

## **Multiverse 188**

### Chapter 188: The Crime of Rukia Kuchiki

With the new Captain of Division 10 appointed, the Soul Society once again entered a brief period of peace.

Peace was a good thing—but also a bad thing—because it made time seem to pass quickly, and allowed darkness that dared not show itself in the light to slowly grow, until it erupted entirely.

All peace came at a price, and all tranquility was only temporary. The natural law of the world dictated that new things would always emerge and disrupt the old.

Thus, conflict would forever remain the theme of the world.

Deeply understanding this, Kaiser especially cherished these final moments of peace. He set aside much of the usual Division work he often handled, and as a result, his once frequently seen figure throughout the Soul Society became increasingly elusive and unpredictable in recent times.

This left many people confused, not understanding why Kaiser had suddenly changed his modus operandi. But no one openly criticized it. In fact, some of the noble clans were quite relieved—no longer having to worry about being randomly surprise-audited by the inflexible Captain of Division 3.

However, some clearly didn't want Kaiser out of their sight. So Kaiser distinctly noticed that the odd sensation and sense of being watched around him appeared even more frequently during this period.

He didn't care. In fact, he found it amusing. After deliberately ignoring it, he continued doing whatever he wanted—living his days with unusual ease and freedom.

Sometimes training, sometimes taking strolls, sometimes visiting familiar faces in other Divisions, sometimes even taking off his Captain's haori and Shihakushō, wearing clothes made by Momo Hinamori, and wandering around Rukongai—Kaiser's movements became incredibly erratic, characterized purely by spontaneity and leisure.

As for the others, they continued as usual—business as usual.

Momo Hinamori took over most of the responsibilities Kaiser set aside and handled the Division 3 duties with great order.

Tōshirō Hitsugaya, while staying close to Gin Ichimaru in daily operations, also continued strengthening his communication with Hyōrinmaru per Kaiser's guidance.

Even Renji Abarai one day suddenly came to Kaiser—asking him to teach him Bankai.

"...Wait, how did you know I could use Bankai?"

At the time, Kaiser was very surprised and asked Renji this question.

And then he heard this reply:

"You've been Captain of Division 3 for so long. I don't believe you still haven't mastered Bankai!"

That was Renji Abarai's reasoning—simple but incredibly convincing.

After all, whether it was Gin Ichimaru or Tōshirō Hitsugaya, even if both were geniuses and the latter even said to rival Kaiser in talent, many still felt neither could compare to Kaiser.

In the Shin'ō Academy entrance exam, Kaiser had measured at Second-Class Spiritual Power. That record still hadn't been broken—and no one thought it ever would be.

To break it would require someone to achieve First-Class Spiritual Power during the entrance exam.

First-Class Spiritual Power...

How outrageous was that?

That was the highest spiritual power rank—and barely anyone in the Soul Society's history had ever possessed it. How could someone possibly achieve it in an entrance exam?

It would be like sending Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto to take the Shin'ō Academy entrance exam. That's how absurd it would be.

And combined with the still-unbroken record of graduating in half a year, no matter what others said, Renji Abarai believed there could be no genius greater than Kaiser.

This kind of genius had mastered Shikai within days of receiving his Asauchi. Decades had passed since—how could he still not have Bankai?

Even Tōshirō Hitsugaya, who enrolled and joined a Division later than Kaiser, had already mastered Bankai. Unless one was truly unimaginably stupid, who would believe Kaiser hadn't mastered it?

At least, Renji Abarai would never believe that.

So, he came to ask Kaiser for instruction.

Kaiser didn't refuse. But he didn't agree either. He didn't even answer Renji's question or tell him whether he could use Bankai. Instead, he fought Renji first.

"For graduating and then joining Division 11!"

"For turning your back after getting news about your childhood friend!"

"I've wanted to teach you a lesson for a long time!"

With that, Kaiser beat Renji into a pig-headed mess and made him apologize on the spot with a dogeza.

