

Multiverse 180

Chapter 180: Let Me Look Forward to It

Just as Kaiser thought, a good show indeed began.

Only, this good show did not happen between Gin Ichimaru and Rangiku Matsumoto, but between Gin Ichimaru and Tōshirō Hitsugaya.

"The Captain of Division 10 will be decided by whoever has the stronger ability."

"Just like when Captain Kaiser of Division 3 became a Captain, the two Captain candidates must engage in a battle."

"The winner shall become the Captain of Division 10."

In the Captain's meeting room of Division 1, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto announced this decision to Gin Ichimaru and Tōshirō Hitsugaya in front of all the Captains.

"Any objections?"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto asked for formality.

"Mm... none for now."

Gin Ichimaru stood before Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, glanced sideways at Sōsuke Aizen, and answered with a smiling squint.

"I have no objections either."

Following immediately after was a boy shorter than even Momo Hinamori, looking just like an elementary school student.

The boy had silver hair and turquoise eyes, wore a Shihakushō, with a green shoulder strap bearing a metallic crest, and his Zanpakutō was carried on his back, appearing very dignified and imposing.

He was Tōshirō Hitsugaya, reputed to be second only to Kaiser, or even on par with Kaiser, as a genius.

His real age was actually much older than Kaiser's, yet his appearance was even younger, something very noteworthy in the Soul Society.

Because the stronger a Soul's Reiryoku, the slower they aged, and Tōshirō Hitsugaya, though older than Kaiser in actual age, still looked like a child, which indicated his slow aging and powerful Reiryoku.

Perhaps it was because of this that he was hailed as a genius on par with Kaiser.

And when this genius graduated in only a year, quickly became a Third Seat after joining the Gotei 13, and now had even achieved Bankai, this reputation was firmly established, making his fame comparable to Kaiser's.

If he could become a Captain now, he would be the youngest Captain in history besides Kaiser.

Unfortunately, for Tōshirō Hitsugaya to become Captain, he still had to overcome the towering wall that was Gin Ichimaru.

"The battlefield will still be prepared by Captain Kurotsuchi of Division 12, correct?"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto looked toward the second-to-last Captain on his right.

"Fine." Mayuri Kurotsuchi, though uninterested, nodded and said, "The arena used for Captain Kaiser and Captain Zarakī's battle is still vacant. We'll just reuse it."

Hearing this, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto nodded.

"I'll give you some time to prepare."

"One hour later, gather at Division 12's barracks."

"For now, meeting dismissed."

After speaking, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto turned and left first, and the other Captains followed one after another out of the Captain's meeting room.

Tōshirō Hitsugaya also exited the room — a room generally only Captains could enter — and walked along the corridor outside, falling into deep thought.

"Shiro-chan!"

At this moment, a voice called him, making Tōshirō Hitsugaya stop in his tracks.

Turning his head, he saw two figures approaching from the other side of the corridor.

The voice had come from the one walking behind.

A petite figure, a delicate expression, hair tied into a bun — who else could it be but Momo Hinamori?

And walking in front of Momo Hinamori was, naturally, Kaiser.

"Captain Kaiser."

Tōshirō Hitsugaya immediately saluted Kaiser with a very proper demeanor.

"Shiro-chan!"

Momo Hinamori, who was walking behind Kaiser, called out discontentedly.

"I was the one calling you, you know. Why are you ignoring me?"

Facing his childhood friend, Momo Hinamori acted a bit more spoiled and childish than usual, not as serious as she typically was.

"Idiot." Tōshirō Hitsugaya looked at his disgruntled childhood friend and said irritably, "Since Captain Kaiser is present, of course I have to greet the Captain first. Don't you even understand basic manners?"

Of course, Momo understood — she was just displeased by Tōshirō Hitsugaya's attitude.

"I'm also a Lieutenant. Shouldn't you salute me too?"

Usually disliking to flaunt her status, Momo Hinamori surprisingly said this, making Tōshirō Hitsugaya's eye twitch.

"Listen, I'm about to become a Captain, you know. When that happens, you'll be the one saluting me, Bedwetting Momo."

With just one sentence, Tōshirō Hitsugaya made Momo Hinamori break down.

"W-what Bedwetting Momo! Idiot Shiro-chan!" Momo Hinamori's face turned bright red with shame. She glanced nervously at Kaiser while glaring angrily at Tōshirō Hitsugaya, shouting, "How could you say that in front of the Captain? Idiot!"

"You were the one calling me by a nickname first, weren't you?" Tōshirō Hitsugaya said with an innocent face, "If you don't want me to call you that, please address me properly as Third Seat Hitsugaya, Lieutenant Hinamori."

