

Multiverse 154

Chapter 154: A Flash of the Blade

"Bakudō #39: Enkōsen."

Just as the Adjuchas once again appeared in front of Kaiser, slashing down with its fin-like hand, Kaiser suddenly extended his own hand and activated a Bakudō.

A circular shield formed purely from Reiryoku immediately appeared before him, blocking the Adjuchas's strike.

"Boom!"

The fin-like hand, sharp like a long blade, crashed onto the circular shield, causing it to shudder violently, even sending out sparks from the friction.

But the strike was, in the end, successfully blocked.

"Bakudō #61: Rikujōkōrō."

From behind the circular shield, Kaiser's hand shifted from palm to finger-point. Reiryoku gathered at his fingertip, and he pointed at the Adjuchas, which had yet to react. Instantly, six flat beams of light shot forth from every direction like spears and struck the Adjuchas, locking its body in place.

"High-level Bakudō!"

Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Momo Hinamori exclaimed simultaneously upon seeing this.

"A high-level Bakudō without incantation...!"

Even Shūhei Hisagi, who had been urging everyone to escape, was shaken.

That was a high-level Bakudō. Even for a Lieutenant proficient in Kidō, casting one would never be that smooth—let alone doing so without incantation. Even among the Kidō Corps, only a handful could achieve such a feat.

But not only had Kaiser done it, he cast another high-level Bakudō while the Adjuchas was beginning to struggle.

"Bakudō #63: Sajō Sabaku."

Thick, serpentine chains emerged from the surroundings, moving like living creatures. They quickly wrapped around the Adjuchas and, in concert with Rikujōkōrō, locked down its movements completely.

Only after doing all this did Kaiser unleash his Reiryoku in full and raise both hands.

"O Sovereign! Mask of flesh and blood, all creation, flapping wings—O thou who beareth the name of Man! Engrave twin lotuses upon the wall of blue flame, await the abyss of great fire in the distant heavens!"

A mass of azure flames began to gather between his palms, blooming like a lotus—beautiful and deadly.

"Hadō #73: Sōren Sōkatsui!"

Kaiser pushed the twin-lotus of blue fire directly onto the Adjuchas's hollow hole.

"BOOM!!!"

In the next instant, the blue lotus exploded into a sea of cerulean fire, engulfing everything within hundreds of meters.

The explosion unleashed a roaring heatwave that shook the very air, fierce and overwhelming. Renji and the others were once again caught in the blast, flung backward quite a distance.

"What terrifying power...!"

"This is insane!"

"Is this his true strength?!"

Izuru Kira, Shūhei Hisagi, and Renji Abarai cried out in turn. Their voices were drowned in the tempestuous winds, and they could only cling to the ground like those enduring a passing typhoon, gripping the earth tightly to avoid being blown away.

As for Momo Hinamori, being the lightest and smallest, she was blown away from the start. She had to fling out a rope made from Kidō to catch a building's edge. Like a kite in a storm, she swayed violently, unable to speak, her eyes locked ahead, filled with worry.

At last, Kaiser's figure appeared in her view, retreating from the sea of blue fire. His body was completely unscathed, his movements still light and natural, and his expression remained calm throughout—as if he never once took the enemy seriously, unlike Shūhei Hisagi, who had looked utterly hopeless.

He stood there with one hand resting on the hilt of his Zanpakutō, facing the wind. That figure—anyone who saw him would think he still had strength to spare.

"Sōren Sōkatsui—that's the second strongest Hadō I've learned so far. Fully incanted, it can destroy a large cluster of buildings in an instant. So far, I've only used it at full power once. This was the second time."

Kaiser seemed to mutter to himself.

"Even for a mid-level Menos like you, stronger than a Lieutenant, taking a direct hit from that must've hurt, right?"

And indeed, it had.

As the blue flames gradually died out, with only scattered wisps still burning around, the Adjuchas's figure reemerged.

Its armor was half destroyed, its body charred in multiple places, and its chest was critically burned—glowing red, nearly carbonized.

Blood oozed from it—green, like some kind of pus, nauseating to look at.

Gurgle...

A faint squelching sound came from its body—its flesh and muscle squirming, regenerating rapidly.

"High-Speed Regeneration, huh?"

Kaiser murmured to himself.

