

## Multiverse 219

### Chapter 219: "Kyōka Suigetsu"

The strange smile on Sōsuke Aizen's face—no one could see it.

Not only could they not see that smile, but even Kaiser's shout of "You're not attacking Aizen" went unheard by everyone. They still pressed forward with their attacks, ultimately triggering a large-scale tragedy.

"Boom!"

Renji Abarai's Baboon King Zabimaru fiercely struck Sōsuke Aizen, but what came flying out of the dust and rubble were several Lieutenants, all screaming as they were smashed into distant ruins.

Kenpachi Zaraki swung his sword at Sōsuke Aizen, but only cut through a false illusion. Then, he was surrounded by countless cherry blossoms like a crashing tide, his body bursting with blood as he collapsed.

Sajin Komamura's Kokujō Tengen Myō'ō didn't strike Sōsuke Aizen either, but instead hit Suì-Fēng and Yoruichi Shihōin who had rushed forward. The blizzard released by Tōshirō Hitsugaya froze Shunsui Kyōraku and Jūshirō Ukitake.

Then came Byakuya Kuchiki, Renji Abarai, Sajin Komamura, and Tōshirō Hitsugaya from the rear. The first two were struck by Gin Ichimaru's Shinsō—one was stabbed in the abdomen, the other slashed across the chest with a massive wound. The latter two were pierced by countless blades released by Kaname Tōsen and instantly turned into hedgehogs.

The attacks released by the nine Captain-level Shinigami ultimately fell on their own comrades and failed to inflict any harm on Sōsuke Aizen.

Only Kurosaki Ichigo alone charged straight at Sōsuke Aizen without deviation, unleashing a high-speed slash.

But—

"Ding!"

At the instant the thin black blade was swung, a single finger blocked it.

"Wha..."

Kurosaki Ichigo's eyes widened.

"Almost forgot—you weren't hypnotized." Sōsuke Aizen blocked Ichigo's sword with one hand and, at some unknown point, drew his own Zanpakutō with the other, smiling as he said, "But it doesn't matter. This won't pose much trouble for me."

"After all, ants can only kill an elephant when they swarm together."

"When it's just one ant, it's smaller and weaker than anything else."

As he spoke, Sōsuke Aizen moved his Zanpakutō.

"Zing!"

A flash of the blade flickered through the air, cold as a blade of ice, bright as the light of the moon.

"Splurt!"

Blood instantly burst from Kurosaki Ichigo's waist, spraying out in great volume as he sustained serious injury on the spot.

"———!"

Kurosaki Ichigo's widened eyes slowly narrowed as he collapsed to the ground.

Blood spread beneath him, quickly forming a pool—blinding and gory.

One strike!

With just one strike, Sōsuke Aizen instantly killed Kurosaki Ichigo who had achieved Bankai!

No—within mere seconds of the Captain-level Shinigami launching their coordinated attack, including Kurosaki Ichigo, all of them had been dealt with by Sōsuke Aizen!

And the most bizarre part was that despite so many Lieutenants watching nearby, not a single one saw how the Captain-level Shinigami were defeated.

They only saw the Captains charging toward Sōsuke Aizen, and the next moment, these Captains either inexplicably collapsed or were struck down by their own allies, losing the ability to fight on the spot.

Even Kaiser was no exception.

"So it really ended up like this..."

Though his vision matched that of the others and he too couldn't see the truth, Kaiser seemed to have already predicted this outcome. He clenched the Crown of Heavens in his hand tightly.

Next, Kaiser grasped one of the many Zanpakutō floating around him and suddenly turned.

"Clang!"

A slash, cold and clear like moonlight, fell without warning upon the Zanpakutō he raised, grinding out a burst of sparks.

Sōsuke Aizen's figure silently appeared there, watching Kaiser block the attack. His eyes narrowed slightly behind his black-rimmed glasses.

"As expected, you weren't completely fooled by Kyōka Suigetsu's power."

Sōsuke Aizen spoke with utter certainty.

