

Multiverse 158

Chapter 158: The Captains' Reactions

"My future?"

The sudden topic caused Kaiser's brow to rise slightly.

"That's right." Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto nodded as he spoke meaningfully. "Though still a child, you already possess the ability to act independently. Someone like you no longer needs to remain in the Shin'ō Academy."

An ordinary Academy Student, yet possessing the strength to slay an Adjuchas-class Menos Grande in a single blow—who would believe that?

But the facts were in front of them. All signs already fully confirmed this to be true. Since that was the case, allowing such an outstanding talent to remain in the ivory tower of the Academy was without a doubt a waste of time—and more importantly, a squandering of potential.

"Graduate." Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto said solemnly. "Join the Gotei 13. That is where you truly belong."

Originally, Yamamoto had intended for Kaiser to be drawn into the Gotei 13 after gradually shedding his violent tendencies through peaceful student life at the Academy.

But in the past half year, Yamamoto had been watching Kaiser's every move.

He discovered that, despite Kaiser's origins in the Zarak District and the many ruthless criminals he had battled, he was not a bloodthirsty or war-loving individual like a certain someone. On the contrary, he was very easy to get along with.

Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, Momo Hinamori... all three were from Rukongai and had interacted with Kaiser to varying degrees, yet none had ever encountered any issues with him. It was proof that Kaiser was not someone with problematic character.

And Kaiser's strength was far too exceptional—not only within the Shin'ō Academy but likely even among the Gotei 13 itself. There was no reason for him to remain in school; it was time for him to receive further tempering within the Gotei 13.

Thus, Yamamoto used this opportunity to present his proposal.

However, at this moment, the real troublemaker could no longer remain silent.

"Oi, Old Man Yama, can you really make such an important decision so casually?"

The one who spoke with absolutely no respect for the Captain Commander was the man who had been staring at Kaiser ever since his arrival.

He had a fierce-looking face, a scar across his left cheek, and his Captain's Haori had jagged edges at the hem. His hair stood up like a porcupine, each tuft adorned with a tiny bell, and his right eye was covered with an eyepatch. His appearance was nothing short of bizarre.

"Captain of Division 11—Kenpachi Zarakī."

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto cast a glance at him and stated his identity.

Yes.

This man was the Captain of Division 11—Kenpachi Zarakī.

"Don't look at me like that, Old Man Yama," Kenpachi Zarakī grinned, his expression more savage than anyone else's, and the aura he exuded was more frenzied than anyone else's—as if he were a beast ready to bite. "This guy's still just an Academy Student, right? And a first-year at that? You telling me someone like that can really kill an Adjuchas in one strike?"

"I'm not buying it."

Kenpachi Zarakī's words made the other Captains look toward Kaiser.

They found Kenpachi's attitude somewhat strange.

They knew Kenpachi well—he wasn't the type to do this kind of thing.

Doubting someone's strength and opposing the Captain Commander's decisions—this wasn't like the usual Kenpachi Zarakī.

But among the Captains present, there were indeed a few who questioned Kaiser's strength.

"Not everyone has the capacity to carry the banner of justice. For someone so young, the burden might be a little too much."

The first to voice support for Kenpachi was Kaname Tōsen, Captain of Division 9.

A dark-skinned man with purple hair and goggles on his face.

Division 9 was the incarceration squad, responsible for imprisoning and apprehending serious criminals who endangered Seireitei. Though Kaname Tōsen gave off a somber vibe, he appeared to be someone who hated evil deeply, hence his remark.

"Indeed, while I don't want to doubt the Captain Commander's decision, Tōsen's concern is not without reason."

Next was Sajin Komamura, Captain of Division 7.

A towering figure wearing a helmet like an iron bucket, a Haori adorned with a raised collar and shoulder guards, and armor on his limbs.

Division 7 was the inner court guard squad, responsible for defending Seireitei—in other words, the guards. As its Captain, Komamura clearly had a strong sense of justice and responsibility. His comment was quite reasonable.

"Well, the kid just looks so young. I think it'd be better to let him enjoy peaceful school life a bit longer, wouldn't it?"

