

Multiverse 192

Chapter 192: I'll Remember Those Words

"..."

Facing Kaiser's piercing question, this time, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto fell silent.

Thinking back on one incident after another, it was true—they were all abnormal, none of them had been properly resolved.

Even Yamamoto himself was quite displeased by these matters. He had thought more than once that these were failures and derelictions of duty by the Gotei 13. So when confronted with Kaiser's pointed questioning, he was, for once, at a loss for words.

The other Captains were the same. They glanced at one another, exchanged looks in silence, and all sank into thought and quiet.

But Kaiser's words continued.

"I'm not criticizing any of you, nor am I belittling the Gotei 13. After all, I myself am part of the Gotei 13. If I looked down on it, wouldn't that be looking down on myself too?"

"But knowing there's an anomaly, and still being unable to find a way to address it because of this or that excuse—that's not a lack of ability, that's inaction!"

"To be faced with something and still do nothing—can that really maintain the order of the Soul Society?"

"With all due respect, I truly don't see how."

To these high-and-mighty Captains, Kaiser's words were sharp to the extreme, making more than a few of them visibly annoyed.

"Then, according to Captain Kaiser's view, what should we do?" Mayuri Kurotsuchi sneered. "Are you saying we should all rise up and rebel against Central 46?"

Upon hearing this, several people's gazes turned cold, unconsciously gripping the hilts of their Zanpakutō.

If Kaiser truly said that, there would absolutely be those who would swing their blades against him on the spot.

Captain Sui-Fēng of Division 2 was one. Captain Byakuya Kuchiki of Division 6 was another.

Both of them were Nobles—one in charge of secret executions and punishment, the other responsible for upholding Noble authority. If Kaiser truly dared to speak of rebellion against Central 46, they would absolutely strike, even in front of Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto.

Of course, there were others eagerly awaiting Kaiser to say something outrageous and stir up turmoil—Kenpachi Zaraki, for one. And others, whose true faces had not yet been revealed...

Even Yamamoto fixed his eyes tightly on Kaiser, waiting for his answer.

But Kaiser ignored Mayuri's words, and ignored his twisted expression as well. He continued looking at Yamamoto.

"I'll ask once more: if Central 46's verdict was not issued to uphold the order of the Soul Society, and their judgment ends up harming that order—what then?"

Kaiser spoke slowly, as if testing something, or reminding something. "Please answer me that question."

All the Captains immediately turned their gazes to Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto.

Yamamoto looked deeply at Kaiser, remaining silent for a very long time. The atmosphere in the Captain's meeting room grew heavier, more oppressive.

"I do not care for hypothetical questions."

At last, Yamamoto spoke.

"However, the Gotei 13 was founded to maintain the order of the Soul Society. That one truth—must never be forgotten."

That statement was, in essence, a direct answer to Kaiser's question.

The meaning in Yamamoto's words was obvious—he was telling Kaiser that if it was truly for the sake of maintaining the Soul Society, then even if Central 46 was at fault, they too would be held accountable.

He himself didn't want to question the authority of Soul Society because that would shake its foundations. But if the problem was truly grave—so grave it endangered Soul Society—then it would be necessary to cut out the rot, no matter the cost.

"Good."

Hearing Yamamoto's response, Kaiser was finally satisfied.

"I'll remember those words."

With that, Kaiser turned to leave.

However, two figures flashed with Shunpo and blocked his path.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Byakuya Kuchiki stared coldly at Kaiser.

"I warn you—don't do anything foolish."

Sui-Fēng also placed a hand on the Zanpakutō at her lower back.

But in the very next instant, their pupils shrank sharply.

Because, before their eyes, Kaiser's figure had already vanished without a trace.

"Don't meddle so much, you two idiots."

Kaiser's voice came from behind them, and their pupils dilated again.

Not just them—even the surrounding Captains, even Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, showed a flicker of surprise.

Kaiser had somehow appeared behind Sui-Fēng and Byakuya Kuchiki, continuing to walk away as if he had teleported.

"You...?!"

