

Multiverse 206

Chapter 206: The Best Moment to Strike

"So, the reason Rukia is going to be executed is because the mastermind orchestrated everything just to get the thing inside her body?"

After a while, clutching his kicked and aching abdomen as he got up from the ground, Renji Abarai finally understood the meaning behind what Kaiser had been saying, albeit with a pained expression.

"That's right." Kaiser glanced at Renji with clear annoyance and said, "If you want to extract that thing inside Rukia, ordinary means won't work."

"But if she's killed by the released Sōkyoku, then the thing inside her might be forced to emerge."

The Sōkyoku is said to possess the destructive power of a million Zanpakutō and, during an execution, as it severs and pierces the body of the condemned, its power rapidly multiplies several dozen times over, completely disintegrating the soul of the condemned.

To be killed by such overwhelming force, an ordinary Soul has no chance of survival—it would be instantly reduced to nothing.

If Rukia were to be completely eradicated by that power, then the thing within her body would be exposed.

"If she were killed in an ordinary manner, that thing inside her could vanish together with her. That's why the mastermind had no choice but to take a roundabout path—using this method to extract it."

Otherwise, a mere Shinigami born in Rukongai, not even a Seated Officer, let alone a Lieutenant or a Captain, who hadn't committed some heinous crime—just gave her Reiryoku to a human to help him become a Shinigami—why would she be sentenced to execution, and why would the Sōkyoku have to be used?

It's precisely because someone wants her dead but must have her die in a specific way that this situation came to be.

"In other words, Central 46..."

Renji Abarai realized something and his expression changed dramatically.

"Central 46?" Kaiser said flatly, "There's no Central 46 anymore."

From the moment the ruling was made under the mastermind's manipulation, something had already gone wrong with Central 46.

Over a hundred years ago, Central 46 had already fallen victim to the mastermind's schemes, leading to the exile of Kisuke Urahara, Yoruichi Shihōin, and the Captains and Lieutenants who were Hollowfied. Now, more than a century later, in order to obtain the item inside Rukia, the mastermind once again set their sights on Central 46.

But this time, rather than using schemes to achieve their goal, they secretly eliminated everyone in Central 46.

The ruling to execute Rukia wasn't made by Central 46 at all—it was made by the mastermind.

"Then why didn't you tell the Captain Commander?" Renji asked loudly, his face contorted as he learned that Central 46 had been wiped out.

"Because it's pointless," Kaiser said indifferently. "Even if someone did believe me—which is unlikely—do you think the mastermind wouldn't have already made preparations?"

"This isn't the first time they've used Central 46. There's no way they wouldn't know the consequences of their actions. And there's no way they'd leave the crime scene exposed."

"So I can say with certainty—if I did speak out, I wouldn't achieve my goal. On the contrary, I'd fall into their trap."

"And then, my situation would be even worse than it is now."

A being who had been laying out plans for over a century, hiding in Soul Society all the while, scheming with all their might to break the limits of Shinigami, causing multiple severe incidents in the process—there was no need to question their intelligence.

Someone who could develop technology to surpass the Shinigami's limits on par with Kisuke Urahara, yet remain hidden in the shadows, would be a flawless strategist, unlikely to leave any openings.

Central 46 was too big of a vulnerability—there's no way the mastermind wouldn't cover their bases.

As someone who knows the original story, Kaiser knew exactly what kind of person the mastermind was—and how terrifying their powers of deception could be. That's why he didn't want to outwit the opponent. He just wanted to outfight them—strike them unawares and catch them off guard.

For this reason, Kaiser had spent the past several decades acting like the mastermind didn't exist. He didn't pay attention to them, didn't raise any suspicions, and avoided provoking any kind of defense.

The reason he struck now was because he knew the item the mastermind wanted was here—inside Rukia—and would appear during the execution with the Sōkyoku. For the sake of that object, the mastermind would no longer be able to stay hidden, nor escape early with their defenses up.

This finally gave Kaiser a chance to attack openly and seek revenge.

Unfortunately, he still didn't manage to take them down—they escaped.

But that was fine. It was within Kaiser's expectations.