Kyōka Suigetsu—Sōsuke Aizen's Zanpakutō—had been released once before Kaiser decades ago. At that time, Aizen had claimed its power lay in confusing the enemy through chaotic refractions of mist and water, causing them to turn on each other.

However, that was a lie.

"Your Kyōka Suigetsu is an Illusion-type Zanpakutō. Its true power is Complete Hypnosis."

Kaiser stared coldly at Sōsuke Aizen and spoke.

"Anyone who has seen Kyōka Suigetsu's Shikai, from the moment they witness its release, becomes a prisoner of Kyōka Suigetsu."

"Their five senses are manipulated by Kyōka Suigetsu, making them misinterpret a target's stance, appearance, texture, touch, and even taste. They might see a fly as a dragon, or a swamp as a field of flowers."

"No matter when or where, as long as Kyōka Suigetsu is released, you as its wielder can make those prisoners see, hear, smell, and feel anything you want them to."

"That is the true power of your Zanpakutō."

This was precisely why Kaiser, despite knowing Sōsuke Aizen was the true mastermind, had always selectively ignored him—neither exposing him nor revealing the truth to anyone.

Because all the Captains, Lieutenants, and key figures of the Gotei 13 had, over the past hundred years, each witnessed Kyōka Suigetsu's Shikai at some point, becoming its prisoners.

Even Kaiser had witnessed Sōsuke Aizen deliberately releasing his Zanpakutō during that incident decades ago.

From that moment onward, they had all been prisoners of Kyōka Suigetsu. Whatever they saw, heard, smelled, or felt might have been illusions created through Sōsuke Aizen's Complete Hypnosis.

For more than a decade, the sense of being watched and the sense of dissonance Kaiser had constantly felt was the result of Sōsuke Aizen using Kyōka Suigetsu's power to conceal himself and observe Kaiser's actions.

When Gin Ichimaru and Kaname Tōsen attacked him in the Division 5 barracks, their presence too had gone unnoticed by Kaiser because of Kyōka Suigetsu—or rather, he saw them, but mistook them for something else entirely.

Even the corpse that Kaiser thought he killed—Sōsuke Aizen's—was in fact something else, made to appear as Aizen's body through Kyōka Suigetsu's hypnosis. That was why everyone believed Kaiser had killed Sōsuke Aizen.

The Captain-level Shinigami thought they were attacking Aizen, but their five senses had long since been confused by Kyōka Suigetsu, and what they struck was not Aizen, but their comrades.

Only Kurosaki Ichigo—a teenager who had lived in the World of the Living until now and was entering the Soul Society, Seireitei, and seeing Aizen for the first time—had never seen Kyōka Suigetsu's Shikai.

Thus, he was the only one not hypnotized, able to locate and attack the real Sōsuke Aizen.

Unfortunately, against Aizen, who had reached the limits of a Shinigami over a hundred years ago and whose abilities in every regard far surpassed those of regular Captains, Kurosaki Ichigo, this self-taught Shinigami, was still far too weak.

Even though he had now achieved Bankai and possessed Captain-level power, in front of Aizen, he couldn't withstand even a single move.

And when Kaiser revealed the true ability of his Zanpakutō to Aizen's face, Sōsuke Aizen showed no surprise at all.

After all, Kaiser had already demonstrated multiple times that even under Kyōka Suigetsu's hypnosis, he wouldn't simply bow his head and wait for death like the others.

Though he still didn't know why Kaiser understood him so well, Sōsuke Aizen never placed hope in others to solve his mysteries.

He would find the answers in his own way. Only the truths he uncovered himself were real. What others said could never be trusted.

For example—

"If I'm not mistaken, you didn't break through Kyōka Suigetsu's Complete Hypnosis. You're just relying on something beyond the five senses to evade its illusions, right?"

Sōsuke Aizen smiled leisurely.

"You've partially sealed off your five senses, discarded the information they convey to you, and fight by relying on a vague sixth sense or something akin to instinct."

As he spoke, the smile on Sōsuke Aizen's face once again turned eerie.

"I must admit, this method is indeed impressive. It's the first time I've seen someone escape Kyōka Suigetsu's Complete Hypnosis in such a way."

