was filled with what you would usually see on a ship. Ropes all about, barrels full of weapons or supplies, along with artistic craftsmanship that could only be found on a Blue ship. The crew seemed to walk in random different directions, but you could tell that everyone had a job they were doing.

The team was lead to the bow of the deck where a figure sat in a chair. The chair faced away from them so that only the hand of the figure could be seen. Atsuma knew that was the captain.

“Kneel.” Atsuma heard one of the Blues command. Though they did not want to, the team got on their knees in front of the chair. All but Koroko. However, he too found himself on his knees when one of the Blues pulled down on the ropes tied to his hands. Koroko gave the man a deathly stare.

“Oh, I’m a so killing you.” He said to the guy.

The Blue simply laughed at him.

Reese lowered Baas’ body to the floor, before allowing it to drop. Baas hit the ship with a thump and a small bounce. He now laid face down with his hood covering his head.

And there they were presented to the captain of the Blues ship. From left to right was Baas, whose face could not be seen do his hood, Atsuma who was eagerly awaiting to see the captain, Pandora looking concerned at Koroko, Koroko, looking angrily at the guy whom had yanked him down, Sheina who head was staring at the floor, and Keely whose gazed was not fixed on one point.

“So, it was a success?” the person in the captain’s chair spoke. It was a female’s voice.

As she spoke, Sheina’s listened but did not look up. The voice sounded… familiar.

“Yes mam.” Answered Decson. “The plan went just as you said it would.”

“Of course it did.” The female said still not turning around. “Oranges are so full of themselves. They honestly think we can’t outsmart them.”

“Well, most of the time that’s true.” Atsuma said with a smirk. “But I didn’t know I was fighting the crew of a Great One.”

“So, you already know who I am.” The female spoke. “Took you long enough. I knew who you were as soon as I saw your group from my ship, Atsuma. Of course, I only planned for four of you. I didn’t know you had two others elsewhere in the forest. And yet, my team was still able to handle you with no casualties.”

Sheina thought back. Where had she heard this voice before?

“Be careful, captain,” Atsuma said half angry half smirking, “to underestimate the best team in Orange will lead to serious regrets.”

“Aw.” The female joked. “A tad upset are we?”

The top of the female’s chair turned around while the base of it stayed attached to the ground. As the captain began to face her prisoners, Sheina’s eyes grew wide and she immediately looked down again.

The captain was young. Much younger than Atsuma Pandora and Koroko. Even younger than the people she was commanding. She sat there in the chair with her head leaning to her left. Her head was supported by her left hand as well as her neck. There was a calm and yet sinister smile on her face. She had on dark blue jeans, black leather knee high boots, a purple t-shirt, and a leather jacket. Her long black hair and blue band on her left bicep matched the shade of her clothing perfectly. A black flat sword sat to her right leaned against the wall of the ship.

“Don’t worry supposed ‘greatest team in Orange.’” The female said keeping her relaxed pose. “Losing to the crew of captain Vatti is the hardest part of war. When this part is over, everything else will be easy.”

Chapter 55 End

Chapter 56 : Coincidence

“You’ve got to be kidding me!” Koroko shouted, bursting out in laughter. “The Blues only have one Great One, and it’s this little girl!”

If Koroko had wanted to contain his laughter, he would have had a hard time. But that was not a problem, considering he had no problem laughing in others’ faces.

“I can’t believe it!” he said in between chuckles. “She can’t be older than 19, and all of you guys suck compared to her.”

As the crew listened, they began to get annoyed. One of the male members began to approach Koroko to teach him some respect. But, he stopped himself when Vaati raised her hand. She looked at Koroko. Then, she smirked.

“Actually I’m sixteen, though I will be seventeen soon. But still, you’re right. For an entire country to have their best fighter to be someone as young as me, they must be pretty pathetic.”

“I’ll say.” Koroko agreed still laughing.

“And to think, you lost to these pathetic people.”

When he heard that, Koroko ceased laughing.

Vatti smirk intensified as she continued to speak. She spoke as though she were being serious, but everyone could tell she was joking.

“Say, if you guys lost to us pathetic Blues, doesn’t that mean you’re something lower than pathetic? I mean, it’s only logical.”

Koroko began to grind his teeth in frustration, but Atsuma simply chuckled.

“You kinda walked right into that one.” He said with a smile. Then, the smile was replaced with a smirk.

“But don’t worry, to be a Great One does not mean you’re the best fighter. It simply means you have a reputation. Vatti’s comes from being an excellent strategist at such a young age. To be a captain at the age of sixteen for a Blue is a great endeavor.”

“Indeed it is.” Vatti agreed putting her chin up. “And I…”

“But, I bet you suck at fighting.” Atsuma interrupted.

“Oooh.” Koroko and Pandora mocked simultaneously.

Vatti lost her smirk and glared at Atsuma.

