

Multiverse 202

Chapter 202: I Did Indeed Want to Kill Him

An earth-shattering battle ended with Kurosaki Ichigo's defeat.

No one could have imagined that a Ryoka, originally dismissed by the Gotei 13, would be capable of displaying such strength.

Therefore, even though he was defeated, Kaiser still spoke while sheathing his Zanpakutō, as if conversing with Kurosaki Ichigo.

"For a sudden power burst to reach this level, it's already quite impressive."

One must understand, Ichigo had only entered Soul Society a single day ago, and the time he had spent as a Shinigami was even shorter than the period Kaiser had spent at Shin'ō Academy. Yet, he had grown from an ordinary human into someone on par with a Captain-level Shinigami—this was already unimaginable.

Had Kaiser not known the original story, and understood the astonishing potential and abnormal uniqueness of this guy, even he would have been shocked by such terrifying growth speed.

The key point was that this wasn't some fleeting outburst, but rather a power Ichigo could truly control.

That unknown potential within his body had been gradually drawn out and realized through one deadly fight after another. Now, Kurosaki Ichigo had genuinely become a Captain-level Shinigami. In terms of Reiatsu alone, he ranked among the top even within the Captains.

If there was still something he lacked compared to other Captains, it was only one thing.

"As long as he can master Bankai, that kid will truly be able to go head-to-head with a Captain-level Shinigami."

Kaiser's words sounded like muttering to himself, but also like a conversation directed at someone.

"After witnessing that last battle, I believe you must be thinking the same thing too, right?"

These words were aimed at the exotic beauty who had suddenly appeared beside Kurosaki Ichigo.

"...You really managed to fight to such a degree, Ichigo."

Yoruichi Shihōin stood protectively behind Ichigo, speaking with admiration while casting a sharp gaze toward Kaiser.

"Are you satisfied now, Captain Kaiser?"

Her tone had become noticeably stiff.

Kaiser understood this meant Yoruichi was ready to get serious.

In that previous round of confrontation, although Yoruichi had shown off her Shunpo and the tools from the "Divine Armament Division," she had never intended to truly face Kaiser head-on.

She had only wanted to escape the battlefield, take Ichigo with her, flee from Kaiser's sight, and leave him behind where he couldn't catch up.

But now that Ichigo had fallen, Yoruichi realized that taking him away wouldn't be easy.

Thus, she was now prepared to engage in a full-blown fight with Kaiser.

But at that moment, Kaiser called off the fight.

"I suppose I'm satisfied enough," he said while sheathing his Zanpakutō at his waist, smiling as he looked at Yoruichi. "But he still has a lot of room to grow. It's far from the end for him."

"Go teach him Bankai."

"Only by mastering Bankai will he be qualified to get involved in what's coming next."

To be honest, if another Shinigami had been present and heard Kaiser say this at this moment, they would've thought something was wrong with their ears.

A Ryoka who became a Shinigami only because he was granted someone else's power—who hadn't even been one for a few months—was now going to learn Bankai? Even Hitsugaya Tōshirō, who once advanced with astonishing speed, would find this hard to believe.

At the very least, it took Hitsugaya more than ten years from becoming a Shinigami to mastering Bankai. Ichigo hadn't even been a Shinigami for half a year and was already about to attempt it. This was completely contrary to the usual guidance Kaiser had offered before.

However, Ichigo's situation couldn't be compared to Hitsugaya's.

Firstly, Ichigo's lineage was extraordinary. He himself was highly unique, possessing bottomless potential. That potential had been gradually unearthed since he became a Shinigami and had directly translated into power. Even growing rapidly like this wouldn't result in a shallow foundation.

Secondly, Zangetsu and Hyōrinmaru were completely different Zanpakutō.

Unlike Hyōrinmaru, which had immense power and required great effort to understand and control, Zangetsu, while not an ordinary Zanpakutō, was a direct-attack type with no flashy abilities, making it much easier to master.

Once Ichigo could freely use Getsuga Tenshō, he had effectively mastered Zangetsu's power and was ready to begin training for Bankai.

With his continuously exploding potential, once he mastered Bankai, Ichigo should be able to quickly gain control over its power and unleash significant force.

Unlike Daiguren Hyōrinmaru, whose already hard-to-master Shikai was further strengthened in its Bankai, making it nearly impossible for Hitsugaya to utilize its full potential.

That's the advantage of direct-attack-type Zanpakutō—they're easier to use and more straightforward to understand, with fewer complications.

Most Shinigami, even after acquiring Bankai, would still need ten to twenty years to fully master its power. But for direct-attack types, Bankai was far easier to grasp—so long as it didn't come with bizarre abilities, it was generally quick to handle.

"He's already able to temporarily manifest his Zanpakutō. Once it submits to him and reveals its true name for Bankai, he'll be able to master it."

Kaiser glanced at the unconscious Kurosaki Ichigo at Yoruichi's feet and said.

"Of course, I know you've already prepared everything for him—including the methods for mastering Bankai quickly. So, I suppose I don't need to tell you what to do?"

Upon hearing that, Yoruichi's eyes became sharper as she stared at Kaiser.

"...How do you know even that?"

She couldn't help but ask this one thing.

"Because I haven't forgotten the identity of that childhood friend you rescued over a hundred years ago," Kaiser said with a cheerful smile. "The former Captain of the 12th Division, and the founder and first director of the Shinigami Research and Development Institute—his intellect and skill were the real deal."

Evidence of that was his inclusion in the future list of the Five Special War Powers—his reason being "unknown means."

Let's be honest—being suspected as the mastermind of the Hollowfication experiment wasn't without basis.

Because he really did have the capability, the technology, and the methods to make it happen.

