Summary

The Kid Pirates are invited to the infamous Pirate Festival. Birdie is still on board and no, she's not impressed.

Notes

This story is a special from "Captive". It follows the events of the movie "Stampede" and, like the movie itself, it's non-canon for Captive's storyline. You will also note that birdie is not as stressed about her condition as she is in the original story.

If we want to make a vague time indication, it would happen between day 25 and 26 of birdie's captivity (so right before meeting Drake).

Spoilers from the One Piece movie "Stampede".
Prelude

A long, silent breath left your lips as you leaned your head against the wood of the ship, right below the upper deck.

It was a bright day in the New World.

The sea was calm, for once, mild waves brushing against the keel of the Victoria Punk; calls from the seagulls echoed around the top of the masts, while the coarse laughter of the men filled the air around you.

You were sitting on the railing, eyes closed, enjoying the sun on your marked skin.

It was getting easier and easier, those days, to empty your mind enough and capture some moments of peace.

And it was terrifying.

«Slacking off, marine girl?»

...exactly.

Your features curled in a pout as you opened your eyes to glare at the three sneering pirates crossing the deck.

«What is it Booka? Do I have to help you with something?»

«I don't need your help!» the big man immediately scoffed, crossing his arms.

«...and I thought having a prisoner would be at least useful!» the Mohican laughed, turning to Wire «Why don't we make her clean the toilets or something?»

«SURE!» you blurted «And after that I'll do your laundry!»

«That might be an idea!» he retorted.

Wire rolled his eyes.

«Y/n, fetch new cordage from the basement.» he plainly ordered «The ropes of the second masts are pretty ruined after the last storm.»

You grimaced, carefully moving your leg to slide it down the railing, but a surge of pain ran up your womanhood and you abruptly halted your movement.

«Mmh... no.»

«No?!» the Mohican uttered «Just how impudent are y--»

«Wait. Waaait a second.» Booka sniggered, placing his hand on his comrade's shoulder and shooting a teasing glance at you «I think our little girl here can't really walk straight this morning.»

«What?» the Mohican looked at him, then back at you. His lips twitched in a crooked smirk «Ooh, I see.»
«Shut up!» you grumbled, a faint blush spreading on your cheeks «That's bullshit.»

«Prove it, then.» Booka grinned, pointing at the door «Go to the basement.»

«I don't feel like it.»

«Very well.»

He took a deep breath and turned to the deck, where most of the crew was hanging out.

«HEY GUYS! Y/N IS SO DRILLED SHE CAN'T WALK! COME WATCH!»

«BOOKA!» you choked, risking to fall from the railing.

The Mohican burst in laughter, while Wire shook his head with a sigh.

You watched in rising concern as some of the men started dropping what they were doing to come enjoy the show.

«Fine, fine!» you growled, forcing your sore body to get down on the deck and hurrying towards the door.

Unfortunately, you did limp badly enough to trigger everyone's enthusiasm.

«Oi, Y/n! Need a hand there?»

«Got banged pretty hard tonight, uh?»

«That's karma for keeping us awake!»

You reached the entrance under a chorus of yells, your teeth gritting harder with each painful step. When you finally grabbed the knob for support, you violently turned to the pirates, your middle finger raised in rage.

«YEAH, MESS AROUND WHILE YOU CAN!» you shouted «YOU ALL KNOW WHERE YOUR DICKS WILL BE WHEN I GET YOU ALL ARRESTED!»

You slammed the door behind you in a jubilation of laughter.

You still had to endure some teasing when you came up again, carrying the ropes on your shoulder.

Thankfully, moving proved to be good for your ache, the pain tuning down as your muscles warmed up. That, and the magic ointment from the doctor.

«I see. Thanks for the delivery.»

Killer's voice caught your attention and you looked at the railing just in time to see the Massacre Soldier slipping some coins in the albatross' bag before it flew away.

A small frown wrinkled your eyebrows as you followed it with your eyes. It looked different from the usual News Coo.

Killer was focused on the paper he received.
«Hey, blondie.»

He raised his masked face to you.

«Y/n.»

«Got something interesting there?» you asked, hinting at the letter with your chin.

A low hum rumbled through his chest before he replied.

«Maybe. Call Kid, he needs to see this.»

«Then call him yourself.»

Yeah, your bad mood from earlier hadn't completely worn off yet.

Killer lowered his arms, his concealed eyes fixed on you now.

«One of these days, kitty, I'm going to throw you overboard.»

«You already did.»

«Well, this time I'm not going to jump with you.» he turned back to the paper «Call Kid.»

You dropped the cordage on the floor with a groan and limped towards the workshop.

«Kid?» you grumbled, pushing the door open.

The workshop was messy, tools and metals lying around the floor and all over the huge desk, where the captain was currently tinkering with some small device.

«Hm?»

«Your boyfriend misses you.»

His amber eyes flicked up to meet your scowl.

Yes, I blame you for my condition.

You forced yourself to maintain a glowering face and let your back go against the wall, crossing your arms.

It wasn't so easy, with the beast looking right at you. Not even after all those weeks.

Somehow, the air around him was always burning.

After a few seconds, a smug smirk spread on his painted lips and he relaxed on the chair.

«You never seem to learn, birdie.»

A flick of his finger, and your belt yanked you forward.

«WAH! HEY!»

But his smirk only grew wider as he quickly attracted you to him, making you tumble on his lap
with a curt tug.

You grasped his vest not to end up hitting your forehead on his chest, and he took his chance to grab your waist, pressing your small body against his.

Your face jerked up to snarl at him, but every retort died on your lips in a gasp when his hand roughly groped your breast, his dangerous grin already hovering on your mouth.

«I thought last night's punishment taught you something, but looks like you need more.»

Kid gave your bosom another squeeze and your hand sprang over his, your grip on his vest tightening as you bit your lip.

«K-Kid... there's a... letter. I think. For you.»

«Mmh.»

He leaned over to pinch the tip of your nose between his teeth, barely listening, his fingers now searching for your nipple through the layers of fabric.

With his hot breath fanning your face and his strong scent invading your nostrils, it was hard to focus. It felt like the temperature had risen one hundred degrees.

«L-Looks important.» you stammered, your touch on his hand growing softer and crawling up his scarred forearm «Plus, I can hardly walk already.»

«And who's fault his that?»

You cocked an eyebrow, eyes rising on his.

«Yours.»

Kid stopped his ministrations to let out a laugh, his metallic arm wrapping around your figure, and you took the chance to readjust your balance on his lap.

«Fine, let's go see this letter.»

*So he DID listen.*

The pirate stood up, not bothering to let you down in the process, but lifting you with one arm like a damn baguette.

Your mouth twitched.

«Oh, for fuck's sake, can't you *please...!*»

«You're the one complaining about walking.» he sneered, making his way out of the workshop.

«PIRATE EXPO?!»

«..."The event will conclude with a treasure hunt for something that belonged to Gol D. Roger, the King of the Pirates himself."» Killer read out loud.

Evening had fallen over the ship and the crew was having dinner outside, with candles and torches
lit all over the deck and a myriad of stars leading the way.

«Gold Roger!» some men shouted, spitting crumbles on their neighbours.

The news had most of the crew all fired up, with the pirates seemingly unable to sit still on their chairs.

Killer folded the letter and turned to the captain.

«So, I guess we are going?»

A mad grin tugged at the redhead's lips as he slammed his hand on the table, shattering his empty plate.

«Fuck yeah we are going!»

His announcement made the men yell their approval and more booze flow in the tankards.

You nibbled at your inner cheek, eyes fixed on your almost untouched food.

A lock of long hair tickled your arm.

«Are you alright, Y/n?»

You turned to Heat, who sat beside you and had his gaze lowered on you.

«Yeah, I'm just...» but your irises rolled down to the plate again «I don't think it'll be a very welcoming place for a marine.»

You only muttered, or so you thought at least, but silence suddenly dropped on the crew.

You frowned, raising your face.

Everybody was looking in your direction.

What?

Kid's eyes sharpened, joy gone from his features as he turned to you.

After a few quiet moments, Killer nodded.

«It's true. The entire Worst Generation is going to be there, probably, and who knows how many other pirates. You've been active for a long time. Someone may recognize you.»

«Yeah, and let me tell you, they aren't fans.» you smirked, fatalistic «In all these years, I killed some people's nakama here and there.»

«Oh, there's not even need for that!» Booka growled, passing a hand through his hair «I'm pretty sure you pissed off half of the Grand Line with that fancy attitude anyway!»

You clicked your tongue, eyes wisely avoiding the captain.

«Yeah, I... may have... done that.»

A chorus of groans made your head flick down.

«That's not the only problem.» Wire observed «We're infamous, everybody will be paying
attention. What will happen when they see we merrily keep a marine with us?»

«You make me sound like a pet.» you grumbled, even if nobody listened.

«I don't give a shit! They can just try and fuck with us, if they want to die!» Kid finally barked, his fist smashing another plate (Heat's, who sadly contemplated the remnants of his food scattered on the table).

«Okay, okay, I have an idea.» you announced, raising your arms to calm the spirits.

You were met with many doubtful glances, much to your dismay, but you just rolled your eyes and continued.

«Killer.»

The blonde let out a low hum, slightly surprised to be called out.

«You've been part of the Worst Generation for years, and yet the Marines still don't know your face.»

There was a pause.

«You want to wear a mask?» Killer asked, surprise now fully oozing from his voice.

You grinned.

«Why not? Pirates wear all kind of crazy stuff, nobody will question it.»

«It kinda make sense.» the Mohican said.

You turned to the captain, soon imitated by everyone else.

«Do you think you can make it?» you murmured, suddenly unsure.

