

= Ichigo Kurosaki =

Ichigo Kurosaki (Japanese : 黒崎 一護 , Hepburn : Kurosaki Ichigo) is a fictional character in the Bleach manga series and its adaptations created by Tite Kubo . The protagonist of the series , Ichigo receives Soul Reaper powers as a result of a run in with Rukia Kuchiki , the Soul Reaper assigned to patrol his city , the fictional Karakura Town . These powers come at the cost of Rukia 's own , and as a result , Ichigo concedes to work as Rukia 's stand in , fighting to protect people from evil spirits called Hollows and sending good spirits , wholes , to Soul Society . In addition to the manga series , Ichigo appears in many other pieces of Bleach media , including the anime series , the four featured films , the two original video animations , rock musicals , several video games and light novels .

Kubo said that Ichigo 's character was created to replace Rukia as the protagonist of the series because he felt she wasn 't suited for the role . His character has been well received among both readers and reviewers . Ichigo is often featured in Weekly Shōnen Jump character popularity polls . He was consistently ranked as one of the most popular characters in Bleach . The 2007 Japanese Newtype magazine polls ranked Ichigo as one of the top 100 most loved anime characters . Reviewers of the series have praised his personality , though some consider him to be a stereotypical anti hero . Merchandise based on Ichigo 's likeness has been released , including toys , clothing , and action figures . In the animated adaptations of Bleach , Ichigo is voiced by Masakazu Morita in Japanese . In the English adaptations , he is voiced by Johnny Yong Bosch .

= = Creation and conception = =

When drawing the manga series , Kubo commented that Rukia Kuchiki , the first Bleach character he introduced , was originally intended to be the protagonist . Through subsequent development of the series , however , Kubo decided to make her a valued ally and instead introduced Ichigo as the central character . Initial design sketches show Ichigo wearing glasses , and having dark hair and softer eyes . When designing Rukia , however , Kubo modified Ichigo 's appearance to contrast with hers , giving Ichigo orange hair , a trademark scowl , and removing the glasses . During the series ' first chapter , Ichigo 's wristwatch was based on one Kubo himself wore at the time . In later chapters , his wristwatch was based on Naoto Fukasawa 's W11K cellphone . According to Kubo , Ichigo , along with Orihime Inoue , are the most arduous characters to sketch . While illustrating one of Ichigo 's scenes , Kubo found it awkward to draw him with a cheerful smile .

Kubo has stated that Ichigo 's greatest strength is his considerate and thoughtful nature ; he always thinks about other 's needs . However , he also noted it as his greatest weakness , since worrying about his friends tends to put him in danger . When asked in an interview if he had any plans to focus on the love triangle between Ichigo , Orihime , and Rukia , Kubo chose neither to confirm nor deny it as he didn 't want to focus on romance . Kubo likens Ichigo 's popularity among readers because he " looks cool " . He also mentioned that as people read more about him they will discover that he is a warm and kind hearted person .

Following over fifty volumes of the manga 's released , Kubo believes that Ichigo was the most developed character . He said that Ichigo leads the story and introduces readers to the events in it . When the Arrancar arc ended , Kubo rebooted the series which resulted in Ichigo losing his Soul Reaper powers . In the same way Ichigo became a Soul Reaper during the series ' first chapter ; he starts searching for methods to recover his original powers . Ichigo is voiced by Masakazu Morita in the Japanese anime , while as a child he is voiced by Yuki Matsuoka . Johnny Yong Bosch voices him in the English dub as a teenager , and Mona Marshall as an adolescent . While describing Ichigo as one of his best roles , Morita notes that voicing him can be at times difficult . Bosch has enjoyed voicing Ichigo 's character due to his personal interest in the character 's morals . However , he experienced difficulty voicing him in some scenes where Ichigo shouts for a long time .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In Bleach = = =

Ichigo Kurosaki is a 15 @-@ year @-@ old teenager who attends a Karakura High School with the ability to see ghosts . One evening , Ichigo meets a Soul Reaper named Rukia Kuchiki from a secret organization called the Soul Society . At the same time , Ichigo 's family is attacked by a Hollow , a deceased spirit that became a warped soul @-@ eating monster which Soul Reapers deal with . After being wounded in an attempt to shield Ichigo from a Hollow attack , Rukia transmits her Soul Reaper powers to him so he can save his family . In following months , Ichigo acts in Rukia 's place as the Soul Reaper in protecting Karakura Town from Hollows as their friendship continues to bloom . Ichigo 's past is also revealed as he faces the Grand Fisher , a Hollow who killed his mother when he was nine years old . In time , the Soul Society sends two high @-@ seated officers to take Rukia back for committing the crime of transferring her Soul Reaper powers to a human . In training with Kisuke Urahara in order to rescue Rukia , Ichigo obtains his own Soul Reaper powers and learns the name of his Zanpakut? , Zangetsu (?? , literally ? Slaying Moon ?) . In the Rescue arc , Ichigo is confronted by members of Gotei 13 , the main military force in the Soul Society . In entering the Seireitei , Ichigo faces and defeats Ikkaku Madarame . As he approaches the prison where Rukia is being held captive , Ichigo does battle with , and defeats Lieutenant Renji Abarai and Squad 11 Captain Kenpachi Zaraki . In preparation for his inevitable battle with Captain Byakuya Kuchiki , who adopted Rukia as his sister , Ichigo learns his Bankai , Tensa Zangetsu (???? , literally ? Heaven Chain Slaying Moon ?) .

