

Multiverse 142

Chapter 142: More Complicated Than It Seems

"A clash between Shinigami... is a clash of Reiatsu."

This was a very famous line from the original work.

Reiatsu is the density of a soul, and whether it is strong or weak naturally represents the strength of that soul.

It affects the power, duration, number of uses, and consumption of combat techniques. It can surge dramatically due to full spiritual output, imminent danger, or intense emotion, and it can diminish from casting techniques, fatigue, or being absorbed by the enemy. It is directly linked to one's overall combat power.

A Soul's control over their Reiatsu also determines their ability to sense it. If a Soul emits Reiatsu clearly stronger than those around them, the others will be overwhelmed, unable to move.

If the gap in Reiatsu between individuals is too great, the one with the weaker Reiatsu tolerance may faint—or even die on the spot—unable to endure the other's overwhelming pressure.

Thus, the strength of one's Reiatsu is directly tied to their combat strength. For this reason, the Spiritual Pressure used to measure the upper and lower limits of Reiatsu is considered extremely important.

At this moment, Kaiser was sensing Reiatsu from the two people walking slowly in front of him.

Even though they were clearly suppressing their Reiatsu, to the point where no one else present could feel it, Kaiser—who had excellent control over his Reiryoku and Reiatsu and held a high Spiritual Pressure—was still able to vaguely perceive the concealed pressure emanating from them.

Even sensing only a portion of it, the presence of that Reiatsu was enough to make Kaiser fully aware of just how powerful those two really were.

Especially the man in the white Haori walking in front—just feeling a thread of his Reiatsu made Kaiser feel a chill down his spine.

"So that's him..."

Kaiser stared intently at the man, his expression unreadable.

Next to him, Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori were also unconsciously drawn in, their eyes falling upon that man as if entranced. They murmured absentmindedly.

"That's... the Captain."

Perhaps attracted by the murmuring voices, the man who had been walking slowly suddenly turned his head to look this way.

Kaiser's brow twitched slightly.

Because the man's gaze fell directly on him in the very first instant.

"He's coming over."

Kaiser had that thought.

Sure enough, the man who had been walking slowly stopped in his tracks—and then began walking directly toward them.

"Eh?"

"H-He's...?"

"He's coming over!"

Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori were all startled.

The surrounding crowd reacted even more dramatically, quickly parting to the sides.

By the time the man reached Kaiser, only Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori remained at his side—everyone else had already scattered.

Kaiser and the man faced each other—one calm and expressionless, the other wearing a gentle smile.

Neither of them spoke right away. They simply stared at each other, and the air between them grew increasingly tense.

Just as Renji and the others were starting to feel nervous, the man finally spoke.

"It seems... you must be the rumored holder of the Second-Class Spiritual Rank."

The man's face carried a gentle smile. His eyes, behind black-rimmed glasses, were soft and benevolent. His voice was magnetic and gentle, soothing to hear.

"Hello." Kaiser was still looking at him, as if silently conveying something, or perhaps trying to see through him. He slightly bowed his head, speaking calmly. "I'm Kaiser, a first-year student at Shin'ō Academy."

That composed demeanor stunned many of the onlookers.

"Thank you for your politeness, Kaiser-kun." The man seemed quite pleased by this. "I am Sōsuke Aizen, Captain of the Gotei 13's Fifth Division."

The Fifth Division was the division within the Gotei 13 responsible for rescue missions.

When Shinigami from other squads encountered crises or unexpected events requiring intervention, the Fifth Division would act—handling such operations.

The man before him was the Fifth Division's Captain, one of the thirteen (sometimes even fewer) Captains that made up the Gotei 13.

Of course, Kaiser recognized him.

After all, that famous line about Reiatsu had come from this very man—Sōsuke Aizen, the seemingly gentle Captain hiding unimaginable secrets beneath the surface.

"Greetings, Captain Aizen."

Kaiser subtly sized him up, then gave a slight bow.

"No need to be so formal," Aizen replied with that same warmth, his voice still gentle. "With your talent, it's only a matter of time before you become someone equal to me."

