

Chapter 66

17th of April 1522
Thriller Bark

The dirigible descended with a soft hum, its rotors slicing through the thick fog perpetually cloaking Thriller Bark. As the massive airship settled on the creaking wooden dock, Morgans stepped out, his feathered frame silhouetted against the eerie glow of the ship's lanterns. The once-isolated island-boat had moved from the Florian Triangle to a more accessible spot near Sabaody at the end of Paradise, a strategic relocation that piqued Morgans' curiosity. He laughed heartily, his avian beak clacking in anticipation. Gecko Moria was always full of surprises, and a wedding like this, just two days before the war? Astonishing!

The air was thick with anticipation and the scent of old wood and roses. Moria, ever the enigmatic host, had chosen Thriller Bark as the venue for his unexpected marriage to Vinsmoke Reiju. The timing was impeccable, with the imminent war explaining the choice of location. The New World was a hotbed of chaos, with Whitebeard heading to Marineford and other pirate emperors, like Big Mom and Kaido, poised to seize territory. Even Shanks, ever the peacemaker, could not stem the tide of ambition and aggression.

As Morgans disembarked, he was greeted by Isabella von Carstein, Moria's personal assistant and a key figure in Alabasta's administration alongside Capone Bege. Isabella's presence was commanding; her pale skin seemed to glow under the dim lights, and her red eyes, sharp and intelligent, appraised him with a mixture of formality and curiosity. She wore a formal black dress that clung to her curves, accentuating her ample bosom, which drew a subtle, appreciative glance from Morgans.

"Welcome to Thriller Bark, Mr. Morgans," Isabella said, her voice smooth and controlled. "It is an honor to have you here. Your reputation precedes you, and I trust you will find this event most intriguing."

Morgans inclined his head, his keen eyes sparkling with interest. "Thank you, Ms. von Carstein. Moria never ceases to amaze. A wedding on the eve of war—truly the kind of news that shakes the world."

Isabella smiled politely, though her eyes remained guarded. "Indeed. We hope this event will be a memorable one for all attendees. Please, make yourself comfortable. I must attend to other matters, but should you need anything, do not hesitate to ask."

With a graceful nod, she excused herself, leaving Morgans to his observations. He pulled out a small notebook, its pages already filled with scribbles and notes, and began to jot down the details of the various attendees. Many nobles were present, likely invited by Judge rather than Moria, seeking refuge from the turmoil in the New World. Their opulent attire and uneasy expressions contrasted sharply with the gothic splendor of Thriller Bark. Morgans made his way to the castle's courtyard. The garden was a breathtaking display of gothic beauty. Roses of every conceivable color writhed and twisted, their thorny vines forming intricate patterns that seemed almost alive. The most striking were the blood-red, carnivorous roses, their petals moving with a predatory grace as they snapped at passing insects. Their thorns gleamed menacingly, hinting at their lethal nature.

"I still can't believe Moria managed to pull this off," murmured one noble, adjusting his silk cravat. "A wedding here, of all places."

"Indeed," another replied, sipping from his champagne glass. "And to Vinsmoke Reiju, no less. The alliances this could forge..."

Shadowy figures patrolled the grounds with an eerie silence—Moria's Shadow Soldiers, their forms barely more than moving darkness. Thriller Bark itself loomed like a grand, mysterious castle against the night sky. Its gothic spires reached towards the heavens, humming with a faint, electric energy. Gargoyles with bright yellow eyes perched on the edges, their stony faces seeming to follow the movements of the guests. The castle's architecture was both imposing and captivating, a fortress of secrets and shadows, its walls whispering tales of past horrors and hidden treasures.

The garden was filled with nobles. Their opulent attire—flowing silks, velvet robes, and jeweled accessories—contrasted with the gothic architecture. Among them, Vinsmoke Judge stood at the center, looking very pleased. His presence was commanding, his military uniform adorned with medals and his cape fluttering

slightly in the breeze. Near him, Morgans noted the infamous Doctor Hogback. So, he really had gone to work under Moria? What a scoop! And was that Trafalgar Law near them? Another scoop! Moria had so many impressive subordinates he had kept secret.