Arriving in time to stop Rukia 's execution on S?kyoku Hill , Ichigo engages Byakuya in a battle that ends in a tie . Captain S?suke Aizen , who faked his death prior , have been behind Rukia 's sentencing and the chaos that plagued the Soul Society . He proceeds to rip H?gyoku , an invention of Kisuke 's , from Rukia ? s Gigai body before he and his followers escapes into the Hollows ' realm of Hueco Mundo .

In time , Aizen begins targeting Karakura Town with an army of Arrancars , Hollows that assumed human form with Soul Reaper powers , after subjecting them to the H?gyoku . In order to defeat the Arrancars and to control his Hollow powers , Ichigo begins his training with the group of Soul Reaper outcasts known as the Vizard . During the Arrancar 's attack on Karakura Town , Ichigo 's friend Orihime Inoue has been abducted by Ulquiorra Cifer of the Aizen 's strongest Arrancars : The Espadas . When the Soul Society refuses to help save Orihime , Ichigo and his friends go to Hueco Mundo to rescue her . In Hueco Mundo , after defeating the Espada Grimmjow Jaegerjaquez , Ichigo manages to save Orihime and defeat Ulquiorra . Soon after , Ichigo returns from Hueco Mundo to fight Aizen in the climax of the villain 's attack on Karakura Town . During the battles interim , Ichigo learns a technique called the Final Getsuga Tensh? (??????? , Saigo no Getsuga Tensh? , literally ? The Final Moon Fang Heaven @-@ Piercer ?) that weakens Aizen , allowing Urahara to seal him within a kid? barrier , at the expense of his Soul Reaper powers .

Seventeen months later , Ichigo becomes a senior in high school . The start of the Lost Agent arc describes Ichigo 's life after he loses his Soul Reaper powers . One day , he meets K?go Ginj? , a Fullbringer from the group Xcution . Ginjo offers to replenish Ichigo 's Soul Reaper powers in return for helping him and his group to become ordinary humans . With their help , Ichigo unlocks his own Fullbring powers through his Substitute Soul Reaper Badge . However , Ichigo later learns that Ginjo and his ally Sh?kur? Tsukishima , a Fullbringer with ability to change people 's memories , used him to take Fullbring powers for Xcution 's use . Luckily , the 13 Court Squad restore Ichigo 's Soul Reaper powers and he kills Ginjo , revealed to be the first Substitute Soul Reaper , in their duel . Though learning from Ginj? that the Soul Society monitor and limit their powers , Ichigo tells the Court Squad that he will continue to fight by their side as he asks for their consent to bury Ginj? .

While patrolling Karakura Town , Ichigo is informed about invasion of Hueco Mundo by Wandenreich , a group of Quincies . He goes to Hueco Mundo with his friends to liberate it from one of the Wandenreich 's high @-@ ranked officers Quilge Opie . After dealing with Opie , Ichigo finds out that the Quincies are attacking the Soul Society . Arriving just after Head Captain Yamamoto 's

death , Ichigo encounters the Wandenreich 's leader Yhwach . At the end of the encounter , learning his mother was a Quincy , Ichigo finds his Zanpakut? shattered . As the situation in Soul Society becomes dire , the Royal Guard arrive and they take Ichigo to the Soul King Palace where he meets ?etsu Nimaiya , inventor of the Zanpakut? . Nimaiya sends Ichigo back to the World of Living where he learns the truth that his mother was a Quincy who was on a verge of hollowification until she saved when Isshin in specially made gigai that stabilizes her new state of being at the cost of his Soul Reaper powers . As a result , Ichigo was born in possession of both his parents ' spirit pressure natures which manifested in his powers as both a Soul Reaper and as a Fullbringer . Ichigo later learns that entity he believed to be Zangetsu is actually the embodiment of his Quincy powers yet accept him as he gains his reforged Zanpakut? in its new split Shikai form . During the second invasion by the Wandenreich , Ichigo and his friends confront Yhwach at the Soul King 's Palace . Though Quincy had already inflicted a fatal wound on the Soul King , Yhwach uses the Quincy energy within Ichigo to have him kill the Soul King against his will . But as the Soul King is stabilized by Mimihagi after Ukitake sacrificed himself , Ichigo stops Yhwach so Yoruichi can protect the Soul King . Ichigo explains his intent to protect all realities while telling Yhwach that possessing Quincy powers doesn 't mean he needs to serve him . But Ichigo removed from the Soul King 's Palace by Ury? Ishida , briefly facing him before learning his friend 's actual intent while he covered him and Orihime as they face Yhwach after he succeeded in absorbing the Soul King 's power . During the fight that followed , Ichigo takes the blunt of Yhwach 's power to transform into a new form that combines his abilities as a vizard and as a quincy .

