

## Multiverse 230

Chapter 230: You Think You Can Escape?

"Yammy..."

In the sky, Grimmjow, bleeding profusely, lowered his head with difficulty and looked at the explosion below, clenching his teeth hard.

"That idiot is still as oblivious as ever, getting distracted during a fight—he deserved to be killed!"

Grimmjow seemed completely unconcerned about Yammy's life or death. After glancing at the explosion on the ground, he turned his furious gaze toward Kaiser.

"Don't look at me like that, and don't mock your comrade. After all, you're birds of a feather."

Kaiser walked forward with his sword, as if descending an invisible staircase, one step at a time until he stood face-to-face with Grimmjow.

"If you had been more serious, you wouldn't have ended up like this so quickly. At the very least, you could've stalled longer and tangled with me a bit more."

"But from the very beginning, you regarded me as no different than that substitute Shinigami over there. You even scoffed at Aizen's warning, thinking I was all name and no substance."

"Your arrogance hurt you. Your underestimation of me also hurt you. It made you unable to properly assess the situation, and that's what led to your downfall."

Otherwise, with Grimmjow being the Sexta Espada, he shouldn't have lost so quickly.

Even before becoming an Arrancar, he was among the elite of the Adjuchas, possessing strength on par with a Captain-level Shinigami. After becoming an Arrancar, his power should've been indisputably top-tier even among Captains.

In the original story, Ichigo Kurosaki in Bankai couldn't even defeat Grimmjow. That's proof enough.

At that time, Ichigo Kurosaki wasn't like he is now, with internal problems—he was genuinely at Captain level.

And Grimmjow?

He hadn't even released his Zanpakutō, barely even drew his blade, yet still defeated Ichigo Kurosaki in Bankai. This shows Grimmjow's strength was indeed extraordinary.

If Kaiser hadn't possessed overwhelming physical strength, highly refined Shunpo techniques, and masterful swordsmanship, fighting with only one-fifth of his Reiatsu, he might not have been able to win.

But unfortunately, there are no "ifs" in this world. Kaiser's Reiatsu may have been sealed, but his physical strength and movement skills were unaffected—more than enough to handle a Sexta Espada who underestimated him.

Of course, Grimmjow was already too furious to listen to any of this.

"So what if you landed one hit? You think that means you've won?!"

Letting the blood flow from his chest, Grimmjow gripped his Zanpakutō tightly and, like a frenzied beast, charged at Kaiser.

"Don't look down on me!"

Facing Grimmjow's fierce assault, Kaiser remained remarkably calm.

"Bakudō #61: Rikujōkōrō."

He extended a finger, pointed at Grimmjow, and instantly cast a high-level Bakudō. Six rods of light flew from all directions and locked around Grimmjow's waist like shackles.

"What?!"

Grimmjow was forced to a halt. Looking down at the restraints around his waist, his expression shifted.

Then he saw Kaiser's finger turn into an open palm, aimed straight at him.

From that palm, an immense surge of spiritual energy began to gather.

"Damn—?!"

Grimmjow realized the danger too late.

There was no time left to react.

"Hadō #88: Hiryū Gekizoku Shinten Raihō."

The massive spiritual energy in Kaiser's palm instantly transformed into a gigantic beam of light and blasted forth.

That beam was as thick as a pillar, dazzling like lightning, deadly like a laser, and similar to the Cero that Grimmjow had fired earlier. Even before it touched him, Grimmjow could already feel its terrifying power.

Hadō #88—one of the highest-tier offensive Kidō, second only to forbidden spells. Among Kidō under #90, it was top-tier in power, on par with a Hollow's Cero, if not stronger.

Even without the incantation—at less than half the full power—it was still a serious threat to Grimmjow.

This strike—there was no way to dodge it.

"Thud!"

At the critical moment, a slender figure appeared via Sonído, piercing space with a strange sound, and arrived in front of Grimmjow.

"Boom!"

He swung his arm forcefully—like a steel wall—and struck the massive beam, deflecting the Hiryū Gekizoku Shinten Raihō with a loud, dull impact.

The thick beam shot skyward, piercing the clouds above and dispersing them completely.

The newcomer kept one hand in his pocket while the other maintained the pose of deflecting the Kidō. For a brief moment, his eyes turned toward his arm.

"Sss..."

With a sizzling sound, the back of that hand was thoroughly scorched, black smoke rising from it.

"Impressive attack."

The man expressionlessly gave his assessment.

"As expected from the person Aizen-sama specially warned us to be wary of—Captain of Division 3, Kaiser."

