

## Multiverse 210

Chapter 210: Incomparably Blazing Reiatu

Sōkyoku Hill, at the scaffold.

At this moment, Rukia was still hanging there, unable to move.

"Renji!"

She saw Renji Abarai appear, and also saw him unleash his Bankai, controlling the skeletal serpent to roar and attack Byakuya Kuchiki. She instantly became extremely flustered.

"No! Renji!" Rukia shouted with all her strength. "You mustn't fight Nii-sama! Run!"

No one knew better than Rukia just how powerful her older brother truly was.

Though among the Captains of the Gotei 13, Byakuya was relatively young in both age and experience, he was the most exceptional genius among the heads of the Kuchiki Clan throughout its generations, and his strength was unfathomable.

That Renji Abarai could achieve Bankai was indeed shocking to Rukia, but Byakuya Kuchiki had already attained Bankai several decades ago.

Back when Renji was still a student at Shin'ō Academy, working hard to attain Shikai, Byakuya had already completed Bankai and become the Captain of Division 6.

Decades had passed since then. Though Renji's growth was astounding, as the most brilliant heir of the Kuchiki Clan, how could Byakuya not have grown?

His rate of progress could only be faster than Renji's—there was no reason to believe he had been surpassed.

Thus, Rukia didn't think Renji could defeat Byakuya at all.

And if he couldn't, then for recklessly raising a hand against a Captain—against the head of the Kuchiki Clan—Renji's only possible outcome...

Was to be slain on the spot!

"Run, Renji!"

Rukia's voice turned hoarse with anxiety.

Until—

"All you know is telling others to run?"

A deliberately mocking voice echoed from above and entered Rukia's ears.

"Then why, when something happened, didn't you run first yourself? Why did you choose to surrender and get tied up here awaiting execution?"

When those words reached her ears, Rukia almost doubted her own hearing.

"That voice... could it be...?!"

Rukia looked up in disbelief.

There, standing atop the scaffold, wearing a cloak over his shihakushō and holding a massive, cleaver-like Zanpakutō, was a Shinigami with orange hair.

"Ichigo!"

Rukia's eyes trembled as she called out his name.

The newcomer was indeed Ichigo Kurosaki.

"Y-You're Ichigo?" Rukia asked in disbelief. "Is it really you?"

No blame could be placed on Rukia for reacting this way.

She clearly remembered—when she encountered Byakuya Kuchiki and Renji Abarai and was taken to the Soul Society, leaving the Human World behind, Ichigo was still a half-baked Shinigami who couldn't even perform a proper Shikai.

Back then, although Ichigo had immense spiritual power, in the context of the Gotei 13, he wasn't worth mentioning—he wasn't even a Seated Officer. At best, he had a strong burst of power and could display astonishing combat strength in specific moments.

Yet it had only been a few days since then?

Not even half a month had passed, right?

In less than half a month, Ichigo seemed like a different person—not only had he mastered Shikai, the Reiatsu emanating from him had undergone a complete transformation, becoming several times more powerful than before.

Rukia was certain—this was Captain-level Reiatsu.

So... Ichigo had already become a Captain-class Shinigami?

How could Rukia possibly believe that?

In contrast, Ichigo acted as if nothing had happened. He didn't seem like someone coming to break into an execution ground—he looked more like someone out for a countryside stroll.

"I'm not the only one who came." Ichigo pointed to a corner below. "Everyone's here."

Upon hearing that, Rukia quickly looked down.

And the moment she did, she saw several familiar faces.

"Kuchiki-san!"

A cheerful girl waved up at her excitedly, standing next to a boy in a pure-white battle uniform and a muscular, Native American-looking young man.

"Inoue! Ishida! Chad!"

Rukia murmured in a daze, as though struck.

"Why did you come? Why...?"

The answer to that question was self-evident.

"Of course, to save you." Ichigo looked down at Rukia and snorted. "At this point, don't you dare say something like 'I didn't need you to save me,' okay?"

"We've already come all the way here. It's caused quite the commotion—even those Captains down there are fighting amongst themselves for no reason."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance. If you dare tell us to escape now, I'll knock you out with Zangetsu."

As he spoke, Ichigo flew to Rukia's side. With a flash of Zangetsu, he slashed off all the restraints binding her.

Then, carrying Rukia, he descended to the ground.

"You..."

Rukia's expression was complicated, and her heart was filled with a turbulent mix of emotions.

