

A Warlord and his Princess

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Kapitel 4: Shopping

The next morning came faster than expected. Perona was still a bit sleepy when she woke up. Last evening it took a lot of time for her to check, which utensils she needed and she was too hyped to fall asleep. She has not left this island for almost a year now. Everything she needed, she asked Hawkeye to buy for her, which at some points was really embarrassing for her. Who wanted a basically stranger to buy her things for her period? But even in her time with Gecko Moria she did not often visit other cities. Most of her time Perona spent on Thriller Bark and only accompanied him if there were special occasions or missions that required the attendance of the warlords. So every time she went out to another place it was pure excitement for her.

She decided to wear the black dress and the black hat with white roses to match Mihawks outfit. Now that she had her first official trip as his partner, she wanted to dress accordingly and of course she wanted to look splendid. She got dressed and readied herself in the bathroom. Then she took her umbrella and a small bag and flew downstairs to the dining room.

Today it was Zoros turn to prepare the breakfast, so it was no problem that she was a bit late today. Mihawk and Zoro were already seated. The owner of the house sat at usual on the head of the table, eating a piece of his sandwich while studying the latest newspaper. He was already dressed in his usual trademark clothing, except for his hat and his sword. Yoru was leaning on the wall next to him and his hat hung on the headrest of his chair. Zoro sat at the opposite end of the table wearing his classic combat outfit. Seems like he just wanted to proceed with his training today while the other two were leaving. "Good morning", she hummed when she entered. Zoro just side-eyed her, mumbling something like "Somebody is in a good mood." Mihawk looked up for a short moment and nodded simply as a greeting. Then he redirected his attention to the newspaper again. Perona sat on a chair somewhere in the middle of the table, place already prepared and started to eat. Breakfast itself was always quiet. Mihawk was mostly reading his newspaper, Zoro never said a word, only if he wanted to know about today's training or if there were any news on events concerning his crew. Perona would always try to start some light-hearted conversation, asking Zoro if his training went well or how his other crewmates are like. She had met most of them during their time on Thriller Bark and to say that their last encounter was not that friendly would be a big understatement. Over the months they all spent here Zoro became like a friend to her. They talked often and it was nice getting to know him and his crew better. They had experienced a lot of adventures for their young age which was really interesting for her. At some point she was also hoping that she could meet them all again, under different circumstances, and try to

get to know them. After all the straw hats seemed like nice people.

When breakfast was over, she looked to Mihawk, who did not say a word this morning, and told him: "I just need to go to the bathroom quickly. Then we can leave." Hawkeye nodded shortly without looking at her and replied: "I will meet you outside." "Ok", Perona decided to not let the indifferent mood of him disturb her and floated outside of the room. When she was gone Mihawk let his gaze wander to Zoro and asked him to destroy the newspaper when they left. This declaration made Zoro suspicious. "What?", he looked at his mentor not really believing what he was ordered to, "Why should I?" Mihawk fold the newspaper two times and put it on the table next to his plate. He waited for a short moment and checked with his observation haki, if Perona really was out of hearing range. When he got the confirmation, he explained: "The news says that they have spotted someone who might be Gecko Moria." Zoro raised an eyebrow when he processed this information. "And you don't want Perona to see this." Mihawk nodded slowly. "Why?" "This information is very vague. I do not want to get her hopes up and do something reckless." The younger swordsman thought about this statement for a while. "It has been a year", Mihawk grabbed his cup of tea and emptied it, "If he really was interested in getting Perona back, then he knew where he should be headed. The news proclaimed that she is now under my jurisdiction." "But you two never really seemed to be friends", Zoro intervened, "Maybe he does not want to pick a fight with you to get her back." Mihawk considered this statement. It could very well be that he was the reason the other warlord did not reach out for her. But even in that case, the sword master would not give her back to him without knowing that she would be safe there. Given the rumours he received from other informants the world order was about to change. Every wrong move could become a fatal decision. "But I believe you already had that in mind", Zoro continued. He straightened up in his chair and looked at Mihawk with a concerned face: "Anyway I do think that it is better for her to stay here. She told me some things about Morias crew, that even made me wonder what kind of shithole this place was." Mihawk raised an eyebrow on that statement. "Why is that?" "I think it is better if she tells you this by herself", Zoro answered, "She asked me to keep it to myself." Hawkeye nodded and felt Peronas presence coming closer again. He grabbed his hat with his right hand and placed it on top of his head. Then he walked over to Yoru and put it into the holder on his back. "We will be back in the evening." With that he left the room and saw Perona waiting on the entrance to the castle. Together they went to the small coffin shaped boat.

