

Multiverse 179

Chapter 179: A Good Show to Watch

Momo Hinamori's joining the squad, for the entire Gotei 13, was just a small matter.

A future Lieutenant, it sounded impressive, but placed within the entire Gotei 13, it really wasn't anything big.

Unless the one joining was a future Captain, only then would it be worthy of the Gotei 13's full attention. Otherwise, to put it bluntly, a Lieutenant was just that — at most, other squads would inquire a few words out of curiosity, but besides that, there would be no more attention.

However, for Division 3, this matter was not small.

After all, this was their squad's future Lieutenant. Although Chikane Iba didn't say it explicitly, it was already reflected in all aspects.

The evidence was that after Momo Hinamori joined the squad, Chikane Iba personally guided her, helping her become familiar with the squad's various affairs.

Sometimes, Chikane Iba would even hand over some of her own tasks for Momo Hinamori to do. On the surface, it seemed like she was helping to share the workload, but anyone with eyes could tell that she was cultivating her, letting her quickly familiarize herself with the work of a Lieutenant.

With Chikane Iba's tacit approval, Momo Hinamori also accompanied Kaiser on many missions, and the opportunities to stay by Kaiser's side became many, letting many people frequently see that behind the usually solitary Division 3 Captain, there was now always a girl following, handling various miscellaneous tasks for him.

This was clearly the work a Lieutenant should be doing, originally belonging to Chikane Iba, yet now it was being done by Momo Hinamori. What it represented, anyone not foolish could see.

Thanks to this, Momo Hinamori indeed attracted quite a bit of attention, including some Captains and some past acquaintances.

Like Renji Abarai and Izuru Kira — when they heard about this, they were first stunned and then became envious.

"Hinamori is going to be promoted to Lieutenant, huh?"

"Hinamori-san is going to become Kai-kun's... no, Captain Kaiser's Lieutenant?"

After secretly sighing and feeling envious for a while, the two immediately threw themselves into work with renewed motivation.

Their two companions — one had already become a Captain early on, and the other was now about to become a Lieutenant. If they still didn't work hard, wouldn't that be quite embarrassing?

"At the very least, I must become a Lieutenant like Hinamori."

Thus, the two set such a goal — one began constantly training himself and challenging the strong within his squad, and the other was dispatched to the World of the Living to carry out Hollow purification duties.

It was worth mentioning that Rukia Kuchiki also joined Division 13, becoming Izuru Kira's teammate.

After learning about this, Renji Abarai seemed to frequently visit Division 13's barracks, under the pretext of visiting Izuru Kira, though everyone knew his real intention was not that.

Even Kaiser found it amusing.

"Truly a straightforward man."

Kaiser often commented like this about Renji Abarai, leaving Momo beside him hesitant to speak.

"You think so too, right?"

Kaiser would sometimes ask Momo when he caught her hesitating.

"Y-yes..."

What could Momo say? She could only laugh dryly.

Unfortunately, Kaiser didn't notice the subtle thoughts in the girl's heart. After paying some attention to Renji Abarai, Izuru Kira, and Rukia Kuchiki for a while, he no longer concerned himself with them and continued doing his own things.

Sometimes going on missions, sometimes training in the barracks, sometimes cultivating Momo Hinamori with Chikane Iba, sometimes checking in on old acquaintances — this was how Kaiser's life in the Soul Society was: plain, ordinary, and peaceful.

However, Kaiser would occasionally feel something was off.

"...There's something nearby, isn't there?"

It was a feeling that would arise from time to time ever since the battle with Byakuya Kuchiki.

After that incident, Kaiser often felt as if someone was watching him nearby.

Especially when he held his Zanpakutō, this sense of incongruity would become particularly distinct — or rather, only when he held his Zanpakutō would he notice it.

When he wasn't holding his Zanpakutō, Kaiser felt nothing, as if everything was perfectly normal.

But when holding the Zanpakutō, although it didn't happen every time, he would sometimes have the feeling of being spied upon, as if the Zanpakutō itself was trying to tell him something, causing Kaiser to frequently frown.

"Could it be..."

Kaiser had a guess but did not show it. Instead, he pretended to know nothing and continued living his life as usual.

Only, whenever he wanted to do something he didn't want others to know about, he would first casually touch his Zanpakutō, and only after confirming there was no sensation of being watched, no sense of incongruity, would he proceed. Otherwise, he would suppress the matter temporarily and wait until the feeling disappeared before acting.

