

Multiverse 156

Chapter 156: “Gotei 13”

With the intervention of Division 5, the chaos was finally brought under control.

The Soul Society also finally managed to re-establish communication, and the subsequent squads—Division 2, Division 4, and Division 8—arrived at the scene one after another through the Senkaimon.

Division 4 was the medical team, responsible for emergency treatment and daily healthcare. This outbreak had resulted in many injuries, and even a few deaths. Once Division 5 had quelled the disturbance, Division 4 immediately followed orders and arrived to treat the wounded.

Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, Momo Hinamori, and Shūhei Hisagi departed the World of the Living alongside Division 4 and returned to the Soul Society. They would remain temporarily at Division 4’s barracks for observation, taking leave from Shin’ō Academy for the time being.

Division 8, the Gotei 13’s intelligence division, had naturally come to investigate the situation—specifically, to determine the cause of so many Hollows suddenly appearing without warning during a practical training exercise.

As for Division 2, their movements were far more covert.

That was because the full name of Division 2 was the Onmitsukidō. The members of this squad were all experts in high-speed movement, assassination techniques, and stealth. They were a special operations unit that worked in the shadows.

Their objective this time was likewise to uncover whether any unknown, hidden factors were involved in this incident.

And that possibility could not be ruled out.

After all, why was it that the Soul Society completely lost contact with the Academy students the moment the incident began?

The instructors from Shin'ō Academy were supposed to be monitoring the exercise in real-time from the Shinigami Research and Development Institute. How was it that they failed to notice anything amiss, despite the sheer scale of what transpired?

If the students hadn't been out of contact for so long—long enough to prompt the Soul Society to take action—they might still not know what had happened even now.

With abnormalities this glaring, it was hard to believe there wasn't something shady behind the scenes. Other people might buy that excuse—but the Onmitsukidō, who specialize in dealing with the shadows, definitely wouldn't.

Thus, Division 2 sent operatives as well. They simply moved with such stealth that, apart from Kaiser, who sensed a few of their traces, no one else noticed their arrival.

Of course, Kaiser himself was not entirely off the hook.

After the Gotei 13 members arrived in the World of the Living and began the cleanup, he followed Sōsuke Aizen back to the Soul Society.

However, he was not allowed to return to Shin'ō Academy.

Because, upon his return to the Soul Society, a gentlemanly middle-aged man appeared before him.

"I am Chōjirō Sasakibe, Lieutenant of Division 1."

Chōjirō Sasakibe looked at the youth before him—one who hadn't even completed his first year at the Academy, yet whose name had already spread across all of Seireitei and the entire Soul Society. Then, he spoke words that momentarily stunned Kaiser.

"Please come with me. The Captain Commander wishes to see you."

...

Division 1 of the Gotei 13.

This was the command squad of the Gotei 13, tasked with issuing orders from Central 46 and convening regular meetings among the captains. It also oversaw the entire organization of Shinigamis.

The Captain of Division 1 concurrently served as the Captain Commander of the entire Gotei 13—a title currently held by the Shinigami who had founded both the Gotei 13 and Shin'ō Academy. He was one of the strongest and oldest beings in the Soul Society.

Today, that very individual—the man with the greatest reputation and authority in the Soul Society—summoned Kaiser to Division 1's barracks.

The Division 1 barracks were located at the heart of Seireitei.

In fact, the barracks of all thirteen squads were located in this area. Even facilities related to accommodation and meals for Shinigamis were found nearby—only the specific locations varied.

Each squad's barracks were spacious, equipped with offices, captains' private chambers, training grounds for members, and various administrative sections. The functionality was all-encompassing.

On the way to Division 1's barracks, Kaiser passed by several others, sensing the fluctuations of various spiritual pressures within. For a moment, he couldn't help but take notice.

"You needn't be so wary."

Walking ahead, Chōjirō Sasakibe seemed to have been watching him. Seeing his attention on the other barracks, he spoke up.

"You'll be working in the Gotei 13 yourself in the future. This whole area will become your main activity zone. Once that happens, you can ask someone to give you a proper tour. For now, meeting with the Captain Commander is the priority."

Hearing this, Kaiser withdrew his gaze and gave a light nod to indicate he understood.

This reaction caused Chōjirō Sasakibe to silently admire him once again.