The trip to their destination was quiet. Mihawk said on his throne as usual when he steered the small boat. He leaned against the backrest, arms crossed in front of him and his hat covering most part of his face. The warlord was still thinking about the small discussion he had with his student before he left. He needed a way to ask Perona about her time with Moria but he did not want to do this without raising her suspicion. The woman occupying his mind was sitting in front of him on the edge of the small boat, staring straight into the ocean. The water has always fascinated her. It looked so beautiful as the smooth waves collided with their boat. But for her the ocean also meant a real-life threat. She was a devil fruit user so she should never come in contact with it. She would lose all her abilities and her strength within seconds, meaning her inevitable death. Perona averted her gaze from the water and looked at Mihawk. He was so quiet this morning which was unusual even for him. "Is something troubling you?", she could not help but ask him. "Nothing that concerns you", he lied plainly. Right now was not the right moment to address his thoughts.

Perona pouted and left it at that. She did not want to anger him, because today was a fun day for her. But she was also not really happy with his reply. She directed her view to the front and saw that they were now getting closer to an island. Their trip was not long. It only took them one hour to get to the next island. She watched the silhouette of the island getting sharper and memorized everything that she saw. It was a smaller island. On the docks she saw ships that at most could transport 30 men. The first houses she saw were not that big. But it looked beautiful, clean and at most peaceful. Like all the piracy never has happened there. The pair docked their boat almost in the middle of all the ships and went on the bridges. "Hawkeye!", someone shouted from the edge of the bridge, "I did not think I would see you again so shortly after your last trip here. Do you need to resupply again?" An old man with grey hair walked towards them. He was shorter than Mihawk and was a little chubby. "It is good to see you, my friend", he was really friendly towards the warlord. The he noticed Perona standing next to Mihawk. He smiled his best smile and took both of her hands in his: "And who is this lovely lady at your side?" Perona was a bit startled at the open friendliness the man freely displayed. She could not do anything except go with what the man was doing. "Perona, this is mister Williams", the sword master was already used to the friendly outburst of the older man. It was nothing new to him as he was always greeted like that when the old man was walking around the docks. "Mr. Williams, this is Perona." Upon hearing that name he already recognised the name: "Oh of course! I am sorry that I did not recognise you directly. It is a pleasure to finally meet you. I have read a lot in the newspapers and could not wait to officially meet you." He let go of her hands and bowed lightly: "I am the mayor of this town. We are glad to welcome you in our city. Every friend of Hawkeye is a friend to us. We owe him so much." "It is nice to meet you", Perona replied to him with a light smile. She was still surprised by the friendliness. She did not expect for Mihawk to be greeted with such a pleasure. "What do you need today, Hawkeye?" "I need to see the blacksmith." "Again? Last time you visited us you were also running some errands there." "I have adapted my exercise. That's why I need to restock the training supplies more often." Mihawk could not say that Zoro was living with him. He decided to make this small lie and felt Perona's gaze in him. He looked at her as to get her confirmation that she would also keep this a secret and it seemed like she understood him without any words. She slightly nodded and smiled. "I understand. It is essential for you to be at your best", Mr. Williams replied, "But a blacksmith is not a place for such a fine young lady. Would you do me the honor of showing you around in our small town?" Perona was not sure how to answer his request. She thought that she would stick to Mihawks side during their trip to make sure that she was not lost or did not do something stupid. She looked at the warlord to get him to answer for her. "Of course. This would be lovely", Mihawk answered, "I will join you as soon as I have finished my business." Perona agreed with Mihawks decision: "I am looking forward to get to know everything." With that said the mayor hooked her into his left arm and guided her towards the market place. Mihawk watched them leave and then he went his way.