Under such circumstances, days passed one after another, and within the Gotei 13, some changes were quietly taking place.

First was Momo Hinamori. After mastering Shikai and being able to release her Zanpakutō, she was finally promoted by Kaiser to the position of Division 3 Lieutenant, while Chikane Iba retired with honor.

After that, Izuru Kira, through diligent work in Hollow purification and with significant achievements and rapid growth in strength, was promoted by Jūshirō Ukitake to the position of Division 13 Lieutenant, filling the vacancy left by the former Division 13 Lieutenant who had recently been killed by a Hollow.

Renji Abarai thrived in Division 11, climbing to the Sixth Seat through constant challenges and later even reaching Fourth Seat. However, the Third Seat and Lieutenant positions of Division 11 remained beyond his grasp, and in the end, just like in the original story, he transferred to Division 6 and became their Lieutenant.

Additionally, Shūhei Hisagi was promoted by Kaname Tōsen, Captain of Division 9, to become Division 9's Lieutenant. Thus, Kaiser's contemporaries and seniors all successfully rose to high positions within the Gotei 13, becoming Lieutenant-level figures one after another.

During this period, another genius not inferior to Kaiser entered Shin'ō Academy, mastered Shikai in just one year, applied for early graduation, and joined Division 10 as the Third Seat.

This person was also Momo's childhood friend, and their relationship was very close, which greatly surprised Momo. When he had just enrolled in Shin'ō Academy, she even rushed to visit him, but unfortunately, she couldn't recruit him to Division 3, leaving her a bit regretful.

When Kaiser learned of this, he paid attention to the person for a while but had no intention of poaching him.

Still the same — his squad didn't particularly lack people, nor did he intend to gather all the geniuses from the original story into his squad. So after observing for a while, he stopped paying attention.

At present, the Soul Society was still relatively peaceful, and the original story's plot had yet to formally begin. Therefore, Kaiser didn't intend to stir up too much, simply focusing on quietly improving himself, striving to exert enough influence during the major future events.

This was also to mislead the being secretly watching him, making it harder for the other side to judge his true strength.

Otherwise, being schemed against by such an entity, even for Kaiser, would be a real hassle.

Thus, another stretch of peaceful days passed until one event shattered the calm.

That event was — Captain of Division 10, Isshin Kurosaki, mysteriously disappeared.

After the incident, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto urgently summoned all Captains for a Captain's meeting and explained the events before Isshin Kurosaki's disappearance.

Reportedly, after learning that stationed Shinigamis in the World of the Living were being attacked and killed by unknown entities, Isshin Kurosaki personally went to the World of the Living to investigate. He encountered powerful Hollow attacks, returned to report the findings to Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, and then suddenly went back to the World of the Living again — after which he vanished without a trace.

As a result, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto issued orders to Divisions 2, 5, and 8, sending them together to the World of the Living to investigate and find Isshin Kurosaki.

Unfortunately, after arriving, no matter how much they investigated, the squads couldn't find any clues about Isshin Kurosaki's whereabouts, as if he had evaporated into thin air — completely disappearing, very strange.

After confirming that Isshin Kurosaki could not be found, although Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto did not rescind the search order, he tacitly acknowledged Isshin Kurosaki's leave of absence and decided to appoint a new Captain for Division 10.

Two candidates eventually emerged for the position.

One was Gin Ichimaru, the former Lieutenant of Division 5 recommended by Sōsuke Aizen.

The other was Tōshirō Hitsugaya, the Third Seat of Division 10.

The former had been recommended by Sōsuke Aizen a long time ago, while the latter was precisely Momo Hinamori's childhood friend — the genius who had graduated from Shin'ō Academy in just one year.

After verification, it was found that both had achieved Bankai and possessed the capability to become Captains.

Thus, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto designated both as candidates for Division 10's Captaincy and planned to choose one.

When Kaiser learned of this, his expression was strange.

"Goodness, Gin Ichimaru is going to become Division 10's Captain?"

If Kaiser's memory served him right, the Lieutenant of Division 10 should be Rangiku Matsumoto, correct?

And Rangiku Matsumoto... seemed to be Gin Ichimaru's childhood friend?

Not only that, but Gin Ichimaru had joined the Gotei 13 and stayed close to Sōsuke Aizen largely because of Rangiku Matsumoto, right?

Moreover, the two hadn't even properly reunited yet.

Now, Gin Ichimaru was about to become Division 10's Captain, and Rangiku Matsumoto would be his Lieutenant?

...It felt like a good show was about to unfold.