

Multiverse 214

Chapter 214: The Gap Is Simply Too Vast

On this day, Sōkyoku Hill collapsed.

Just like a mountain crumbling apart, under the bombardment of countless Zanpakutō raining from the sky, Sōkyoku Hill disintegrated without suspense, turning into endless rubble, rolling down to the ground.

Dust and smoke billowed and spread like a sandstorm.

"Shup!" "Shup!" "Shup!"...

One by one, the Shinigami who had been on Sōkyoku Hill used Shunpo to flee from the crumbling ruin.

"Boom!"

A vast blaze also erupted from within, surging through the falling rubble, flying forth amid the crashing Zanpakutō.

Only after breaking free from the collapsing scene did Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto appear from the flames, his Captain's Haori and Shihakushō tattered, revealing a body covered in wounds—his figure unexpectedly somewhat disheveled.

"Captain Commander!"

"Captain Commander!"

Many Shinigami who saw this were shocked.

Clearly, they had never seen Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto in such a state.

As the strongest Shinigami of the past thousand years—and the most powerful being in all of Soul Society—Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto did not just represent the pinnacle of Shinigami, but the pinnacle of the entire Soul Society.

Even the Gotei 13 and Shin'ō Academy had been founded by this man. The current structure of Soul Society could be said to be built by his hands alone.

Such a man had lived for over two thousand years. Unchallenged for a millennium—how many people had ever seen him look this defeated?

So the Shinigami who witnessed this were stunned, their minds shaken for a moment.

However, reality is not ruled by personal will.

A figure surrounded by countless blades streaked through the air at high speed, instantly catching up to Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto. The Zanpakutō in his hand, covered in flickering illusions of countless other Zanpakutō, came crashing down on the hastily raised Ryūjin Jakka.

"BOOM!!!"

At the instant of impact, there was no clashing sound of metal—only a deafening blast.

A power formed by the combined might of all Zanpakutō in existence exploded upon the blazing Ryūjin Jakka, causing its blade to tremble. The flames it emitted were blown apart, scattering into sparks.

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto felt himself hurled toward the earth by an unmatched force, crashing straight into the ground—shattering and collapsing the terrain, billowing smoke rising.

Surrounded by countless blades, Kaiser refused to let up—or rather, had entered a state of frenzy—his figure flashing downward with unmatched Shunpo, diving into the swirling dust.

"BOOM!!!"

As if struck by a meteor, the churning dust was instantly blasted away. The already shattered terrain was struck again, raising another storm of dust and debris—like a volcanic eruption.

Kaiser and Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto engaged in fierce battle within, blades clashing, figures crossing, bursts of blades and explosive flames erupting all around.

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, battered and scarred, his eyes burned brighter than ever before. He roared with fury, slashing Ryūjin Jakka and releasing wave after wave of explosive flames, each strike a thunderous detonation.

This firepower was too fearsome for even a Captain-level Shinigami to confront directly, yet Kaiser charged forward unfazed—piercing through the explosive flames toward Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto.

The countless blades around Kaiser shattered and reformed, broken ones instantly replaced, blocking every oncoming wave of flame.

With the protection of Blade Array Matrix, Kaiser completely ignored Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's attacks. His Crown of Heavens slashed down with immense power—the collective might of all Zanpakutō in existence—each strike sending Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto flying.

"BOOM—BOOM—BOOM—BOOM—"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's body smashed through rocks and debris, like demolishing buildings, leaving destruction in his wake.

"RAAAHHH...!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's expression twisted into fury, like a wrathful deity, roaring as he slashed Ryūjin Jakka, flames growing stronger and fiercer, trying to break through Kaiser's Blade Array Matrix.

But even the strongest, oldest Fire-type Zanpakutō, Ryūjin Jakka, could not possibly destroy all Zanpakutō in one strike—at least not in Shikai form. So his attacks were rendered ineffective, while Kaiser's strikes landed with devastating effect, carving fresh wounds.

"BOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOM—!!!"

Before long, under Kaiser's control, the blades surrounding him launched another storm-like assault—an overwhelming barrage crashing down on Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, tearing apart the earth, pulverizing the terrain.

"CLANGCLANGCLANGCLANG...!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto swung Ryūjin Jakka, knocking away blade after blade, but the sheer volume was too great—even with his skill, he couldn't deflect them all. Forced to dodge with Shunpo while deflecting as many as he could, the remaining blades smashed the rocks and ground around him.

"Slash!" "Slash!" "Slash!"...

Eventually, his defenses faltered. A few blades broke through—slicing across his thigh, his side, even his cheek, leaving deep gashes.

Kaiser emerged from the sea of flying swords, wielding Crown of Heavens. One slash struck Ryūjin Jakka again—scattering its flames and sending Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto flying once more.

Their battle shifted rapidly, carrying them kilometers away from the original site of Sōkyoku Hill. Everything they passed was swept into their clash—either obliterated or reduced to rubble, leaving a swath of ruin behind.

This scene sent shivers through the onlookers.

"Captain Commander... is actually being suppressed?"

The Shinigami could hardly believe their eyes.

