

Multiverse 149

Chapter 149: Will You Make a Move?

The Konsō training was indeed just as Shūhei Hisagi had said—there was no real danger.

With the Hollows already purified by the Shinigamis of Division 13 of the Gotei 13, Konsō had become quite simple. All it required was finding the wandering Souls in the World of the Living and tapping them on the forehead with the hilt of a Zanpakutō.

As long as one had a Zanpakutō and didn't encounter any Hollows, anyone could easily complete a Konsō.

In fact, purification duties were the same—as long as one had a Zanpakutō, they could be carried out.

Because when a Hollow was slain by a Zanpakutō, it would be purified and revert to a Plus, then be sent to the Soul Society. Therefore, Hollow purification could be performed as long as one had a Zanpakutō.

Of course, Hollows were different from Pluses. They were monsters that devoured souls. Killing them was no simple matter without a certain level of strength.

Only after receiving a Zanpakutō could one begin performing Konsō and purification. That was why, upon receiving an Asauchi, students at Shin'ō Academy began Konsō and combat training courses.

Now, the Konsō practical had proceeded extremely smoothly. With no incidents, all students had returned to the forest by dusk and gathered in front of Shūhei Hisagi and the others.

"Very good."

Shūhei Hisagi felt relieved that the Konsō training had gone so well, nodding as he addressed everyone.

"This concludes the Konsō portion of the practical. Next is the combat training using simulated Hollows."

"We sixth-years have already selected the location, and members of the barrier class have set up a barrier there. No one will accidentally wander in."

"However, unlike Konsō, combat comes with risk—even simulated Hollows can lead to unexpected situations."

"Therefore, in the combat training, you'll form teams of three and engage in joint operations."

One of Hisagi's companions brought over a box for drawing lots and passed it around to the students.

"Teams will be decided by drawing lots. Each of you will draw once. Those who draw matching symbols will form a team."

At this point, Shūhei Hisagi made an announcement.

"Because of the team format, one of you will be left unpaired."

"We've discussed it, and decided to leave the choice to that person."

"Whoever draws the blank lot can choose to withdraw from the training and stay with us, or choose to join one of the teams."

Upon hearing this, the students began whispering among themselves.

"Of course you'd want to join a team, right?"

"It's a rare chance to do combat training—who would give that up?"

"I... I kinda want to pass..."

"No way, the opponents are just simulated Hollows!"

"But I'm still kind of scared..."

Everyone was exchanging opinions—some unwilling to miss the opportunity, while others hesitated, clearly nervous.

Shūhei Hisagi ignored the chatter and prepared to begin the drawing.

However, at that moment, a voice rang out.

"Senpai, can I take the blank lot?"

The moment that voice rang out, everyone froze.

"You..."

Shūhei Hisagi furrowed his brow, about to say something—but upon seeing who had spoken, he fell silent.

"Kai-kun?"

"What are you trying to do?"

Izuru Kira and Renji Abarai both cried out in shock.

Indeed, the one who had spoken was Kaiser.

"...You don't want to participate in combat training? Or is there someone you want to partner with?"

Shūhei Hisagi paused for a moment, then asked.

"No, neither." Kaiser shook his head and said calmly, "I want to act alone. Is that okay?"

"Alone?"

Shūhei Hisagi was momentarily stunned.

"A-Are you saying you want to act alone?"

The others were even more stunned.

To think someone wanted to go solo in their very first combat exercise?

Should they say he was brave, or just plain reckless?

If it had been anyone else, the students probably would have said just that.

But because it was Kaiser, they found themselves at a loss for words.

"Very well," Shūhei Hisagi said after a brief moment of contemplation, nodding. "If it's you, I suppose acting alone won't be a problem."

It was, without a doubt, a recognition of Kaiser's strength.

Even though Shūhei Hisagi had never seen Kaiser fight, just the Shunpo Kaiser had displayed earlier was enough for him to believe that—even in an emergency—Kaiser could easily withdraw.

Besides, he'd heard plenty of rumors about Kaiser.

Like how, in Kendō class, he'd never lost a single match—his highest record being twenty-four consecutive victories in a single day.

And in Kidō class, how his progress always outpaced everyone else, his scores always ranked first.

The only area where he was seemingly unimpressive was Hakuda, where his performance was just average—not as outstanding as in the other subjects.

