

Multiverse 218

Chapter 218: A Completely Opposite Existence

"Clap—Clap—Clap—"

A series of unhurried applause suddenly echoed in this silent space.

Sōsuke Aizen then smiled and began applauding, as if feeling admiration, or perhaps a sense of peculiarity, as he spoke to Kaiser.

"Correct, all answers are correct."

Sōsuke Aizen calmly admitted his goals, and also admitted everything he had done.

"That's right, everything I did was to break through the limits of the Shinigami, to reach a new height, a new boundary."

"For that, I went to great lengths, trying all sorts of methods, and ultimately created the Hōgyoku."

"The Hollowfication of Shinigami, the Shinigamification of Hollow, this is the conclusion I reached in surpassing boundaries."

Sōsuke Aizen was still the same as before, with a gentle smile, yet he made people feel unfamiliar, made people feel a chill down their spine.

"Unexpectedly, you understand so much about me—just where did you learn all of this?"

Sōsuke Aizen looked at Kaiser with deep, profound eyes.

But he then shifted his tone and made a correction.

"However, Captain Kaiser said one thing wrong, or perhaps not clearly enough?"

"That is, the Hōgyoku I created is actually incomplete."

"Even though I poured hundreds of souls possessing Shinigami power into the Hōgyoku, it still could not satisfy the Hōgyoku's demands, causing it to remain in an incomplete state."

Upon hearing this, before the others could respond, Yoruichi Shihōin stepped forward.

"So, you set your eyes on Kisuke's Hōgyoku, didn't you?"

As these words fell, everyone was shocked.

"You're saying, Kisuke Urahara also created a Hōgyoku?"

Shunsui Kyōraku opened his mouth in astonishment.

The one who answered this question was not Yoruichi Shihōin, but Sōsuke Aizen.

"That's right, Kisuke Urahara also created a Hōgyoku, and by a method completely opposite to mine."

Sōsuke Aizen spoke with a smile.

"To form the Hōgyoku, I poured in Shinigami souls."

"Kisuke Urahara, to form the Hōgyoku, poured in Hollow souls."

"But coincidentally, my Hōgyoku is incomplete, and so is Kisuke Urahara's."

"This is also inevitable. If the Hōgyoku is meant to allow Shinigami or Hollow to transcend their boundaries, and the method is to Hollowfy Shinigami or Shinigamify Hollow, then, with me only pouring in Shinigami souls, and him only Hollow souls, neither of us completed the fundamental structure of the Hōgyoku."

"Only by simultaneously possessing both Shinigami and Hollow—two completely opposite existences—within the soul can the Hōgyoku be complete, and become the ultimate material that allows Shinigami to Hollowfy and Hollow to Shinigamify."

For this reason, Sōsuke Aizen devised everything.

"In order to obtain the Hōgyoku created by Kisuke Urahara and merge it with the one I created to complete it, I instructed Gin to act in secret with me, framing Shinji Hirako and his group, causing them to trigger Hollowfication."

Shinji Hirako was the former Captain of Division 5, also once the Captain whom Sōsuke Aizen served under, and one of the victims of the Hollowfication experiment.

Hirako's group naturally referred to the Captains and Lieutenants who fell into the Hollowfication experiment more than a hundred years ago.

"Just as I expected, seeing this situation, Kisuke Urahara took action. To save Shinji Hirako and the others who had fallen into the Hollowfication experiment and nearly became Hollows, he had to use the Hōgyoku to strengthen their Shinigami side."

Unfortunately, he was unable to obtain the Hōgyoku on site, and thus could not get the Hōgyoku from Kisuke Urahara's hands, so he had to manipulate Central 46 into sentencing Kisuke Urahara to capital punishment.

But due to Yoruichi Shihōin breaking into the trial chamber and rescuing Kisuke Urahara, Kisuke Urahara disappeared from Soul Society with the Hōgyoku and went to the World of the Living.

"I also once used Shinigami souls to create powerful modified Menos Grande and sent them to attack the stationed Shinigami in the World of the Living, intending to test Shinigami Hollowfication and force Kisuke Urahara and the others to act and reveal their location. But the one who responded instead was Isshin Shiba."

Sōsuke Aizen's words confirmed that he was the main cause behind Isshin Shiba's disappearance.

Perhaps, Isshin Shiba had already died in the World of the Living—who could say.

At that thought, Rangiku Matsumoto and Tōshirō Hitsugaya, once Isshin Shiba's lieutenant and subordinate, both had dim expressions, while Kurosaki Ichigo, who hadn't caught up with the situation, was dumbfounded.

"Isshin?"

That name was far too familiar to him.

His old man was named Isshin Kurosaki.

Was it another person with the same name?

Kurosaki Ichigo blankly thought so.

During this time, Sōsuke Aizen was practically giving a speech, revealing the hidden purpose behind every incident that had occurred recently.

"I thoroughly investigated Kisuke Urahara's past and movements, and ultimately discovered that in order to hide the existence of the Hōgyoku, he had concealed it inside Rukia Kuchiki."

"So, after Rukia Kuchiki was brought back to Soul Society, in order to extract the Hōgyoku inside her, I killed all the members of Central 46, took control from behind the scenes, and deliberately fabricated

Rukia Kuchiki's execution order, planning to use the destructive force of the Sōkyoku to completely evaporate her soul and expose the Hōgyoku inside her."

"Unfortunately, this method met with complications, and I had to investigate Kisuke Urahara's past again, study his research, and find a way to extract foreign objects from a soul."

"Fortunately, this time, I succeeded."

Upon hearing this, Kurosaki Ichigo, who had previously not kept up, immediately reacted intensely.

"What did you do to Rukia...?!"

Kurosaki Ichigo finally realized that something may have happened to Rukia and his companions.

"Her?" Sōsuke Aizen smiled as if unaware of Kurosaki Ichigo's feelings and said, "I don't know, really. Given the urgent situation, I wasn't sure if the medium for extracting foreign objects from a soul would harm the soul itself, so I just tossed her aside."

"Perhaps... she's already lying in a pool of blood like those fugitives who escaped with her—lifeless, who knows."

These words made Kurosaki Ichigo's mind go completely blank.

Lying in a pool of blood...

Lifeless...

...Who?

Those fugitives who escaped with her!

"Snap!"

A string in Kurosaki Ichigo's mind suddenly snapped.

"Aizen!!"

Kurosaki Ichigo lost all reason and let out the most furious roar he had ever made.

"Bankai!"

All the Reiatsu within Kurosaki Ichigo instantly erupted, forming a storm that swept across the entire field.

"What?"

"He said... Bankai?"

"That fugitive actually learned Bankai?"

"Impossible!"

Many cried out in shock.

Indeed, with the help of the special tools developed by Yoruichi Shihōin and Kisuke Urahara, the greatest minds, Kurosaki Ichigo had successfully learned Bankai in just three days.

At this moment, he activated Bankai without hesitation, causing his Reiatsu to soar.

The surging Reiatsu split into two parts: one transformed into a black outer garment with red lining, no longer resembling a kimono but a trench coat-like Shihakushō that he wore; the other condensed into a highly dense black blade with a cross-shaped guard and a short iron chain attached to the hilt.

This was Kurosaki Ichigo's Bankai. Compared to regular Bankai, its transformation was minor, but its power was extraordinary.

The special Shihakushō allowed him to perform ultra-high-speed movement and strikes, and the extremely light, thin, and fine Zanpakutō could release extremely destructive slashes without hindering his movement and strikes—a very outstanding Bankai.

Its name was—Tensa Zangetsu.

"Aizen!!!"

Having released Bankai, Kurosaki Ichigo turned into a blur, charging toward Sōsuke Aizen at incredible speed.

That speed had faintly surpassed even Yoruichi Shihōin, known as the "Flash Goddess."

Of course, Kurosaki Ichigo wasn't the only one whose rage had overtaken him.

"Bankai!"

Renji Abarai also roared in fury and activated Bankai, summoning a skeletal serpent from a storm of Reiatsu that charged at Sōsuke Aizen with a roar, making a stunning display.

"Bankai!"

Next to act was Byakuya Kuchiki.

He stared fixedly at Sōsuke Aizen, his eyes burning with unprecedented rage. His Zanpakutō sank into the ground and transformed into countless massive blades, which then scattered into endless cherry blossoms, surging at Sōsuke Aizen like a tidal wave.

"Bankai!"

"Bankai!"

In the next instant, Sajin Komamura and Tōshirō Hitsugaya both unleashed their Reiatsu and activated Bankai.

"Kokujō Tengen Myō'ō!"

Behind Sajin Komamura appeared a giant black-armored warrior holding a massive long blade, swinging it down hard toward Sōsuke Aizen.

"Daiguren Hyōrinmaru!"

Tōshirō Hitsugaya grew icy wings from his back, ice claws at his feet, and his hand gripping his Zanpakutō was encased in an ice dragon. The dragon's mouth opened to reveal the hand holding the Zanpakutō. The tail also emerged, forming twelve ice flowers on the wings.

A burst of terrifying cold surged forth, transforming into a sky-filling blizzard that struck Sōsuke Aizen.

Then, Kenpachi Zaraki ripped off his eyepatch, unleashing all his hidden Reiatsu and swung his blade at Sōsuke Aizen. Sui-Fēng released her two-hit kill Suzumebachi and charged out with Yoruichi Shihōin.

Shunsui Kyōraku and Jūshirō Ukitake also simultaneously released their Zanpakutō and, with Katen Kyōkotsu and Sōgyo no Kotowari, launched an assault on Sōsuke Aizen.

In an instant, all Captain-level Shinigami present launched attacks on Sōsuke Aizen, the mastermind behind everything, shaking the field with overwhelming Reiatsu and force.

And all of this happened in less than a second, so fast that the Lieutenants hadn't even reacted yet and were blown away by the terrifying pressure and momentum.

A total of ten Captain-level individuals either unleashed Bankai or Shikai, launching the greatest attacks they could muster on short notice—all focusing on Sōsuke Aizen.

Such a terrifying onslaught could not be ignored.

Yet just as this onslaught was unleashed, Kaiser's voice rang out.

"Stop! The one you're attacking isn't Aizen!"

Just as Kaiser's voice echoed, Sōsuke Aizen raised his head.

A strange smile surfaced on his face.