"But that doesn't mean you're unaffected by Kyōka Suigetsu. You're merely using that intangible sixth sense or instinct to respond to external attacks and immerse yourself in battle."

"In other words, while you don't ignore attacks and can still determine where to strike to hit your enemy, you don't know who is attacking you—nor do you know who you're hitting."

At this point, Sōsuke Aizen's voice and appearance transformed into another person.

"Am I right, Captain Kaiser?"

Gin Ichimaru smiled at Kaiser like a venomous snake, and Kaiser's pupils suddenly shrank.

"Clang!"

At that very moment, a slash struck from behind, hitting the Zanpakutō circling around Kaiser.

"Boom!"

Kaiser swung the Crown of Heavens backward, unleashing an explosive force that shattered the area behind him.

"Cricket 2nd Movement: Crimson Flying Locusts!"

Kaname Tōsen appeared midair, waving Bell Bug and releasing countless blades that fell like a torrential rain upon Kaiser. But just like the previous slash, they only clashed with the Zanpakutō circling around him, producing a storm of metallic clashes—none could touch him.

"Shoot to kill—Shinsō!"

Gin Ichimaru also released his Zanpakutō, the blade bursting out like light toward Kaiser. But again, the swords around Kaiser blocked it.

Kaiser sharply realized that what he was seeing and what was actually hitting him didn't match.

Kaname Tōsen's storm of blades hadn't struck the blades above his head, but those at his sides. Gin Ichimaru's Shinsō, which seemed to come from the front, had actually hit a blade behind him, sending sparks flying.

So, he ignored the visuals, shut his eyes, completely sealed his five senses, and poured his entire mind and soul into the Crown of Heavens. As the golden patterns on his body pulsed, his body moved instinctively.

"Clang!"

With his eyes closed, Kaiser charged forward and slashed at a large rock, striking it with a crisp clang.

"Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang...!"

Kaiser relentlessly attacked the rock. The Crown of Heavens unleashed countless slashes—rapid, heavy, and forceful. Each slash carried immense power, almost enough to shatter the ground—yet the rock did not break. It was as if he were clashing with an invisible blade, the sound of battle constant.

"Boom!"

The ground beneath the rock eventually collapsed under the overwhelming force.

Sōsuke Aizen's figure darted out, retreating while speaking with a hint of awe.

"So this is your Zanpakutō's power?"

"It's indeed powerful. It was necessary for me to investigate your methods earlier. Unfortunately, you've been cautious from the start—I learned nothing."

"Thankfully, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto forced you to use your Shikai. Otherwise, I really might've been caught off guard."

Sōsuke Aizen's words didn't reach Kaiser at all.

Having completely sealed his five senses, he now fought solely by the instinct of wielding a weapon. He could hear nothing from the outside world—nor see any of it.

Kaiser continued charging blindly at Sōsuke Aizen.

In response, Sōsuke Aizen's voice began chanting in a low tone.

"Hadō #90: Kurohitsugi."

As the chant sounded, deep darkness emerged around Kaiser.

The darkness transformed into pitch-black walls of light, rising from all four directions—front, back, left, and right—connecting to form a massive black coffin that sealed Kaiser inside.

The next moment, countless shadow blades erupted within the coffin, becoming omnipresent slashes aimed at Kaiser.

"Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang...!"

Fierce metallic clashes erupted once more from the swords circling around Kaiser, sending a shower of sparks flying.

The omnipresent slashes were blocked by the Zanpakutō protecting every corner of Kaiser's body, completely unable to breach the Blade Array Matrix.

"Bang!"

With a single slash, Kaiser shattered the Kurohitsugi, the incredible power gathered in the Crown of Heavens reducing it to fragments.

"...Even though the uncharmed version of Kurohitsugi only has a third of its full power, for you to break through Hadō #90 so easily—your Zanpakutō's power really is outrageous, Captain Kaiser."

Sōsuke Aizen, having retreated a safe distance, finally lost his smile.

Even he—could now do nothing against Kaiser...