"I..." Momo Hinamori was so angry she was about to explode.

Watching the scene, Kaiser found it refreshing.

Because Momo Hinamori was usually hardworking and serious, Kaiser rarely saw her flustered and angry like this. It was like watching Renji Abarai and Rukia Kuchiki back in the day, resembling bickering sweethearts.

Only, unlike the vaguely ambiguous Renji Abarai and Rukia Kuchiki, Momo Hinamori and Tōshirō Hitsugaya seemed to be purely childhood friends without any romantic implications.

At least, judging from Momo Hinamori's behavior, she likely only saw Tōshirō Hitsugaya as a childhood friend, or perhaps a younger brother who would never grow up, without any feelings of man-woman affection.

Seeing the two about to quarrel openly, Kaiser shook his head with a laugh and spoke to stop them.

"Alright, this is Division 1's barracks. Don't bicker here." Kaiser flicked Momo Hinamori's forehead and said, "Also, you were obviously very worried about Third Seat Hitsugaya. What's with starting an argument with him now?"

Hearing this, both of them felt a little embarrassed.

Especially Momo Hinamori, who covered her forehead and spoke shyly.

"I-I didn't wet the bed! Captain, please don't listen to Shiro-chan's nonsense!"

This was absolutely drawing attention to the matter.

"If you hadn't explained, it would have been fine. Now your explanation just makes it seem true," Tōshirō Hitsugaya reminded her exasperatedly, making Momo Hinamori grit her teeth in anger and feel utterly miserable.

My image... it's ruined...

Stupid Shiro-chan! It's bad enough you're teasing me, but it had to be in front of the Captain — in front of Kai-kun! How am I supposed to face him now?!

Momo was nearly in tears.

Kaiser, watching Momo Hinamori's teary eyes, found it quite amusing before turning to Tōshirō Hitsugaya.

"How about it? Nervous?"

Kaiser asked.

"Even if I am nervous, it's useless, right?" Tōshirō Hitsugaya returned to a serious demeanor, appearing rather mature as he calmly said, "Since the Captain Commander has decided we must duel, it's going to happen no matter what."

"I can only do my best and give it a try."

Hearing this, Momo Hinamori momentarily forgot her embarrassment and hurriedly asked:

"Shiro-chan, do you have confidence?"

"To be honest, no," Tōshirō Hitsugaya shook his head, looking solemn, "Lieutenant of Division 5, Gin Ichimaru — I've heard from Rangiku that he's also an extraordinary genius."

"He graduated from Shin'ō Academy after just one year, like me, and quickly became a Lieutenant, holding the position for at least fifty years."

"With his talent, if he was already a Lieutenant fifty years ago, then now he can only be stronger."

"I believe he definitely has the ability to become the Captain of Division 10."

Tōshirō Hitsugaya's analysis made Momo Hinamori even more worried.

"But haven't you achieved Bankai too?"

Speaking of this, Momo Hinamori still felt amazed.

Clearly, she had entered Shin'ō Academy first, became a Shinigami first, even achieved Shikai while her childhood friend was still in Rukongai, yet now, he had grown rapidly to surpass her and even achieved Bankai — such a dramatic development.

Not knowing what Momo Hinamori was thinking, Tōshirō Hitsugaya just shook his head, maintaining his serious face.

"I just recently achieved Bankai. I haven't fully mastered its power yet — it's hard to say how much strength I can unleash," Tōshirō Hitsugaya said. "On the other hand, Lieutenant Ichimaru must have achieved Bankai much earlier than I did and may have already completely mastered it."

From this perspective, Gin Ichimaru indeed held the advantage.

"But your Zanpakutō is strong. Even an incomplete Bankai shouldn't lose to an ordinary Bankai, right?"

Kaiser interjected from the side.

Only, when mentioning Tōshirō Hitsugaya's Zanpakutō, Kaiser's eyes flickered slightly, as if recalling something amusing, making his expression subtly strange.

"My Zanpakutō is strong, but precisely because of its power, it's hard to control." Tōshirō Hitsugaya didn't notice Kaiser's expression and sighed, "Anyway, I'll do my best and see what happens."

Kaiser nodded, said a few encouraging words to Tōshirō Hitsugaya, and then looked into the distance.

There, Gin Ichimaru was following Sōsuke Aizen, leaving Division 1's barracks, seemingly heading toward Division 12.

Kaiser narrowed his eyes, smiled slightly, then withdrew his gaze.

Right now, he was truly curious about the clash between these two geniuses, Gin Ichimaru and Tōshirō Hitsugaya — who would win, who would lose.

"Let me look forward to it."