Kid was staring at you, amber irises scanning your figure attentively.

«You want me to make you a mask?»

You hesitated, then nodded.

«Hum, yeah. Well, nothing like that unsightly helmet-thing that blondie wears.»

«I'm sitting right here.»

Kid threw his head back and laughed.

«Come to my workshop, birdie!»

He stood, grabbed a plate full of food (Wire's, who simply leaned back and watched his dinner disappear with blank eyes) and headed to the door.

«Killer! Adjust the route for the Pirate Expo!»

«Sure.» the blonde sighed while you jumped down your chair and hurried behind Kid.
Once in the workshop, the redhead set the plate on his desk and grabbed his yardstick, roughly tilting your chin from side to side to take your measures. You tried to protest, but he squeezed your grumbles between your cheeks.

For some reason, he seemed unable to stop smirking the whole time.

«Fine.» he eventually said, sitting at his table «You can go now.»

«Aren't you going to ask me if I have any idea?»

«No.» he replied, not even raising his eyes from the draft he was already sketching.

Yeah, sure, because I'm totally trusting you not to make my face look like a giant vagina.

«Wait, you freaking redhead!» you groaned, grabbing his arm.

«What?» he snapped turning to you, annoyance now curling his features.

«I have some requests!»

«Requests?» he repeated, his hairless eyebrow twitching dangerously.

You swallowed, but forced yourself to nod.

«Yeah. Nothing covered from the nose below, I want to be able to breath and talk freely.»

His hand abruptly grabbed your chin, his thumb pressing over your lips and he pulled you closer until his fangs were inches from your mouth.

«Cutting you from talking freely would be the wisest choice.» he husked, but he snickered immediately, letting your flushed grimace go «Fine. Any other request, you little princess?»

You puffed your cheeks in a scowl, arms crossing over your chest.

«I do have an idea for the theme.»

Kid barely hummed, already bent over his draft.

«And what would that be?»

«I was thinking... it should look like...» your words trailed off as a light blush dusted your face, eyes wandering on the wall.

«It should look like what?»

You muttered something.

«What?!»

«...a bird.»

Kid stopped sketching.

Despite your eyes being stubbornly glued to the shelves, you could feel him moving his burning gaze on your skin.

His signature grin slowly curled his features.
«Sure thing, my little birdie.»

Your stomach backflipped in your belly, but didn't have the time to register it because the pirate grabbed your arm and pulled you in his lap.

«Since I'm working for you, you're not allowed to go anywhere.»

You sat on his legs, back leaning against his warm torso while his arms surrounded you to reach the table.

As you observed his skilled hands working the different materials, your nape relaxed on his shoulder and his chin eventually rested atop your head while he got completely lost in his work.

With your heart pounding, you watched the mask taking form through his fingers for the rest of the night.
«EVERYBODY PLEASE TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO THE SHORE!»

The Victoria Punk was almost a mile away from the island, but the explosion of chaos and colours was already engulfing the ship as it approached the Pirate Expo.

You leaned against the railing with the rest of the crew, stomach churning in anticipation.

«FINALLY, THEY ARE HERE! ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE WORST GENERATION, THE MOST RUTHLESS! IT'S EUSTASS KID AND THE KID PIRATES!»

A chorus of welcoming yells followed the announcer's amplified voice. Fireworks burst in the sky, illuminating the path of the ship.

«They sure do things big.» you grumbled, your hand flicking up to adjust the bandanna that concealed your hair.

You were secretly impressed with how fine the mask turned out, since you had never seen Kid working on something that wasn't meant to kill before. The material was cool on your skin, in a black that faded into dark blue on the borders. Feather-like edges extended from each side of your face, completely hiding your features. A small beak covered part of your nose, but your nostrils and mouth were left free.

However, it wasn't enough for the captain.
By that point, the whole crew was well-known in the New World. They all had bounties with their faces slammed on them.

“Everyone knows this is an all-men crew, and it will stay that way!” Kid had barked that morning, forcing you in that ridiculous outfit that was supposed to make you look like a boy.

You groaned, your hand crawling below your dark top to pull at the bandage around your chest.

“This is stupid. You guys are practically a fleet now, why can’t I just play the part of a new recruit?”

“You’d draw too much attention, obviously.” Wire retorted, stepping by your side “It’ll be a miracle already if you don’t cause trouble as it is.”

Your cheeks puffed in a pout but you didn’t reply, the long unbuttoned jacket moved by the wind as the ship entered the port in a mess of fireworks and cheers.

Kid’s Jolly Roger suddenly exploded in the sky in a triumph of lights, and the crew’s flag was hoisted among dozens of others on the dock.

“FUCK YEAH! WE'RE HERE!” Kid shouted from the bow.

“Holy...” you leaped onto the railing and stuck your head out as much as possible, eyes rapidly scanning the pirate flags displayed at the entrance «The Fire Tank crew... Bonney... Hawkins... no way. The Fallen Monks, the Heart Pirates...»

Your blood suddenly ran cold.

“Barto club... Macro pirates, and...” your fingers tightened on the wood as a hiss escaped your lips «Fuck.»

“What's wrong?” Heat asked, looking down at you from your other side.

You jumped back on the deck.

“Diez Drake is here.”

He frowned.

“And...?”

“And he knows me from the Marines!”

Wire hummed, his gaze suddenly attentive.

“Well, you don’t look exactly like a marine girl anymore.”

Your mouth fell shut at his comment.

He’s right. I don’t.

“We should mention it to Killer.” Heat reasoned, crossing his massive arms “You better stay away from Drake then.”

A bitter scoff left your lips as your elbows dropped on the railing and your gaze observed the multitude of Jolly Rogers.
«Oh, so I can play with the rest of the kids?»

«You can play with only one Kid.»

The captain's voice startled you from behind and a shiver traversed your body.

How come I never sense him approaching...?

The redhead grabbed the long loose hands of your bandanna and tugged them unceremoniously, making you stumble back against him with a yelp. His flesh hand grasped your biceps and he swung you around to face him.

«Oi, Kiddo...!»

«No "Kiddo" for you now.» he growled.

You barely registered the others taking a step back, your concealed eyes captured by his amber ones.

«You'll control your tongue here, birdie. Don't you dare going around drawing attention to yourself.»

You shook off his grip from your arm with a frown.

«Excuse me? Isn't that what you guys are famous for?»

«I don't care. And another thing.» his eyes sharpened in a glare that made your heart skip a beat «Don't even think about sneaking away. These are your rules for today.»

He used his free hand to roughly tilt your chin up and he leaned down, his mad grin now dangerously close to your face.

«Or do you want me to kill every single person on this island before dragging you back on my ship?»

You swallowed, your lips parted to take in enough air before they curled into a nervous smirk.

«Wow... what a healthy little relationship we got here.» you murmured, taking his wrist in your hand and making him release your face «Don't worry, fucking redhead, I'm not looking forward to messing around with other supernovas. Plus, there's nowhere I could possibly escape here.»

His grin didn't falter, but you could tell the corners of his mouth relaxed at your words.

«Good.»

The captain stood up in all his height and his fingers closed in excited fists.

«Now let's get started with this fucking expo!»

His yell was welcomed by the enthusiastic cheers of the crew, and by the time the ship docked, they were already jumping on the port.

Kid was the first one to land, obviously, and you observed how the people around quickly backed away to clear his path, a certain nervousness in their movements.

A silent sigh left your lips as other pirates leaped beyond the railing.
«How about we set up a regular ladder for onc— NO!!»

You couldn't even finish your sentence that a strong arm wrapped around your waist and pressed you against a muscular torso. A second later, your feet left the ground and the railing rapidly came into view, only to disappear a moment later, throwing you in the void.

«Fuck!» you choked, shutting your eyes and burying your face in your captor's T-shirt.

It lasted less than a second, though, as he landed in the port and put you down.

You grabbed his arm not to lose your balance, then raised your furious gaze on him.

«Killer. I swear. I'm going to kill you in your sleep.»

A cough that was clearly meant to suppress a chuckle left his helmet, and the Massacre Soldier shrugged.

«Just speeding up the process, Kid doesn't like to wait.»

You didn't reply, keeping your sharp eyes planted on his mask until his arm stiffened slightly and he shook your grip off, heading towards the clutter of stands.

«Look, the Kid Pirates!»

«Don't stare at them, idiot! They are crazy, they'll kill you for nothing!»

«They'll sure create a mess in town.»

You eyed the surroundings, scanning the people that lingered nearby. Many of them turned their faces away not to meet your eyes, but some of the bolder pirates frowned at you.

«That one is rather small.»

«Must be a new recruit or something.»

«I bet you five hundred berries that he doesn't live to see another day.»

Without moving your eyes from them, you smoothly raised your arm and give them the middle finger.

Their demeanour changed from curious to shocked to threatening in a few instants, but they immediately stopped when two imposing figures landed to each side of you.

Wire grabbed your impudent hand and pulled it down, his blank face turned to the pirates, while Heat crossed his arms and stared at them in the same way.

Suddenly they didn't seem so interested in the Kid Pirates anymore as they quickly walked into some alleys, desappearing into the harbour.

You scoffed, pulling your hand out of Wire's grip.

«It's pure fantasy to hope that this one will stay quiet.» he sighed.

«Here, Y/n.»

Heat handed over your rifle, and relief bloomed inside you as soon as your fingers touched the cold
metal.

«Thanks.» you smiled, letting the weapon's strap slide around your shoulder.

Heat blinked, then looked up at Wire.

«We didn't think about everything. Her lips give her away.»

«Oh boy.» Wire groaned in exasperation, rubbing his palm against his eyes.

«OI, GUYS, COME HERE ALREADY!»

