

Multiverse 191

Chapter 191: Incredibly Sharp Questioning

Although not every Captain present had direct dealings with Central 46, they were, after all, the most powerful organization in Seireitei and even the entire Soul Society, so they more or less knew something about Central 46's style.

Many among them looked down on that so-called highest judicial body, yet based on their understanding, Central 46 should not have issued such a verdict.

It felt off—so off that the Captains were all puzzled, feeling deeply confused.

What they truly cared about wasn't Rukia Kuchiki's life or death, but why Central 46 had so drastically changed its usual approach and issued such a discordant sentence.

"Captain Commander!"

Jūshirō Ukitake was the only one present who had openly expressed opposition to the verdict against Rukia Kuchiki. His expression was filled with urgency.

"Thud!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto slammed his wooden staff heavily on the ground, producing a deep sound.

"Everyone."

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto swept his gaze across the assembled Captains, his voice particularly weighty as it rang out.

"Are you all saying you take issue with Central 46's verdict?"

As these words were spoken, an oppressive pressure immediately swept through the room.

Everyone instantly fell silent.

They knew full well that this was Yamamoto reprimanding them.

Because he was displeased with their reactions.

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto—the most powerful Shinigami of the past thousand years and founder of the Gotei 13—was well known to be stern and principled.

He revered justice, upheld discipline, and placed great emphasis on regulation and order among his subordinates. Yet, as the oldest current Shinigami in the Gotei 13, he unavoidably shared Central 46's rigidity.

The justice he upheld was justice that benefited the Soul Society.

The principles he abided by were those that supported Seireitei.

Whether it was discipline or rules, all of it existed to maintain order in the Soul Society, which is why Yamamoto emphasized them so much.

Because of this, Yamamoto warmly welcomed any who upheld justice and sought constant improvement to join the Gotei 13. He would even personally protect and guide such individuals without hesitation.

On the other hand, anyone who dared challenge Soul Society's rules—regardless of their identity—would face his blade without mercy.

Central 46 was the highest judicial body in the Soul Society, its greatest authority, and the absolute defender of order and law.

To question them was to question the very laws and order of the Soul Society—something Yamamoto would never allow.

Why is it that not even the Captain Commander can object to a verdict issued by Central 46?

Is it because he lacks the power to oppose them?

Of course not.

Frankly, Yamamoto's contributions to the Soul Society were so immense that no Noble Clan could ignore them. If he openly expressed dissatisfaction with Central 46, how could they not feel apprehensive?

The reason such a rule existed—that even the Captain Commander couldn't object—was because Yamamoto himself believed that only by doing so could the inviolability of Soul Society's order be demonstrated.

He didn't assume his position to seek power. As long as it benefited the maintenance of order, Yamamoto didn't mind sacrificing his own position, rights, or reputation to bolster Central 46.

In that context, how could the Captains of the Gotei 13, the organization tasked with defending the Soul Society, be allowed to question Central 46's verdict?

Wouldn't that be a challenge to the Soul Society's order?

Naturally, Yamamoto would feel dissatisfaction.

"Since the verdict has been issued, all we need to do is obey." Yamamoto's tone brooked no opposition. "That is the example a Captain of the Gotei 13 must set."

Yamamoto had come to this meeting solely to express that principle.

He knew why the Captains had gathered, and he knew what they were questioning—but that didn't matter.

What mattered was that as the enforcers of Soul Society's order, the Gotei 13 had to obey the verdicts of Central 46.

"But... sensei..."

Jūshirō Ukitake tried to say more but was forced into silence by Yamamoto's oppressive gaze.

"Captain Kuchiki." Ukitake knew he couldn't persuade his rule-bound teacher, so he turned to Byakuya Kuchiki and said urgently, "Don't you have anything to say?"

In Ukitake's view, Byakuya should be on his side.

After all, it was his sister who had been sentenced to death. He had no reason to remain silent.

Yet Ukitake would be disappointed.

"...The Kuchiki Clan is the exemplar of all Shinigami, bearing the duty of upholding and enforcing the laws of the Soul Society."

Byakuya Kuchiki replied with utmost calm, even indifference.

"Since the authoritative voice of the Soul Society, Central 46, has delivered its verdict, the Kuchiki Clan would never commit the folly of defying the rules."

These words drew a look of utter disbelief from Ukitake.

"You..."

His face was filled with incredulity, as though he couldn't believe Byakuya would be so cold and ruthless toward his own sister's death.

"...As expected of the head of the Kuchiki Clan—Captain Byakuya Kuchiki," Shunsui Kyōraku adjusted the straw hat on his head and smiled, though the emotion behind it was unclear. "To uphold the authority of the Soul Society, sacrificing a mere adopted daughter is only natural, right?"

That remark was loaded with barbs.

"Do you have an opinion on that, Captain Kyōraku?"

Byakuya coldly looked toward Shunsui.

"Hah, how impressive, Byakuya Kuchiki," Kenpachi Zaraki jeered from the side, fanning the flames. "So if any of us voice dissent, are you going to cut us down?"

From the look on his face, he didn't seem the least bit afraid. In fact, he seemed eager for that outcome.

"If necessary, I won't hesitate."

Byakuya wasn't cowed in the slightest and calmly responded.

Immediately, a dangerous surge of Reiatsu filled the Captain's assembly room.

Kenpachi Zaraki and Byakuya Kuchiki were the first to release their Reiatsu, followed by Jūshirō Ukitake and Shunsui Kyōraku, causing four surging forces to clash.

