

Multiverse 148

Chapter 148: Tearing Up Someone Else's Umbrella

The World of the Living, deep in a forest.

As sunlight streamed down from the sky, piercing through layer upon layer of branches and leaves, casting light upon the ground covered in fallen leaves, a classical sliding door suddenly appeared here without warning—and opened automatically.

No one knew that this door was called a Senkaimon, the gate used by Shinigamis to travel from the Soul Society to the World of the Living or vice versa. It connected to the Dangai, and was an important gateway linking the two worlds.

Led by a few pitch-black Hell Butterflies, students from Shin'ō Academy began to pour out of the Senkaimon one after another, gathering in the forest and adding a touch of liveliness to the otherwise desolate woodland.

Unfortunately, neither the birds and beasts in the forest nor the falling leaves from the dense canopy above could touch these people—nor could they perceive their existence.

Because they had no physical bodies—they were Souls, Soul, invisible and imperceptible to the living.

"So this is the World of the Living?"

"How amazing. I can't believe we actually came to another world like this."

"What? You mean you weren't sent to the Soul Society from the World of the Living?"

"Of course not. We're native to the Soul Society."

"That explains it."

"Yeah, we're among those who were sent from the World of the Living."

"Though it's been nearly fifty years since we left."

"It really brings back memories."

The students began whispering to each other, excitedly chatting. The native Soul Society students, in particular, were all curious, listening intently to those who had come from the World of the Living bragging about their experiences—it all felt so new and interesting.

"Back here again."

Kaiser didn't find it that novel. He just felt a bit odd recalling what happened when he first arrived in this world.

Back then, he had already died and existed only as a Soul. Before he could even react, he was Konsō'd by a Shinigami, and in a complete daze, sent off to the Soul Society—specifically to the lawless Zarakī District.

So even though he technically had been in the World of the Living, it hadn't even been three seconds. He didn't get a chance to see his surroundings, nor even figure out where he was, before being whisked away.

Thinking back on it now, Kaiser still felt a bit irritated.

"I didn't even get a clear look at the Shinigami who performed my Konsō. By the time I realized what was happening, it was already over. Who am I supposed to complain to?"

If he ever found out who that Shinigami was, he would be sure to "thank" them properly—and show them just how difficult this job could be.

Kaiser silently vowed this in his heart. Whether he'd get the chance to do so was another matter.

"All right, everyone pay attention."

At that moment, Shūhei Hisagi appeared before the students, accompanied by his two teammates.

"From now until this time tomorrow, we'll be stationed in the World of the Living to carry out Konsō and Hollow extermination practice."

"First is Konsō. This portion of the exercise will last until sunset. You are to return here at dusk to regroup."

"After night falls, we'll take you to the designated area where simulated Hollows have been deployed for actual combat training. That training will last until tomorrow morning."

In other words, this practical assignment for Class 1 consisted of two parts: the first half was Konsō, and the second half was combat practice. The exercise would last the entire day and end at the same time tomorrow.

"Let's start with Konsō."

Shūhei Hisagi distributed maps to everyone.

"The Konsō exercise areas are several towns surrounding this forest."

"We sixth-years have already conducted preliminary investigations. This region has recently seen unrest, and many people have died. As a result, there are a large number of Souls needing to be sent to the Soul Society. Those Souls are your targets for this training."

"Technically, with so many Souls gathered in one area, it wouldn't be strange for Hollows to show up. But recently, Division 13 Shinigamis were deployed here and have already exterminated a number of Hollows. At present, you're unlikely to encounter any more."

Division 13 was the Purification Squad within the Gotei 13, responsible for Konsō and Hollow purification in the World of the Living.

Since Shinigamis from Division 13 had already been here, it was indeed possible the Hollows had been eliminated.

As for the Souls, there might still be too many left for the Division 13 Shinigamis to handle all at once.

That was why this area had been chosen as the Konsō training site.

"Remember, you are only to operate within the designated towns. Do not wander around aimlessly," Shūhei Hisagi said sternly. "If you go off on your own and encounter a Hollow outside those areas, don't say we didn't warn you."

At those words, several students who'd been thinking of sneaking off to explore visibly stiffened, instantly standing up straight. Those who had been harboring thoughts of revisiting places from their past life also gave up the idea, afraid to act rashly.