“I’m sorry, did I strike a nerve?” Atsuma asked with his everlasting smirk. “That’s a nice flat sword you have by your chair. It must collect a lot of dust being only decoration. It’s okay. It’s only natural since the Blues are so hasty to set you guys out. You’re not the first 16 year old to become a Blue captain, and you won’t be the last. But to call yourself a young Blue captain AND a skilled fighter. Now that would earn my respect.”

Vatti glanced at the flat sword sitting by her chair. She stared at it for about five seconds. Then she quickly approached it and picked it up.

Atsuma’s smirk stayed on his face.

After grabbing her sword, Vatti quickly approached Atsuma. She bent down to get her face on his level and stared in him. Then, she gave him a little smirk of her own.

“I heard of you too Atsuma of Orange.” She then stood up and began pacing slowly in front of the Orange captives. “You win your fights by getting your opponents angry. I bet you were hoping I’d get angry and order my crew to set you free so I could fight you.”

“What are you talking about?” Atsuma said dumbly. “That thought never crossed my mind.”

Though he said this, it was exactly the plan he had been hoping to do.

“Sorry Atsuma.” Vatti said still pacing. “But there’s only one person in this world who can get me upset. And he’s much better at aggravating people then you are…”

As Vatti began to pace in front of Sheina, she stopped. She looked at the girl. Sheina was turned away in fear. She did not want Vatti to recognize her. Why not? She did not know. But still, she did not want it.

Vatti continued to stare down Sheina. Sheina tried her best to resist. Finally, she couldn’t any longer. Her face turned toward Vatti. Vatti looked dead at Sheina’s face, then, a laugh came out of her mouth.

“Wow.” Vatti said. She then began to continue pacing. “You talk about our country releasing people early, yet you’ve got this young person here. What a bunch of hypocrites you Oranges are.”

Sheina let out a sigh. Vatti had not recognized her. It was probably due to the passage of time. Though Sheina hadn’t noticed, two years might really change a person.

“And then we have this.” Vatti said. Sheina looked over at where she was. She had reached the opposite end of the line and was kneeling in front of Baas. Oh no! Is she saw Baas’ face, she would recognize him immediately.

“This guy looks like a white band.” Vatti said now crouching. She reached down to lift his hood up so she could look at his face. Sheina held her breath as she did.

Vatti stretched out her free hand, grabbed Baas’ hood and began to lift. But, before she finished, she let it drop.

“Wait,” she asked Reese. “Do I want to see his face? If he’s knocked out like that, you must have messed him up good.”

“Yeah.” Reese said excitedly remembering his battle. “Kicked him right in the chin with both feet.”

“Ooh.” Vatti said making an uncomfortable face. “Yeah, I think I’ll look at him later. I don’t want to see a bruised face right now.”

She then stood up tall and walked back in front of Atsuma.

“Okay Atsuma, I’m gonna be honest with you. I would rather meet you in battle and kill you there, than have you die in such a pathetic way. So here’s how it’s gonna work. You cooperate and answer all my questions, and I’ll let you guys go.”

“What kind of questions your highness?”Atsuma said still smirking.

“I simply want to know what you’re doing here.” Vatti responded with a quirky smile and fake quirky attitude. “What are you planning against the Blues shouldn’t be too hard of an answer.”

Atsuma’s smirk left his face, he was now being serious.

“We’re not here for you.”

“Tsk tsk tsk.” Vatti said shaking her head. “This would be a lot easier if you would cooperate. I don’t want to have to take you back to my base where they won’t be as nice as me, but I will.”

“I am cooperating.” Atsuma said seriously. “We did not come here to attack the Blues.”

Vatti let out a sarcastic sigh.

“Seriously? You expect me to believe Orange sent its best team so close to our territory without you guys doing something?”

“Whether you believe us or not it’s the truth.”

“Then why!” Vatti said suddenly getting angry. Her sudden change from calm to anger surprised everyone. Even Sheina was taken aback. Vatti had always been such a calm person. “Why in the Wig are Blues disappearing in this area!? We’re losing people out here and you expect me to believe that you just so happened to be wondering around? Where are my people going!?”

The intensity on Vatti’s face did not change. Atsuma returned it with his own intense look.

“I. Don’t. Know.”

She spoke again, but this time in a much lower voice.

“I gave you a chance to speak up, remember that.”

Vatti then turned to go sit back in her chair. As she did, she raised her hand and ordered her fellow Blues.

“Take them below deck. Set sail for home.”

“Yes mam.” Everyone said. They began to prepare to follow her orders when she interrupted them.

“Hold on.” The Blue Leader then looked at Keely. “You. Grey band. Which one of the weapons is yours?”