Sui-Fēng and Byakuya Kuchiki turned around sharply—only to find no trace of Kaiser.

His presence had vanished again—as if he had never been behind them at all.

In that moment, everyone lost track of both Kaiser's figure and Reiatsu. No one knew when he had left—nor where he had gone.

"_____"

A hush fell over the room.

Suì-Fēng and Byakuya Kuchiki's eyes were full of uncertainty.

Shunsui Kyōraku, Jūshirō Ukitake, Sajin Komamura, Retsu Unohana, and Mayuri Kurotsuchi all had trembling pupils.

Sōsuke Aizen lowered his head, Kaname Tōsen's body tensed up, and even Gin Ichimaru and Kenpachi Zaraki lost their usual smiles—leaving the scene in absolute silence.

After a moment, Shunsui Kyōraku finally opened his mouth, sounding as though he were suppressing deep emotion.

"That Shunpo just now—did any of you manage to see it clearly?"

No one answered for a long time.

But Kyōraku already knew the answer.

"Unbelievable." Kyōraku removed his straw hat, marveling aloud. "Decades have passed—and that student who became a Captain before the age of twenty has become this strong?"

"Even Lieutenant Hitsugaya, as a rising star, has reached Captain-level and mastered Bankai. How could he possibly have made no progress?"

"Just how strong is he now?"

Kyōraku's successive sighs left all the Captains feeling complicated.

Especially those who had crossed paths with Kaiser before—their expressions were visibly conflicted.

"That level of Shunpo... how could it be possible?"

Sui-Fēng clearly didn't want to believe what had just happened. Her expression was ugly.

Byakuya Kuchiki also wore a cold expression, and for once, showed visible dissatisfaction in his eyes.

"Haha!"

Kenpachi Zarakī laughed—a wild, ferocious laugh.

"He's gotten even stronger! I really want to have a battle to the death with him!"

"Tch..." Mayuri Kurotsuchi, having just been embarrassed by Kaiser, was displeased. Yet, even he had a flicker of dread in his eyes, muttering, "What a monster..."

"Good thing I didn't compete with Captain Kaiser for the position of Division 3 Captain back then." Gin Ichimaru spread his hands helplessly. "If I had to go up against someone like him, I'd have surrendered on the spot."

While everyone was still reeling in amazement, Kaname Tōsen stepped forward.

"Captain Commander," he said gravely, "Captain Kaiser of Division 3 is clearly showing signs of insubordination and has expressed intentions that could be construed as defiance toward Central 46. Should we consider taking measures against him?"

Hearing this, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto didn't look away from the door. His aged eyes were deep and unreadable.

When no one else had been able to follow Kaiser's Shunpo, Yamamoto had.

So more than anyone present, Yamamoto understood exactly what Kaiser had done.

In truth, the moment he turned around, Kaiser had already activated Shunpo and left.

When Sui-Fēng and Byakuya Kuchiki tried to stop him, the person standing in front of them was no longer Kaiser himself, but a lingering phantom still walking forward.

And when they turned around before looking behind them, the figure that had appeared behind them walking toward the door—was also a phantom.

That level of Shunpo... even the so-called "Flash God" likely couldn't match it.

At that thought, Yamamoto's gaze subtly drifted toward the side.

There, clad in the white Haori of the Fifth Division and wearing black-rimmed glasses, stood Sōsuke Aizen, head bowed in rare silence.

His presence was low—almost as though he didn't want to stand out—calm and gentle as always.

But if Yamamoto had seen correctly just now, aside from himself, this Fifth Division Captain had also managed to follow Kaiser's movement for a split second. His gaze, too, had momentarily tracked Kaiser's real location—not like everyone else, who still stared at the phantom.

"Sōsuke Aizen..."

Yamamoto furrowed his brow deeply, then finally responded to Kaname Tōsen.

"Captain Kaiser's statements just now were indeed inappropriate. We must take them seriously."

"Captain Sui-Fēng, have the Onmitsukidō deploy agents to monitor Captain Kaiser's whereabouts. If anything unusual occurs, report it to me immediately."