"What are you all doing?!"

"Stop this at once!"

"Do you really intend to fight here?!"

Sui-Fēng, Sajin Komamura, and Kaname Tōsen immediately spoke up to stop them and likewise released Reiatsu to intervene.

"Calm down."

"You're doing this in front of the Captain Commander."

Sōsuke Aizen and Retsu Unohana also furrowed their brows and released Reiatsu to counterbalance the tension.

"Ayaya~ didn't expect things to get like this."

"Hmph. Utterly foolish."

Gin Ichimaru looked on amusedly while Mayuri Kurotsuchi sneered at everyone's behavior, unwilling to side with either group.

As for Kaiser, he uncharacteristically remained cold and silent, observing everything without a word.

"Thud!"

Finally, a more overbearing and unrelenting Reiatsu exploded with the sound of a wooden staff slamming to the floor.

"You brats! That's enough!"

For the first time, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto fully released his Reiatsu within the Captain's meeting chamber, unleashing the most terrifying spiritual pressure to date.

It was a Reiatsu like a natural disaster.

It surged like a tsunami.

It was as if the sun had descended into the small chamber, radiating terrifying heat that could evaporate everything. In an instant, Yamamoto's Reiatsu crushed all others and filled every corner of the room.

In that moment, every Captain present was suppressed by Yamamoto alone—no one could remain calm beneath such overwhelming pressure.

Even Kaiser felt a sliver of pressure and oppression, causing him to glance at Yamamoto with a gradually more serious gaze.

"I will say this once more!"

Yamamoto's voice rang in every ear like a great bell.

"Since the verdict has been delivered, we must obey without any dissent!"

"This discussion ends here. I will not tolerate any more reckless words or actions regarding this matter!"

"Preparation for the execution... begins now!"

Yamamoto slammed his wooden staff against the ground several times in a row, his voice filled with unprecedented authority.

There was no room for further questioning—if anyone tried, the old man might just explode.

Understanding this, everyone gradually calmed down and fell silent.

Until—

"Captain Commander, I have a question."

A calm voice rang out, causing everyone's heart to tighten.

Yamamoto looked over, face dark.

Kaiser, who had remained silent from beginning to end, now stood there, raising his head.

His eyes, his expression—they were so calm it made others uneasy.

"What do you want to do?"

Byakuya was the first to respond, questioning Kaiser directly.

But Kaiser ignored him completely, standing silently, watching Yamamoto, waiting for a reply.

"Speak."

Yamamoto's tone was heavy—it was clear his mood was foul.

But Kaiser remained unconcerned and calmly said:

"I want to know—what exactly is it that we're protecting?"

That question was naturally met with Yamamoto's resolute answer.

"The order of the Soul Society, of course."

Upon hearing this, Kaiser actually followed up with another question:

"If we're protecting the order of the Soul Society, then why can't we question Central 46's verdict?"

Kaiser's words caused many to frown.

"Because Central 46's verdict exists to preserve Soul Society's order," Yamamoto replied word by word.
"What exactly are you trying to say? Why ask what you already know?"

"Nothing much," Kaiser said plainly before the entire room, ignoring everyone's changing expressions.
"What I'm trying to say is simple."

"What if Central 46's verdict wasn't issued to protect Soul Society's order?"

"What if their judgment actually harms that order?"

"Shouldn't we question them then?"

Those words not only darkened the expressions of the Captains present—they made Yamamoto's face grow ever gloomier.

"Do you realize what you're saying?"

Yamamoto stared hard at Kaiser. His voice was no longer merely displeased—it carried a clear warning.

To him, Kaiser's words were bordering on treason.

Was this not implying that the highest authority in Soul Society might be problematic—might even endanger the Soul Society?

If these remarks got out, Kaiser would be pursued by countless people, especially the Noble Clans. They would never ignore what he said.

Proof of this was already in Byakuya Kuchiki's eyes—he now gazed at Kaiser with murderous hostility, as if ready to draw his blade at any moment.

The atmosphere in the room suddenly turned icy—chilling to the bone.

It made Kaiser reflect, not for the first time, on just how rigid the class structure in the Soul Society was—absurdly so.

But Kaiser had no need to cower.

"How many times has this happened already?" he said flatly. "Do you even realize how many anomalies I've witnessed?"

At first, no one understood what Kaiser meant.

But what he said next made everything clear.

"Back when I was still a student at the Shin'ō Academy, I encountered an abnormal attack. I assume you all remember that incident, right?" Kaiser said calmly. "After that, I was promoted to Captain of Division 3, but even now, the Gotei 13 still hasn't identified the culprit behind that attack—despite clear evidence it was a deliberate act by someone with deep knowledge of the Soul Society."

"Then there's the previous Captain of Division 10, Isshin Shiba—who mysteriously disappeared in the World of the Living, never to be found."

"A fully-ranked Captain just vanishes without a trace—and even now, not a single clue has surfaced?"

"Isn't that strange?"

Kaiser's words left everyone silent.

"And over a hundred years ago, I heard of a major incident that took down multiple Captains and Lieutenants—among them the former Captain of Division 3."

"That incident had a lot of unanswered questions, didn't it?"

"And now it's Rukia Kuchiki's turn. Her verdict is clearly unreasonable. Are we supposed to just turn a blind eye again?"

Kaiser's half-smiling, half-serious tone rang sharply in everyone's ears.

"Since when was the Gotei 13 such a useless organization?"

"Can this really maintain the order of the Soul Society?"

"Please answer me, Lord Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto."