

## Multiverse 215

Chapter 215: “Hōgyoku”

As a fellow user of Ryūjin Jakka, how could Kaiser not know what its Bankai was?

Once used, it truly possessed power that could severely impact the outside world, even to the point of bringing destruction to the entire Soul Society!

Hyōrinmaru, the strongest Ice/Snow-type Zanpakutō, could already manipulate Celestial Phenomena. Ryūjin Jakka, as the strongest Fire-type Zanpakutō, only revealed its true might after Bankai—so powerful it could damage the whole Soul Society.

Thus, unless faced with an especially dire situation, even if his own life were threatened, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto would not lightly use his Bankai.

"What a shame. It seems I won't get to witness the Captain Commander's full power here."

Kaiser did feel some regret, but not disappointment.

After all, this situation had long been within his expectations, hadn't it?

"Hmph!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto mustered the last of his strength, swaying as he stood, his wrinkled eyes fixed dead on Kaiser, his voice still heavy and forceful.

"Don't get so full of yourself, brat. I was a Shinigami long before you even existed!" Reiatsu like fire rose from Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto once more. "If you think you can provoke me with mere words—you're two thousand years too early!"

He used Shunpo, suddenly appearing before Kaiser.

"BOOM!!!"

Ryūjin Jakka struck the countless swords circling Kaiser, unleashing surging flames that blew everything around them sky-high.

Explosive flames spread like waves, blackening the ground.

But within the inferno, Kaiser remained unharmed, not suffering the slightest injury.

"It's not over yet!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's eyes widened, and just as he was about to act again, a hand broke through the sea of flames—seemingly slow, yet actually swift—and pressed against him.

"Divide!"

The next second, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto heard a voice that seemed to echo from within Kaiser's body.

In the instant the voice rang out, the Reiatsu around him, the Reiryoku inside him, and even the flames of Ryūjin Jakka were halved—as if forcibly shaved away, instantly weakening.

"What?!"

The sudden sense of frailty caused his expression to change drastically.

Undoubtedly, this was the ability of Divine Dividing—halving.

Just like in his fight with Yoruichi Shihōin, Kaiser had borrowed a portion of the power of Divine Dividing from within himself and activated its halving ability.

Of course, he could only do it once.

Without using the Sacred Gear itself, Kaiser could at most borrow a small portion of its power and couldn't unleash its full strength.

Just like now, without summoning Divine Dividing, he could only activate the halving effect once, couldn't apply it a second time on the same target, and couldn't absorb the halved power to strengthen himself.

The same went for Boosted Gear. Without using it, Kaiser could only activate its doubling ability once, couldn't use it again on the same object, and couldn't transfer the doubled power to others.

Naturally, whether it was Balace Breaker or Juggernaut Drive, without summoning the Sacred Gear itself, they couldn't be used at all.

Without the actual Sacred Gear summoned, even if Kaiser could borrow a portion of their power, he could only activate a single use of halving or doubling—no different than using the lower-grade Twice Critical or Dragon Wing.

The rest of the Sacred Weapons were the same—without their actual form, only a small fraction of power could be accessed.

Still, it was enough.

Even a single halving was enough. When someone's power is suddenly cut in half, even Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's strength dropped drastically, no longer what it once was.

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

At the same time, the Zanpakutō floating around Kaiser all flew toward Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto. Each one was a long weapon. Before he could react, they passed through his armpits, behind his knees, even brushing past his temples—pinning him in place.

"...!"

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto finally reacted, just as he was about to struggle—suddenly, a gravity force descended from nowhere, crushing him, bending his waist.

"Ughhhhhh...!"

Muscles bulged across Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto's entire body, veins throbbing even on his forehead, as he strained with all his might to break free.

But with only half his power left, he couldn't free himself from the Zanpakutō pinning him or the gravity weighing him down.

"I win, Captain Commander." Kaiser slowly lowered Crown of Heavens, looking at the struggling Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto before him. "Now, can you listen to what I have to say?"

"Brat..."

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto glared, fuming with rage.

At that moment, the observing Shinigami arrived on scene—and seeing the Captain Commander restrained before Kaiser, they were all stunned.

"The Captain Commander... lost?"

"Old man..."

"Sensei..."

"Grand Master..."

"This can't be!"

Their faces were filled with shock and disbelief.

"You all..."

Kaiser turned his head, looking toward the surrounding Shinigami.

Just as he was about to speak—

"Buzz..."

A wave of Reiryoku suddenly spread from the space itself, like a net, linking to everyone present.

"—!"

All the Shinigami reacted instantly, too strongly.

"W-what is this?!"

Ichigo Kurosaki looked completely lost, clearly not understanding the phenomenon.

"This is..."

But Kaiser's heart stirred—he understood.

And in that instant, a voice suddenly rang in everyone's mind.

"[All Captains, Lieutenants, Division representatives of the Gotei 13, and fellow Ryoka, please listen calmly.]"

It was a woman's voice.

Urgent and anxious, it was obvious something major had happened.

"This is... Tenteikūra!"