"You must know that this place is only as beautiful as is it because of the warlord", the mayor said as they arrived on the market place. "Before we got to know Hawkeye, we had a problem with ill-mannered pirates. But nobody was able to keep up with them. When he came to our island the first time, I thought that he would leave directly. He looked so disgusted when he saw these pirates lingering around." He stopped for a second and sighed. "This town was a real mess and our villagers were never safe. Many women were abducted, violated or killed during that time." He looked at the

marked and smiled a sad smile. "When Hawkeye came here, I begged him for his help. By then we already knew of his position. And thank the gods he cleaned this town of all the pirates. Since then we are under his protection. We owe him everything." Perona looked at him stunned about this story. She could feel the deep hurt the mayor had and could now understand better why he was so cheery to see Mihawk. "I am glad it turned out well for you", she said, "Your town is really gorgeous and I cannot wait to see all the small shops and goods." "Of course, of course – as the lady wishes", he wiped away a stray tear on his cheek and guided her to the first market stalls, "Here you can see the finest fruits and vegetables the town has to offer." The small booth had their goods placed neatly into some boxes. All the fruits were shimmering lightly and they looked really delicious. "Oh it looks very great!" The mayor smiled and guided her to the next stall. "This is my wife Elisabeth. She owns a small shop with jewellery", he introduced her to the woman behind the booth, "Elisabeth, this is Perona. The girlfriend of Hawkeye as I have mentioned last time out of the newspaper." Hearing that Perona's face became the shade of one of the shiniest tomatoes she has seen in the previous stall. "I ... I'm sorry but there is a light misunderstanding", she stuttered and waved her hands in front of her, "We are only working together. I ... I am not his girlfriend." The mayor was also a bit embarrassed: "Oh my god I am so sorry. I thought you two are really cute together and I never heard of Hawkeye allying with anyone – let alone a beautiful young woman. I made a wrong assumption." "No problem", Perona was still blushing heavily. For an outsider it could very well appear like he had assumed. Before she could dive further into the topic she gave her full attention to the mayor's wife: "It is a pleasure to meet you, Elisabeth. You really have wonderful jewellery on your booth." Elisabeth chuckled lightly. "Thank you, young miss." From afar a man was calling out to Mr. Williams. "Mayor, can I have a short opinion on my newest development for our sewer tunnel?" The mayor excused himself for a short moment and left Perona in the care of his wife. "I am sorry if my husband has made you feel any kind of embarrassment", she told her warmly, "He is a romantic old fool." Oh could someone please save Perona from these discussions. She was not able to regain her normal skin colour if they were coming back to that topic again and again. "Please do not worry", she managed to say, "Your husband really is a kind man." Perona looked through the jewellery in front of her as she had time to spare until Mr. Williams came back. The booth was presenting a lot of rings, necklaces and bracelets in all kind of colours. She stopped in her general admiring when she saw a necklace on the left of the market stall. It was a delicate necklace made out of silver. The chain was plain and a small silver cross was attached on it. She took the necklace into her right hand to have a closer look. "Oh you have chosen a really beautiful necklace", Elisabeth said. "Yes. It is gorgeous." Instantly Perona was remembered of Hawkeye's golden necklace with his hidden blade. "How much is it?" She asked the owner of the shop. Elisabeth grinned as she also noticed the similarity to the Hawkeye's jewellery: "Please. If you like it, then keep it." Perona was startled by the generosity of the older woman. "Oh no I can't." "No, it is my pleasure", Elisabeth answered, "We owe Hawkeye much. It is a small way to repay his kindness if I can give his lady something she adores." "What? No ... I ... I already told you", Perona stuttered. Her face darkening again. The owner chuckled: "Sure, love. But keep it. It suits you." "Thanks you very much", Perona smiled widely and put the chain around her neck. Then she remembered that she needed to buy other stuff as well. "Can I ask you for a favour as long as your husband is busy?", she was a bit shy to ask. "Of course", Elisabeth agreed, "How can I help you?" "Well ... you see. Soon it is this time

of a month again", Perona started, feeling really uncomfortable, "Do you know where I can buy some utensils for women?" Elisabeth smiled at her uneasiness and came around from her booth to stand next to Perona. "Sure. Please follow me. The drugstore is around the corner."