Only then did Kaiser begin teaching Renji Abarai how to achieve Bankai.

Of course, since herding one sheep or two was the same effort, Kaiser didn't forget to also guide Momo Hinamori, trying to get his Lieutenant to also learn Bankai.

Unfortunately, in terms of Zanpakutō aptitude, Momo Hinamori really wasn't as gifted as Renji. While Renji had already achieved materialization of his Zanpakutō, Momo still showed no progress, forcing Kaiser to abandon that idea and instead teach her some advanced Kidō.

Sure enough, that was Momo Hinamori's comfort zone. As soon as she began studying Kidō, she showed overwhelming talent—learning all the Kidō Kaiser taught her, and even innovating upon them to develop her own personalized spells.

With that, Momo began progressing rapidly, training day and night alongside Renji Abarai, who was slowly learning Bankai.

Later, for some reason, Izuru Kira also came running over, begging Kaiser to teach him.

Clearly, he didn't want to be left behind by his friends, and was trying hard to catch up.

Combined with Tōshirō Hitsugaya, who occasionally stopped by to consult Kaiser on issues related to Hyōrinmaru, Kaiser suddenly realized that even though he had no intention of gathering all the promising talents under his command—those very talents had come to him on their own, making his place livelier than ever.

"...Oh well, I'll just herd them all together."

Kaiser didn't care anymore. When he was in a good mood, he taught. When in a bad mood, he skipped out, leaving Momo and the others loving and hating him at the same time—helpless toward him but also envious of his carefree life.

And like that, the tranquil days slowly passed.

Until the turning point arrived.

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"Chirp chirp chirp—"

Birdsong rang across the sky, their shadows flashing over the ground as they passed.

Today's sun was strong—not enough to feel hot, but bright enough to be blinding—casting the entire Seireitei in golden sunlight, dazzling and brilliant.

Atop the roof of the Division 3 barracks, Kaiser lay sprawled out, hands behind his head, a stalk of grass in his mouth, eyes half-closed as he basked in the slightly glaring morning sun.

"Captain!"

At a certain moment, Momo Hinamori suddenly appeared on the rooftop, worry etched across her face.

"What is it, Momo?"

Kaiser didn't open his eyes, nor did he get up. He remained lying there, asking lazily.

The next second, he heard Momo's report.

"The information you asked me to look into at Division 8 has yielded some leads," Momo said, looking at Kaiser, worry still written across her face. "According to the intel provided by Division 8, not long ago, Rukia Kuchiki of Division 13 did in fact leave the Soul Society—she was assigned to guard Karakura Town in the World of the Living."

"After that, her communication with the Soul Society began becoming unclear, and the duration of her stay in the World of the Living became problematic."

"Confirmed reports say Rukia Kuchiki committed a taboo in the World of the Living—she transferred her power to a human and made him into a Shinigami."

Only then did Kaiser slowly open his eyes.

"So it's finally started?"

Murmuring to himself, he then turned and asked Momo:

"So what's the situation now?"

Upon hearing that, Momo gave a truthful report.

"The Captain Commander, Genryūsai, has personally issued the order to arrest Rukia Kuchiki. Captain Kuchiki of Division 6 and Lieutenant Abarai have taken the assignment and gone to the World of the Living."

Giving spiritual power to a human, helping them become a Shinigami—this was considered an illegal act by the Soul Society.

To become a Shinigami, one had to be a soul born with spiritual power, trained at the Shin'ō Academy, or raised through the noble houses. Otherwise, one was not recognized as a proper Shinigami candidate.

So transferring spiritual power to a human and enabling them to become a Shinigami was a prohibited act—an illegal offense—a serious crime.

Rukia Kuchiki, without a doubt, had committed such a grave offense.

"Even the Captain Commander got involved?"

Kaiser clicked his tongue and finally sat up.