Kid's bark made you all hurry towards a big stand located in the middle of the first large street.

If it was true that many people were trying to stay away from the Kid Pirates, many didn't seem to care.

The entire town was teeming in pirates of all races and ages: men, women, fishmen, long-arms, long-legs, and even minks were walking all over the place.

Food and game stands of all kind lined the streets, every building was either a shop, a pub or an inn. Signs pointed towards fight clubs and brothels, various jolly rogers decorated the squares, and the whole island was a swarming of colours, cheers and music.

Soundtrack:

Wow.

You walked pressed between Heat and Wire (not that you had any choice, they basically closed up on you), your attention captivated by the festival atmosphere.

Now that I think about it, I've never been to an expo before.
Kid and the rest of the crew were standing in front one of the main posts, where a man in a pink suit and less limbs than normal seemed to be taking down names for something.

«Very well, very well! I knew that Captain Kid wouldn't miss the Underground Deathmatch!» he grinned maniacally, scribbling down something on a list.

«Damn right I wouldn't!» Kid laughed, hitting his desk and almost breaking it in half.

«Oi, guys!» the Mohican waved at you «Move your asses and come! We're signing up for the various competitions here!»

You frowned and raised your eyes, noticing the big board indicating the different games and matches for the day.

You couldn't recognise all of them. Some names looked rather innocent, while others were definitely disturbing.

«Sign me up for whatever the Ring of Fire is.» Heat blurted, leaning over towards the man in pink.

«I'll join the Blood Endurance.» Wire stated.

Your upper lip twitched.

«Sure, sure!» the man nodded, before lifting his paper with a satisfied look and letting out a brief laugh «You guys signed up for almost all the competitions! As expected from such a fearsome crew!»

«What do you mean "almost" all?» Kid retorted, a faint note of annoyance entering his voice.

«Well, you didn't mention--»

«The Air Target Shooting!» you gasped, reading the game on the board.

All the men stopped and turned to you.

The guy noticed you, and his eyes immediately flicked on the rifle strapped on your back.

«Oooh, I didn't know there was a sniper among the Kid Pirates! Shall I sign you up for the game?»

Killer looked at the captain.

«Kid, I don't think this is a good--»

«I'll do it!»

You pushed some of the pirates aside and made your way to the desk.

«I'll do it! Put me down for the shooting competition!»

«Sure thing, little guy. Just write your name and sign here.»

The man handed you the paper and a pen.

«Oi.»

Kid's hand heavily dropped on your shoulder, halting your actions.
You looked up to see his stern amber eyes.

«What? You want to win this thing, right?»

You didn't falter, holding up his gaze with your own.

A few seconds passed, then his painted lips curved into a smirk.

«Fine. You better win, though, little guy, because you'll be sporting my name out there.»

You swallowed.

*Shit.*

*I'll be competing for the Kid Pirates.*

But yet again, there was no way you were letting this occasion slip.

Humiliating a bunch of pirates in front of hundreds of people? Bring it on.

And if there really was someone able to stand up to you as a sniper, you needed to know.

You took a deep breath.

«Damn right I'll win, Eust--»

His grip abruptly tightened on your trapezium, choking the words down your throat.

You realised your mistake in his sharp eyes, but they swiftly turned amused and expectant as he waited for you to correct yourself.

Even without looking around, you could feel the rest of the crew holding their breath.

You grit your teeth.

«...captain.»

That crazy grin of his spread on his face and he released you.

«Very well then.»

You turned back to the paper with a grunt, but immediately faltered again.

Name.

*I should have thought this through.*

You hesitated a couple of seconds before scribbling down a signature.

Unfortunately for you, Kid intercepted your arm before you could give the sheet back, grabbing your wrist and redirecting it so he could read it.

If possible, his grin widened.

«It's a nice little name you have here.»

«Shut up.» you muttered, snatching your hand away and slamming the sheet on the desk.
Kid only laughed at your reaction, and you felt grateful for the mask hiding the faint blush on your cheeks.

The man in pink collected the list, his eyes rapidly going through it.

«Kotori*, uh? I've never heard about you, you must be a recruit. Kind of a feminine name.»

«Do you want to be my first target?» you growled, exasperated.

He chuckled.

«Feisty like the rest of your crew, though. Fine then, thank you for participating, Captain Kid. And don't forget about Gold Roger Treasure Race tomorrow!»

Kid didn't even reply, giving his back to the desk and marching towards the depths of the town.

«Come on, guys! I feel like drinking and breaking some jaws now!»

The others yelled their agreement and the crew started to disperse among the various streets.

You followed Kid for a few feet before lingering.

«I don't want to drink and break some jaws. I want to go around and see the festival.» you muttered.

Heat, who was the closest, looked down at you with a thoughtful expression.

«Oi, little guy!» Kid barked, turning to you.

You doubted he had heard you, with the distance and the general chaos, but a deep wrinkle was now settled between his hairless eyebrows.

«Get your ass back here!»

You crossed your arms on your chest, without moving an inch, which only caused his eye to twitch dangerously.

Killer, beside him, hid his mask in his hand with a sigh.

«Hum, captain.» Heat stepped in before any of you could make the situation worse «I plan on walking around the festival too. I can stay with her.»

You raised an eyebrow, moving your focus on the pirate.

He rubbed his nape.

«I won't let her, I mean, him, out of my side.»

Kid hesitated, his fingers clenching into a fist before relaxing again.

«Do whatever you want!» he snapped before turning and marching away.

You followed him with your eyes for a while before offering a smirk to Heat.

«...which, in Kid language, means "have a lovely day, see you later guys".»

His sad eyes trailed down to you, and you read a spark of concern in his eyes.
«Will this end up like at John's Dockyard?»

You chuckled.

«You know, if it was any other member of the crew, it probably would.» you relaxed your arms down your side «For you, though, I will behave.»

Heat didn't say anything, but a shadow of a smile seemed to play on his features for a moment.

Chapter End Notes

* Kotori (小鳥) can be read as "small bird"
which is not how Kid would normally call her in Japanese, because the translation of "birdie" sounds like "bādi" (バーディー).
In the next couple of hours, Heat got to see a side of you he hadn't imagined before.

Of course he hadn't known you for long, but he used to think about you as a restless, chaotic person. Now, looking at you taking your time inspecting each stand, he realised he should have known better.

You were a sniper, after all, someone who doesn't rush into brawls, but instead stays steady and chooses the right moment. So it was always right there, that certain stillness inside you, below all the aggressiveness and the insecurities.

«Heat? You awake?»

The pirate blinked at you.

«Sure. You didn't take-- ahem, buy anything?»

After the time you spent looking at the accessories made out of shells and other sea creatures, it was a little surprising. Then it occurred to him.

«Oh, wait, you don't have any money.»

His eyes flicked to the crowd, already scanning for a target to punch and rob when you chuckled, tugging his slacks to catch his attention.

«Hold on, big guy.»

Heat turned to you to see a small bag bouncing in your hand and your signature crooked smile.

«When did you get that?» he asked, frowning lightly.

You shrugged, the bag disappearing inside your long jacket.

«The place is filled with pirates, and I'm smaller than most of them.»

«I didn't think you would be okay with stealing.»

You scoffed, a pout suddenly puffing your cheeks.

«This money was stolen already. They're mine as much as they were theirs.»

«Then why didn't you use them?»

«What for? Those trinkets would look ridiculous on me. Besides, I prefer to spend this on food. Hey, takoyaki!»

Heat watched you spring to another stand, cutting your way through the little crowd and enthusiastically placing your order.

The rest of the morning proceeded pretty much in the same way, with you dragging Heat around
form a food post to another. He didn't seem to mind anyway, you could even guess his slight amusement right below that ever-sad expression of his.

Plus, he was kinda handy. People recognised him as member of the Kid Pirates and decided to let you alone.

For the most part.

«Oi, Heat of the Kid Pirates!»

You were munching at an octopus skewer when the coarse yell reached you, making you both turn. Two tall pirates stood in the middle of the alley, dark cloaks draped on them, the cowls projecting a shadow over their wicked grins.

*Magician's men.*

Heat's face didn't falter as his sullen eyes met them.

«What's with that tiny guy you're walking around?» one laughed.

The blue-haired man shifted so he could properly face the two as they approached. The people around seemed to sense the tension, because they stepped back, partially clearing the street.

«Look at you, gay mask.» one of the pirates sneered, stopping a couple of feet from you «Are you really part of the Kid Pirates? Your crew is falling low.»

Without losing eye contact with him, you bit down another piece of octopus and slowly chewed it. His smirk twitched it irritation.

«Did you fucking hear what I said?»

«Oi.» the other one faced Heat «Is your little bitch deaf or something?»

Heat let out a sigh that clearly meant "not this shit again". It almost made you chuckle.

«Hey, watch your tongue.» you grunted, pointing your stick at him «He's in a committed relationship!»

Heat's eyes dropped on you with a spark of alarm.

«Hum, Koto... something.»

You looked up at him with a grimace.

«What?»

«You promised.»

Your lips curled.

«But they started it!»

«I know, I know.» he breathed, pressing a hand on your shoulder and pushing you back lightly «Just let me deal with them, okay?»
"Oi, oi, you fuckers, don't you dare ignore u--"

The pirate never got to finish his sentence.

Heat turned his head and the next thing you saw was a bundle of flames raging out of his mouth and enveloping the two men.

You jumped away with a gasp, and so did the rest of the crowd.

For the next few instants, you couldn't bring to look away as you watched the bodies writhing and dying in the fire, horrible screams crackling through it.

When Heat closed his mouth, the black remains dropped on the dusty street.

Your wide eyes were still staring at them when he grabbed your arm and shook you delicately.