= = = In other media = = =

Ichigo appears in the featured films of series : protecting a Soul Reaper named Senna in Memories of Nobody ; helping T?shir? Hitsugaya to defeat S?jir? Kusaka in The DiamondDust Rebellion ; saving Rukia Kuchiki from a pair of mysterious siblings who can erase memories in Fade to Black ; and going into Hell in order to rescue his sister Yuzu in Hell Verse . He also appears in both of the original video animations ; fighting against a Hollow called the Grand Fisher in the first one and combating the rogue Soul Reaper Baishin in the second . In the Bleach video games , Ichigo is a playable character , including the Heat the Soul and Blade Battlers series . In some games , his Hollow form and Bankai state are available as separate characters . In Rock Musical Bleach , a musical based on the Bleach series , Ichigo is played by Tatsuya Isaka . His character is featured in two volumes from the Bleach Beat Collection CD soundtrack series which features themes composed by his Japanese voice actor , Masakazu Morita . These include the first of them , in which he is the only character and the fourth season 's fourth volume along with Rukia . Ichigo also appears in the first volume of Bleach Breathless Collection CD soundtrack series together with the embodiment of his Quincy powers that posed as the Zanpakut? spirit Zangetsu .

= = Reception = =

Amongst the Bleach reader base , Ichigo has been always highly ranked in the Weekly Sh?nen Jump popularity polls for the series . He has usually taken first place , though in early 2008 he dropped to third . His sword , Zangetsu , also ranked third in the Zanpakut? popularity polls . In the 2007 Japanese Newtype magazine poll , Ichigo was ranked one of the best male anime characters . In the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation (SPJA) , Ichigo was elected for the best anime male character in 2008 . The Japanese music distributor Recochoku has made two annual survey of which anime characters that people would like to marry . Ichigo ranked tenth in the category " The Character I Want to Be My Groom " from the 2008 survey and eight in the 2009 poll . Wizard Entertainment considered Ichigo the best hero from 2007 , commenting that he doesn 't try to be a typical hero but he fights in order to protect his friends . He was also 20th in IGN 's " Top 25 Anime Characters of All Time " with comments focused on his design and personality . Ichigo has also appeared twice in the Anime Grand Prix polls , ranking as one of the most popular male anime characters . At the first Seiyu Awards in March 2007 , Masakazu Morita won in the category " Best

Rookie Actor " for his role as Ichigo Kurosaki . Ichigo 's voice actor in the English adaptation , Johnny Yong Bosch , has also been praised for his voice work on Ichigo 's character by Anime News Network (ANN) , which favorably compared Bosch and Morita 's work . Various merchandise based on Ichigo 's appearance has been created , including action figures , plush toys and key @-@ chains . Since the series was released , replica models of Ichigo 's Zanpakut? and Bankai have been produced for purchase by collectors and fans .

Several publications for manga , anime , video games , and other related media have provided praise and criticism on Ichigo 's character . ANN 's Melissa Harper commented that Ichigo 's initial rebellious actions make him almost a stereotypical anti @-@ hero , but note that he is soon revealed to be a more complex character with a sad past . Los Angeles Times 's Charles Solomon comments Ichigo 's character has little in common with protagonists from other series due to his bad temper and how he tends to fight . However , he added that readers from the series still " love " Ichigo . The way Ichigo becomes a Soul Reaper was found to be relatively common by Carlos Alexandre . He noted that Ichigo 's character of a " tough guy with a heart of gold " had already been done in several series . Charles White from IGN praised Ichigo 's climactic fight against Byakuya Kuchiki as one of the best fights in the Bleach series , and later Ramsey Isler gave additional praise to both the design and voice acting for Ichigo 's inner Hollow . Ichigo 's development during the Rescue arc in which he sets to save Rukia Kuchiki from being executed have been praised by ANN 's Theron Martin . He praised the scenes in which Ichigo manages to stop Rukia 's execution and his subsequent demonstration of his Bankai as one of the " eminently satisfying landmark moments in the series " . Wired News 's Corrina Lawson stated that she liked Ichigo 's strong sense of responsibility , and commented it was one of the reasons of the series ' popularity .