High-Speed Regeneration—an ability unique to Hollows. As the name implied, it was a regeneration ability of terrifying speed. Once activated, all parts of a Hollow's body could rapidly repair—except for the head and internal organs. Its speed even exceeded Asia's Sacred Gear [Twilight Healing] and Priscilla's regeneration, truly unreasonable.

Of course, High-Speed Regeneration wasn't the only absurd ability Hollows possessed.

As the Adjuchas raised its head to look at Kaiser, another unreasonable ability appeared.

Buzz...

A red glow began to gather before the Adjuchas, condensing like a focused beam.

"Not good! It's a Cero!"

Shūhei Hisagi's face changed dramatically.

Cero—a high-density reiatsu blast only Menos Grande could use. It was their primary and most well-known attack. Its destructive power was immense.

Kaiser sensed vast reiatsu condensing into that red glow. Its density had already surpassed the Hadō #73 he just unleashed—maybe even more.

"BOOM!"

In no time, the red blast was fired—pure high-density reiatsu, in essence a high-speed bombardment. Within two seconds, it reached Kaiser.

"O Child of Heaven! Iron wall of fortitude! Dragon's march, lion's roar, tiger's cry, wolf's run—sever the heavens and earth before they collapse!"

Kaiser swiftly chanted and raised both hands.

"Bakudō #81: Dankū!"

At once, a massive transparent barrier like an unyielding wall appeared before him.

Bakudō #81—this was the highest-level Bakudō Kaiser could currently cast. He still couldn't abandon incantation, but it was said to completely block any Hadō under #89, boasting the highest defensive power among all Bakudō.

"BOOM!!!"

The red beam struck the translucent wall like a nuclear strike. A blinding flash erupted first, followed by a thunderous explosion that shattered and sunk the earth beneath it, leaving the area devastated.

Behind the wall, Kaiser's clothes flapped wildly. Even his face was cut by flying rubble.

"RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH—!!!"

The Adjuchas, meanwhile, had already fully regenerated. Cracks formed in its mask as it let out an empty howl like one from hell. The sound was so terrifying it turned the atmosphere into a raging whirlwind.

In the blink of an eye, the Adjuchas charged Kaiser with terrifying momentum.

Kaiser's pupils reflected the rapidly approaching enemy—watching as that fin-like hand swung down toward his head.

"Watch out!"

Renji and the others screamed in unison at the scene.

"Kai-san...!"

Momo Hinamori's face went pale.

They couldn't even track the Adjuchas's movements, let alone match its speed. All they saw was the sharp fin, swinging down like a great sword, slicing the air and causing sonic booms that even they could perceive.

They didn't dare imagine what would happen if that blow landed.

Unfortunately for their imaginations, they never had the chance.

Because that strike—was destined to do nothing.

CLANG!!!

At the moment that deafening metallic crash echoed out, the Adjuchas's blade-like fin was violently deflected—sparks flying, shockwaves blasting through the air.

What deflected the blow was Kaiser's Zanpakutō.

Kaiser had finally drawn his blade.

At last, the appearance of his long-hidden Zanpakutō was fully revealed to everyone.

"That Zanpakutō..."

Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, Momo Hinamori, and Shūhei Hisagi all froze.

They stared at the Zanpakutō—so unlike a regular Asauchi, ornate and exuding a noble aura. As if they had realized something, their eyes widened in unison.

"To make me draw my sword... As expected of an Adjuchas, just below the Vasto Lorde."

Kaiser's voice echoed in everyone's ears.

"But this is where it ends."

The moment he spoke, everyone lost sight of his figure.

Flash!

With a flawless Shunpo, Kaiser passed through the Adjuchas's body and landed gently behind it.

Behind him, a graceful arc of light shone.

It was the cold glint of a blade.

A flash of the blade.

The slash cleanly swept through the Adjuchas's body, gleaming behind Kaiser as it gradually faded.

"_____"

The Adjuchas, which had been charging forward, froze in place—motionless.

Spurt!

Seconds later, a spray of blood burst from its chest.

A massive, grotesque wound split its body in two.

"....."

The Adjuchas remained still, its ruined body turning to ash and dispersing on the wind.

Click...

Kaiser slowly sheathed his sword.

Like a cold, distant swordsman, his figure stood isolated beneath the moonlight—so striking it left others in a daze...