"Inoue!" Ichigo ignored Rukia and tossed her to the approaching Orihime Inoue. "Take Rukia and go!"

"Eh?" Orihime cautiously caught Rukia, first stunned, then said blankly, "Why? Aren't we all going together?"

"Right," Ichigo replied crisply. "You guys go first. I'll catch up later."

There was no helping it.

"There's a ridiculous guy eyeing me."

Ichigo's sharp gaze turned forward.

"Jingle—jingle—jingle—"

With the sound of ringing bells, a spiky-haired battle maniac swayed forward, bells tied into his hair.

"Yo, sorry to interrupt your reunion," said the grinning beastly figure. "Do you know how hard I've been trying to find you guys?"

A violent Reitsu swept out like an invisible storm, causing everyone to hold their breath and tremble.

"This is bad..."

"Hey! Ichigo! That guy's seriously dangerous!"

Chad was drenched in cold sweat. Uryū Ishida's breathing grew rapid, and he shouted in panic.

"I know." Ichigo stood calmly, shielding the group behind him. "That guy should be the Captain of Division 11—Kenpachi Zaraki—that Ikkaku talked about."

Ikkaku Madarame, Third Seat of Division 11—a powerful Shinigami even Renji admired. Because of him, Renji never advanced beyond the Fourth Seat during his time in Division 11.

After arriving in Soul Society and infiltrating Seireitei, Ichigo's first opponent had been Ikkaku, and it had taken a lot of effort to defeat him.

At that time, Chad had faced the Fifth Seat, Yumichika Ayasegawa, and had also barely secured victory after a grueling fight.

It was through these two that Ichigo and the others learned about Kenpachi Zaraki.

By the way, Mayuri Kurotsuchi had been defeated by Uryū Ishida, who paid a painful price for the win—leaving Mayuri so depressed that he refused to leave his lab afterward.

And Kenpachi had worked so hard to track down Ichigo's group precisely because of Ikkaku and Yumichika's reports.

"Ikkaku already told me—you're strong, and might be able to give me a good time."

Kenpachi's eyes were on no one else but Ichigo, who remained calm under his oppressive Reiatsu. Holding his battered Zanpakutō, Kenpachi grinned ferociously.

"Now that I see you, I believe he wasn't lying."

Ichigo's Reiatsu, not at all inferior to his own, put Kenpachi into a state of wild excitement.

"You guys go."

Ichigo still faced Kenpachi with a calm gaze, but his voice was directed to his companions behind him.

"Ichigo!"

Rukia immediately shouted, wanting to stop him.

The opponent was Kenpachi Zaraki. Even though Ichigo now had Captain-level Reiatsu, Rukia still couldn't imagine him winning.

But Ichigo was no longer listening to any discouragement.

"Inoue! Chad! Ishida!"

Under Ichigo's sharp command, the three glanced at each other—then obeyed and ran.

"Wait—!"

Rukia panicked, but she didn't even have the strength to resist, and was easily taken away by the three.

"...You're not going after them?"

Ichigo kept his eyes on Kenpachi, but noticed he didn't care about Rukia and the others fleeing.

"I'm not interested in people who just run," Kenpachi grinned. "Besides, as long as you're here, it doesn't matter what the small fry do."

Clearly, Kenpachi had eyes only for Ichigo.

"I heard you had a fight with that Kaiser guy a few days ago?"

Kenpachi hefted his sword, speaking with interest.

"Yeah, got beaten pretty badly." Ichigo raised Zangetsu and smirked at the overwhelming Reiatsu coming from Kenpachi. "I came today hoping to get revenge—but now it seems like that guy might actually be on our side?"

"Who knows what that guy's thinking?" Kenpachi said indifferently. "I did want to use this chance to fight him again—but unfortunately, a terrifying old man's already been pissed off by him."

Ichigo naturally knew who Kenpachi was referring to.

Because ever since earlier, a terrifying Reiatsu had been slowly drawing near, radiating intense heat.

That Reiatsu—even Ichigo, in his current state, felt his grip on Zangetsu tremble slightly.

Even the Captains and Lieutenants locked in battle had paused for a moment, casting respectful gazes toward the source of the Reiatsu.

"This is the first time I've seen that old man so mad."

Kenpachi spoke—whether in admiration or sympathy, even he couldn't tell.

"That guy... is in serious trouble this time."