

Multiverse 183

Chapter 183: The Immature Genius

The pace of the battle between Gin Ichimaru and Tōshirō Hitsugaya was very fast, and after releasing their Zanpakutō, the pace became even faster, causing the battleground to suffer severe destruction.

Mainly, it was because Tōshirō Hitsugaya's Hyōrinmaru displayed tremendous power—every time he swung his blade, the moisture in the atmosphere turned into ice, and all kinds of ice at that.

Sometimes it was a roaring ice dragon, sometimes swarms of ice pillars, sometimes spreading ice mist, and sometimes a sky-filling barrage of ice bullets. Tōshirō Hitsugaya recklessly wielded the power of Hyōrinmaru, causing extensive destruction to the battlefield, even turning the entire area into a frozen land of snow and ice. The scene was massive.

Yet in the face of Tōshirō Hitsugaya's dazzling variety of Ice/Snow-type attacks, Gin Ichimaru merely pointed the tip of Shinsō toward them from beginning to end, allowing it to extend and retract at high speed, piercing through, slicing open, and cutting apart all the ice and snow, rendering all of it ineffective.

Gradually, despite unleashing such massive power, the clearly stronger Tōshirō Hitsugaya began to fall into disadvantage, almost getting pierced several times by Shinsō's sudden extensions, narrowly avoiding injury.

Seeing this, Kaiser couldn't help but shake his head.

"That guy Hitsugaya never managed to fully grasp the power of Hyōrinmaru."

As a fellow wielder of Hyōrinmaru, and having already completely mastered its power thanks to the effect of the Authority, Kaiser could easily tell how poorly Tōshirō Hitsugaya was utilizing Hyōrinmaru.

Not only had he failed to fully master Hyōrinmaru's power, even his methods of using it were crude. Despite his immense Reiatsu, all he did was flood it into Hyōrinmaru to launch Ice/Snow-type attacks. That wasn't truly using Hyōrinmaru in battle—it was simply venting his own power through Hyōrinmaru's abilities.

This caused Tōshirō Hitsugaya's offensives to appear grand at a glance, and while they looked imposing and powerful, they were actually strong in appearance but weak in substance—easily shattered and not hard to deal with.

Gin Ichimaru's performance proved this. No matter how spectacular Tōshirō Hitsugaya's offensives were, he was able to break them all with a single retractable blade, resulting in Hitsugaya having achieved nothing so far—merely wasting Reiatsu and Reiryoku in vain.

This was a scene that shouldn't have occurred.

Shinsō's ability wasn't particularly special, nor especially powerful. Logically speaking, as the strongest Ice/Snow-type Zanpakutō, Hyōrinmaru shouldn't have lost to it—so how could all the ice attacks be broken apart by a blade that simply extended and retracted?

If it were Kaiser, with just a light swing of Hyōrinmaru, the extreme cold would completely freeze Shinsō's blade—there would be no such thing as letting it stretch back and forth freely.

The ice and snow created by his Hyōrinmaru would also never be broken by Shinsō. At most, its tip might shave off a layer of ice chips—nothing more.

But Tōshirō Hitsugaya always missed the key point, allowing Hyōrinmaru's ice and snow to be broken apart at will by a mere Shinsō. Kaiser couldn't help but shake his head at this.

"He's not making use of the weather at all. That kid, what does he think Hyōrinmaru's most basic and most powerful ability is?"

Raising his head to the gray sky, Kaiser's heart was filled with helplessness.

Tensō Jūrin—this was one of Hyōrinmaru's fundamental abilities and also its most powerful one.

This ability formed the core of everything about Hyōrinmaru, said to make everything in the sky fall under its control, fully displaying the might of the strongest Ice-type Zanpakutō.

But Tōshirō Hitsugaya's ability was far from mature—not only did he fail to grasp and control it, he couldn't even make minimal use of it. It was like using a divine weapon as a kitchen knife—a complete waste.

In Tōshirō Hitsugaya's hands, the power of Hyōrinmaru wasn't even half unleashed—perhaps not even half of that remaining half was properly utilized.

"In his hands, Hyōrinmaru is sullied."

Kaiser couldn't help but think this.

One must know, Kaiser's other Zanpakutō, Ryūjin Jakka, was likewise called the strongest Fire-type Zanpakutō, and stood on equal footing with Hyōrinmaru.

It was precisely because of this that Ryūjin Jakka and Hyōrinmaru were together offered to Kaiser as settlement rewards from the Fantasy Library—proof that they were of the same rank.

Yet in this world, the original wielder of Ryūjin Jakka used it to become the strongest Shinigami, with a reputation that shook the Three Worlds. Once its power was released, everything in existence would be burned to ash. If Bankai was activated, the entire Soul Society could potentially be destroyed.

As a Zanpakutō of the same rank, Hyōrinmaru should have had similar power, but due to its wielder's own capability, the title of strongest Ice-type Zanpakutō never showed its true might, reduced to nothing more than a very ordinary Ice-type Zanpakutō.

If that wasn't being sullied, what was?

"No, I shouldn't think that way. That kid Hitsugaya is still young after all."

Kaiser dismissed the negative thoughts.