"Is that Trafalgar Law over there?" a guest whispered, eyes widening. "I thought he was just a rogue pirate!"

"Seems Moria has quite the collection of talents," another responded, barely hiding his surprise. "And Doctor Hogback too... Incredible."

Princess Vivi, Moria's first wife, was a vision of regal beauty. She wore a traditional, oriental-inspired dress of white linen, intricately embroidered with blue and gold patterns that highlighted her regal bearing. The dress flowed elegantly, adorned with golden jewels that sparkled with every movement. Her attire included a fitted bodice with delicate gold filigree, accentuating her slender waist, and a flowing skirt that trailed gracefully behind her. Her ensemble was completed with a translucent blue veil, edged in gold, draped over her long, flowing hair. Her father, King Cobra, stood proudly by her side, both of them radiating a sense of contentment. Morgans jotted down in his notebook that they seemed very pleased with the marriage. Interesting, but surprising.

Shadow Servants and Maids moved gracefully among the guests, serving delicate champagne glasses filled with bubbling golden liquid. These spectral attendants, their forms barely more than moving shadows, glided silently, adding to the eerie atmosphere of the event. Their service was impeccable, their presence almost ethereal.

"This champagne is exquisite," a noble remarked, examining his glass. "And those Shadow Servants... Unsettling, yet efficient."

"Leave it to Prince Moria to blend luxury with the macabre," his companion replied with a shiver.

As Morgans continued to observe, he noted Vice Admiral Vergo, a formidable figure in his dark Marine uniform, likely sent by HQ to ensure Moria's cooperation and to make sure he would come to the war. Kings from various New World countries mingled among the crowd, with their lavish robes and jeweled crowns. The air buzzed with quiet conversations and the clinking of glasses as alliances were subtly forged and old enmities momentarily set aside.

He also recognized Capone Bege and Absalom overseeing the security, their vigilant eyes scanning the crowd for any potential threats. In another corner, already drinking a beer with a green-haired man in traditional Wano attire, was Selena Whitefang. She was a striking figure, her tanned, muscular form contrasting with the delicate surroundings. Her vibrant red hair fell in waves around her shoulders, and her cocktail dress—a little red number—clung to her fit physique, highlighting her visible muscles. The dress, short and daring, showcased her toned legs and athletic build, drawing appreciative glances from those around her.

"Who's that woman in the red dress?" a guest asked, nodding towards Selena. "She's quite the sight."

"That's Selena Whitefang, one of Moria's enforcer" another replied. "Heard she's a fierce fighter. Look at those muscles... She could probably take on half the guests here."

To Morgans' surprise, he spotted Charlotte Pudding and Charlotte Galette among the guests. Pudding, with her luscious dark hair adorned with floral accessories and her third eye conspicuously visible, exuded a mischievous charm. Her elegant dress of soft pastel colors contrasted with the gothic surroundings, highlighting her as both an anomaly and a point of fascination. Galette, a pale-skinned woman, quite tall with shoulder-length fuchsia hair that curled at the ends, wore a short red-violet dress that provocatively hugged her form, along with a long dark purple feather coat. Her magenta gloves and arrow-shaped horns on top of her head gave her an edgy, seductive appearance. Her yellow eyes, framed by notably thick eyelashes, drew attention and captivated onlookers. Morgans was immediately intrigued by their presence. He tried to decipher their expressions, but their faces revealed nothing. Why were they here?

His eyes scanned the crowd, ever vigilant for more noteworthy faces, when he suddenly froze. There, standing nonchalantly near the edge of the gathering, was none other than Silvers Rayleigh, the Dark King himself. Morgans' heart skipped a beat. What in the world was Rayleigh doing here? Had Moria invited

him ? And better...he came ! Scribbling furiously in his notebook, Morgans' excitement was barely contained.

"Morgans, what a spectacle this is!" Fukaboshi from Fish-Man Island greeted him warmly. The noble, a Siren Prince, had shimmering scales and a flowing mane. "I never thought I'd see such a gathering."

