

## Multiverse 136

Chapter 136: Zan, Ken, Sō, Ki

Today's weather was very pleasant. The sky was clear and cloudless, making the sunlight that shone down on the earth unusually warm and gentle.

Kaiser walked down one of the corridors of Shin'ō Academy's school building, his expression composed, and his steps calm and steady, drawing frequent glances from the surrounding Academy Students.

"That's the one with Spiritual Pressure Level Two, right?"

"He looks so young..."

"I heard his actual age is also very young, not even twenty yet."

"Not even twenty and already has Spiritual Pressure Level Two?"

"Isn't that a bit too freakish?"

The Academy Students didn't dare to casually approach Kaiser. They simply watched him from a distance, whispering among themselves, and were especially shocked upon learning his true age.

In Soul Society, souls also age as time passes—just very slowly.

So although the Academy Students at Shin'ō Academy all appeared to be young people, many were actually souls who had lived for forty to fifty years, and some had even lived for nearly a hundred years.

Compared to them, the age set by the background of Kaiser's current life experience was indeed extremely young. He might even be the youngest person in all of Shin'ō Academy.

To these students who had lived for at least forty or fifty years, the fact that a new student not even half their age had just enrolled with Spiritual Pressure Level Two—surpassing even some Captains of the Gotei 13—was an absolutely astonishing matter.

As a result, even though not much time had passed, Kaiser had already become a legend within the academy, regarded as the most talented Academy Student since its founding.

Unfortunately, Kaiser was long used to the stares of others, as well as their murmuring.

If he had never studied at Seidoukan Academy, he might still feel uncomfortable. But after studying at Seidoukan Academy, taking the top rank, and even winning the Phoenix Festa championship, stares like these had become far too common. Whether he liked it or not, Kaiser had grown used to them.

And so, Kaiser ignored all the gazes around him and, bathed in eyes filled with awe, curiosity, envy, and jealousy, walked up to the front of a classroom.

"First-Year Class One."

After confirming this was his destination, Kaiser stepped inside.

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Immediately, the once slightly noisy classroom fell completely silent.

The new students who had been chatting and getting to know each other all lowered their voices at once the moment they saw Kaiser, as if by instinct and mutual agreement.

"...That's him, isn't it?"

"...Yeah, that's him."

The new students began whispering secretly, making the atmosphere in the classroom quite subtle.

Paying them no mind, Kaiser walked to the very corner and back of the classroom and sat down.

The other students continued sneaking glances at him while whispering among themselves, not daring to raise their voices.

Not long after, the instructor entered the classroom and stepped onto the podium.

"Nice to meet you all, First-Year Class One."

The instructor seemed to glance in Kaiser's direction, then addressed everyone in a stern tone.

"All of you here have passed the entrance exam and officially become outstanding students of Shin'ō Academy."

"By successfully sitting here, it means you are no longer just ordinary souls. You are now reserves for the Shinigami, and if you graduate, you will become one."

"For the next six years, barring any accidents, all of you will remain here and study together."

Shin'ō Academy follows a six-year system. Normally, after completing six years of study, one can successfully graduate and become an official Shinigami.

Of course, students with particularly outstanding performance may also skip grades and strive to graduate in a shorter time. However, very few can achieve this, and those who do are usually renowned figures in the Gotei 13—some even Captain-level.

"As students of Class One, I don't expect you to be so excellent as to graduate early, but I do hope you will always lead ahead of others and successfully join the ranks in six years."

Each grade's Class One consists of the most outstanding group of students. Therefore, Class One is also known as the elite class or special advancement class and is a priority focus group for training.

"Now then, let me briefly introduce to you all what you will be learning in your future academy life."

The instructor picked up a piece of chalk and wrote four large characters on the blackboard.

Those four characters were: Zan, Ken, Sō, Ki.

"Shin'ō Academy has many courses—from teaching and training the most basic Shinigami combat techniques to field Konsō practice in the World of the Living. Though not excessively burdensome, they're by no means easy either."

"We'll set aside field Konsō practice for now. Today, we'll focus on the four basic combat techniques of the Shinigami—Zan, Ken, Sō, Ki."

The instructor pointed at the character "Zan."