He realized that he had been too harsh in his expectations for Tōshirō Hitsugaya.

How long had it even been since he became a Shinigami?

How long had he held Shikai?

Not everyone could, like himself, instantly master the power of a Zanpakutō upon first contact.

In the original work, Tōshirō Hitsugaya never managed to fully grasp Hyōrinmaru due to his youth. In contrast, Ryūjin Jakka's wielder had lived for at least two thousand years, fighting continuously for over two millennia—experiencing countless great wars and trials, and only then did he bring Ryūjin Jakka's power to its peak.

But Hitsugaya?

At the start of the original story, he hadn't even been a Shinigami for fifty years, right?

One had just become a Shinigami for less than fifty years; the other had fought for over two thousand. The gap in experience couldn't be more obvious.

If Tōshirō Hitsugaya were given over two thousand years as well, with his achievement of being the youngest Captain in history and Soul Society's greatest genius, he probably wouldn't be inferior by much, right?

Thinking this, Kaiser became at ease.

Only...

"At this rate, that kid might really lose."

As expected, after failing to bring down Gin Ichimaru for so long, Tōshirō Hitsugaya grew impatient.

"Bankai!"

At last, he unleashed the ultimate secret of his Zanpakutō and was the first to use Bankai.

"Boom!"

Astonishing cold air erupted from Tōshirō Hitsugaya, and his appearance also changed.

Twelve crystalline petals of crimson ice appeared behind him, and an ice dragon formed on his body. Its massive ice wings extended all the way to the wrist of his sword arm, forming a dragon's mouth, while his legs became dragon claws formed of ice, causing his Reiatsu to skyrocket several times.

"Daiguren Hyōrinmaru!"

Tōshirō Hitsugaya flapped his ice wings and charged at Gin Ichimaru.

"Bankai..."

Upon seeing this, Gin Ichimaru glanced subtly in Sōsuke Aizen's direction, then softly murmured.

"Kamishini no Yari!"

In an instant, the blade of Gin Ichimaru's Zanpakutō became extremely short, and along the path of its blade appeared a slash of overwhelming power, cutting open the earth.

"Ohhh, both of them used Bankai."

"As expected, both of them know Bankai."

"So this is a genius, huh?"

"Two promising young Captains..."

The other Captains immediately started murmuring among themselves.

"Those two Bankai seem to be of the same type, don't they?"

Kaiser was thinking this to himself.

The Bankai of a Zanpakutō was somewhat similar to the Balance Breaker of a Sacred Gear—once activated, it generally led to three types of changes.

First: Enhancement of the original ability.

Second: Acquisition of a new ability.

Third: Transformation into a completely different kind of ability.

Most Zanpakutō Bankai could be classified into these three categories, with some possessing multiple types simultaneously.

Hyōrinmaru's Bankai belonged to the first category—its original Ice/Snow-type abilities were further enhanced, gaining stronger control and dominion over cold, moisture, and weather, a full-spectrum boost.

Byakuya Kuchiki's Senbonzakura was also of the first category—the number of blades and slashes increased massively, a tremendous reinforcement of its original ability.

As for Gin Ichimaru, during the Bankai of Kamishini no Yari, everything around him could be instantly cut apart. Its slashes had immense impact and cutting force. The ability remained the same—freely extending and retracting the blade—but the limit of extension was no longer 100 times the length of Shinsō, but 13 kilometers.

At the same time, Kamishini no Yari's extension speed became 500 times the speed of sound, making a single extension powerful enough to cut through several buildings. That terrifying speed essentially meant that once the tip of Kamishini no Yari was aimed at someone, it was over—there was absolutely no way to dodge, and absolutely no way to survive.

At first glance, this ability also seemed to fall under the first category—a further enhancement of the original ability, making the Zanpakutō stronger.

At least, until Gin Ichimaru revealed other powers of Kamishini no Yari, its Bankai fell into this classification.

And clearly, Gin Ichimaru had no intention of revealing more here—he simply aimed the tip of Kamishini no Yari at Tōshirō Hitsugaya and activated its most basic function—extension and retraction.

And so... the battle ended.

"Shing!"

When a blade flash faster than extreme speed appeared in this space, the entire frozen land was sliced apart.

"Splurt!"

Before anyone could react, the blade flash directly pierced Tōshirō Hitsugaya's shoulder and sliced the ice wings behind him in two.

"Wha... t...?"

Tōshirō Hitsugaya's downward diving figure froze in midair, his face filled with disbelief.

"Sorry, Third Seat Hitsugaya."

Gin Ichimaru showed no smile on his face, and his apology lacked any sincerity. As he straightened up, the Zanpakutō in his hand had already returned to its original length.

The Captains' expressions immediately turned grim.

Because they couldn't even see when Kamishini no Yari retracted.

Same when it extended—the speed was too fast for anyone to see.

A burst of blood erupted from Tōshirō Hitsugaya's shoulder, spraying out and causing him to fall from midair, crashing onto the ground.

The victor was decided.

The one who ultimately claimed victory and became the Captain of Division 10 was none other than the Lieutenant of Division 5—Gin Ichimaru.