«Er... I don't remember your fake name.»

You slowly raised your gaze to him.

«Is this how you deal with things?»

«Well, pretty much.»

«I... am not sure it's much better than my way.»

He huffed, one hand crawling up to mess with his hair, like he did when he felt slightly uncomfortable.

«Hum... it's faster, and less messy.»

You blinked at the remains.

«If you say so, big guy.»

Oddly enough, the smell of burnt flesh made you crave some grilled meat. It wasn't difficult to find.

Nobody paid too much attention at the accident. Anything was allowed during the Pirate Expo, plus you were sure Kid had already caused much more trouble by himself.

You ended up eating too much and became sleepy right after noon, so you convinced Heat to let you get back to the Victoria Punk to take a nap. The idea of having Kid's cabin for yourself for once was too inviting. Plus, you wanted to let Heat off the hook for a while.

He wasn't the biggest fan of the idea at first, but upon seeing that Booka was the one in charge of the ship, he agreed.

You felt a weird peacefulness while climbing up to the deck and waving. A feeling you hadn't known in years, maybe decades.

You stuck out your tongue at the other pirates before disappearing towards the cabin.

«Is she even allowed to do that?» Leo smirked, sitting up on the railing.
Booka turned to him with a snort. He wasn't happy to be on ship duty during the Pirate Expo.

«What?»

«Walking in the captain's room so casually.» Leo shrugged «If one of us attempted the same shit, I'm sure captain Kid would break at least our leg. And she's a marine on top of that!»

Booka's hand heavily swatted the nape of his neck.

«Ack--! What the fuck man!» Leo coughed, stumbling back on the deck and pressing his palm on the offended area «What was that for?!»

But Booka only puckered his lips and abandoned his chin on the railing.

«I just felt like it.»

4 pm, West Ring of the Festival.

«WELCOME EVERYBODY! THIS IS YOUR BELOVED DONALD MODERATE, READY TO COMMENT THE AIR SHOOTING CONTEST FOR YOU!»

The bleachers were packed with noisy pirates, while visual Den Den Mushi were placed on a number of high bases around the stadium, transmitting the images all over the island.

«It's my pleasure to see so many of you joined for one of the biggest events of the day! We have snipers from many infamous crews ready to compete to see who's the best!»

The crowd cheered loudly as new fireworks exploded in the sky and the jolly rogers of the contenders were hoisted at the starting point.

Despite that, Killer cut his way through easily. Not many people wanted to mess with him, after all.

He was scanning the way for a good spot, when someone got tossed and tumbled at his feet.

«Make room, you scum!»

The familiar bark caught his attention, and he finally caught sight of Kid.

Looked like his captain had cleared his own good spot, throwing people away from that edge of the bleachers.

«Kid.»

«Oh? Killer.»

The blonde walked up to him while some of the beaten up pirates crawled away.

«You came to see Y/n competing?»

Kid's face turned into a grimace and he scoffed.
«I was just passing by! What about you instead, hm?»

Killer took place beside his comrade and crossed his arms.

«I want to make sure she won't cause a mess.»

«Captain! Killer-san!»

The Mohican elbowed his way towards them, followed by Heat, Wire, Kai and a bunch of other men. They were carrying enough food to feed an army.

«What are you idiots doing here?» Kid huffed.

Their movements lost confidence for a second at the question, and they quickly exchanged uncertain glances with each other.

«We... were passing by and, hum... decided to check out the event?»

The Massacre Soldier turned his helmet to the redhead.

«What a coincidence. Just like you, Kid.»

«Shut the fuck up, Killer!»

The targets consisted in flying objects hurtling through the airspace of the stadium. Despite being mobile, they seemed to be assigned to certain areas, with the fastest and smallest ones situated toward the end of the route.

Contestants were supposed to cut through the race with board-shaped wavers, adapted to fly at low-medium height. Any weapon was allowed, as long as the in-house bullets were used. Fighting the other participants was not only allowed, but encouraged.

Donald Moderate jumped enthusiastically from his high plateau.

«Here we see the snipers taking place at the starting line!»

About a dozen of infamous jolly rogers were placed at the beginning to indicate the crew of the contestants.

«Waah, I see several members of the Worst Generation's groups!» Donald chimed in his microphone «From right to left, I give you Nutari of the Fallen Monks! And right beside him, Vito of the Fire Tank Pirates! Oho, the two are already glaring at each other!»

He proceeded in presenting the rest of the pirates among the cheers of the crowd, everybody already picking their favourites.

«Then we have someone from a popular, yet elusive crew. They barely took part in any competition. But here he is: Uni from the Heart Pirates!»

The man only offered a slight nod of his concealed face, rolling his shotgun over his shoulder.

«And finally, last but not least, a sniper from the fearsome Kid Pirates! He's quite small compared to his comrades, but will he be as fierce? I give you...!»
Donald voice trailed off along with the yells of the crowd.

The announcer's grin fell into a confused pout as his eyes scanned the place marked with Kid's flag.

«Hum... there's no one there. I guess the man of the Kid Pirates bailed?»

It took only a few seconds for the audience to start laughing and booing at the crew, although most of them probably didn't realise they were sitting in the crowd.

The Mohican grabbed the railing and stuck out of the bleachers towards the ring.

«Oh fuck. Ooooh fuck.»

The whole crew tensed up immediately, many even taking a step back from their captain, who hadn't moved or talked for the past minute.

«She... bailed?» Wire finally murmured, making his comrades shudder.

«Shit.» Killer hissed, rapidly glancing over Kid before turning to the others «Heat! You were with her this morning, where did she go?!»

The sad man blinked, finally moving his eyes from the ring and to the first mate, quite alarmed by Killer's unusual haste.

«Er... she was sleepy after lunch, so I escorted her back to the ship.»

Killer immediately jabbed his finger into the Mohican's bicep.

«Contact the ship immediately!»

They were interrupted by the gunshot and Donald's yell announcing the start of the race.

The shooters jumped on their flying boards and took off towards the marks. Some of them were handling their device better than others, and the first targets began to explode.

«WHAT A GREAT BEGINNING!» Donald uttered «As you can see behind me, this screen keeps track of who's on top! All the participants are equipped with marked bullets, so we can assign each shot to the rightful crew!»

The small jolly rogers that served as tokens on the screen were rising at different speeds. The Heart Pirates symbol was doing best so far.

Killer's attention was only briefly captured by the competition before he noticed the railing cracking under his captain's furious grip.

«Kid, let's not jump to conclusion...»

The low, terrifying growl that rumbled in the redhead's throat shut him off.

A mad grin distorted Kid's features, but the blonde could perfectly read the rage underneath.

«So she really wants me to murder the entire island.»

«Kid...»
The captain turned abruptly, marching towards the closest exit.

Meanwhile, Donald was getting more and more into his commentary.

«Uni is already approaching the first ten-point target! He managed to dodge his rivals' blows for now, but Vito his tailing him! This target is faster and more erratic than the others, will he be able to hit it?!»

Uni's face was not visible, but he seemed to be struggling a bit between aiming and avoiding Vito's bullets at the same time.

«Here he goes, he takes aim, and...!»

When the target exploded, the noise was louder than usual.

«HE GETS IT! This is a big leap forward for the Heart... uhu?!»

The surprised gasp made a good portion of the audience move their focus to the screen.

Uni cursed.

«That's impossible!» Donald shouted «Why do I see the Kid Pirates getting the points?!»

Killer stopped.

«What?»

«Captain!»

Wire's call had Kid turn his blazing gaze to the race. The tall pirate was frantically pointing at a small figure in the middle of the ring.

«I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY, I'M LATE!» you shouted, lowering your rifle and running down the course «I OVERSELPT!»

Donald's wide eyes twitched as he stared down at your tiny frame in shock.

«Did he just say... that he overslept?»

«YEAH, YEAH, I'M SORRY! I'M HERE NOW!»

You didn't lose any time and aimed at some of the closest targets. It was a bit far from the ground, but still pretty easy for your skills, so you took down two of them in two seconds.

Even with that, you were still pretty behind the rest of the shooters.

«Well, there is no rule against latecomers.» Donald admitted, but his surprised expression quickly morphed into a wicked grin «But there is no spare board for you! Sorry, little guy, this is your punishment for being late! You'll never make it from the ground!»

Your lips twitched at him, while most of the crowd burst in coarse laughter.

*Well, aren't you a little shi–*

«BIRDIE!!»

The blasting roar cut through the chaos and startled you so bad you almost ended up rolling on the
ring.

_Fuck!! He's here?!_

You managed to recover your balance and turned, eyes feverishly scanning the bleachers until you spotted him.

And not only him, but the rest of the crew as well.

The colour drained from your cheeks when you saw Kid's face.

_Uh-oh._

He bared his fangs and the crowd retracted.

«YOU BETTER FUCKING WIN THIS RACE NOW, OR YOU’LL RESPOND TO ME!»

You swallowed and lowered your face, but a small smirk quickly replaced your grimace.

«Ryōkai*, captain.» you whispered, before turning and running off.

«You can run, little guy, but you'll never be able to catch up with the others!» Donald chimed.

_He has a point._

So you stopped.

«Ohoh, he finally gave up... wait, is he aiming at the other contestants?!»

«Well, it's not against the rule, ain't it?!» you yelled, shooting down the closest pirate, who was also the last of the race.

He wasn't paying attention behind him, obviously, so he had no mean to avoid it.

The bullet hit his heel exactly, making him lose his balance and control of his board at the same time. In an instant, they were both precipitating in the ring.

You hurried toward him, quickly retrieving the flying board. It seemed the fall knocked him unconscious.

«Sorry about that.» you muttered, trying to figure out the different buttons on the vehicle.