"I've been wanting to meet you for some time, but it seems the Captain Commander doesn't want us 'idle bystanders' disturbing you."

"Luckily, I come to inspect or lecture at Shin'ō Academy often, so I finally found an excuse to drop by and meet you."

Every line Aizen spoke expressed admiration and high regard for Kaiser.

Had it been someone else, they would likely have been overwhelmed with gratitude by now, honored by the attention of a Gotei 13 Captain.

But Kaiser remained calm—so calm it was almost amusing.

"You flatter me, Captain Aizen. I'm just a humble Rukongai native—not worthy of such attention from someone of your stature." Kaiser smiled faintly, hiding his inner thoughts. "Since Captain Aizen must have important matters to attend to during your inspection, I won't take up more of your time."

He made to step away.

"Wait." Aizen called out to him. "Don't be in such a hurry. I'd really like to know how you've been doing in the Academy. Have you encountered any difficulties? Anything you need help with?"

"If there's anything troubling you, don't hesitate to tell me."

He spoke like a kind elder deeply concerned for an outstanding junior.

But Kaiser simply smiled and shook his head.

"I haven't run into any problems. But thank you, Captain Aizen, for your concern."

"Is that so? What about your coursework—any difficulties there?"

"None at all. The instructors have been very patient and thorough."

"So your studies are going smoothly, then?"

"Yes."

"Good to hear."

Kaiser and Aizen conversed for a while—one always calm and smiling, the other perpetually warm and gentle—easing the tense atmosphere quite a bit.

The surrounding students didn't even dare to breathe loudly, afraid to interrupt their conversation.

Especially Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori, who stood there stiff as boards, deeply admiring how Kaiser could speak so casually with a Captain.

After a bit of small talk, Aizen finally chose to end the conversation.

"Since you're doing well, I'm relieved." Aizen smiled. "If you ever have the time, come visit the Fifth Division's barracks. Though I'm only modestly capable, I do consider myself somewhat knowledgeable. If you ever run into questions in your studies, feel free to talk to me—I'd be happy to help."

As soon as he said this, everyone around looked at Kaiser with envy.

This was a personal offer of mentorship from a Captain!

Wasn't Aizen basically saying Kaiser could consult him anytime?

That was far more valuable than even the most renowned instructors at Shin'ō Academy!

"I will."

Kaiser acted as if he hadn't noticed everyone else's reactions, remaining perfectly composed.

Only then did Sōsuke Aizen smile again, turning to leave with his Lieutenant following behind.

The crowd of students glanced at each other—then surged forward like a tidal wave, following behind the Captain.

Only Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori remained, as if finally able to breathe again, visibly relaxing.

"That scared the life out of me. I didn't think a Gotei 13 Captain would actually show up."

Izuru Kira looked visibly shaken.

"Seriously—I nearly lost all feeling in my legs," Momo Hinamori sighed, then brightened. "So that was the Fifth Division's Captain? He felt so kind! Nothing like the scary stories people tell!"

At Shin'ō Academy, the Captains of the Gotei 13 were always portrayed as awe-inspiring, powerful, and full of authority—causing many students to regard them with fear and respect.

"Yeah, Captain Aizen looked so gentle. He probably gets along really well with people."

Izuru Kira seemed equally charmed.

"I'm already thinking about joining the Fifth Division after graduation."

Momo Hinamori even said that out loud.

"Just don't know if he's really as terrifyingly strong as the instructors say," Renji Abarai mused, then looked at Kaiser. "You... you get to learn from a Captain whenever you want. That's seriously enviable."

Hearing this, Kaiser glanced at Renji—then at Izuru Kira and Momo Hinamori—and said:

"You know... sometimes, you can't just look at things on the surface."

That seemingly cryptic remark caused all three of them to blink in confusion.

"What do you mean?" Renji asked.

"Exactly what I said." Kaiser tilted his head slightly. "Just wanted to remind you that the Soul Society is far more complex—and far more cruel—than you think."

"So don't let surface appearances blind you."

"Otherwise... you might not even know how you died in the end."

With that, Kaiser turned and walked away.

"What was that about...?"

The three of them stared after him, puzzled and filled with lingering confusion.