

Multiverse 262

Chapter 262: The Transformed Zanpakutō

"Boom!!!"

Blazing flames suddenly erupted within the underground temple, igniting a blaze powerful enough to fill the entire sanctuary.

As soon as Kaiser's calm declaration fell, the flames burst forth centered on him, drowning out both Melqart's rebuttal and Erica's cry.

The flames originated from Ryūjin Jakka—the fire that could reduce all things to ashes.

Without even drawing Ryūjin Jakka itself, Kaiser merely borrowed a portion of its power, and flames on par with those unleashed when Yamamoto Genryūsai Shigekuni released Ryūjin Jakka engulfed the entire underground temple.

Had it been the past, Kaiser truly wouldn't have been able to release such a massive blaze by using just a portion of Ryūjin Jakka's power without actually drawing the sword.

But now, after slaying gods twice and becoming a Campione, his power had greatly increased, and Ryūjin Jakka, as his exclusive weapon, had grown stronger with him. Driven by Kaiser's magical power—which far exceeded that of an ordinary Campione—even a fragment of its power could rival Ryūjin Jakka's full release from before.

Thus, crimson flames spread with astonishing speed, burning through the locusts until none remained.

From Erica's point of view, she only saw a sudden flush of red before the air's temperature surged to an unimaginable degree. When her vision cleared, the densely packed, endless swarm of locusts had been reduced to ash in the fire and vanished without a trace.

"What?"

Melqart's rock-like, stern face shifted slightly.

Those locusts were not ordinary insects, but a manifestation of his destructive god aspect—the swarm of death.

Numbering in the hundreds of thousands, these locusts could devour not just crops but even iron and concrete within seconds.

If such a swarm were unleashed upon a major city—or even an entire nation—then in just one night, the city or country would be reduced to ruins, to a barren wasteland.

This was a product born of true divine Authority. Not even magma could guarantee the death of a few among them, let alone mere flames.

Yet, the flames released by this Campione before him had effortlessly incinerated a swarm capable of erasing a major metropolis—or even a nation?

Melqart gave Kaiser a deep look, then shouted aloud.

"Yagrush, Aymur, Bal riding the clouds, I summon you!"

This was a sacred phrase imbued with power—a Kotodama.

At Melqart's call, thunder and lightning suddenly roared in the sky above the underground temple.

A violent storm rose, howling across the earth.

Thunderclouds rolled, rumbling above.

Then, a staff emerged from the stormy void, and another staff appeared from the lightning-filled clouds.

The two staves differed in appearance but were equally ancient and massive—one wreathed in swirling wind, the other flashing with electric light. Both arrived at Melqart's side.

"Those are... Yagrush and Aymur!"

Erica, snapping back to her senses, cried out at the sight.

Yagrush and Aymur—these were a pair of magical staves.

They were divine tools forged by the god of craftsmen, Kothar-wa-Khasis, imbued with his divinity, and also symbolized Melqart, the god of the sky.

The former represented wind, the latter lightning—the power of wind and thunder, which were the Authorities of a sky deity.

"I'm not yet in condition to fight. Let them be your opponents."

Melqart remained seated cross-legged on the altar like a true statue, unmoving as he began chanting Kotodama in a bold and heroic voice.

"Aymur and Yagrush! Speed forth, fly swiftly, and sweep away all!"

The two giant staves immediately flew toward Kaiser—one carried the storm that swept the underground temple, the other expanded amidst thunder and lightning, as if given life, needing no controller. They split into two paths and charged Kaiser from different directions.

It all happened in an instant. From their appearance to their imposing assault on Kaiser, no more than two seconds had passed.

And the time it took them to cross the distance from Melqart to Kaiser wasn't even a full second.

Truly as swift as lightning; onlookers couldn't even see Yagrush and Aymur's movements, let alone react.

Of course, "onlookers" didn't include Kaiser.

"Buzz..."

Just as Yagrush and Aymur were about to strike him, the air around Kaiser changed.

He, who had just released intense flames, now exuded a terrifying chill, spreading white mist through the underground temple.

"Crack crack crack—"

Wherever the white mist passed, everything froze, turning into gleaming ice and snow.

The ground froze, the walls froze, the ceiling froze—even the spring that flowed froze.

In the blink of an eye, the entire underground temple became a frozen world, transformed into an icy cave. Ice pillars sprang from the ground, and icicles emerged from the ceiling.

The searing heat that had filled the temple was instantly replaced by bone-chilling cold. This extreme shift—the rapid switch from fire to ice—caused cracks to appear throughout the temple, which now teetered on collapse.

Melqart's statue-like body was also assaulted by the ice and snow. Though he unleashed tremendous magical power at the last moment to avoid being completely frozen, the frost still marked him—ice shards and snowflakes covered his entire body, making him look as if he stood amidst a blizzard, transformed into a snowman.

Erica too was caught in the icy assault, but because Kaiser was beside her, she was specially protected and completely unharmed.

As for the wind-wreathed Yagrush and the lightning-crackling Aymur, both had already become two frozen sculptures at Kaiser's side.

"Infused with the craftsman's divinity and bearing the power of wind and lightning—shouldn't these divine tools be capable of more?"

Kaiser glanced at the two staves now turned to ice sculptures and, after a moment, shook his head in regret.

"Unfortunately, as their wielder, your condition affected their performance, and they couldn't display their true might."

Melqart's lips, now covered in ice and snow, twitched slightly, yet no words came.

To his horror, he discovered that the power of this ice and snow actually suppressed his Divinity.

It wasn't like the Golden Sword, which specifically targeted divinity, but rather power that acted upon the concept of "sky" itself.