«Looks like this little sniper is as ruthless as the rest of his crew!» Donald yelled in delight «But he still missed the training to operate the Dialboard, so I doubt he... WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING?!»

You must have pressed the wrong button, because that devilish device darted in the air at full power with you desperately clinging on it with your arms, which was _NOT_ how it was supposed to be.

«HOLY SHIIIIIT!» you cried out.

On the Kid Pirates' side, the atmosphere was oddly quiet.

«You know...» the Mohican finally murmured «I'm not sure whether this is entertaining or painful
Your crazy run was only stopped when you accidentally hit one of the other participants, knocking him out of his vehicle.

«Sorry!» you shouted at his falling form.

At least your board was hovering steadily now.

You took the chance to jump on it, testing your balance.

Turned out the commands were not so different from your usual power-boots.

At last, a bit of luck!

You tried out a couple of pirouettes.

«Oi, Kotori! Quit messing around, they're leaving you behind!» Killer yelled from the bleachers.

You huffed.

«Fine, fine.»

You turned to face the airspace in front of you, filled with flying shooters and darting targets.

Your rifle started rotating in your hand.

«Here I come, bitches.»

Chapter End Notes

* Ryōkai (了解) means "roger" in Japanese – I'm sure we all heard it in some anime!
«AND ANOTHER ONE GOES DOOOOOWN!»

An explosion of cheers rose from the audience as you flew backwards along the row of shooters, having cleared a number of targets behind you. The insults of your enemies got lost in the speed as you flashed them a cocky smirk.

«The little guy of the Kid Pirates is unstoppable! He hasn't missed a shot so far!» the announcer shouted in the microphone.

You spun back in the right position over the dialboard, facing the opponents ahead of you.

That vehicle proved to be a huge advantage, since it resembled your usual way of moving through the air, and it allowed you to catch up with the main group and bury the weaklings behind, as you all flew through the race. However, a couple of rivals were taking down targets far ahead, including the pirates from the Worst Generation crews.

«Meanwhile, Vito and Uni are involved in a duel for the lead... looks like they're more focused on taking down each other than the actual targets though!» Donald continued.

Well, that works well for me.

You barely needed to take aim to hit the closer targets, but the ones far away were smaller and jerking around madly – not easy to get when the other pirates kept targeting you.

«You people sure are annoying!» you yelled, dodging another burst of bullets coming from your side.

«Fuck you, insect, you're clearing all the targets!» a big guy in black shouted back, flying below you and dangerously close.

«I'm just a better shooter than you are!» you growled, fiddling to reload your rifle while another rain of bullets fell over you from someone else.

You hardly managed to bounce aside in time to avoid it.

«Ahahah! The shooters in the middle finally got sick of the little guy and are now teaming up on him! Is this the end of his race?»

The bullets were cutting the air all around you as your fingers moved fast to ready the rifle.

Those enemies were not real snipers, which made it possible for your haki to easily predict their movements, but they were all around you, and their havoc was preventing you to aim at the high-reward targets.

It was when a bullet glanced your arm that you scoffed, rotating your loaded rifle in your hand.

«Fine, time for a cleansing here.»

You were now on the lead of the central group, and your eyes landed on the participant ahead.

He was bigger than the others, with a cloak falling over his figure, so you guessed he was part of the Fallen Monks. His dialboard was also big, to better accommodate him.
A crooked smirk tugged at the corner of your mouth.

«Big device, big boom.»

Your foot hit the lever of the accelerator and you darted forwards.

«See ya, losers!» you waved at the others.

It was merely a move to provoke them and it seemed to work, because most of them growled and jerked to the chase.

Luck assisted you when the monk slowed down to aim at some target. His Observation probably warned him though, because he turned abruptly, pointing his gunshot at you.

You didn't stop, crouching down to better cut the wind, the rifle positioned in front of you.

*I can't dodge this if I want to keep the shot.*

*Rapid calculation: he'll hit my left arm.*

You just prayed that he wouldn't haki the bullet up and used your crappy Armament to coat the area at the last second.

The impact made you budge a few inches aside and hiss in pain, an acute soreness springing through your arm, but it worked.

Looked like your localised Armament against rubber bullets was good enough.

*My turn now!*

From your crouching position, you aimed at the dial engine on the bottom of his board, without slowing down one bit.

He frowned in confusion, trying to sprint away, but it was too late.

You braced yourself and passed just below him as fast as you could.

The engine exploded when you were only a few feet away, the dense smoke enveloping you as the shockwave pushed you forward.

All the pirates behind were less fortunate.

«He hit her! Did he hit her?!» the Mohican gasped, grabbing the railing and sticking out, much like most of the crew.

«I'm not sure!» Kai squeaked.

«I think he hit her.» Killer hummed.

«She seemed okay though.» Wire commented.

«What's with all that smoke now?! I can't fucking see her!»

«Did she do that?»
«Did she fall down? Dudes are falling!»

«EVERYBODY SHUT THE FUCK UP!»

The pirates bristled at the captain's roar, every other word immediately dying in their mouths.

Killer glanced at Kid's tense jaw and clenching fists.

He had underestimated how stressful your competition would be for the crew, although it seemed to him that you were doing just fine.

Sure, he had to admit that your suicidal way of fighting was a little nerve-wrenching. Nothing new though.

«There was an explosion in the middle row!» Donald yelled, literally bouncing on his spot.

«Many pirates were involved and precipitated in the arena! We're seven contestants down!»

Their comrades yelled and booed from the bleachers.

«Who caused all this havoc?! Wait, there's someone emerging from the smoke... oh shit, it's him! It's the Kid Pirates shooter!»

You were coughing hard and barely in control of your board as you rolled out of the cloud, trying to rub your teary eyes through the mask.

That thing was holding up nicely though. Kid did a great job there.

«I can't believe we are already down to three contestants, but... wait a second!» Donald shouted «Look at that! Nutari from the Fallen Monks still stands!»

...what?

You turned and squinted through the tears just in time to see the big pirate darting towards you with a raging yell.

He stood on a smaller dialboard he probably snatched from someone else in the chaos. His cloak was ragged and barely hanging from his shoulders now, he appeared to have lost his weapon and was just coming at you with his fists.

The Fallen Monks were famous for being brawlers, after all.

Shit!

You raised your rifle, but a surge of pain ran down your arm, delaying your action.

The pirate's board bumped hard against yours, almost knocking you out of it. You winced and saw his open palm coming at your face.

«I'LL TEAR YOUR FACE APART, YOU INSECT!»

Fuck! He's going for the mask!

Your foot clumsily found the controls and pull your board ahead to snatch out of his range, but he lunged forward.
Your hand instinctively ran to the mask to keep it pressed against your face as you jumped back and shut your eyes.

The action caused him to grab your shirt instead.

You heard the sound of the fabric tearing apart, but at that point he sealed his own faith.

Even with your eyes shut, he was so close it was impossible to miss the shot.

Your bullet hit him right in the stomach, finally sending him down into the arena.

The dialboard frantically twirled around until you managed to hit the brake and finally let out a sigh of relief. Your head was still spinning though, so it took a few seconds to realise that the cheers of the crowds had quieted down.

«Am I... seeing it right?»

Donald's hesitant voiced echoed in the stadium.

Letting go of your mask, you slowly turned around to look at the audience.

Everyone seemed to be staring at you in disbelief.

A gush of cool air caressed you, giving you the goosebumps.

Wait.

You blinked and glanced down at yourself.

Oh.

Even if the bands were arranged pretty tight around your breasts, with the shirt gone it was totally possible to guess the shape of your chest below the fabric. Let alone the line of your sides and hips, now exposed to the wind and the audience.

Uops.

«THIS IS ANOTHER CRAZY PLOT TWIST!» Donald shouted in the microphone, startling you and half of the crowd «THE KID PIRATES' LITTLE SHOOTER IS IN FACT... A WOMAN!!»

Most of the jaws on the crews' side had dropped the moment your shirt was tore apart, along with the cold sweat pouring down their forehead.

Killer cursed in his helmet.

One minute he had to grab Kid and pull him back before he could slaughter that monk with his powers, which required the assistance of both Heat and Wire, and the second after you were standing half-naked mid-air in the centre of the arena.

He could swear, he never pictured he would meet someone able to send things so South so fast. And he had to deal with Kid for most of his life.

At least the redhead seemed to be as petrified as the rest of the crew at the moment, a horrified grimace frozen on his face.
Now in control of your board, you clenched and unclenched your fist to test the pain. A bruise was rapidly forming below your shoulder, but it didn't feel so bad.

Since the silence was still lingering, you turned to the announcer's post.

«Oi, referee! Is it against the rules that I am a woman?» you yelled across the stadium.

He squinted at you before finally shaking his head.

«What? Uh, no.»

Your features opened in a cheeky grin.

«Good then.»

The only two contestants left apart from you were Uni and Vito.

They were both stuck in surprise at first, but the moment they saw you manoeuvring and pointing right at them, they snapped out of it and turned towards the end of the race.

The quickest targets were jerking around the finishing point, and they both sprinted at maximum speed to close the competition, firing their guns repeatedly to try and hit them.

«Woha, woha! The girl is unfazed by her own mess and goes straight for the win! But so do the other contestants! The race is not over, people!»

The audience suddenly woke up and an explosion of mess and shouts rose once again.

«I'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT A GIRL AMONG THE KID PIRATES!» Donald was still yelling «And she wiped out most of the participants in one blow! Definitely worthy of her crew!»

Oh, shut up.

But the ordeal had somehow gained you a lot of support, because the audience was now loudly cheering you up.

«YOU GO SEXY!»

«Show us whatcha got!»

«Get 'em, doll!»