Many recognized the source of this effect.

Tenteikūra—Bakudō #77, a Kidō that uses Reiatsu to search for multiple targets and transmits a message upon locking on.

Someone had used this Kidō to send a message to all the Captains, Lieutenants, division reps, and even the Ryoka who had invaded Seireitei.

"[I am Kotetsu Isane, Lieutenant of Division 4.]"

She stated her identity, and Kaiser immediately pictured her appearance.

She was very tall, over 185 cm, with a slender and graceful figure. Her face and build were elegant, her silver-gray short hair slightly messy, braided in parts, and she wore red rectangular earrings as a pair.

Kotetsu Isane—Lieutenant of Division 4, subordinate to Retsu Unohana. Like Unohana, she rarely appeared on the front lines, working in logistics and medical support, usually stationed at the General Relief Station. Within the Gotei 13, she was fairly well-known.

Her impression was also memorable—not just due to her appearance, but because her speech often gave off a boyish feel. But in truth, she was timid and indecisive, only showing boldness during battle. This contrast, along with her polite and humble attitude, made her quite distinctive to Kaiser.

But now, her voice was stern and hurried.

"[Under Captain Unohana's orders, I hereby announce an emergency.]"

"[It concerns the previously declared dead Captain of Division 5—Sōsuke Aizen.]"

"[Please remain calm. Under Captain Unohana's detailed examination, we have determined that the body found in the Division 5 quarters was in fact another individual, disguised.]"

"[That was not the real Sōsuke Aizen.]"

"[Sōsuke Aizen... is not dead.]"

At those words, whether they already knew, suspected, or were completely unaware—everyone's expressions changed.

"N-not dead...?"

Even Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto froze, momentarily unable to process the weight of the news.

Kotetsu Isane's voice continued.

"[After confirming that Aizen was alive, Captain Unohana and I secretly investigated the recent anomalies—ultimately locating the chambers of Central 46.]"

"[There, we found all forty sages and six judges—slaughtered.]"

"[Furthermore, their time of death dates back to before Rukia Kuchiki was brought back to Soul Society.]"

"[In other words, every order and verdict the Gotei 13 has received from Central 46 during this period... was issued by the murderer.]"

"[Everyone—we've been deceived.]"

These words made every listener widen their eyes.

"No way..."

Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto also widened his eyes—and suddenly turned toward Kaiser, seeing the calm and cold expression on his face.

He finally understood why Kaiser had done everything up to this point.

And most likely, the one who orchestrated it all from the shadows was...

"[Sōsuke Aizen.]"

Kotetsu Isane's voice rang out, clear and firm.

"[We have strong reason to believe this man is the mastermind!]"

Yes.

This man was the true culprit.

Unfortunately...

"It's already too late."

That voice came from a secluded street near Sōkyoku Hill.

It was the main path leading to the execution grounds—and now, several figures lay in pools of blood.

Two men and one woman—all dressed in modern clothing, clearly out of place in Seireitei or Soul Society.

If Ichigo Kurosaki were here, he would've recognized them immediately.

Orihime Inoue...

Uryū Ishida...

Yasutora Sado...

These were the Ryoka who had come to Soul Society alongside Ichigo.

And in their midst, stood a figure wearing a Captain's Haori—holding someone by the neck.

"Aizen... Captain..."

The one in his hand, Rukia, uttered a pained groan.

Sōsuke Aizen grasped her throat, looking at the girl who had almost been executed, his face bearing a gentle smile—yet his eyes glinted with cruelty.

"What a pity. In the end, you couldn't die under the Sōkyoku."

Aizen said calmly, "Should I call it luck? Or misfortune?"

"Hmm... probably misfortune."

"After all, you know nothing, understand nothing—just used unilaterally by Kisuke Urahara."

Rukia struggled in discomfort, seemingly unable to hear Aizen's words.

But Aizen continued speaking to himself.

"After all that effort, so many performances... it was all for nothing."

"Luckily, I anticipated this outcome."

"Which means, my backup plan wasn't in vain."

As he spoke, Aizen drew out an item from his robes.

"A spiritual anomaly extraction medium—an artifact created by Kisuke Urahara, capable of extracting foreign substances from a soul, Shinigami or not."

Aizen activated the device, praising sincerely.

"No wonder he, like me, could create miracles that defy Shinigami limits. In all of Soul Society, only he surpasses me in intellect."

As the device activated, thick thorn-like columns sprouted around him, and the hand holding it transformed into a grotesque green mass.

"I found this after poring through all of Urahara's research. Let's hope it doesn't disappoint."

With that, his mutated hand shot forward—piercing through Rukia's chest.

Her eyes widened, pupils trembling.

But Aizen never once looked at her—his gaze remained calm as he withdrew his hand, pulling something from within her body.

Quickly, a bluish-black gem encased in multifaceted crystal walls was in his grasp.

Aizen tossed aside the now-useless Rukia and stared at the gem in his hand, eyes flashing.

"At last, I have you."

"Hōgyoku."