"Remember—not too close. Captain Kaiser has highly attuned Reiatsu perception. If you get too close, he'll notice."

At Yamamoto's instruction, Sui-Fēng nodded.

Recalling that Shunpo just now that she hadn't been able to follow at all, Sui-Fēng bit her lip, deciding to personally oversee the matter.

"Sensei..."

Jūshirō Ukitake finally spoke again, somewhat dejectedly.

"What about Rukia Kuchiki?"

Among all present, Ukitake was probably the only Captain who remained preoccupied with Rukia's situation.

At least, on the surface.

"Transfer the criminal Rukia Kuchiki to the Repentance Cell for imprisonment."

Yamamoto lowered his eyes and issued the cold judgment.

"In accordance with Central 46's verdict, the criminal Rukia Kuchiki will be executed at the Sōkyoku Hill."

Hearing this, Jūshirō Ukitake seemed to suddenly lose all strength—his shoulders drooped.

"The Sōkyoku Hill..."

The expressions of the other Captains varied.

Sōkyoku Hill was an especially unique place within the Soul Society.

There stood a long spear and a crucifixion platform.

The spear was named "Sōkyoku," the execution device used by the Soul Society to deal with severe criminals. It was usually sealed and only unsealed during executions, returning it to its true form and unleashing its power.

It was said that Sōkyoku held the destructive power of a million Zanpakutō. No matter the target, it would pierce, sever, and obliterate them.

Historically, only the most terrifying high-level criminals were executed this way—to guarantee their utter annihilation.

And Rukia Kuchiki?

To put it bluntly, she wasn't even a Seated Officer. She was just an ordinary Shinigami—though from the Kuchiki Clan, she may have hidden some strength, but nothing that warranted Sōkyoku.

For a criminal of her level, one strike would suffice. Why go to such extreme lengths?

Even Captain-level criminals weren't always sentenced with such force.

"I think I might understand why Captain Kaiser said what he did."

Retsu Unohana spoke softly with her eyes closed.

The room fell into silence—no one spoke for a long time.

Byakuya Kuchiki stood with his back to the others, lost in thought.

Gin Ichimaru looked around the room and gave a silent smile.

Sōsuke Aizen finally lifted his head, the gaze beneath his glasses drifting toward the door.

Each Captain had their own thoughts, plunging the meeting chamber into utter quiet.

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Outside the First Division Headquarters, in the corridor—

Kaiser's figure appeared there, followed by Momo Hinamori.

"Captain..."

Momo had sensed something in the atmosphere. She hadn't spoken the whole time. Only now did she carefully open her mouth.

But what she brought up wasn't Rukia Kuchiki—it was Renji Abarai.

"There was just a message," Momo said. "Renji has been waiting for you at the squad barracks this whole time."

Kaiser didn't respond—he simply walked straight out of the First Division, heading toward his own squad barracks.

Before long, he returned to the Third Division.

On the steps outside the squad barracks, Kaiser saw Renji Abarai.

"...Kaiser."

At this moment, Renji sat on the steps without entering the barracks, looking utterly dejected—like a beaten, lost dog.

"Renji...?"

Momo was surprised to see him like that.

Kaiser simply looked at him silently and said nothing.

Renji, however, began to speak as if muttering to himself.

"I begged the Captain again and again, asked him to help Rukia be pardoned—but he refused."

"Even Rukia... she knows she's going to be executed, yet she just accepted it, like it's her fate."

"I... I..."

Renji buried his head in his hands.

"I don't know what to do anymore. I don't know what to do..."

Renji showed a lostness and helplessness no one had ever seen in him before. Like a silently weeping beast, grief poured from his entire being.

Kaiser looked at him, still as calm as ever.

"Don't worry."

Kaiser's voice reached Renji's ears.

"She'll be fine."

Leaving those words behind, Kaiser entered the squad barracks.

Renji didn't follow. Only Momo gave him a worried glance before following Kaiser inside.