

Multiverse 161

Chapter 161: You Really Will Die

Splatter!

Blood that fell from the sky struck the ground heavily, stirring up a loud splashing sound.

That blood instantly stained the ground red, making the battlefield reek of blood for the first time.

Kenpachi Zarakī's chest was instantly drenched in blood, his entire upper torso soaked scarlet.

"Hahahaha!"

Yet even after being slashed hard, Kenpachi Zarakī continued laughing—and louder than ever.

"You actually wounded me, Kaiser!" Kenpachi Zarakī laughed like he had taken a hit of pure adrenaline.

"It's been a long time since anyone managed to injure me. You really are a worthy opponent!"

Kenpachi Zarakī's Reiatsu was monstrously powerful by nature, and not only did it increase the strength of his attacks, it made his body abnormally durable.

Normally, someone could strike at him with a blade and still fail to leave a wound. Even a Lieutenant-level opponent would struggle to inflict an injury on someone with such powerful Reitsu.

The fact that Kaiser was able to casually slash him once and leave a wound was already enough to prove his extraordinary strength.

And this was exactly the kind of opponent—and kind of battle—that Kenpachi Zarakī craved.

"Come! Let's keep fighting!"

Kenpachi Zarakī roared and slashed again.

Whoosh!

Kaiser no longer chose to meet his attacks head-on. With a single Shunpo, he pulled away, dodging Kenpachi Zarakī's swing, then instantly used another Shunpo to step into close range.

Slash!

Blade light flashed, blood sprayed—Kaiser once again landed a clean cut on Kenpachi Zarakī, slicing open his side.

"Hahahaha!"

Kenpachi Zarakī didn't mind at all. He wildly swung his Reiat̄su-infused Zanpakutō at Kaiser, only for Kaiser to easily dodge it again.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

Kaiser danced around Kenpachi Zarakī, continuously weaving in and out using Shunpo to gain an advantage. Sometimes he appeared in front, sometimes behind, sometimes from afar, and sometimes he stepped in close—dodging fluidly and landing blow after blow as his Zanpakutō slashed Kenpachi Zarakī again and again.

Side, chest, arm, thigh, cheek, back—one gaping wound after another appeared on Kenpachi Zarakī's body, blood pouring from him like it cost nothing.

Even so, Kenpachi Zarakī showed not a hint of concern. He completely abandoned defense and swung at Kaiser with all his might, even ignoring slashes that struck at his vital points, letting the blade carve wounds across his body as he pushed forward with the reckless momentum of someone ready to trade 800 of his own for 1,000 from his foe.

That appearance made Kaiser's eyes flicker slightly—and even the observing Captains in the distance furrowed their brows.

"That guy Kenpachi is still just as crazy."

Isshin Kurosaki clicked his tongue and muttered.

"I've heard stories of how insane his fights can get, but I didn't expect he'd be this extreme."

Sajin Komamura also spoke with a deep, steady voice.

"...A monstrous evil dwells deep within him. Sooner or later, it'll devour his life and endanger others."

Kaname Tōsen gripped the hilt of his Zanpakutō tightly, treating Kenpachi Zarakī like a grave threat.

"My dear Captain Commander, you're not going to stop him even like this?"

Shunsui Kyōraku tilted his chin toward Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, but received no reply.

Not only did Yamamoto remain silent, even Retsu Unohana refrained from commenting. She simply watched Kenpachi Zarakī, who kept grinning through his injuries under Kaiser's relentless assault, her thoughts unknown.

As for the others, they had turned their attention to Kaiser's performance.

"Kenpachi is definitely a lunatic, but that kid is actually holding him down. Maybe that bit about one-shotting an Adjuchas wasn't so exaggerated after all."

Mayuri Kurotsuchi collected combat data as he spoke, sounding a bit surprised. "Even his Shunpo is that well-practiced. He truly is a genius."

"What do you think, Captain Sui-Fēng?" Sōsuke Aizen smiled beside her. "Kaiser's Shunpo shouldn't be bad even by Onmitsukidō standards, wouldn't you say?"

The most famous trait of Onmitsukidō wasn't anything else—it was their unrivaled mobility.

Simply put, everyone in that organization was a master of Shunpo.

Sui-Fēng was the Captain of Division 2 and the Commander-in-Chief of Onmitsukidō. Her Shunpo was the best in the Gotei 13, virtually unmatched.

So when she saw Kaiser's Shunpo in action, even she narrowed her eyes slightly.

"That level of Shunpo? Plenty of people in Onmitsukidō can manage that."

Suì-Fēng didn't seem particularly impressed.

