

Multiverse 208

Chapter 208: "Hikotsu Taihō of a Thousand Radiant Hands"

"Screech!!!"

When Kaiser's declaration of arrival resounded throughout Sōkyoku Hill, the massive firebird flying before the scaffold let out a sharp, piercing cry.

That cry was so loud and violent it could be heard by everyone.

Clearly, the firebird king had been enraged.

In its fury, the massive firebird abandoned the criminal it was meant to execute and turned instead toward Kaiser, who was slowly walking up the steps. It flapped its blazing wings and flew directly toward him.

With that flight, a whirlwind surged forth, heat waves rolled in, and the flames burning upon the firebird's body seemed to spread outward with its motion, becoming incredibly fierce.

"Not good!"

Seeing this, the faces of the Captains present changed drastically.

The firebird king, said to possess the destructive power of a million Zanpakutō, was something that even Captains could not take lightly.

This was power that truly posed a danger—even a deadly threat—to Captain-level Shinigami.

Yet in the face of such power, Kaiser still wore a smile. His gaze was utterly calm, and the hand resting on the hilt of the Zanpakutō at his waist slowly lifted, aiming toward the incoming firebird king.

"Endless hands, sacred hands of unreachable silence, bowman of unreachable heavens."

Solemn incantations were chanted by Kaiser.

"The road bathed in radiance, the wind that kindles flame, when converging—be not lost, follow my guidance."

Reiryoku burst from Kaiser's body, roaring like a storm, crashing like a tidal wave, making all the Captains' faces change once more.

"That incantation...?!"

"Could it be...?!"

"This is bad!"

Some Captains proficient in Kidō already recognized which Hadō that chant belonged to, revealing looks of shock.

Kaiser, however, as if discarding all unnecessary emotion, chanted gravely and heavily.

"Eight bodies of light bullets, nine lines, heavenly scripture, swift treasures, great wheel."

"Gray turret, draw your bow afar, pale and radiant, vanish forth."

The massive Reiryoku erupting from him warped around his body under the weight of this unprecedented chant.

In the next moment, countless cones of light formed around him, glowing as they appeared, exuding an overwhelming pressure—even the enormous firebird flying toward him let out a cry of both shock and rage.

Kaiser then released the fully chanted Kidō toward it.

"Hadō #91: Senju Kōten Taihō!"

The countless cones of light surrounding him instantly turned into flashes of brilliance, shooting out at once to meet the charging King of Halberds, clashing violently.

"BOOM!!!"

Immediately, a terrifying roar erupted.

Countless light cones struck the massive firebird all at once, each detonating like artillery shells on contact, unleashing a world-shaking explosion that blasted the firebird king to pieces.

It was a truly astonishing explosion. It not only completely consumed the massive firebird but also drowned out its scream entirely. The blast shook the whole of Seireitei, causing countless Shinigami to look this way in alarm, faces full of panic.

Above Sōkyoku Hill, a radiance lit the skies—more accurately, a burst of light that continued to expand.

"Rumble rumble...!"

Under this incredible explosion, the entire hill trembled as though in an earthquake. Cracks began to appear in several places, as if the ground itself might collapse at any moment.

Meanwhile, the Captains present on Sōkyoku Hill seemed caught in a raging hurricane, as if being hit by a level-twelve typhoon. They all retreated swiftly, nearly blown away, forced to raise their arms and unleash their Reiatsu just to remain standing against the blast winds.

Of course, while the Captains could withstand the blast, the Lieutenants present didn't fare so well.

Thus, several Lieutenants were either blown away screaming or used all their strength to desperately cling to the hill, looking as miserable as could be.

"Hadō above number ninety..."

"That guy... he's actually capable of using Kidō of this level?!"

"This power is unbelievable!"

"Damn...!"

The Captains and Lieutenants, one after another, turned from stunned to furious. Only a few had grave expressions, as if pondering something deeper.

"Captain Kaiser!"

As for Rukia, who was on the scaffold, she actually wasn't affected much.

Bound tightly, unable to move at all, she felt the gale lash at her body with pain, but it couldn't blow her away.

She could only widen her eyes, watching the scene before her unfold, and cry out toward Kaiser.

She didn't know why Kaiser had come.

But she knew that his appearance wasn't a good thing.

Unfortunately, she was already deep within this game, unaware of what had truly happened to her, or how she had ended up in this situation—thus, her opinion no longer mattered.

Kaiser did hear her cry, but he didn't look at her. He simply withdrew his raised hand, letting the explosion bloom above his head. His Haori and Shihakushō billowed wildly in the blast wind, but his posture remained immovable.

"The so-called Sōkyoku, said to possess the destructive power of a million Zanpakutō... is nothing special."

The massive firebird known as the Firebird King was destroyed in the explosion above his head.

"CRACK!"

A long spear appeared within the blast, shattering like thunder into countless pieces.

Its fragments turned into motes of light and drifted from the sky, falling across Kaiser's area, casting him in a divine radiance, as though he were a celestial warrior.

"Sōkyoku has been destroyed. The so-called Sōkyoku execution no longer exists."

Kaiser's voice echoed once more, reaching everyone's ears.

"This little reunion gift—does it please you all?"

That familiar, half-smiling voice made several Captains boil with anger.

"Swish!"

A figure was first to use Shunpo and appear before Kaiser, raising his Zanpakutō high and then slashing downward, sharp and merciless.

"CLANG!"

Kaiser drew his blade, parrying the descending strike. A metallic clash rang out as he forced the attacker back.