Morgans took a special champagne glass designed to accommodate his beak from a passing Shadow Servant. The delicate bubbles tickled his palate, and he marveled at the thoughtfulness of the gesture.

"Now, this is something," Morgans chuckled to himself, savoring the exquisite taste.

Princess Vivi, standing gracefully in the center of the garden, raised her glass. The crowd fell silent as she began to speak. "Esteemed guests, it is with great joy and honor that I welcome you to this extraordinary occasion. As Vivi Gecko-Nefertari, I stand before you, humbled and grateful, to celebrate the union of my beloved husband, Gecko Moria, and the Princess Vinsmoke Reiju. Tonight, we not only celebrate love but also the forging of powerful alliances. I am overjoyed to become the sister wife of Princess Vinsmoke Reiju, a woman of unparalleled grace and strength. This union signifies more than just a marriage; it represents the joining of two formidable families, a beacon of hope and unity in these turbulent times."

She paused, her eyes scanning the crowd, ensuring her words resonated with each guest. "I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Judge Vinsmoke for joining our families in this significant bond. Your presence here signifies a hopeful future, a testament to the power of unity and collaboration. In these moments of great change, we believe in the strength of our alliances and the courage within us to face any challenge the World presents. Let tonight be a celebration of our commitment, resilience, and the bonds that unite us all."

The guests responded with polite applause, their clinking glasses adding a musical note to the atmosphere. Shadow Servants silently signaled for them to follow into the castle. Morgans jotted down notes on the speech, impressed by Vivi's poise and eloquence. He then joined the procession, following the ethereal servants into the castle's grand interior, while Rayleigh, having showed himself to give some face to Moria, eclipsed himself to go and take Camie.

The enormous gothic cathedral they entered was nothing short of awe-inspiring and eerily mystical. Vast stained glass windows, illuminated by the haunting light of the full moon, depicted a series of scenes both beautiful and sinister. These windows, with their dark, jewel-toned hues, portrayed legends and forgotten histories. The high, vaulted ceilings were adorned with intricate carvings of mythical creatures and ancient symbols, their eyes seemingly following the guests as they moved.

The air was thick with the scent of aged stone, incense, and candle wax. The walls were lined with towering pillars, each one etched with detailed, almost lifelike engravings of legendary figures and epic battles. Shadows flickered across these carvings, making them appear to move and breathe in the light. The floor was a mosaic of dark and light stones, forming an elaborate pattern that seemed to shift and change underfoot, adding to the sense of unease. Chandeliers hung from above, their flickering candles casting long, dancing shadows that played tricks on the eyes. The chandeliers themselves were works of art, forged from dark iron and adorned with crystals that caught the candlelight, casting prismatic glows across the room. The center of the cathedral housed a massive, ornate altar, draped in rich, crimson velvet and adorned with ancient relics and ceremonial artifacts.

Morgans cackled softly as he observed the stained glass windows more closely. Among the depictions of saints and battles, he discerned hidden references to ancient weapons and the enigmatic Will of D. The imagery was cleverly woven into the traditional scenes, visible only to those who knew what to look for. The windows portrayed ancient myths and long-lost legends, their vibrant colors muted by the years but still captivating. One pane, in particular, showed a cryptic scene of a great serpent entwined around a tree, its eyes gleaming with a malevolent intelligence. It was a bold, audacious move by Moria, and Morgans couldn't help but admire the cunning artistry. He scribbled furiously in his notebook, his excitement now barely contained as he documented each hidden clue and symbol, knowing they would make for an extraordinary story.

Then, through the heavy wooden doors, an orange-haired woman made her entrance. She was cloaked in an ample, conservative garment that combined the austere elements of a nun's habit with the authoritative air of

a priest's robes. The fabric was dark and heavy, cascading around her like liquid shadow, concealing her vibrant figure. Her attire was adorned with intricate, crimson embroidery that formed unsettling patterns of eyes and tentacles, giving the impression that the fabric itself was alive and watching. Most striking of all was the black blindfold she wore, a strip of silk that rendered her expression inscrutable and added to her aura of mystique. Her fingers, clad in fingerless gloves, gripped a heavy tome bound in what looked disturbingly like human skin.