"But he's only studied for six months and already reached that level." Aizen saw through her inner thoughts and smiled. "Even you must be impressed by that, aren't you?"

Suì-Fēng stayed silent—an unspoken admission.

From her perspective, Kaiser's Shunpo was just barely passable.

But as Aizen had pointed out, he had only been a student for six months and had already achieved this level. That made it a different matter entirely.

Yes, Onmitsukidō had many experts in Shunpo, but how many of them could reach Kaiser's level with only half a year of training?

Suì-Fēng thought for a moment—and realized there weren't many.

"That kid... I thought, since he's from the 80th District of North Rukongai just like Kenpachi, he'd be another idiot who only knows brute force. I didn't expect he'd have mastered Shunpo to this degree..."

Suì-Fēng, who originally didn't care much about Kaiser, began paying closer attention to him.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!...

Unaware of what the Captains were thinking, Kaiser was fully immersed in the battle with Kenpachi Zarakī. His Shunpo became smoother and more precise with each step, his figure flickering at Kenpachi Zarakī's left one moment and right the next, as elusive as a ghost.

Slash!

Kaiser's Zanpakutō once again carved through the air and slashed across Kenpachi Zarakī's flesh, adding yet another gash to the already nearly-covered body.

In contrast, Kaiser remained completely unharmed, not even out of breath.

"Still want to keep fighting, Captain Zarakī?"

Kaiser dodged another of Kenpachi Zarakī's heavy swings with a Shunpo and reappeared ten meters away, finally ceasing his attacks. He flicked his blade to throw off the blood staining its edge.

"Of course!" Kenpachi Zarakī's grin didn't fade, and he roared like a demon, "How could I pass up an opportunity like this? Who wouldn't want to keep enjoying it!?"

This battle maniac had truly made combat into a source of joy—a form of pleasure. Even Kaiser couldn't help but be impressed.

He had met many who loved fighting, but someone this addicted? Perhaps only one.

Even Vali, who had challenged him twice, wouldn't have gone this far—abandoning defense and ignoring wounds just to keep enjoying the thrill of battle.

"You really will die at this rate."

Kaiser offered that line.

"Isn't that great?" Kenpachi Zarakī laughed savagely. "To die in battle, to fall in a clash of blades—that's the natural order of the world!"

"...Hearing 'natural order' come from someone like you really does feel out of place." Kaiser shook his head, half-laughing. "Forget it. Everyone has the right to choose how they die—even you, Captain Zarakī."

"If you want to keep going, then I'll see it through to the end. Just don't blame me if you end up dead."

At those words, Kenpachi Zarakī laughed again—but this time, he seemed more composed.

"It's true, I don't mind dying in battle. In fact, I think that's the best way to go—but right now, I don't want to die."

He actually said it.

"If I die, I can't keep fighting."

"If I die, I can't enjoy the thrill of combat anymore."

"I still want more battles. I want to cross blades with more strong opponents."

Kenpachi Zaraki reached up and grabbed his eyepatch.

"So, sorry, Kaiser—if I don't want to die by your hands, then I've got to go all out!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Kenpachi Zaraki tore off his eyepatch with a sharp pull.

BOOM!!!

In an instant, a terrifying wave of Reiatsu erupted from Kenpachi Zarakī.

It was golden Reiatsu.

In that moment, his spiritual pressure exploded to a physical, tangible level. Gold light surged upward from his body like pillars and unleashed a storm of wind and energy that filled the entire space.

"Hahahahahaha!"

Kenpachi Zarakī stood at the center of the tempest, his sword raised. The golden Reiatsu behind him began to form a massive, twisting skull.

"What incredible Reiatsu..."

Kaiser stood within the violent storm of spiritual pressure, pushed back several meters, forced to raise his sword arm to shield his face from the blasting dust and wind.

"So this is your true Reiatsu, Captain Zarakī?"

Kaiser spoke calmly, drawing Kenpachi Zarakī's fiery gaze.

"My eyepatch, you see—it's a tool developed by the Shinigami Research and Development Institute. It constantly absorbs my Reiatsu with no upper limit, keeping it at a relatively low level."

Kenpachi Zarakī had always worn it—suppressing himself, reducing his combat power.

"It was meant to help me enjoy battle more. As long as I wasn't too strong, even weaker opponents could offer some fun."

But now, Kenpachi had taken it off—releasing his limiter, unleashing his true strength.

"Can you handle me in this state, Kaiser?"

Kenpachi Zarakī's entire body surged with Reiatsu, divine and overwhelming.

Facing him, Kaiser finally released his own spiritual pressure.

"Let's find out, Captain Zarakī."