"The first to strike is you?" Kaiser said calmly. "Are you in such a hurry to send your own sister to her death?"

The one standing before Kaiser—was none other than Byakuya Kuchiki.

"You've gone too far, Kaiser." Byakuya held his Zanpakutō, his expression cold. "This time, I won't allow you to act recklessly."

He appeared completely serious—his Reiatsu released without reservation, more intense than at any previous time when confronting Kaiser.

"This Reiatsu isn't bad," Kaiser said, standing as if in a breeze. "But this time, I'm not your opponent."

As soon as Kaiser's words fell, a voice rose behind Byakuya.

"Roar! Zabimaru!"

A sharp blade shot out behind him like a serpent emerging from the grass, extending toward Byakuya as it lunged.

"CLANG!"

Byakuya had been vigilant, immediately swinging his Zanpakutō backward to block the incoming strike.

Looking closely, the blade was an extended serpent-like greatsword.

It was a dual-edged segmented blade resembling a snake's belly. Half of the sword's spine was black; the rest of the blade was silver-white, with numerous protrusions.

The blade had split into multiple segments, each linked by silver chains and metal cords, extending its length significantly. Its front edge had clashed with Byakuya's Zanpakutō, while the hilt was over ten meters away, held tightly by its owner.

"...What are you doing?"

Byakuya turned a cold gaze toward the one who had attacked.

It was his Lieutenant, and recently missing for some time—Renji Abarai of Division 6.

"Captain!" Renji shouted firmly, holding the dual-edged, whip-like blade. "I've come to save Rukia!"

"Denied." Byakuya issued a cold order. "Stand down."

"I won't!" Renji stood firm in Byakuya's terrifying Reiatsu, sweating from his forehead, yet undaunted. "Don't stop me, Captain. Otherwise—even you—I'll defeat you!"

"Defeat me?" Byakuya showed no contempt, his tone unchanged. "With just you?"

If his opponent had been Kaiser, Byakuya would have been far more wary.

But against Renji Abarai, he didn't take it seriously.

This was his Lieutenant—how could he not know the extent of his ability?

Renji had been in the Gotei 13 for decades. His strength was considerable, but at the end of the day, he was still a Lieutenant—not someone who could challenge a Captain.

Facing Renji, Byakuya didn't even need to release his Zanpakutō to win easily.

If he did release it, Renji would have no chance.

However, what Byakuya didn't know...

"The current me is no longer who I used to be."

Renji recalled everything since graduating from the Shin'ō Academy and joining the Gotei 13.

Because of Kaiser's influence, he had joined Division 11 after graduation to become a combat specialist.

Though far from Kaiser's level of talent, Renji was no ordinary Shinigami. Soon after joining Division 11, he defeated several high-ranking officers, becoming Sixth Seat—and eventually Fourth Seat—earning praise from his seniors.

Unfortunately, the Lieutenant and Third Seat of Division 11 were not ordinary people, their strength far exceeding their rank. Thus, Renji remained stuck at Fourth Seat.

Striving to rise further, Renji transferred to Division 6 and became its Lieutenant. At the same time, he sought out Kaiser, asking him for guidance to grow stronger.

For decades, he trained under Kaiser's instruction.

Thanks to that, Renji had now obtained what most Shinigami could only dream of.

"Let me show you my true power!"

Renji released an astonishing Reiatsu.

That Reiatsu had already surpassed the Lieutenant level.

"This Reiatsu..."

Byakuya's eyes opened slightly wider.

"Don't tell me, you..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Renji shouted a line that shocked the entire field.

"Bankai!"

An overwhelming Reiatsu surged around Renji, causing his Zanpakutō to undergo a dramatic transformation.

The previously whip-like blade thickened and expanded in the light, becoming a giant form that coiled around Renji.

Renji's Shihakushō also transformed. Brown fur appeared on his shoulders—his right shoulder's fur reached to his wrist, the left only to the elbow, adorned with a skull emblem. A skull ornament also hung from a chain across his chest—his appearance changed drastically.

Surrounding him, Zabimaru had transformed into a giant skeletal serpent. Its eyes were yellow, its head covered in crimson fur, and its body composed of numerous beige skeletal segments. Its tail formed a staff-like handle, which Renji held.

"Sōō Zabimaru!"

Renji had completed his Bankai. His Reiatsu surged several times over, shocking everyone around.

"That's... Lieutenant Abarai?"

"Lieutenant Abarai... actually achieved Bankai?"

"Heavens..."

Captains and Lieutenants alike exclaimed in astonishment.

"You actually mastered Bankai?" Even Byakuya was surprised—clearly, this had exceeded his expectations.

"I completed this Bankai some time ago." Renji stared at Byakuya. "That guy Kaiser is really incredible. He's never revealed his Zanpakutō, not even its Shikai, but he understands mine inside and out. He helped me achieve Bankai with ease."

"Though, according to him, this Bankai is still incomplete. I haven't yet grasped its full power or true form."

"But he doesn't see that as a bad thing. Incompleteness has its perks—it makes mastery easier."

Normally, even if a Shinigami obtained Bankai, it would take over ten or twenty years to refine and control it properly.

Renji's Bankai, though incomplete, allowed him to shorten that process.

Now, he could fully wield the power of this Bankai form.

"Even against you, Captain—if you're careless, you'll lose!"

With that, Renji raised the staff-like tail in his hand.

"Roar!"

The skeletal serpent let out a bellow and lunged toward Byakuya...