Your foot stepped on the accelerator as you crouched down again to cut the air.

Well, while I'm at it.

With a smooth movement, you freed your hair from the bandanna, letting them fly behind you in the wind.

The action caused new enthusiastic cheers from the pirates.

«Woho, we can't see her face, but she surely doesn't look half bad!» Donald grinned «The Fire Tank Pirates and the Heart Pirates still have a big advantage on her though, and they are about to close the race. At this point, the first who manages to score one of the last targets and cut the finish
line will win!»

Right.

The board could only accelerate so much, and the other two were fairly ahead. But it didn't really matter as long as you hit the target.

You stopped your chase and steadied the dialboard mid-aid, bringing up the rifle.

«What is she doing now? The girl stopped her run and looks like she’s... is she really panning on shooting from that distance?!»

Killer nodded at the announcer's words.

«Yes, that's her only possibility.»

«But...!» the Mohican protested «The target is like the size of a coin! And so fast! All I see from here is a golden flash darting around.»

«The other two are much closer and they keep missing them.» Wire observed.

«Shut up!» Kid cut them short, his eyes fixed on you «Come on, birdie.»

You had to admit you could barely distinguish the outline of the little winged sphere yourself.

Your haki helped, but using it on an inanimate object was far less effective than usual.

Fine, little thing, I'll give you three possibilities.

You took a deep breath and amplified your Observation as much as possible, then pinpointed three shots in the target's area.

Uni and Vito's bullets were cutting the air around, so you had to hurry.

You fired your rifle three consecutive times.

It was the second bullets that got it, whistling inches from Uni's cheek before hitting the target.

«I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! SHE DID IT, SHE DID IT AGAIN!»

A grin spread out on your lips and you spun the dialboard around, bowing at the cheering crowd.

A roaring "YES!" came from the Kid Pirates' zone, and you turned to them, flashing a bright smile.

At least until Donald spoke again.

«The Kid Pirates are on the lead now! But the Heart Pirates have enough point to win, if Uni cuts the finishing line first!»

The grin froze on your face.

WHAT?!!
Yeah, you really should have been around when they laid out the rules.

Uni didn't lose any time, sprinting towards the goal at maximum speed. You immediately did the same with a curse, but there was no way you could catch up with him.

Unless.

Freaking suicidal as always, Y/n.

But there is no other way a weakling like you can win in this world.

You aligned your trajectory to the finish, pushing the dials to their limit until a burning smell started to come from your board.

The wind was hitting you so hard it almost knocked you off, and you wouldn't have been able to see a thing if it weren't for the mask.

Uni had almost made it.

A few seconds left.

You suddenly stepped on the brake with all your strength.

The recoil was so violent it catapulted you forward at an incredible speed.

You curled up on yourself, preparing for the impact with the ground.

«THAT CRAZY WOMAN JUST FUCKING LAUNCHED HERSELF TO THE GOAL!!»

I really wish I don't die!

The crowd held their breath. The Kid Pirates froze. Again.

Uni couldn't help but slow down and glance over his shoulder to see the human projectile flashing before his eyes.

«AND SHE MAKES IT! SHE CUTS THE LINE FIRST!» Donald shouted, spitting saliva all over the microphone as he almost jumped to the railing while the audience jumped on their seats and burst in joy.

«BUT NOW SHE'LL...!»

...end up splattered on the ground?

You grit your teeth, bracing yourself.

And the impact came, but much sooner and much softer than you expected.

Your body hit and rolled over a cold smooth surface, and you soon opened your eyes.

Trembling, you struggled to rise on your four, blinking at the platform that stopped your fall.

It was a grey sheet of metal, floating in the air.

The chaos from the crowd was still swallowing the stadium.

You slowly kneeled, pushing your hair away from your face and turning to where the crew was.
Kid stood in the middle, his flesh hand raised in front of him, fingers moving lightly to control the metal. Most of the other men were jumping and cheering at you.

After a moment of disbelief, a surge of warm ecstasy spread from your chest to the rest of your body, a genuine smile blooming on your face.

You finally dared to stand up on your still shaky legs, but the moment you regained your balance you threw your fists in the air and let out a victorious yell.

This stirred up the pirates even more.

«FREAKING AMAZING! THE MASKED GIRL SECURES THE VICTORY FOR THE KID PIRATES!»

Fireworks suddenly exploded above the arena, shaping the Kid Pirates' jolly roger in the sky.

The metallic platform flew around the stadium to clearly show you off and a joyful laugh escaped your lips.

Never in your life had you been celebrated that way.

Among the general mess, you turned to peer at Kid.

His fingers were still controlling your movements. He was smirking, and the proudness you met in his amber eyes made your heart tremble.
The Mohican took a rough bite from his chicken leg before stepping onto the road surrounding the stadium.

The sunlight had turned into that pinkish shade that precedes the evening, projecting golden puddles on the street.

A few of his comrades were gathered nearby, a clearing among the flows of pirates leaving the arena.

«Where are the captain and Killer?» he asked, rubbing his mouth with his sleeve.

Heat shrugged.

«I don't know about Killer, but the captain had his murderous look when we got out, so I guess he's killing someone right now.» Wire explained.

«Mhm.» the Mohican nodded, chewing loudly «The people who catcalled Y/-- I mean, Kotori?»

«Most probably.»

«I have to say, having a woman in the crew feels kinda weird.» Kai commented «It's like everybody's checking her out, it's unsettling. How do other crews handle it?»

«Beats me.» the Mohican grumbled.

As to further stress his point, two big pirates walked out from the nearest exit, their coarse laughter echoing around. They didn't seem to notice the Kid Pirates, just around the corner.

«Man, that little sniper! Did you know Eustass Kid had a woman on his ship?!»

«Well, I actually pictured several, but none of them with all their limbs!» the other one replied with a sly grin «That one though! What a piece of ass!»

Kai winced, immediately eyeing his comrades. They had already tensed up at those words.

«Right?! If I could just get her alone...!»

«Pff, get in line! If I catch her alone on this island, I'm gonna thrust my cock so hard into that bitch, she's gonna split in half.»

«But what about the Kid Pirates?»

«Uh, believe me.» the pirate licked his lips «She won't be in no state to squeal after I'm done with her.»

Kai swallowed and glanced at Heat and Wire, in front of him.

A dark shadow had fallen over their hard features, and their eyes were fixed to the void.

«Excuse us for a second.» Wire growled before he and Heat turned and pointed straight toward the two pirates.
What followed wasn't pretty.

«Well, I guess they ain't catching anyone alone now.» the Mohican laughed above the screams of agony, sputtering his chicken around.

«Come on.» he chimed, grabbing Kai's shoulder «We gotta take over the ship from Booka and the others.»

After cashing in the first prize, you headed out the stadium through the gallery reserved for the contestants.

You were well aware that many of the other participants wouldn't be fond of walking beside you, so you waited for them to be gone before taking the exit yourself.

The gallery was deserted and badly illuminated, but the rifle bouncing against your side made you feel comfortable nevertheless.

*I wonder whether Kid is angry with me.*

Sure he looked proud before, but his mood could change faster than the tides in the New World.

Your small sigh echoed in the tunnel.

*Well, I guess I'll find out soon.*

Your haki alarm went off full power in your head, and you jerked back just in time to dodge a huge axe swinging your way.

«WHAT THE HELL?!»

«Nice Observation, as I thought.»

You blinked, rifle already pointing at the imposing shadow in front of you, adrenalin pumping in your veins.

It took a second for you to recognise him.

*You gotta be kidding me.*

Diez Drake stood in the middle of the gallery, his weapon now lowered, but his piercing blue eyes fixed on you.

He was even taller than Kid.

Nobody moved for a few long moments, your fast breathing cutting the silence.

His gaze slowly descended on the gun.

«Are you going to shoot me?»

Your grip tightened over the rifle to prevent your fingers from trembling.

Yes, that would have been the smart thing to do. Then why couldn't you bring yourself to pull the trigger?
For fuck's sake, why, why does it have to be him?! What does he want from me?

You grit your teeth, biting down your tongue.

You didn't want to speak anymore in case he could recognise your voice.

Calm down, Y/n. We barely ever talked to each other, and it was a long time ago. It's very unlikely that he remembers me at all.

He didn't move.

«I'm sorry, but I must ask you to remove your mask.»

You felt your blood turning into ice.

...well, shit.

The air became so still you knew he was going to spring at you any second now.

I don't stand a chance against him.

I have to move first.

You darted aside with your maximum speed, firing your rifle at the same time.

You aimed at the arm holding the axe, but you had underestimated his own speed, or maybe his Observation.

He lashed out at the same time, dodging the bullet, and he was beside you in an instant, out of your range.

His words whistled in your ear.

«I'll just cut it down then.»

You spun on your feet and jumped back in an attempt to escape his field of action, but his axe was just too big.

You saw the blade flashing before you, right toward your face, and you shut your eyes with a desperate gasp.

Then your back hit something warm and solid, and the furious clang of blades clashing burst right in front of you.

You opened your eyes to see the scythe and the axe trembling against each other a few inches from your nose.

«Back off, Red Flag.» Killer growled from behind you.

Drake's gaze didn't falter.

«Massacre Soldier.»

The spasmodic tension suddenly left your body, and you abandoned your weight against the warm torso with a long breath.

Thank god.
Killer swung his scythe, disengaging the pirate, and his other arm firmly wrapped around you as he leaped several feet away.

Drake didn't jump after you.

«Come for your nakama, I see.» he calmly observed.

The blonde didn't reply, roughly pulling you behind him and assuming his offence position.

«Not very chivalric, ambushing a sniper to close combat.» he hissed.

«I needed to check something.»