But among the four arts of Zankensōki, even the Captains of the Gotei 13 weren't necessarily proficient in all of them. For Kaiser to master three out of four was already exceptional.

Add to that his Second-Class Spiritual Pressure, and it didn't seem unreasonable for such a genius to act alone during a simulated Hollow training session.

If anything, acting alongside others might hinder him.

After all, others couldn't keep up with him.

Perhaps that was exactly why he made the request.

With that thought, Shūhei Hisagi had no reason to refuse.

"Then you can act alone. With you excluded, the remaining students divide evenly into groups of three."

Having made his decision, Hisagi allowed the students to begin drawing lots.

After exchanging glances, the students stepped forward silently to draw their lots. No one objected.

Their thoughts aligned with Hisagi's—it didn't seem unreasonable for Kaiser to act solo.

"Seriously, trying to show off again..."

Only Renji Abarai grumbled under his breath, but didn't object out loud.

After all, this was only a mock battle. The opponents were simulated Hollows that wouldn't devour souls. At worst, one might get a bit banged up.

As he thought this, Renji had no idea that Kaiser was gazing up at the darkening sky, thinking to himself:

"If something unexpected happens, it'll most likely be during the upcoming combat training."

Not teaming up with anyone was for the sake of moving freely.

"Will you make a move...?"

Kaiser murmured softly to himself.

Thus, with the drawing completed, the students of Class 1 formed their teams and, under Shūhei Hisagi's lead, headed to the combat training site.

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It was an abandoned industrial area.

The zone was near the coast, and seemed to double as a warehouse district. Buildings beyond the factories were filled with all kinds of clutter.

The sixth-years from Shin'ō Academy had arrived earlier—some erected barriers, while others stood guard at various locations, ensuring the training would proceed smoothly and no unexpected events would occur.

Simulated Hollows had already been released. They wandered through corners of the area, letting out hollow cries.

Their appearances were bizarre and varied—some humanoid, some beastlike, and others somewhere in between. Their "skin" came in all colors, with some looking like they were encased in shells, their entire bodies exuding an inorganic feel.

Though the forms of Hollows were diverse, they shared two universal traits.

A hole in their chest—symbolizing the emptiness of their hearts and the loss of their souls.

A mask on their face—representing the erasure of their true identities, hiding their original features from life.

These two traits defined all Hollows.

The simulated Hollows wandering here were no different. Some were large, some small, some grotesque, and others more acceptable in appearance. But all without exception had hollow holes in their chests and grotesque masks on their faces—clearly marking them as monsters, as evil spirits.

Shff!

Kaiser's figure appeared on the rooftop of one of the buildings, landing atop the roof.

"Roar!"

A simulated Hollow hidden in the shadows suddenly leapt out, letting out a hollow cry as it lunged at Kaiser.

Its speed wasn't fast—in fact, it could be called slow—well within the reaction time of a first-year student.

In Kaiser's eyes, it was moving so slowly it may as well have been crawling. He didn't even glance at it, didn't draw his blade. He simply extended a finger toward its head.

"Hadō #4: Byakurai."

In an instant, lightning burst from Kaiser's fingertip.

Boom!

A lightning bolt shot from his finger, piercing the simulated Hollow's head in an instant, shattering its mask and skull.

"_____"

The headless Hollow stopped moving, staggered in place, then slowly toppled to the ground.

Whoosh...

As the wind blew gently, the Hollow's headless corpse turned to dust and vanished—leaving not a single drop of blood.

"So weak..."

Kaiser stood silently for a moment before commenting.

"Things like this... forget the current me—even back when I was still in the Seidukan Academy, I could've casually wiped out a whole bunch."

And he wasn't even talking about after he'd obtained the Ser-Veresta.

He meant back when he'd just acquired supernatural power and had only just become a Genestella.

Back then, even in Seidoukan Academy, he was merely average. But facing something like a simulated Hollow? He probably could've taken them down in one blow.

"And this is what they call 'combat training'? Are you sure this isn't just play-pretend?"

Kaiser grumbled.

"Might as well go spar with Renji using wooden swords..."

Right now, Kaiser actually wouldn't mind an unexpected development.

At the very least, that way he'd get a proper fight in—and shake the rust off this body of his.