"Zan refers to Kendō and Zanjutsu. It is the most commonly used combat technique for Shinigami. Because a Shinigami's primary weapon is the Zanpakutō, swordsmanship is something every Shinigami must master. Unless you absolutely lack talent, no Shinigami can completely avoid training in sword techniques."

The instructor pointed to the character "Ken."

"Ken refers to Hakuda. Hakuda is unarmed combat techniques—what you'd usually consider barehanded fighting. Even though a Shinigami's weapon is the Zanpakutō, unarmed combat is still something you must learn. You can't guarantee you'll have talent for swordsmanship, nor can you guarantee you won't lose your weapon in battle. In such situations, Hakuda becomes critically important."

The instructor then pointed to the character "Sō."

"Sō refers to Shunpo. It is a skill that allows instant high-speed movement, letting you move faster than the opponent can perceive. It is an extremely advanced footwork technique. Shinigami who master Shunpo gain a tremendous advantage in battle. Even simply moving quickly to strike your opponent can become a lethal threat."

Finally, the instructor pointed to the character "Ki."

"Ki refers to Kidō. It's the art of casting various mystical spells through Incantations. Shinigami who are skilled in Kidō will be highly valued by the Kidō Corps and carry great responsibility. It's a required subject not only for combat, but also for displaying value and effectiveness across various domains."

Having said this, the instructor looked at the students with a serious expression.

"Zan, Ken, Sō, Ki—these four techniques are the four basic combat techniques of Shinigami and the means by which you, as Reitai and Souls, can flexibly and fully utilize your excellent Reiryoku."

"During your time studying at Shin'ō Academy, these will be your main learning content. Though called basic techniques, these are the very skills all Shinigami have always used—even Captains of the Gotei 13 constantly seek to refine them further."

"As long as you are a Shinigami, or wish to become one, it is absolutely impossible for you not to learn these four techniques. At the very least, you must master one or two of them before you are qualified to step onto the battlefield and call yourself a Shinigami."

Next, the instructor gave a rough overview of the learning process and announced the related courses.

Where to study Zanjutsu, where to study Shunpo, when to learn, and when each course begins—these were the main points of this lesson.

"I hope you all take this seriously and do not slack off during training. If you perform well enough, you should be able to receive your own Zanpakutō soon."

The instructor told everyone this.

"By the way, elite Shinigami from the Gotei 13 sometimes visit Shin'ō Academy for inspections. If you're lucky, you might even get a Captain of one of the Thirteen Squads to personally teach you a lesson."

"If you perform well enough in front of a Captain, there's even a chance you'll be recruited early and invited to join the Gotei 13."

Hearing this, all the new students' eyes lit up, and many became excited.

Among them, quite a few once again looked toward Kaiser, seated quietly in the back corner, murmuring in their hearts.

"He's probably the one who'll get recruited early, right?"

Many of them thought this, including the instructor.

In their eyes, Kaiser—who had entered the academy as a new student with Captain-level Spiritual Pressure—was definitely not going to stay at the academy for six years.

There's no way the Gotei 13 wouldn't covet such a super-genius. In fact, if Kaiser performed well in the Kidō courses, even the Kidō Corps would be unable to resist trying to recruit him.

As for the Onmitsukidō, that's not something you can join based on academic performance. It requires performing many unseen tasks. Without strong mind and body, even a genius would be ruined there.

"Well then, that concludes my brief introduction."

The instructor glanced at the time and then said,

"Soon, your first Kidō class will begin. You may now head to the training field to begin your Kidō lessons."

Leaving those words behind, the instructor departed alone.

The group of new students all stood up, walking out of the classroom while chatting with eager anticipation.

"Kidō, huh... I wonder what it's like?"

"Spells that use Reiryoku—it sounds pretty awesome."

"I prefer Zanjutsu. After all, a Shinigami's weapon is ultimately the Zanpakutō."

"By the way, when will we get our Zanpakutō?"

Everyone's attention had been drawn to the new course about to start, and no one was paying attention to Kaiser anymore.

Kaiser was naturally pleased to have some peace. He blended in with the crowd and slowly made his way toward the training field.

Before long, the students of First-Year Class One arrived together at a training field lined with numerous targets. There, they met their Kidō instructor.