In the meantime, Mihawk was already finished with the first stop to gather some supplies for their meals at home. Now he was waiting at the blacksmith's shop for the owner to bring him the desired training utensils. It was not much. He just needed some targets and some training weights. While he was waiting, he had a look around the crafted swords that were aligned on the wall. The swordman knew that the owner always had good products. But it was not like he was in need for a new sword of his own. He wielded Yoru since he was a child and he always took care of the sword. But as swords were part of his passion as a sword master, he always had a look at the ones displayed. He went from left to the middle. Pulled down one or another sword to check the handcraft. They were always perfectly balanced and well formed. When he reached the end, he saw a thin sword in a size a little smaller compared to Zoros swords. What really intrigued Mihawk was the design of the hilt and the colour of the sheath. It was designed in white and pink. "Oh come on", he muttered. It was like this sword was made for Perona. He took it from the wall and checked the craftsmanship deeply. He could not find any failure in it. "I never expected you for someone interested in such a special sword", the owner came back into the room with Mihawk's order, "The colour does not really match your outfit." "Not for me. This is for a friend", the warlord made some light movements with the sword to check the handling of it, "Do you have a matching belt?" "Sure... just give me a minute. I will go get it", the owner went out of the room again and came back with a white belt decorated with small pink flowers, "Would this fit?" Mihawk eyed the belt and nodded. "I take everything." The warlord paid for all the training utensils and the new sword and left the shop with two large bags in each hand.

Outside he used his observation haki to find Perona. It did not take long as she was exactly where he expected her to be: still in the market place. He went into her direction and as Mihawk came close he already saw her standing at the booths with four shopping bags next to her, trying some of the local biscuits and talking to the mayor and his wife. When Mr. Williams spotted Mihawk he waved at him. "You're back!", Perona exclaimed cheerily, as he was standing next to them, "Did you get everything that you needed?" The warlord nodded simply. "Did you have a good time?" "It was soooo great!", Perona answered, "Everybody is so kind here, the town is beautiful and there is so much stuff to explore. Have you seen the posters? Next month there is the annual festivity. We need to participate!" "Most definitely you need to attend. Both of you", the mayor insisted, "It is always a pleasure having you around." "We will think about it", Mihawk answered casually, but Perona interfered. "If necessary, I will personally drag him here", she chuckled. The mayor and his wife joined her in doing so. "Your friend is lovely", Elisabeth mentioned addressed to the warlord, "It was fun to spend time with her." It was nice to hear that they liked Perona. He knew that occasionally she could be very exhausting but in general she was a good person. Even though Mihawk would not admit it out loud and most times he did not act like it, but he liked having her around. When she was with him there was always something happening and the day took an interesting turn. It also made him feel less lonely and heightened his mood a bit. "It is good to hear that all of you had a great day", he said, "But we need to leave. I want to be back before it gets dark." Perona nodded. "Well then let's go", she said. She turned to the mayor and his wife to bid

them goodbye: "Thank you both for everything today. It was a pleasure to meet you and I am looking forward to our next meeting." Mr. Williams and Elisabeth also said their goodbyes and Mihawk simply nodded as a gesture. Then they left and went to their boat. "It was such a great day. Thanks for taking me with you", Perona took place in front of the big throne and placed her bags next to her, "And the mayor and his wife really are kind people." "Yes they are", Mihawk agreed. He put down the bags next to his seat and tied them together so they would not fall down when they were on the sea. "While I was away getting something for Roronoas training, I found something for you", he pulled out the sword stuck in the sheath and the belt he had bought for her, "It was basically screaming at me to buy it." When Perona saw the pink sword, her eyes widened in disbelief and she stared at it with her mouth hung open. "Really? For me?" "I doubt that this colour suits me." "OH MY GOD!", she shouted, "This is SO CUTE!" She sprung up, took the sword out of his hand and unsheathed it. Perona made some light movements with it and then lowered it. She looked at the design and she was not sure if there could be anything that was more fitting for her. "It is perfect. Thank you Mihawk!" She grinned widely, as she put on her belt and attached the sword on it. She stood before him, presenting her new sword to him. "How do I look?" He examined her from top to bottom. He could not help it. Seeing her standing in front of him, with an outfit, that was matching with his - but way girlier - that he had to admit that she was indeed a gorgeous woman. It was only then that he noticed the new jewellery around her neck. A small silver copy of his own cross. "You look beautiful", he admitted honestly, trying to be as calm and indifferent as always. That comment made her blush a bit. "Thank you", she mumbled while taking a seat again in front of Mihawk. With that they started their little trip back to Kuraigana.