Said by Isshin Kurosaki, Captain of Division 10.

A tall and well-built man with short black hair, a lean face, and a sleeveless long white Haori.

Division 10 was the patrol and guard squad responsible for patrols in both Seireitei and Rukongai. Essentially, the security force. Isshin Kurosaki's appearance matched that image—but his attitude seemed a bit unserious.

These three Captains all questioned Kaiser's strength. Perhaps they had no ill intent, but they did doubt the credibility of the rumors.

Of course, where there is doubt, there is also support.

"Gentlemen, I don't believe the Captain Commander is the type to promote someone arbitrarily. If he's made this decision, then it must be well thought out. We should place more trust in that."

A gentle and calm voice.

The speaker matched her tone—a graceful and mature woman with long black hair braided and draped over her shoulder.

Retsu Unohana, Captain of Division 4, and the most skilled Kaidō practitioner in the Soul Society.

"I feel the same as Captain Unohana. As someone who has spent more time around Kaiser, I can assure you he truly is talented enough. Graduating early from the Shin'ō Academy is well within his rights."

Sōsuke Aizen followed up with full support for Kaiser.

"I've also heard from the Academy Students—everything confirms his abilities."

Shunsui Kyōraku chuckled as he pressed on his straw hat.

These three voiced their support, forming a subtle opposition to the earlier objections. To an outsider, it might seem like factional infighting.

Meanwhile, Sui-Fēng and Mayuri Kurotsuchi showed no interest in the topic at all, nor in Kaiser himself. They simply observed coldly from the sidelines. The Captain of Division 6 remained silent as well, eyes closed.

As Division 6 was a Noble-exclusive squad, its duties related to the Noble Clans. The Captain—belonging to the head of the Kuchiki Clan, one of the Four Great Noble Clans—seemed uninterested in matters involving commoners and thus didn't participate in the discussion.

It was said he was planning to retire soon, and another genius from the Kuchiki Clan would take over. For now, he showed no enthusiasm for Gotei 13's affairs and simply wished to spend his remaining days in peace.

As for Division 3, the support squad, its Captain's position was currently vacant and thus had no representative present. Division 13, the purification squad, had its Captain chronically ill and often absent from such meetings—hence their absence.

Ten Captains each expressed their opinions or silently conveyed their stance, creating a charged atmosphere.

Kenpachi Zaraki, as if growing impatient, cut everyone off.

"Who cares if he's qualified to graduate?! I'm saying, does he really have the strength to kill an Adjuchas in one strike!" Kenpachi said. "That's an Adjuchas! To kill one of those, you've got to be at least Captain level, right?"

"And you're saying a kid halfway through his first year at the Academy has Captain-level strength?"

"Well, I don't believe it!"

Kenpachi Zarakī's words caused all the Captains' eyes to flicker.

To be honest, this was the part they doubted most.

It wasn't that they distrusted the intelligence—it's just that a first-year Academy Student with Captain-level strength was simply too hard to accept.

Even if he was rumored to have Second-Class Spiritual Pressure, with potential to become a Captain, how long had he even been enrolled?

Six months!

Only six months, and he was already at Captain level?

Without seeing it with their own eyes, who would believe such a thing?

And precisely because they were Captains, they knew how difficult it was to reach this level.

Most of them simply didn't want to believe it. They didn't want to believe that a feat they had painstakingly achieved had already been surpassed by a half-year rookie.

"So what do you propose, Captain Zaraki?"

Retsu Unohana turned to him and asked.

And then everyone saw it.

Saw Kenpachi Zaraki smile.

A very dangerous smile.

"If we want to know whether this guy really has Captain-level strength, isn't the method obvious?"

Kenpachi finally laid bare his intent.

"Have him fight me. Problem solved, right?"

Upon hearing this, the Captains finally understood why Kenpachi Zarakī—this battle maniac—had been so unusually vocal in opposing Yamamoto's decision.

So this was what he'd been waiting for.

"Oi! You're from the Zarakī District too, right?"

Kenpachi Zarakī shouted to Kaiser with barely contained excitement.

"Then fight me—let's see who's the strongest swordsman from Zarakī!"