Upon hearing this, Kaiser showed not a hint of pride or joy.

He simply stared calmly at the cold-faced man, sighing silently in his heart.

"So even he came, huh?"

It wasn't just Kaiser. On the ground, Momo Hinamori and Ichigo Kurosaki, who had just completed their coordinated strike against Yammy, also saw the man.

"Who... who is he?"

Momo Hinamori found her voice trembling uncontrollably.

"What... is this Reitsu...?"

Ichigo Kurosaki seemed as if he had been hit by something shocking. His entire body trembled, and he gasped heavily, chest heaving.

No one could blame them.

Even though the man hadn't released any Reitsu, anyone with even a modest sense for spiritual pressure could clearly feel—it was dangerous. Extremely dangerous.

Kaiser instinctively glanced at the "4" marked on the man's body.

"Cuarta Espada..."

That muttered phrase seemed to reach the man's ears.

"Ulquiorra Cifer."

The man calmly reported his name.

He was Cuarta Espada—the highest-ranked Arrancar to come to the World of the Living this time.

Although he was only ranked fourth, just two above Grimmjow, everyone present—Kaiser, Momo Hinamori, and Ichigo Kurosaki—could tell that this man who called himself Ulquiorra was on an entirely different level.

This gap wasn't just in strength—it was in Hollow classification.

"The legendary top-class Menos Grande, stronger than even Captain-level Shinigami... Vasto Lorde."

Kaiser smiled faintly and said those words.

"Today, I finally get to see one."

Upon hearing this, Ichigo Kurosaki—who didn't know much about Hollow classification—had little reaction, but Momo Hinamori was shocked.

"He's a Vasto Lorde? A top-class Menos Grande?!"

Momo Hinamori's gaze toward Ulquiorra carried unmistakable fear.

The rumors said that even in Hueco Mundo, Vasto Lordes were extremely rare. Just ten of them could destroy all of Soul Society...

And this man in front of them was one?

Her hand gripping her Zanpakutō began to tremble.

Ulquiorra, however, ignored all this. He merely glanced at Grimmjow behind him.

"You were too careless, Grimmjow," Ulquiorra said coldly. "Even though Aizen-sama gave clear instructions, you still underestimated him despite knowing who he was. That's disgraceful."

Grimmjow showed no gratitude for being saved. Instead, his expression darkened.

"Bang!"

He broke free from the Rikujōkōrō binding himself, causing blood to spurt anew from his chest.

"Shut up, Ulquiorra!" Grimmjow swatted away the light shards of the Bakudō and snarled. "I was just about to finish him off. I didn't need you interfering!"

Ulquiorra mercilessly replied:

"Impossible. You can't beat him."

The blunt statement made Grimmjow whip his head around and glare at Ulquiorra.

"You looking down on me?!"

Grimmjow radiated the aura of a beast ready to devour.

"Just stating facts." Ulquiorra remained indifferent, pointing at Kaiser. "See the mark on his chest?"

"That's called a Reiatsu Limiter—used to suppress the spiritual pressure of Captains and Lieutenants of the Gotei 13."

"With that on, he can only use one-fifth of his full power."

Hearing that, Grimmjow's entire body trembled.

"One-fifth?" Grimmjow said in disbelief. "You're saying he's never even gone all-out this whole time?!"

"That's right," Ulquiorra said flatly. "If the limiter is removed, his Reiatsu will be five times what it is now."

"You can't even defeat him like this—don't even think about defeating him at full power."

"Besides, you haven't released your Resurrección, and he hasn't even used Shikai or Bankai."

"So, with your level, there's no way you can beat him."

Ulquiorra's cruel words stabbed straight through Grimmjow's heart like blades.

His arrogance, his disdain—at this moment, they made him look like a pathetic clown. His face twisted.

Ulquiorra left Grimmjow behind and disappeared for an instant in Sonído—only to reappear holding the wounded Yammy.

"So fast...!"

Momo Hinamori and Ichigo Kurosaki both froze in shock.

They hadn't even seen Ulquiorra's movement, let alone realized Yammy had been taken.

"It's time to return."

Ulquiorra remained as aloof as ever, his tone icy.

"As per Aizen-sama's orders: if we encounter Kaiser, we are permitted to withdraw unconditionally."

As he spoke, Ulquiorra pointed, tearing open space.

A Garganta opened, and Ulquiorra stepped into it with Yammy, not giving Grimmjow any chance to protest.

"W-Wait..."

Ichigo Kurosaki instinctively tried to stop them.

But Kaiser moved faster than him.

"You think you can escape?"