

Multiverse 234

Chapter 234: The White Light That Pierces the Darkness

"Wmmm..."

That was the sound of the entire Hueco Mundo brimming with activity, as Reishi surged when the radiant white light illuminated the world.

That sound resembled cheering, yet also resembled praise—like a salute, or a reverent worship—as if welcoming, as if adoring, as the light resembling the Morning Star slowly descended from the heavens, falling toward Las Noches.

The white light spread outward from it, slicing through all the darkness of Hueco Mundo, causing everyone who looked up to the sky to fix their gaze upon it.

Including Sōsuke Aizen, Gin Ichimaru, and Kaname Tōsen.

"What is that?"

It was a natural question to arise.

A reflexive shock.

But when the figure within the white light suddenly unfurled its translucent wings of light, appearing as if born from the radiance, all of their confusion and astonishment was instantly replaced by another emotion.

That emotion was called awe.

"Zing!"

Brilliant wings of light shone radiantly, causing the figure against the dark sky to glow resplendently, without a trace of shadow.

Not a speck of dullness could be found on the flawless white armor; the entire body was adorned with sapphire-like gems, radiating such a holy brilliance that all who gazed upon him either felt ashamed by comparison or were moved to tears.

Was this what one called beauty?

Was this what one called immaculate?

Holy, dazzling, magnificent, glorious... Every word of praise that could exist in the world seemed applicable to him in this moment.

Tremble...

The body could not stop trembling.

At least, Gin Ichimaru and Kaname Tōsen were like that—like they'd been struck by something immense, terrifying, yet too beautiful to comprehend, causing their souls to be seized, their bodies unable to move.

Even Sōsuke Aizen found himself deeply captivated by the white figure glowing with mysterious light.

But he did not lose himself to it. Rather, an increasingly thick sense of foreboding welled up inside him.

"Thump!" "Thump!" "Thump!" "Thump!" "Thump!"...

Then, amidst a series of spatial distortions, one figure after another arrived beside Aizen, Gin, and Tōsen, carried by Sonído.

"Lord Aizen!"

"Lord Aizen!"

"What is that?"

"Are you alright, Lord Aizen?!"

Some of them immediately gathered around Aizen, others turned their gaze to the white figure in the sky, expressions stunned or shaken.

Each of them bore a number engraved upon their bodies—revealing their identities.

Bearing the number "1", the Primera Espada, Coyote Starrk.

Bearing the number "2", the Segunda Espada, Baraggan Louisenbairn.

Bearing the number "3", the Tercera Espada, Tier Harribel.

Bearing the number "5", the Quinta Espada, Nnoitra Gilga.

Bearing the number "7", the Séptima Espada, Zommari Rureaux.

Bearing the number "8", the Octava Espada, Szayelaporro Granz.

Bearing the number "9", the Novena Espada, Aaroniero Arruruerie.

Aside from Ulquiorra, Grimmjow, and Yammy, the rest of the Espada had all gathered.

"Is that a Hollow?"

Starrk, who had the appearance of a middle-aged man and was accompanied by a little girl, stared at the white figure in the sky and muttered uncertainly.

"He actually... did that to my Las Noches..."

The massive, elderly-looking Baraggan, whose head was adorned with a crown-like crest, looked furious.

"I don't sense any Reiatrics... what is going on?"

Tier Harribel, with her tanned skin, emerald eyes, generous chest, and golden hair braided into three long plaits, frowned with concern.

"Truly... beautiful."

Zommari, a tall and muscular man with thick lips and golden eyes, resembling a black man, trembled slightly, seemingly moved by the holiness of that white figure.

"Did that thing attack Las Noches?"

Dressed in a full-body white cloak, white gloves, and a long vertical slit mask on his head, Aaroniero spoke with a voice that seemed to come from two people—clearly two distinct tones.

"No Reiatrics, not even Reiryoku—are we sure that's a living being? Could it be some kind of machine?"

Szayelaporro, with glasses-shaped mask fragments, short pink hair, golden eyes, and the appearance of a scientist, pushed his glasses and looked up with curiosity at the white figure.

"Tch, that high-and-mighty posture is disgusting."

Nnoitra, with a circular collar, tall and lanky frame, single eyepatch, black middle-parted medium hair, and wielding a scythe composed of two crescent blades joined with a chain to his waist, clicked his tongue in displeasure.