Even the Captains of the Gotei 13 were stunned.

"That man... has he really become this strong?"

Sui-Fēng, Shunsui Kyōraku, Jūshirō Ukitake—those who had worked with Kaiser for decades—were all shaken to their core.

They had known Kaiser was powerful, but never imagined he had grown this strong.

Could just a few decades really turn a newly graduated Academy student into someone like this?

Or... had he always been this powerful?

"No! That's not it!"

Many cried out silently in their hearts.

Kaiser himself was indeed strong, and his growth over the decades was astonishing—but the true reason he could suppress Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, the strongest Shinigami of the last millennium, was that Zanpakutō—Crown of Heavens.

They had all heard Kaiser's explanation—understood its true nature.

It was the king of Zanpakutō, a being that absorbed the power of all Zanpakutō into itself.

Its strength was the collective strength of every Zanpakutō in existence.

Its single strike was the combined strike of every Zanpakutō in existence.

The more Zanpakutō there were, the stronger Crown of Heavens became.

Even Ryūjin Jakka—despite being the strongest, oldest Fire-type Zanpakutō—was still just one blade among all others. Against the sum total of every Zanpakutō, of course it would be suppressed.

Though Crown of Heavens only held their power, not their unique abilities, that power alone was unmatched.

They even saw Kaiser occasionally grab one of the many blades surrounding him—throwing or striking with it—fighting with dual blades like Shunsui Kyōraku and Jūshirō Ukitake. His fighting style was versatile and ever-changing, occasionally catching even the battle-hardened Captain Commander off-guard.

The Kaiser before releasing his Zanpakutō—and the Kaiser after—were simply worlds apart.

The difference was so vast that many Shinigami now believed: this was Kaiser truly fighting seriously.

And that belief was largely correct.

After all, Kaiser with a weapon in hand was utterly different from when he was unarmed.

Before its release, Crown of Heavens was merely a noble and ornate Zanpakutō. But once released, it exploded with the power of every Zanpakutō in the world—how could such power not be overwhelming?

And Kaiser possessed the authority to fully wield the total power of any weapon in his grasp.

So the full combined might of every Zanpakutō burst forth without the slightest leakage in his hands.

Thus, he effortlessly suppressed Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto—turning the tide completely, becoming overwhelming and dominant.

The Captains' understanding was correct. For Kaiser, who possessed the Ultimate Authority over Weapons, only after releasing his Zanpakutō did he reveal his true power. Before that, he was no different than being unarmed.

Under such conditions, this shocking one-sided suppression unfolded before all Shinigami.

"BOOM!!!"

Flames surged like a tidal wave, crashing against countless blades—shattered in turn by the endless assault—scattering across the sky.

From afar, it looked like flaming meteors streaking across the heavens. Ryūjin Jakka's flames exploded into countless sparks raining down to the ground.

Kaiser brought down Crown of Heavens like a bolt of lightning. The torrent of power it carried overwhelmed Ryūjin Jakka's flames, knocking Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto from the sky. Even as his feet landed, the earth beneath him shattered—leaving behind a massive crater.

"Cough...!"

At last, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto coughed up blood again. His knee buckled, forcing him to kneel.

He instinctively tried to stand—but found his legs powerless, unable to rise.

His eyes revealed disbelief.

"...I... I can't even stand?"

How long had it been?

How long since someone had pushed him to this point?

As that realization set in, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto also found his breathing growing rapid and labored.

"As expected... you've grown old, Captain Commander Yamamoto."

Kaiser descended with countless blades, landing before him.

"After more than two thousand years of battle—even you are no longer at your peak."

Undeniably, as a Shinigami, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto had reached the limit.

If one were to quantify all a Shinigami's abilities with a score out of 100—then in every category, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto had reached 100.

Zanjutsu, Hakuda, Shunpo, Kidō—even mastery and use of his Zanpakutō—all were perfect scores.

His Reiatsu as well—his Spiritual Pressure level was certainly the highest, unquestionably at First Class. In both Soul Society and Hueco Mundo, none could compare.

However, even with First Class Spiritual Pressure, even with strength surpassing all others, after living more than two millennia, he had inevitably entered the stage of decline.

In every way, he possessed overwhelming statistics. But age meant his physical stamina could no longer keep up.

In short—he could no longer sustain such intense battle.

The proof was clear—Kaiser remained composed, not even out of breath, while Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto was already gasping, like an exhausted old general.

"Your only chance of defeating me now is probably to use Bankai."

Kaiser held Crown of Heavens and looked at Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto with meaningful eyes.

"Why not... give your Bankai another try?"

Kaiser's words were nothing short of provocation.

To this, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto did not grow angry—he only sneered.

"To deal with a mere brat... why would I need Bankai?"

That response did not surprise Kaiser.

"True," he replied, completely unsurprised. "Ryūjin Jakka's Bankai... even to Soul Society itself, it's extremely dangerous."

"For someone like you, who wishes to preserve Soul Society's order, how could you casually use it?"

"One misstep, and Soul Society could be destroyed by your own hand."