At this moment, even Kaiser hadn't anticipated that Hyōrinmaru's power would suppress Melqart, the god of the sky.

Because one of Hyōrinmaru's abilities was to govern the weather.

All moisture became Hyōrinmaru's weapon.

All skies fell under Hyōrinmaru's dominion.

And like Ryūjin Jakka, after Kaiser became a Campione and slew gods twice, Hyōrinmaru had grown far stronger.

Even without directly using Hyōrinmaru, just a fraction of its power was enough to deal with a heavily damaged Melqart.

Next...

"Since you've shown your weapons, I'll return the favor."

As those words fell, a blade appeared in Kaiser's hand.

It was a Zanpakutō shaped like a wakizashi, with an S-shaped guard and a short blade.

"Bankai..."

Kaiser murmured softly, and the Zanpakutō in his hand suddenly shortened, becoming like a dagger.

"Kamishini no Yari."

A flash of sharp brilliance lit up the frozen underground temple, and in an instant, the entire sanctuary trembled and was inexplicably split in two.

"Rumble..."

The ice-cave-like temple shuddered violently as a crack spread across it, dividing it neatly down the middle.

"Clang!"

A blade light suddenly flashed. Before anyone could react, it struck Melqart.

In the face of that blade, even Melqart, the God-King, couldn't respond.

Because this blade was fast—unimaginably fast.

Kamishini no Yari—its thrust speed had once troubled even Kaiser himself.

In the original story, Gin Ichimaru had falsely claimed that its maximum extension was thirteen kilometers and its thrust speed was five hundred times the speed of sound. In truth, it was neither that long nor that fast—its true power was hidden by Gin himself.

Even so, its speed was fast enough that even Aizen—who had evolved multiple times via the Hōgyoku and surpassed both Shinigami and Hollow—couldn't dodge it at close range. That alone speaks to its speed.

Now, after recognizing Kaiser as its master and becoming one of his exclusive weapons, Kamishini no Yari had been further enhanced. Like all his weapons after becoming a Campione, it had grown even stronger.

Its current extension far exceeded thirteen kilometers, and its speed had truly reached five hundred times the speed of sound!

What does five hundred times the speed of sound mean?

Normal sound speed is 340 meters per second—five hundred times that is 170,000 meters per second, or 170 kilometers per second!

What was the distance between Kaiser and Melqart?

Not even thirty meters!

At Kamishini no Yari's current speed, crossing that distance and hitting Melqart didn't even require 0.001 seconds!

Such a brief time frame—even gods couldn't casually react and respond in time, especially with Melqart heavily wounded and half-frozen.

It was simply impossible to dodge!

"Splurt!"

In the next instant, Melqart's body was pierced by the blade of light that had reached the pinnacle of speed.

"Ughhhhhh...!"

With a painful wail, Melqart's massive body was pushed by the sheer momentum of the blinding blade into the frozen spring, shattering the ice and sinking into the water.

"Rumble...!"

The underground temple, already split in two, could no longer hold and began to collapse on a massive scale.

"This place is going to collapse!"

Erica couldn't keep up with the development. Seeing the ceiling suddenly break apart and fall, all she could do was shout.

And then—fate once again grabbed her by the nape of the neck.

"Let's go."

One hand holding the dagger-sized Kamishini no Yari, the other gripping the back of Erica's neck, Kaiser used Sonído before the ceiling crashed down, his form vanishing amid spatial distortion.

The entire underground temple then collapsed completely, reduced to ruins.

This sacred site and precious ancient relic was now buried in history.

...

"Thud!"

Deep in the forest, above the underground temple, at the plaza showing signs of settlement and Nuraghe ruins, two figures appeared—like they had pierced through space—causing the air to ripple.

Muffled booms still echoed from below as the ruins continued to collapse, but it didn't affect the surface space.

Kaiser landed on the plaza, still holding Erica by the nape. Before she could speak, he set her down.

"You okay?"

Kaiser looked at Erica and asked casually.

"....."

Erica didn't respond immediately. Her face was dazed, as if she hadn't yet awoken from a nightmare.

Sunlight fell on her face, giving her the feeling of having returned from another world.

Several minutes later, Erica finally regained her senses. She looked at Kaiser, her expression more complex than ever.

Suddenly, Erica dropped to one knee on the ground.

"Erica Blandelli, Great Knight of the Copper Black Cross, greets the King."

This genius knight, who had carried confidence and composure since yesterday, now knelt before Kaiser with sincere reverence.

"I didn't know the King was present. Please forgive my discourtesy."

Erica bowed her head, showing clear signs of repentance.

"Looks like you've finally realized who I am. No need to keep interrogating me, huh?"

Kaiser raised an eyebrow slightly and spoke with a half-smile.

"Yes." Without lifting her head, Erica replied, her expression unreadable. "In the distant Far East, the seventh King was recently born. The Copper Black Cross has already received this news and circulated it to all members."

"Erica Blandelli was informed as well, but I didn't expect that the King who was recently in the Far East would suddenly appear here on Sardinia."

It was the truth.

After all, Kaiser had only become a Campione a few days ago.

The seventh King had emerged just three or four days prior, and for him to now be in Sardinia—even the factions tracking his movements were unaware.

That's because Kaiser had flown over using Divine Dividing, not by airplane.

Had he taken a flight, his itinerary would've long since spread to all the major powers, and his arrival in Sardinia would've been impossible to conceal.

But Divine Dividing's flight speed far exceeded that of any plane. Kaiser didn't need flights—he simply flew over himself.

As a result, no one knew that he had already arrived on Sardinia.