"To be this composed on your first visit here... as expected of the most gifted genius in a thousand years."

Thinking back on the rumors, Chōjirō suddenly felt that the boy before him could no longer be simply regarded as a genius.

Despite his youth, he was already an undisputed powerhouse.

Looking at the ornate and noble-looking Zanpakutō at Kaiser's waist, Chōjirō kept his thoughts hidden and led him into Division 1's barracks.

The Division 1 barracks were majestic and dignified—resembling a solemn dojo. In both scale and design, they stood out as the finest among all thirteen squads.

Chōjirō led Kaiser through several corridors and side rooms before arriving at a chamber deep within the barracks.

There stood a massive lift-gate with a large "一" (One) inscribed upon it.

"Lieutenant of Division 1, Chōjirō Sasakibe, has brought Kaiser to present himself!"

He called toward the door, and with a rumble, the lift-gate began to rise, revealing the interior.

But before Kaiser could clearly see the inside, an overwhelming spiritual pressure washed over him.

It was a field formed by the convergence of multiple reiatsu—each one powerful enough to overwhelm a Lieutenant. The combined force of them all was terrifying, like stepping into the belly of a beast.

"Go in."

Chōjirō Sasakibe stopped there, clearly not intending—or perhaps not qualified—to enter.

Kaiser glanced at the gentlemanly man, tempted to curse.

This was "the Captain Commander wishes to see you"?

With all these reiatsu gathered here, clearly more than just the Captain Commander wanted to see him.

If it were someone else who got lured here unawares and suddenly faced this display of power, they'd probably wet themselves on the spot.

That bastard... was this a setup to intimidate him?

"Academy Student Kaiser," Chōjirō said, seemingly unaware of any impropriety in his actions. Seeing that Kaiser hadn't moved, he urged, "Hurry and enter. You mustn't keep the Captains waiting."

Well then... he's not even trying to hide it now.

That "Captains" phrasing was rather telling.

Kaiser had already guessed what kind of gathering was inside. He rolled his eyes at Chōjirō, who looked puzzled by the gesture.

Before Chōjirō could figure it out, Kaiser stepped through the gate and entered the chamber brimming with spiritual pressure.

Instantly, all the reiatsu within the room solidified, falling upon Kaiser like a crushing weight.

The air itself felt heavier. The space vibrated faintly, emitting a low hum.

This kind of overwhelming pressure would've rendered most Lieutenants unable to move forward.

But Kaiser walked in with a calm face, completely unaffected—causing many present to show subtle reactions.

Looking closely, a number of Shinigamis stood in the room, each exuding immense spiritual pressure.

They stood in two rows, flanking the chamber. There were not many—about ten—but unlike ordinary Shinigamis, every one of them wore a white Haori.

On the backs of their Haori were the numerals of their respective squads: "2", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", and "12". All were present except for "3" and "13".

The "1" Haori was worn by the elder sitting at the center.

Kaiser's gaze was immediately drawn to that old man, ignoring even Sōsuke Aizen—who had somehow appeared here as well.

It couldn't be helped. The old man's reiatsu was simply too overwhelming and too scorching. Kaiser felt as if he had stepped before the sun itself.

The others in the room also radiated powerful reiatsu—some even rivaling Kaiser—but only this elder made him feel truly pressured.

If Kaiser was classified as Second-Class Spiritual Pressure, then this man was undoubtedly First-Class—or perhaps even beyond, if such a tier existed.

Facing him, Kaiser felt as though he were confronting a Demon King.

If this reiatsu were converted into magical energy, it would be equivalent to a top-tier Demon Lord.

This was—

"The Captain of Division 1. The Captain Commander of the Gotei 13. The strongest Shinigami in a thousand years—Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto."

Their eyes locked, and for a time, neither spoke.

The other Captains remained silent as well—save for Sōsuke Aizen, who wore his usual gentle smile. The others simply studied the young prodigy who had made waves throughout all of Seireitei.

"So this is Kaiser?"

Many thought the same, especially one man whose entire presence radiated bloodlust. His hair was wild, and one eye was covered by an eyepatch. His uncovered eye was fixed on Kaiser like a predator eyeing prey.

Thunk!

At that moment, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto struck the ground heavily with his staff.

The silence shattered.