Keely gave Vatti an upset stare. She had never been captured before, but she knew what to do. She would not speak. To do so would be to give in to the enemy. No matter how much this Blue captain would ask, she would not respond. No matter how much they wanted, they would not get an answer from her. No matter how…

“Answer her.” Atsuma said looking at Keely.

Keely was confused, but upon hearing Atsuma’s command, she responded.

“The sword with the flamed sheath.”

Vatti nodded. She then looked at Decson. “Give the Grey back her weapon and release her onto the shore.”

“What!?” Keely asked standing up. “Why are you releasing only me!? You can’t do that!”

Vatti let out a chuckle.

“Aw, how cute. The little Grey thinks she’s worthy of being held captive.”

Everyone wearing a blue band laughed at Vatti’s joke. Keely looked around, upset, embarrassed and confused.

“Don’t worry Keely.” Atsuma assured standing up. “She’s just trying to get us upset. She would take you if she could, but the Discretes made that new rule.”

“How observant of you.” Vatti said smirking at Atsuma. “Though I think what the Discretes decided is totally unfair. She can help you out, even fight on your side while calling it self defense so long as she didn’t start the fight. But if I capture her, I have to set her free. Geeze, I thought I left those pests back at the Center and yet they still get on my nerves.”

“I think you agree with them After all, you’re letting her keep her weapon so she can defend herself right?” Atsuma asked smug.

Vatti smirked back at Atsuma. “I already told you Atsuma, that cocky attitude of yours doesn’t work on me. I’ve had to deal with someone way worse than you.”

Vatti then spoke to her crew.

“Decson, return the Grey back to land with her weapon. Reese, take the rest of the prisoners below deck.”

Reese turned to follow orders, but was interrupted again.

“Wait,” Vatti said. “I don’t want them trying anything. Especially this smug guy.”

She was referring to Atsuma.

“Place them in two separate locations. Keep the three to the right together. Tie Atsuma with the unconscious kid.”

She then spoke so that all could here.

“Get ready to set for sail, when Decson gets back, we’re heading home.”

“Yes mam.” The crew said.

As her crew followed her instructions and separated the team into three groups, Vatti her chair back around to face the front of the ship. The team was now separated into three different groups. Keely was led off the boat by Decson. Koroko Pandora and Shenia were led through a door that led below deck. They then made a right turn to be brought toward their holding place. Atsuma was being led toward the same door, only he would be making a left turn.

As the people were brought their separate ways, Reese picked up Baas and through him over his shoulder to take him with Atsuma. Before they made it through the door though, someone on deck tripped. They did it right in front of Vatti’s chair. Vatti, half joking half serious, spoke to the man without moving from her seat.

“Be more careful you moron.”

The order made the sailor nod and hurry back to preparing the ship, but that wasn’t all it did. The order traveled so that everyone on deck heard, everyone including an unconscious kid. Upon hearing the voice, Baas stirred a little from his unconsciousness. However, it wasn’t a full awakening. He moved only his head, and thus Reese did not really feel him. Baas lifted his head and opened his eyes as best as he could, but his brain was still dazed from his attack.

He could make out the shapes of the ship and people moving about. He was being led away from these people, toward someplace else. Directly in front of him, there was someone sitting in a chair, but Baas could not see them. They were facing away from him and his eyes were still not fully opened.

When one is in between the area of consciousness and unconsciousness, they do not always comprehend what is going on. Baas, did not understand any of this, but there was something his body understood. Instinctively, to the order he heard, Baas answered in a low voice…

“Okay Vatti.”

Then, his head fell forward as he blacked out yet again. Reese, still carrying Baas and not knowing any of this had happened, entered the door to the below deck and turned left to secure his prisoner. At the exact time he did that, Vatti turned around from her chair quickly.

“Baas?” she called low.

Her eyes looked around the ship, as though she had heard something and was now looking for it. But there was nothing out of the ordinary. Only her crew was there. Had she really heard his voice? No, it had to have been her imagination. Still, it had sounded so clear to her.

“Captain, are you okay?” One of the crew members asked her, noticing her stair.

“Huh?” Vatti asked taking her gaze off of her search.

“You seem a little… I don’t know, distracted.”

“Distracted?” Vatti repeated as though confused.

“Maybe you should get some sleep. You were up all night searching these waters.”

That was it. Sleep. Vatti figured it was because of her lack of sleep that she had heard his voice. She stood up from her chair and grabbed her sword.

“You’re right, I should get some rest. When Decson gets back, she will be in charge until I awake.”

“Okay mam.” The man said. As Vatti headed below deck, she put her free hand on her head and began to speak low to herself.

“Calm down, you’re just tired. Don’t let the enemy or your crew see you like this. He wasn’t there. You were hearing things. His birthday passed sometime ago. That means he’s already left the Center and found his country. That means he isn’t with you. Besides, what are the odds of you running into Baas anyway? Yes, he’s gone, and he isn’t coming back. Ever.”

Chapter 56 End