Your fingers balled into fists.

Drake tilted his head to the side, those cold eyes still studying you.

«I suggest you to walk away» Killer said «if you don't want me to take you out right before the treasure hunt.»

The ginger's eyebrows twitched imperceptibly.

«What makes you think you can take me out?»

You immediately raised your rifle again, and Killer's second scythe snatched out of his gauntlet.

«Try me.»

Drake's gaze trailed from him to you.

«Fine.» he said, his shoulders relaxing «I do not wish to start a war against your crew the night before the race. We can settle things tomorrow.»

Killer kept his guard up as Drake walked past him, shifting his position so you could remain behind him the whole time.

«My apologies, sniper, I mistook you for someone else.» Drake suddenly said, without turning «The person I knew would never associate herself with the Kid Pirates.»

You felt a snarl rumbling in your throat, but Killer's hand squeezed your shoulder, making you swallow your anger back.

When the pirate's steps disappeared in the shadows, you finally faced Killer.

«Thanks for saving me.» you muttered, gaze glued to the floor.

He hummed, still peering towards the end of the gallery.

«I think it's better if we don't mention this to Kid. He would attack Red Flag immediately, and the whole island would turn into a battlefield.»

You took a deep breath.

«I agree. But Killer...»

«Yeah, he probably recognised you.» his blades clicked back into his gauntlets «What difference does it make though? He's not a marine anymore and he doesn't have any proof.»
You pressed your lips together, then nodded.

The Massacre Soldier looked at you.

«What's with that face? You better get some colour back to your cheeks if you don't want Kid to suspect something.»

He started walking and you hurried behind him.

«Killer.»

«Mh?»

«What were you doing here?»

It took a moment for him to reply.

«I figured something like this may happen.»

Your head dropped.

Of course. After the show you gave out there, it was pretty naïve to assume nobody would wait for you in the darkness.

Your mouth twitched.

«Sorry I'm such a pain.» you quietly grumbled.

There was a second of silence and you felt his eyes on you before he swiftly flicked your nape.

«Ouch! Hey!» you groaned, grimacing at him.

«Quit the submissive act, kitty, it freaks me out.»

«Where the hell have you two been?!» Kid barked when you finally emerged from the stadium.

«Y/n got lost in the galleries, I had to fish her out.» Killer shrugged.

You shot a side glare at him, but didn't comment.

«Why are you guys all stained with blood?» you frowned when you took a better look at them.

Heat and Wire glanced at each other, while Kid scoffed.

«Why wouldn't I be?»

Fair enough.

«Yeah... well, sorry my coverage went to shit.» you sighed «But can I get some decent clothes now? This thing is freaking killing me.»

Your fingers pulled at the bandage around your chest, causing Heat and Wire to quickly look away.

You were about to say something else when Kid's dark shadow enveloped you.
«Birdie.»

His voice sent a cold shiver down your spine.

You slowly raised your eyes on his, and your tongue dried.

«That was quite a show you put up, out there.» he lowly said «You showed up late. You got stripped down. And you drew all the attention to yourself.»

You tried to swallow.

«I-In my defence,» you stuttered, taking a step back «I didn't think you would be watching.»

That only made his eyes twitch as he grabbed the fabric around your breasts, harshly pulling your small frame against his.

His deadly glare suddenly morphed into a mad grin, his tongue darting out to lick his lips.

«Oh, but I was.» he growled «So what are we supposed to do with all those men who want to fuck you now, mh?»

You frowned, your eyes lowering on his bloody fingers before rising back to his.

«Are any of them still alive?»

He snickered, his iron grip closing around your forearm as his mouth pressed against your ear.

«Congratulations on your victory, birdie. Here comes the prize.»

«Huh, actually, the prize was in ca–»

Kid turned abruptly, dragging you with him towards the main street.

«Oi, Kid!» Killer called from behind «Remember that we have the treasure hunt tomorrow!»

«I'll see you on the ship!» Kid shouted without slowing down.

«Hey, freaking redhead! Let me go! I can walk by myself!» you protested, trying to wiggle out of his grasp.

You were basically running to keep up with his impatient strides, and the ordeal was attracting several eyes from the crowded streets. It was humiliating.

«Kid!» you snarled, when he didn't reply.

He turned abruptly with a low growl.

You were surprised by how rabid his eyes looked, but you put your foot down, returning his fierce glare.

«Let me go.» you ordered.

The people around took a step back.

He grit his teeth and, for a second, you thought he was going to hit you. Instead, his grip grew
tighter before slowly loosening.

You grunted, pulling your arm back and rubbing your sore wrist.

«What the hell's gotten into you?!»

His large hand slid over your shoulder to harshly grab a handful of your hair, though he didn't pull. He bent over you and his grimace came dangerously close to your face.

You noticed the muscles of his arm were strangely tense.

«Y/n.» he hissed, for only you to hear «I don't have much self-control left in me.»

Your eyes widened, flicking on his.

Oh.

Oooooh.

«You better move your ass if you don't want me to fuck you here in the middle of the street.»

You stared at him for a few seconds, then a crooked smirk crawled to your features.

«So you did enjoy my little show.»

«Birdie.»

His metallic fingers dug into your bicep and you flinched.

«O-Okay, okay!» you murmured «No filthy inns or anything like that though! I've seen a little wood up the hill, I don't think there's people there.»

You didn't think he would really take you in public, but you rathered not finding out.

Kid frowned, his eyes darting over the hinterland.

«In the woods?»

«Yeah, I... I'd prefer that.»

He paused for a moment.

«Fine.» he grunted «But I can't promise you'll reach there with your clothes on.»
You did manage to reach the woods with that little clothes you had left on, just barely.

The moment the forest became thicker, Kid turned and tugged you against him unceremoniously, his mechanic arm wrapping around you and securing your figure against his torso with a dark snicker.

You were expecting him to go for your chest band first, but he surprised you when his quick fingers tore the mask off your face instead.

«No need for this now.» he husked, banging you against a tree and grinding his body against yours, his face lowering until you could feel his hot breath on your lips.

The temperature suddenly rose, flushing your cheeks.

One of your hand crawled up his chest. Feeling his hard-steel muscles below your touch always sent a delicious twitch between your legs. Your free hand tugged at the garments around your torso, but he stopped you.

«Impatient, aren't we?»

You glanced up at him with a frown.

«I thought you were.»

«The walk helped, and frankly, I'm more impatient to punish you.»

«Wha–»

Your eyes widened slightly when he unfastened one of his belts from his pants.

Kid probably noticed your dread, because he chuckled.

«Do you want to be whipped, birdie?»

Before you could answer, though, his mechanic hand quickly grabbed both of your wrists and pulled them above your head.

You tried to escape his grip, but he was swift in securing the belt around the trunk, tying your arms in that position.

«Maybe some other time.»

You gave a tentative yank at the restrains, to no avail, then glared at him.

«I should have seen this coming.»

Kid grinned at you, his fingers finally grasping at your chest band.

«Now let's get rid of this, shall we?»

He tugged curtly at the fabric, tearing it to pieces.

His grin only grew wider as he watched your breasts finally bouncing free from their restrain.
«W-Wait, Kid...» you mewled, pressing your back against the rough trunk as a soft breeze hit your vulnerable chest «What if someone walks by...?»

«Oh, don't worry, birdie,» he snickered, his painted lips brushing the sensitive area behind your earlobe while his hand slid down your hip «if someone sees you like this, it would be the last thing they see.»

His mouth trailed down your neck, and you could feel his bare teeth on your skin.

His warm tongue traced the shape of your breast, lightly startling you, and when you looked down you saw his lips hovering inches from your nipple and his amber eyes staring right back at you, a wicked glimmer sparkling in his irises.

Suddenly, it was hard to swallow.

«...which would be a pretty sweet death, if you ask me.»

His words fanned against your hardening nipple, making you gasp.

«Kid...!»

«Calling my name already?» he snickered, his fingers following the rim of your pants before hooking onto them and pulling them down slightly.

Goosebumps were now running down your whole body.

He stuck out his tongue and slowly rolled it over one of your weakest spots.

You squirmed against the tree, the trunk scratching your back.

Suddenly, his flesh hand squeezed your other breast while he rose up to press his forehead against yours, his eyes drinking in your tormented face.

«You knew this was coming, Y/n.» he growled as his fingers twisted your nipple lightly, your gasp breaking against his mouth «You were up there, straining my patience, knowing there would be consequences.» he sneered «I can only assume you want this.»

He tilted his head and bit down your neck, while his mechanic hand harshly groped your butt.

«So say it.»

Your body twitched on his and a ragged moan escaped your lips.

«Say you want this.»

You tried to calm your pounding heart by taking deep breaths, but his ministrations kept making the air hitching in your throat.

You finally managed to swallow, a strained yet cheeky smirk spreading on your lips when he looked at you.

«Break me, Eustass Kid.»

His fingers twitched on your skin, digging deeper as that mad, sadistic grin of his lit his entire face.

«Oh, my crazy little birdie.» he hissed «It will be my pleasure.»
Eustass Kid broke you.

His original plan was torturing you with denial, but your cocky retorts had him ripping the rest of your clothes apart and entering you with an angry push.

He didn't even wait for you to adjust before beginning to thrust fast and powerfully inside you.

Your first climax mounted and violently shook your body, but it only made him more furious.

That man had a crazy stamina.

He didn't allow you any sort of break, but instead he grabbed the back of your knees and pulled your thighs up against the trunk, burying himself deeper inside you with his thrusts.

You couldn't hold back your screams, your mind so overturned you couldn't tell pain and pleasure apart anymore.

You ended up whimpering anything he asked.

That you wanted it. That no one else could touch you. That you were fucking his.

