

Multiverse 227

Chapter 227: “Arrancar”

Soul Society, Seireitei.

Inside the Division 3 barracks, in the Captain’s office, a figure suddenly appeared before Kaiser.

"Captain Kaiser! Emergency dispatch order!"

The person knelt on one knee before Kaiser and delivered this line with an urgent tone.

"Messenger from the Fifth Sub-division of the Onmitsukidō, the Internal Affairs Division?"

Kaiser, seated at his desk and still holding a report, wasn’t surprised at all by this person’s arrival.

The other party moved swiftly and entered without a sound. Even Momo Hinamori outside the door hadn’t noticed his presence. His concealment skills were clearly impressive—one glance and it was obvious he was from the Onmitsukidō.

But with Kaiser’s Reiatsu sensing ability, he had already sensed the other’s Reiatsu the moment they approached.

"Speak. What happened?"

Kaiser set the report down and asked aloud.

The Internal Affairs Division of the Fifth Sub-division of the Onmitsukidō was the message delivery unit, responsible for communicating urgent situations to members of each Division. Their delivery speed surpassed even that of the Hell Butterflies.

His arrival could only mean one thing: something major had occurred.

"This is a report from the Shinigami Research and Development Institute."

The messenger immediately relayed the situation.

"Fifteen minutes ago, the Radio Wave Measurement Research Division of the Institute detected abnormal Reiatu activity in the World of the Living—specifically in Karakura Town."

"At the same time, the Shinigami stationed there came into contact with the intruders and suffered large-scale casualties."

"Upon verification, the enemies were confirmed to be individuals calling themselves 'Arrancar,' originating from Hueco Mundo. Their suspected objective is reconnaissance of the Concentrated Spirit Zone, Karakura Town—and possibly targeting the substitute Shinigami, Ichigo Kurosaki."

Hearing this, Kaiser narrowed his eyes.

"So that guy Aizen is finally making his move?"

The Soul Society's side had fallen one step behind. Before they could launch their offensive against Hueco Mundo, they were preempted by the enemy's operation against the Concentrated Spirit Zone.

Sōsuke Aizen—his ability to read the situation and seize the timing was indeed formidable, acting just before the Soul Society could initiate their large-scale mobilization.

Just yesterday, Retsu Unohana had informed all Divisions that in two days, all Captains and Lieutenants undergoing medical evaluation would make a full recovery.

Yet today, Sōsuke Aizen had begun his operation, one day ahead of the Soul Society. To call this a coincidence would be unconvincing.

"Captain!"

Momo Hinamori walked in from outside, her expression stern, with a Zanpakutō fastened at her waist.

After Tōshirō Hitsugaya officially assumed the position of Captain of Division 10, Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto issued a directive allowing all Shinigami of every Division to carry their Zanpakutō and be on standby at all times.

Following behind Momo Hinamori, also wearing his Zanpakutō, was Chōjirō Sasakibe.

"Captain Kaiser," Chōjirō Sasakibe said seriously, "The Captain Commander has issued orders: the Concentrated Spirit Zone must not be lost. He hopes Captain Kaiser can personally head to the World of the Living and resolve the matter."

Kaiser nodded, equally unsurprised by the order.

With the Captains and Lieutenants still requiring one more day of hospitalization, the number of Captains who could freely deploy from the Gotei 13 was limited. Assigning this mission to him was perfectly natural.

Of course, Kaiser's own strength was more than enough to reassure Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto. With the Concentrated Spirit Zone being of utmost importance, the Captain Commander didn't hesitate to deploy his trump card.

"Prepare the Senkaimon. I'll depart immediately."

Fully equipped, Kaiser walked directly toward the exit.

"Yes, sir!"

Chōjirō Sasakibe also promptly left.

"Captain! I..."

Momo Hinamori quickly followed Kaiser, her eyes showing a hint of expectation.

Kaiser naturally knew what Momo Hinamori meant.

"Want to come?" Kaiser thought for a moment, then finally nodded. "Then come along."

Momo Hinamori immediately revealed a beaming smile.

"Yes!"

...

This was Kaiser's second time passing through the Senkaimon to the World of the Living.

The last time was decades ago, when Kaiser was still a student at the Shin'ō Academy.

Back then, the Senkaimon used was temporary, in the form of a traditional Japanese sliding door.

But this time, Kaiser used a grand mountain-gate style Senkaimon, with two towering square wooden pillars standing at the entrance. It was immensely imposing.

This was the largest and most formal Senkaimon in Soul Society. It was typically used when Shinigami were dispatched to perform missions in the World of the Living. Only under special circumstances would temporary Senkaimon be used—like when Kaiser participated in training during his time at the Shin'ō Academy.

Normally, Noble Clans had their own exclusive Senkaimon, but those were facilities under special privilege. The Senkaimon most frequently used by Shinigami was this tall structure—even Ichigo Kurosaki and the others used it when returning to the World of the Living.

Kaiser and Momo Hinamori arrived together and passed through the Senkaimon immediately.

"Zheng!"