"Konsō isn't dangerous, so you'll operate alone this time," Hisagi added once he saw that his warning had had the desired effect. "Just remember not to leave the designated areas, and be sure to return here before dusk."

"Yes!"

The Class 1 students answered in unison, then dispersed, running off toward their chosen towns.

"Kai, which direction are you heading?"

"Want to come with us?"

Renji Abarai and Izuru Kira called out to Kaiser. It looked like the two of them had chosen the same town and planned to go there together.

"No, I'll go the other way."

Kaiser noticed they had picked the largest and farthest town, so he shook his head.

"It's just Konsō training—no need to overthink it. I'll just pick the closest town."

With that, Kaiser turned, and his figure flickered—he vanished.

This scene shocked the students who hadn't left yet.

"...Was that Shunpo just now?"

"It was."

"Whoa, so he can already use Shunpo proficiently?"

"He was hiding that well, huh?"

The students looked at each other in surprise, then let out wry chuckles.

"As expected of him."

Izuru also chuckled bitterly, though his tone was filled with admiration.

"What's so great about that?" Renji Abarai pouted. "I'll master Shunpo too, sooner or later."

With that, Renji turned and tried to imitate Kaiser, attempting to use Shunpo—only to trip over his own feet and almost fall flat on his face.

Not far away, the three sixth-years had also seen the scene and exchanged glances.

"That's the rumored Second-Class Spiritual Pressure holder, isn't it?" the only female among them said first, her voice tinged with awe. "He can already use Shunpo so proficiently... Truly the strongest genius in a thousand years."

"He really is impressive," said another male student in a deep voice. "Even among us sixth-years, many can't use Shunpo that well. He's only been enrolled for half a year, and he's already mastered it. No wonder even the Captain who visited was so impressed."

Shūhei Hisagi also looked deeply in the direction Kaiser had gone.

Even before graduation, he had gained the recognition of many seniors and was already slated to join the Gotei 13—hence his fame and status as a role model at Shin'ō Academy.

But in terms of raw talent, he could never match Kaiser.

He had failed the entrance exam twice and only reached this point through sheer persistence and effort.

Compared to Kaiser, his talent wasn't worth mentioning—at least that's what Hisagi himself believed.

Now, he'd finally seen a glimpse of Kaiser's abilities for himself, and realized just how much he had underestimated him before.

"He'll probably graduate early and join the Gotei 13."

Maybe, they would even become rookies in the Gotei 13 together.

With that thought, Hisagi looked once more in the direction Kaiser had left, then turned to his two teammates.

"Let's go. We've got our own tasks to take care of."

His two teammates nodded, and the three of them departed.

...

Shff!

In the town closest to the forest, Kaiser had already arrived, stepping into the town's interior.

"Pretty retro."

Looking around at the scene that wasn't much different from the Rukongai in the Soul Society, Kaiser blinked.

"We should be in the Shōwa era now, right? Somewhere around the 20th year of Shōwa?"

Because it was still several decades before the original plot began, the World of the Living hadn't yet entered its era of high-rise buildings and skyscrapers. Though samurai no longer walked the streets, the unrest mentioned by Hisagi just now made it clear this wasn't yet a time of peace like the modern day.

Shff! Shff! Shff! ...

Kaiser used Shunpo several times in quick succession, his figure darting forward like teleportation. Soon, he arrived in the town center and spotted a Soul wandering the street.

Kaiser originally intended to greet the Soul and chat briefly—but suddenly changed his mind.

"If I've been caught in the rain... I might as well go tear up someone else's umbrella!"

With a mischievous grin, Kaiser activated Shunpo again and appeared right in front of the Soul.

"Eh?"

The wandering Soul saw a blur, and before he could react, his forehead was struck hard.

Kaiser had appeared before him using Shunpo and, with a speed faster than the eye could follow, drawn his Zanpakutō and struck the Soul's forehead with the butt of the handle.

By the time Kaiser retracted the blade, a circular mark with the word "魂" had already appeared on the Soul's forehead.

"Ahhhhhhh...!"

With a panicked cry, the Soul vanished—sent to the Soul Society.

"Next."

Kaiser, as if discovering a new hobby, turned and left.

That day, dozens of Souls arrived in the Soul Society—each one grumbling curses nonstop...