There was only one thing you didn't say, the only thing he cut himself from asking mid-sentence, sinking his teeth in your chest to muffle his growl.

As his pushes and grunts became more desperate, your third orgasm was approaching, and he finally hit his release with you, and inside you, his nails digging in your thighs as his whole body tensed up with yours, your walls twitching madly around him.

After a few sloppier thrusts, he finally pulled out of you, and you barely registered his hands freeing your wrists from the belt.

You collapsed against him, covered in sweat, tears and other fluids, including blood.

Kid chuckled, panting himself and wrapping his arm around you to keep you from falling.

«You're fucking... crazy...» you wheezed, struggling to catch your breath.

You probably passed out immediately after, because you didn't remember him ever replying.

The sun was going down when you woke up again, lying in the grass and with the remains of your clothes gathered together as a pillow.

A small groan rumbled in your throat when you tried to move, a surge of pain cutting through your legs.

Something soft was draped on top of you like a blanket, and you blinked to recognise Kid's fur.

«Finally.»

His breath blew directly to your nape, making you shiver.

You whined and clumsily rolled over, a few curses leaving your lips.
Aside from the inner pain, your back was now a mosaic of scratches and scrapings.

Kid was lying in the grass right beside you, his pants already on and his features relaxed in a satisfied expression.

When your gaze met his, a sly smirk spread to his face.

«You screamed like a little virgin.»

«You stabbed me like a freaking psycho.»

He let out something that was both a snort and a chuckle, leaning his chin on his forearm and peering at you from under stray red locks.

«You brought it on yourself.»

You lay together in silence for a while.

The view of the darkening sky was dotted by the foliage, a few clouds carried by the wind and some evening birds calling each other.

«Oi, birdie.»

You turned your head to look at him.

Kid had his eyes fixed on the woods, a bothered frown now etched to his features.

The lipstick was smudged on his lips. They twitched before he spoke again.

«It was pretty bold of you to assume I would stop your fall. Bold and stupid.»

You blinked.

«What?»

«At the competition!» he snapped, turning to you.

Your eyebrows wrinkled.

«I didn't assume you would help me.»

«Don't even!» he scoffed «What kind of idiot would launch themselves like that without...»

His words trailed down to nothing as his sharp eyes darted on yours.

You.

You were that kind of idiot.

You clicked your tongue and attempted a weak smile.

Kid quickly averted his gaze with a growl.

«By the way, thanks for that, I guess.» you muttered.

«Don't fucking thank me!» he snarled «Your way of fighting is so dumb!»
"Yet I still have all my limbs."

His nails suddenly dug into your arm and he straddled you, burning eyes into yours now.

"I can afford to lose an arm and still fight to become the King of the Pirates." he hissed "But you're fucking small, and you break easy."

You grimaced, gritting your teeth as the fire ignited inside you.

"Exactly!" you blurted "You were born strong and ate a goddamn Devil Fruit along the way, good for you! I've always been weak! Do you think I could face the New World by sparing myself?"

Kid frowned, his face still mere inches from yours.

"Weak? Who said anything about being weak?"

He pulled away, sitting beside you and adjusting the goggles on his forehead.

"We're in the New World right now, birdie! The most infamous pirates are on this Island and they came to see your fight." he glared at you "Do you think all those bastards would cheer and lust over a weak woman down there? Then you're fucking stupid."

Your fingers clenched around his fur as you sat in the grass. A surge of pain departed from your lower regions, but you ignored it.

Kid turned away with a grunt, but you kept your clouded eyes on him, letting his words sink in.

Back in the Marines, at the few shooting competitions you joined, you were always the one without an audience. More often than not, your "comrades" booed at your victory, and you were soon made a referee to avoid the same scenario again and again.

Now you were at the Pirate Expo, and Eustass "Captain" Kid could have done just about anything with his day, but he came to see you. Then he killed the men who commented you in the wrong way. Although nobody even thought about booing you.

"I'll be more careful." you muttered.

He scoffed.

"Tch! That's bullshit and you know it."

You chuckled.

"Maybe. But Kid."

"What now?!"

His grimace was soon wiped away by your mouth when you threw your arms around his neck and bit his lips, not too harshly, but enough to wake the beast.

His hands roughly grabbed your hips and he tackled you down, pushing his tongue past your barriers and crushing your defences.

"...and then two more came out of nowhere, but I grabbed their neck and smashed their skulls"
together. I thought I finally won the battle but then... FREAKING BIG MOM SHOWED UP! A normal man would have ran, but not me, no, not me. I stood up to that old hag and guess what? She pissed her pants.»

Heat and Wire glanced at each other from above their tankards while Booka ranted about his phantasmagoric adventures to a couple of hardly-dressed ladies.

A few men of the crew had found a decent bar to hang out downtown. It was a shady place, filled with hookers and brutes, but the meat was good.

Women eager to offer their services had swarmed around them once they were recognised, and now most of the pirates were having their fun.

Heat had waved the company off though, he had his own woman after all, while Wire would scout to satisfy his particular tastes later that night.

The chime of a baby Den Den Mushi called from Heat's slacks, and he leaned back on the chair to answer.

«Yes?»

The snail immediately assumed your fresh features.

«Hey, Heat, it's Y/-- Kotori.»

«Kotori? Are you okay? Aren't you with the captain?»

«Yeah she's with me!» the snail suddenly barked, startling both him and Wire.

«Yes, yes, we're fine, I just have a little problem.» you took over.

«Hum, what is it?» Heat asked.

«Huh, well, I have no clothes.»

«Don't look at me like that, woman!»

«Well, whose fault is it?!»

Heat and Wire exchanged another look.

«Anyway, could you bring me something? Anything you find in any shop that's roughly my size will do. Sorry to bother you, Heat, but I don't know whom else to call.»

The pirate gulped down the rest of his beer and stood up.

«It's fine. What kind of clothes should I pick?»

«Whatever you want, I just need to be able to walk back in town.»

«Mmh, you sure?»

«Yeah, you got decent stuff before.»

«Okay then. I'll find you with the captain's vivre card.»

«Thanks, Heat, you're the best!»
The Den Den Mushi went back to sleep, and Wire followed his comrade outside.

«You're coming too?»

«Mh, why not.» Wire replied, bored «I'll take the chance to get out of here. By the way...»

«Yes?»

«I think you should pick something that fits the crew.»

The sun was already gone when Heat brought your clothes, but a full moon and a myriad of stars were illuminating the evening.

You didn't actually see the man since Kid met him outside the clearing for the handover. Then he came back and threw the bag at you.

«Come on, get dressed and let's get this over with.»

You could see he was turning impatient to head back. Rumours had it the Strawhats' ship was spotted somewhere near the island, so their arrival was expected soon.

You opened the bag and your jaw fell.

«You gotta be kidding me.»

«What?» Kid grunted, turning to you.

You pulled the clothes out and displayed them in front of you.

The dark baggy pants were fine, although the waistline was extremely low.

The problem was the black leather corset, made by two pieces kept together by crossed laces both on the back and the front, apparently designed to push your boobs together as much as possible.

There was no bra.

Kid's frown morphed into a malicious smirk.

«Oho, that looks interesting.»

«Heat, you traitor.» you hissed.

«He wasn't stupid, actually.» Kid shrugged, his smirk never wavering «With that, you'll blend with the rest of the crew. I doubt whoever knew you as a marine would recognise you.»

You glared at him, but his renewed good mood was impossible to kill.

«Come on, wear it.»

You huffed, grabbing his fur to keep it on your shoulders as you moved behind some trees.

«Oi, were are you going?»

«To dress up. I'm not gonna give you another free show.»
«But I've already seen all there is to see! Multiple times!»

«Good, than hang on to that image!» you uttered, before sliding in the shadow.

Thankfully, the corset turned out to be less uncomfortable than you dreaded.

The inside was lined with silk, so at least there was no unwanted scuffing. You fastened it as tight as you could not to lose it, but once again Heat seemed to have guessed your size, because it fitted perfectly. You just felt very naked.

The corset highlighted your bosom and left the line from your sternum to your navel covered only by thin laces.

When Kid saw you, his eyes shamelessly glued to your cleavage and rested there.

«Okay, this thing is indecent.» you grumbled.

«Hm-hm.»

It didn't really seem like he was listening.

«Weren't you all upset by the "all the man who wanted to fuck me"?» you asked, placing the mask on your face «Where did that go?»

«Oh, they must have a death wish if they so much glance at you now.»

He hinted at the countless bites and marks left all over your neck and chest, and even on your lower abdomen. Furthermore, the shape of his fingers was clearly printed around your arms.

He grinned, tilting his head.

«I think the message is pretty obvious.»

«Jerk.»

The two of you headed down the hill, and you chewed down a few curses.

Even if the pain had tuned down, it was still difficult to walk properly.

Kid eyed you with an amused smirk.

«Having some trouble there, birdie?»

«Shut up.»

This will not be a triumphant comeback.

Well, for me at least.

You winced when a stabbing pain flashed through your inner walls, but gasped when something scooped you up from behind.

«Wah!»

«Come on, we don't have all night.» Kid grumbled, lifting you with his mechanic arm.

After a moment of surprise, you relaxed, adjusting yourself against his wide torso, your right arm
resting on his shoulder.

«I'm going back to the ship first.» you mumbled.

«What? Why?» he groaned, his voice laced with annoyance.

«Because I'm covered with all kinds of bodily fluids, you brute! I need a shower. And you do too.»

He muttered some incoherent curse.

«Ugh, fine. At one condition.»

«What?»

Kid pouted lightly, eyes fixed in front of him as a faint blush spread to his cheeks.

«After the shower, you put this shit back on.»

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