As long as the object the mastermind wanted remained here, they absolutely could not stay hidden forever, and certainly couldn't leave Soul Society.

All Kaiser needed to do was lie in wait.

Understanding Kaiser's intent, Renji Abarai had to face a certain truth.

The reason Kaiser attacked Aizen...

"The one behind all this—is it really..."

Renji clenched his fists.

"Sōsuke Aizen," Kaiser didn't hide it anymore and said bluntly, "The very Captain you think I killed."

"Of course, he's not dead."

"The corpse you all saw last night—that was just a fake created by his terrifying deception abilities."

No one had been able to detect that.

Not even Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto had realized that the corpse was a fake.

Only Retsu Unohana—Captain of the Fourth Division—noticed something strange thanks to her many years of medical experience.

Even so, she couldn't be sure. She was probably still examining the body in the barracks.

That alone showed how terrifying Aizen's deception ability was.

Kaiser had already experienced it firsthand.

He recalled the occasional sense of being watched and an uncanny feeling that had plagued him over the years.

He normally wouldn't notice those sensations—only when holding his Zanpakutō would he become aware of them.

Just like when he was in the High School DxD world—where he had compensated for his lack of perception and spiritual defense by sealing off his five senses in battle, relying entirely on the instincts awakened through his weapons and permissions—letting his weapon guide him to fight, to pierce through illusions.

When he held his Zanpakutō, even if his senses weren't reliable, his instinct awakened through permissions would alert him—there was an enemy nearby.

The enemy seemed to be observing him. So Kaiser pretended not to notice, avoided alerting them, and let them watch him.

As long as the things he didn't want revealed were well-hidden, the enemy would get nothing from observing him—and might even be misled instead.

When he confronted the enemy openly last night, it was mostly a test, so he didn't reveal many of his methods.

The enemy seemed to have noticed, and seeing that they couldn't defeat Kaiser outright, faked their death and used the opportunity to turn the Gotei 13 against him.

Kaiser knew their plan. That's why he chose to search for the mastermind rather than argue with the Gotei 13.

Regrettably, once the enemy deliberately went into hiding, Kaiser couldn't find them at all.

There were probably traps in Central 46, and likely surveillance at the Senzaikyū. If Kaiser showed up, the enemy would definitely try to gather all the Captains and launch a siege against him.

"The snake's been startled. Finding him again won't be easy. And I don't want to fight the Gotei 13 to the death, letting the enemy benefit from it all. All I can do now is wait for him to come out again."

Once he understood that, Kaiser finally had the leisure to come here for a quiet drink—and to talk some sense into his friend, so he wouldn't stay stuck in a dead end.

"That's my current plan."

Kaiser turned to Renji Abarai and asked:

"And you? Now that you know the truth, what do you plan to do?"

Renji clenched his fists even tighter.

To be honest, he still couldn't quite believe this was the truth.

Mostly because Sōsuke Aizen gave off such a deceptive impression—gentle and kind, approachable and humble. Despite being a Captain, he never looked down on anyone. Whether it was a Division Member, an Academy Student, or even a soul from Rukongai, he always treated them equally.

To many, he was a good man. A kind man. A highly charismatic man.

Even Momo Hinamori had deeply admired Aizen at first. If Kaiser hadn't been there, she definitely would have joined the Fifth Division and become Aizen's Lieutenant like in the original story.

Renji Abarai also had a good impression of Aizen. If not for meeting Kaiser, his path would have followed the original timeline—joining the Fifth Division before transferring to the Eleventh and then the Sixth.

Now Kaiser told him that this man had been orchestrating one horrifying incident after another from the shadows—it was hard to believe.

If anyone else had said this, Renji would never have believed them.

But the one saying it was Kaiser...

"I'm going to save Rukia!" Renji Abarai said firmly. "I won't let her be killed!"

"Now's not the time," Kaiser shook his head. "I already said it—that place is being watched. If you go now, you'll walk straight into a trap."

"Then when can I go?" Renji asked urgently. "When can I act?"

"The day of the Sōkyoku execution," Kaiser said calmly. "On that day, all the actors will take the stage—no one will be able to stay hidden anymore."

"That will be the best moment to strike."