"Hey!"

Nnoitra took a step forward and shouted up at the white figure in the sky with murderous intent.

"I'll give you one chance—get down from there and..."

He never got to finish the word "now."

Because, the moment he stepped forward and issued his threat, the immaculate white dragon in the sky immediately dashed forward with a streak of light, appearing behind Nnoitra at unbelievable speed and grabbing one of his arms.

"Rip!"

The sound of flesh being torn rang out, and blood sprayed gloriously into the air.

The immaculate white dragon forcibly tore off Nnoitra's arm, causing blood to gush from the stump.

"AAAAAAHHHHH...!"

Nnoitra screamed in agony, clutching his severed arm, stumbling back as blood spilled everywhere.

"!!!!!!"

Everyone present instantly had their pupils contract and their expressions change drastically, hurriedly retreating from the white figure that had suddenly appeared at their side.

"My hand...!"

Nnoitra howled in pain, bordering on hysteria.

"You... you dare rip off my hand!"

He was on the verge of going berserk.

The rest of them looked on, faces shifting again and again—either in astonishment or in alarm at the white figure before them.

"So fast..."

"That wasn't a Hollow's Sonído, nor a Shinigami's Shunpo—it was pure speed!"

"I... I couldn't see a thing..."

Some of the Espada had grim expressions, others broke into cold sweat.

Every Arrancar present was one of the top beings in Hueco Mundo. Each had been a Menos Grande before, and aside from one exception, all were previously either Adjuchas or Vasto Lorde-class. After becoming Arrancar, their strength was easily at or above Captain-level—they were no small fry.

They were a force strong enough to wage war against all of Soul Society—a group so strong that even the entire Gotei 13 might not be able to defeat them without risk of loss.

Yet none of them had been able to react in time to the white figure. By the time it tore off Nnoitra's arm, they had only just realized it had appeared—how could they not be shaken or wary?

Even Aizen, Gin, and Tōsen each showed a different reaction.

"...This is getting a bit troublesome."

Gin's smile vanished from his face.

"How could this be..."

Tōsen reflexively gripped the hilt of his Zanpakutō, posture fully alert.

"..."

Even the expression Sōsuke Aizen wore—that ever-confident, in-control look—had disappeared. In its place was a deep and penetrating gaze, fixed on the immaculate figure, as if trying to see through it.

In this atmosphere, the figure finally spoke.

"The price for speaking rudely... is this. You must pay something, to understand what sort of attitude is appropriate when facing an unfamiliar power."

A distorted voice echoed from within the dragon-shaped helm.

Though distorted, all the Arrancar could hear the mocking undertone.

"Besides, you're a mantis. You've got plenty of arms. Losing one isn't a big deal, is it?"

Hearing this, Nnoitra lost all reason.

"Die!"

Driven by rage, Nnoitra raised his massive scythe and charged at the white figure.

"Stop!"

"Be careful!"

Starrk and Harribel both cried out in shock, trying to stop Nnoitra.

But the white figure moved faster than they did.

"Divide!"

Accompanied by a heavy voice emitted from the blue jewel, the white figure extended one hand toward Nnoitra, releasing a ripple of dragonic power.

In that instant, Nnoitra's charging speed sharply dropped, and even his Reiatsu and aura were halved.

"Divide!" "Divide!" "Divide!"...

As the voice echoed again and again, Nnoitra's Reiatsu, aura, and speed were repeatedly halved, until they weakened below that of an average Hollow—only then did it stop.

"W-what?"

Nnoitra's eyes widened in disbelief.

The others, even Sōsuke Aizen, all changed expression.

The white figure finally began to rise slowly.

"My name is Albion."

A voice rang out across the entire area.

"My Sacred Gear—Divine Dividing—its power is to halve the strength of any being I come into contact with and turn it into nourishment for myself."

Those words caused the Arrancar to change expressions once more.

"Halve their power?"

"W-what the hell?!"

"What's a Sacred Gear?!"

The Espada exclaimed in confusion, visibly rattled.

The white figure clad in the White Dragon Emperor's Armor—Kaiser—looked at the scene and smiled faintly.

"If you want to defeat me, you'd best hurry."

"Otherwise, I'll just keep growing stronger... while you keep getting weaker."

"Until... you can't even defeat a human."