Furthermore, the reason Rukia Kuchiki was sentenced to death and caught up in Sōsuke Aizen's plot was also, to a large extent, his fault.

Because of that, he gave Ichigo and the others a lot of help.

Otherwise, as an ordinary human in the World of the Living, how would Ichigo have opened the Senkaimon to reach Soul Society?

Who taught Ichigo how to achieve Shikai?

Why did Yoruichi turn into a cat and stick around Ichigo like a caretaker?

It was all because that man couldn't bear to watch the current situation unfold. He couldn't let Rukia die. So he stayed hidden and orchestrated everything.

One could say, in terms of behind-the-scenes manipulation, he was comparable to Sōsuke Aizen.

Compared to him, even the current Captain of the 12th Division and present director of the Research Institute, Mayuri Kurotsuchi, was like a tame kitten.

One of Mayuri's lifelong goals was to surpass that man—to prove he wasn't inferior.

Unfortunately, even by the end of the original story, he never succeeded.

"All right, hurry and take him away."

Kaiser suddenly raised his head and looked in a certain direction. He narrowed his eyes and waved at Yoruichi.

"If you don't leave now, you may not get another chance."

Upon hearing this, Yoruichi seemed to sense something too. Her expression hardened as she cast a deep glance at Kaiser and then lifted Kurosaki Ichigo from the ground.

Hoisting Ichigo over her shoulder, she turned and said to Kaiser:

"Though I don't know what you're scheming, I'll accept this goodwill for now."

Her tone paused slightly, and then she added:

"Give my regards to

With that, Yoruichi's figure flickered and disappeared with Shunpo.

"Oh, please." Kaiser muttered with a sigh. "I'm not into comforting little fangirls."

Though he said that, his gaze remained fixed in a particular direction.

"So, what now?"

As he murmured to himself, figures quickly approached from the direction he was watching.

"Shff!" "Shff!" "Shff!" "Shff!" "Shff!"...

Bursts of air rang out as the figures began appearing one after another around Kaiser, surrounding him.

The gusting wind stirred the white Haori on each figure's back.

The air grew oppressively heavy in an instant.

Tension filled the atmosphere like drawn swords.

But in the middle of this encirclement, Kaiser showed not a trace of fear. Instead, he smiled and greeted them.

"You've arrived, Captains."

The ones who came—were the Captains of the Gotei 13.

"Finally found you, Captain Kaiser."

Shunsui Kyōraku stood in front of Kaiser, smiling as he pressed his straw hat down, blocking Kaiser's path.

"What happened here?"

Jūshirō Ukitake stood beside Shunsui, also blocking Kaiser's way. He glanced at the surrounding destruction, his face slightly changed.

"...You, who were you fighting just now?"

Sui-Fēng blocked Kaiser's left flank, glaring at him with clenched teeth.

"By order of the Captain Commander, we are here to apprehend you. Surrender, Kaiser!"

Sajin Komamura blocked the right, speaking sternly and warning him.

"To murder a comrade—especially a Captain—is a grave crime."

Kaname Tōsen stood behind Kaiser, his tone solemn and his words icy.

"Sorry, Captain Kaiser. I didn't want this either, but it's the Captain Commander's order—I have no choice."

Gin Ichimaru stood beside Tōsen, still wearing his ever-smiling face, like a snake in the grass—cunning and cruel.

The Captains encircling Kaiser were these six.

Byakuya Kuchiki had been ordered to remain at the Repentance Cell. Kenpachi Zaraki was still hunting the Ryoka. Mayuri Kurotsuchi had run into Ichigo's companions while seeking test subjects. Retsu Unohana was inspecting Sōsuke Aizen's corpse in Division 4.

Other than those four, Kaiser, and the deceased Aizen, all the Gotei 13 Captains were now here.

No—there was still one more who hadn't arrived yet.

Kaiser closed his eyes to sense. That one seemed to have left the Division 1 barracks and was heading this way.

But that person was still far away. Otherwise, Kaiser might not have gotten off so easily today.

For now, though, Kaiser remained perfectly calm.

"You all arrived much faster than I expected," he said, relaxed in the circle of Captains. "In such a hurry to drag me back?"

The one who answered him wasn't just anyone—it was Shunsui Kyōraku, seemingly the lead.

"We don't want to fight you, Captain Kaiser. You're a genius, after all. It's hard to imagine how formidable you've become over all these years." Shunsui spoke as if humoring an old friend. "But you've gone too far this time. The old man is furious."

"So?"

Instead of being intimidated, Kaiser looked intrigued. "Are you all going to gang up on me?"

"If possible, I'd rather not let it come to that." Shunsui shrugged. "So, Captain Kaiser, could you not make this difficult and come with us to meet the Captain Commander?"

"I want to know why you did it, Captain Kaiser." Jūshirō Ukitake spoke earnestly. "I don't believe you would kill Captain Aizen without reason."

"Was there something—"

Before he could finish, Kaiser interrupted him.

"I did have my reasons. But I also truly wanted to kill Sōsuke Aizen."

Kaiser openly admitted this in front of six Captains.

"If not for being wary of his abilities, what you'd see wouldn't just be his corpse."

The moment he said this, the air around them turned oppressively heavy. The atmosphere plummeted.

"We've already seen Captain Aizen's corpse!"

Komamura didn't expect Kaiser to be so arrogant and spoke angrily.

"The words of a criminal always lack justice."

Tōsen had already drawn his Zanpakutō.

"Oh my, to think you'd admit it so plainly."

Gin Ichimaru smiled, clearly enjoying the chaos.

"No more talk!"

Sui-Fēng finally exploded with pent-up fury. "Let's all attack together—take him down quickly!"

The situation instantly became explosive, dangerously tense.