The guests whispered among themselves, a susurrus of curiosity and unease. Taking her place at the altar, Nami began to speak. Her voice was soft yet resonant, weaving through the air with a cryptic and eldritch tone. "In this hallowed space, we gather to witness a union forged in the crucible of destiny. Two souls, entwined by fate, stand before us to bind their legacies in a pact as ancient as the stars. This marriage is not merely a celebration of love, but a convergence of power, a beacon in the shadows to guide us through the coming storm."

Her words left the audience in a contemplative silence. As her final words echoed through the cathedral, a soft, haunting melody began to play.

The grand doors at the far end of the cathedral creaked open, and Reiju Vinsmoke entered, accompanied by her father, Judge Vinsmoke. Reiju's wedding dress was a marvel of elegance and sophistication, a stark contrast to the somber surroundings. The gown, crafted from shimmering white silk, flowed like liquid moonlight, its surface adorned with intricate lace and delicate pearls that caught the candlelight. The bodice, fitted to her slender frame, was embroidered with subtle gold threads, adding a regal touch to her ethereal beauty. A long, ethereal veil, edged with fine lace, trailed behind her like a whisper of dreams, casting a soft glow around her.

Despite the stunning attire, Reiju's face was a mask of stoic resolve. Her light pink hair, curled delicately at the tips, framed her face, and her purple eyes, reflecting a steely determination, were fixed straight ahead. Morgans thought to himself, Ah, the Vinsmoke family genetic engineering. They had stripped her of emotions, turned her into a beautiful doll. Her expression was void of the joy typically associated with bride. As she walked down the aisle, arm in arm with her imposing father, the guests watched in awe, captivated by her beauty.

Following Reiju's entrance, the aristocratic Gecko Moria made his appearance. His attire was grand and elaborate, befitting the lord of Thriller Bark. Moria wore a high-collared, dark velvet coat adorned with intricate silver embroidery, bestowing upon him an almost regal appearance. His pale skin and sharp features were highlighted by the candlelight, casting shadows that accentuated his commanding presence. A large, sweeping cape billowed slightly as he moved, adding to his formidable silhouette.

Moria and Reiju took their places near each other at the ornate altar, their contrasting figures creating a striking tableau. The orange-haired woman stepped forward. She opened the heavy tome she carried. Her voice, soft yet imbued with an eerie resonance, filled the cathedral.

"In the presence of these witnesses, we unite two paths into one, binding hearts and destinies. Through the shadows of history and the light of tomorrow, this union stands as a testament to power, loyalty, and an unwavering bond."

As Nami's cryptic words hung in the air, Moria and Reiju turned to face each other. Their expressions remained inscrutable, shaped by the weight of their respective legacies and the roles they played.

"Do you, Gecko Moria, vow to stand by Reiju Vinsmoke, to share your power and your heart, to protect and cherish her as long as you both shall live?" Nami intoned, her voice echoing off the stone walls.

"I do," Moria replied, his voice deep and resonant, eyes locked onto Reiju's.

"And do you, Reiju Vinsmoke, vow to stand by Gecko Moria, to share your strength and your heart, to protect and cherish him as long as you both shall live?" Nami continued, turning slightly towards Reiju.

"I do," Reiju responded, her voice clear and steady.

Nami extended her hands over the couple, as if channeling some unseen force.

"By the ancient powers and the binding of this vow, I pronounce you bound by fate and destiny. You may seal this union with a kiss."

Moria and Reiju leaned towards each other, their lips meeting in a kiss that seemed both ritualistic and deeply personal. Morgans smiled as he saw Reiju redden a bit - so she was not totally impervious to emotions, it seemed. The room erupted in applause, a wave of sound that broke the silence and filled the cathedral.

Secondary Quest 2 - The Obsidian Night : [Wedding Night]

Marry three princesses of Kingdoms of the World Government : 2/3 → 3/3

Taking advantage of the fact that all eyes were on him and that he would have a solid alibi, Gecko Moria activated his shadow clone, which teleported into the shadow of the Celestial Dragons he had encountered on Sabaody.