As they passed through, a burst of spiritual light fell upon them, forming a golden calendula-shaped seal at their collarbones.

At the moment the seal was formed, both Kaiser and Momo Hinamori felt a tremendous restriction imposed on their Reiatsu.

"So this is the Reiatsu Limiter Seal?"

Kaiser looked at the calendula-shaped mark on his collarbone.

As the name implies, the Reiatsu Limiter Seal was a seal that suppressed spiritual pressure.

Because the Reiatsu of Captain and Lieutenant-class Shinigami was far too overwhelming, with vast disparity compared to ordinary beings, they were generally forbidden from releasing their full Reiatsu in the World of the Living.

When the gap in Reiatsu was too large, spirit bodies could collapse outright. For ordinary people, a Captain or Lieutenant's Reiatsu was a life-threatening catastrophe.

Therefore, whenever a Captain or Lieutenant of the Gotei 13 had to go to the World of the Living on a mission, the Senkaimon would automatically apply a Limiter Seal marked with their Division's insignia, drastically suppressing their Reiatsu.

The limitation was extreme—up to 80%.

In other words, while operating in the World of the Living, a Captain or Lieutenant could only use one-fifth of their normal power.

This seal was extremely powerful. Even Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto himself could not break it.

Kaiser tested it and confirmed that he too couldn't forcibly break the Reitsu Limiter Seal.

However, if he used Divine Dividing's ability, he could weaken and eventually shatter the limiter.

He could also use Ser-Veresta—its power was enough to burn away the limiter and render it invalid.

Furthermore, if he activated the Balance Breaker of True Longinus and unleashed its sacred power, that should also erase the limiter.

In short, while the Reitsu Limiter Seal did affect Kaiser, it wasn't by much.

"How are you feeling? Can you manage?"

While running through the Dangai, Kaiser asked Momo Hinamori beside him.

"It's manageable. Although I can only use one-fifth of my Reitsu, I should still be able to handle enemies at Seated Officer level."

Momo Hinamori followed closely behind Kaiser and responded truthfully.

"That's not enough."

Kaiser shook his head.

He knew what an Arrancar was, and he knew how powerful one had to be to become an Arrancar.

With Momo Hinamori's strength, she could handle an ordinary Arrancar—as long as she could fight at full power.

Only being able to use one-fifth of her strength—that really would impact her capabilities.

"Send a message to Soul Society using a Hell Butterfly." Kaiser made a prompt decision. "I can manage. In a densely populated place like Karakura Town, it's true that I shouldn't release my full Reitsu. But if you can't fight at full strength, the consequences will be worse than the damage to the World of the Living."

"Have them prepare authorization for limiter release. If the situation demands it, break the seal."

After all, the limiter was imposed by Soul Society. As long as they gave permission, it could be removed at any time.

"Understood."

Momo Hinamori didn't try to act tough. She summoned a Hell Butterfly and transmitted the message to Soul Society.

She didn't want to be a burden to Kaiser.

So she refused to allow herself to be in a situation where she couldn't fight at full strength.

...

World of the Living, Karakura Town.

As the doors of the Senkaimon opened silently in mid-air, Kaiser and Momo Hinamori leapt out together.

The moment they arrived in Karakura Town, even Momo Hinamori's expression changed as she suddenly turned her head and looked in a certain direction.

"What strong Reiatsu!"

Reiatsu far too powerful to exist in the World of the Living—several such auras were present in the direction she was staring.

"That's... Ichigo Kurosaki's Reiatsu?"

Kaiser naturally sensed the Reiatsu as well—and identified one of them as Ichigo Kurosaki's.

Without hesitation, Kaiser activated Shunpo and vanished from where he stood.

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

With just a few flickers of movement, Kaiser crossed a distance measured in kilometers and arrived at the scene.

When he arrived, he immediately saw Ichigo Kurosaki.

"Huff... huff..."

Ichigo Kurosaki gripped his sword with both hands, seemingly in pain, as he faced off against a burly man.

He had already activated his Bankai, and his entire Reiatsu had turned black, swirling like a storm across the ground.

However, for some reason, Ichigo Kurosaki's Reiatsu was erratic and unstable. This made him both pained and unable to use his full strength, allowing the burly man to suppress him completely.

"What's wrong? Weren't you acting all arrogant just a moment ago?"

The burly man attacked Ichigo Kurosaki while laughing wildly.

"So that's the legendary Bankai? I thought it'd be something impressive! What a disappointment!"

Amidst his laughter, the burly man smashed his fists against Ichigo Kurosaki's sword, the impact like a meteor strike, sending Ichigo Kurosaki flying.

"Boom!"

Ichigo Kurosaki crashed into a building and shattered it on the spot.

"This isn't looking good..."

Kaiser narrowed his eyes, but didn't go down to support Ichigo Kurosaki.

Because, before him, another person appeared.

"Another one looking to die?"

With hands in his pockets and a wild, arrogant expression, the man grinned wickedly at Kaiser.

"Tell me, Shinigami."

The man spoke.

"How do you want to die?"