"What should we do, Captain?" Momo finally voiced her worry. "Rukia... Miss Kuchiki is someone very important to Renji, right?"

"If something happens to her, then Renji..."

Momo understandably felt concerned for her classmate.

She wasn't close with Rukia Kuchiki, but she was very familiar with Renji Abarai and Izuru Kira.

Rukia was not only Renji's childhood friend, but also Kira's Division mate. The three were very close.

If something happened to her, not just Renji—even Kira could be devastated.

"Don't worry." Kaiser didn't turn around to face Momo, but instead gazed up at the sky, as if trying to engrave this moment of peace into his memory. "At least for now, nothing will happen to Rukia Kuchiki."

"Then... then later?" Momo caught the implication in his words and asked anxiously, "Does that mean something will happen later?"

"Something will happen, yes," Kaiser said calmly, smiling faintly. "Whether it can be resolved peacefully depends on how things develop."

"Instead of worrying about her, maybe we should worry about ourselves first."

"What?" Momo blinked. "Ourselves?"

"Exactly." Kaiser stood up, dusted off his clothing, and said leisurely, "The Soul Society isn't going to remain peaceful anymore."

"Interesting people are about to arrive. Dangerous ones too are stepping onto the stage."

"Prepare yourself, Momo."

Turning around and heading back inside, Kaiser added:

"If you don't keep your eyes wide open—you'll get played to death."

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Soon after, Rukia Kuchiki was captured and returned to the Soul Society.

With both the Captain and Lieutenant of Division 6 personally taking action to apprehend a powerless Shinigami—it was practically a walk in the park, and no accidents occurred.

Thus, Rukia was directly brought back and imprisoned in Division 6's holding cells.

Originally, as a Shinigami of Division 13, Rukia's punishment should have been handled by Division 13. But since she was the adopted sister of Byakuya Kuchiki and a noble of the Kuchiki Clan, to avoid conflict of interest, her punishment was delegated to Division 6.

Of course, that was only a temporary measure.

Transferring a Shinigami's power to a human was an illegal act prohibited throughout the Soul Society, one that required judgment by the highest judicial body—the Central 46.

Until the Central 46 issued a verdict, Rukia Kuchiki was merely temporarily detained in Division 6's prison. The real punishment would begin once the sentence was passed.

This incident caught the attention of many, including several Captains who began to pay close attention.

Especially Jūshirō Ukitake—as Rukia's superior, he even visited the Division 6 barracks a few times despite his illness, just to check on her.

That day, Kaiser brought Momo Hinamori and visited the Division 6 barracks too.

On the way to the prison, Kaiser ran into Byakuya Kuchiki walking alone.

"Yo, Captain Kuchiki." Kaiser stopped and greeted with a smile. "Been a while."

Byakuya Kuchiki also stopped.

"Kaiser..." he raised his gaze, looking at Kaiser with a blank expression. "What are you doing here?"

"Visiting." Kaiser replied directly, "Although I'm not very close with your sister, we've met a few times. We were even students in the same class. I figured I ought to check in on her."

"Pointless action," Byakuya said coldly. "You, as Captain of Division 3, need not go out of your way for a mere former classmate."

"Because I'm free," Kaiser replied in an annoying tone. "Didn't you know? I'm way more free than I used to be. That's why I have time to care about old classmates now."

"How about it? Are you touched?"

"As her older brother, you must feel grateful someone still cares about your sister, right?"

Kaiser's words were half-teasing, half-mocking, which drew only a cold glare from Byakuya.

"Are you planning to say things you shouldn't again, like last time?"

Byakuya clearly disliked Kaiser getting close to Rukia. As he spoke, he released a faint Reitsu.

Sensing that Reiatsu, Momo Hinamori behind Kaiser held her breath.

Kaiser, however, remained relaxed as ever.

"Don't tell me you still want to fight me again like last time?"

As soon as those words left his mouth, the Reiatsu in the air instantly intensified.