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Roughly an hour before Old Man Zangetsu told him that the next one would be arriving, they called an end to their sparring. Ichigo was impressed by how much Chad had grown already. He certainly wouldn't be fighting any Espada any time soon, but his Reitsū had almost *doubled* in the past few hours.

The group had gone to relax inside the hot springs, though with some small hang ups over it being mixed bathing. Chad was flushed sitting next to Orihime, who had her towel tight around her. She was staring at Ichigo with a small nosebleed, and a pout since he was busy getting hugged from behind by Meninas while he washed Candice's hair. He hadn't even glanced in her direction, much to her disappointment.

Yoruichi was sitting beside them, frankly a bit closer than needed, and looked ecstatic that they had apparently sucked the prude out of Ichigo. She was chatting animatedly with Candice and surprisingly Bambietta as well, while showing them some hair products Urahara had made for her over a hundred years ago.

Finally, Liltotto was on their other side, and was munching on some candy she'd taken from Urahara. She was, however, grumbling mightily, "Ugh, this is so good, but I can't eat a lot of it anymore. Stupid Yhwach. Stupid Schrift."

"What *are* those anyway?" Ichigo asked, "I've heard you mention them a couple of times, but I never had a moment to actually ask."

"They're special abilities granted to us by *His Majesty*." Liltotto replied, scowling. "In a ritual performed by drinking a small amount of his blood," There were some wrinkled noses in disgust, "He would inscribe a letter in our souls, granting us an ability that belonged to us and only us."

Ichigo got a feeling of disagreement as well as amusement from Old Man Zangetsu and couldn't help but feel like he'd be shattering some important notions sooner or later.

"I was The Glutton." Liltotto continued, "I could eat anything. Feeling *full* is *weird*." She finished.

"The Power." Meninas said into his ear, before leaving a sweet kiss just under his earlobe, causing him to shudder slightly in happiness.

"The Thunderbolt." Candice stuck her tongue out playfully as she tilted her head back, drawing his attention to her lightning bolt piercing.

"Gee, I never would have guessed." Ichigo chuckled, which she followed up with some giggling.

"The Explode." Bambietta crossed her arms under her chest as she stared daggers at him, daring him to say something.

"Interesting." Yoruichi commented, "Almost like a Zanpakutō, only one that requires no medium."

“Not an awful comparison.” Liltotto drawled, “Though we didn’t have stages we could release like Shikai and Bankai. Either we used them, or we didn’t. We *could* make them stronger and eliminate weaknesses via our **Vollständig**, but that was a separate technique.”

“Any relation to **Letzt Stil**?” Yoruichi asked, “As far as I know, that was the reason Ishida no longer has any powers.” Ichigo still couldn’t help but feel awful about that. Ishida had tried to keep it from them, but they knew.

“That old thing is the obsolete version.” Bambietta snorted, “Those Ishidas are the only idiots dumb enough to still use it.”

“Well, more of the stepping stone.” Candice corrected her. “Using **Letzt Stil** is the first step in gaining **Vollständig**.” She sighed, “And we can’t use it right now. Stupid things feel like they’re locked, and we have no idea why. I’m going to be *pissed* if I have to go through all that shit again.”

“Must be worth it if you’re determined to do it anyway if needed.” Ichigo muttered out loud.

“Absolutely. Its power is on par if not better than Bankai.” Liltotto replied to him, “It’s just even more of a pain in the ass to earn than Bankai.”

“Got it.” Ichigo grabbed a bucket and allowed the water to wash out the soap from Candice’s hair. “All set, Candi.” He pecked her on the cheek, which she didn’t allow and held his head so she could kiss him properly. Orihime off to the side was pouting outrageously, wishing *she* had been brave enough to do that in the past. “Your turn, Meni.” The magenta-haired woman smiled as she and Candice switched places, though Candice was nowhere near as safe for work, an evil grin on her face as she began to tease him. “So, what can we expect from the last two?”

“Well, your Highness.” Liltotto grinned as he flinched, “Seeing as you’ve gotten all four of us, you’re definitely completing the set with Gigi.” He felt both of his girls flinch slightly, while Bambietta’s flinch was a bit more violent.

He closed his eyes, “I know you five were *supposedly* friends. And I know it ended really, *really* badly. What is she like?”

“Her Schrift was The Zombie.” Bambietta spat, “That should tell you all you need to know about that fucking bitch.” She shuddered, and flinched when a worried Yoruichi put a hand on her shoulder.

“Her blood turned people into her slaves.” Candice murmured, and off to the side, Orihime and Chad both flinched, “They effectively became corpses under her control. But it didn’t work on other Quincies.” He felt her hand tremble, and Meninas was still in front of him too, “Not unless they were already dead.”

The final piece of the puzzle clicked for Ichigo. And again, he felt furious that his girls had apparently *let* this happen to Bambietta in this aborted future they saw bits and pieces of. But they’d already been through that before, so he forced the emotion down. “I see.” He said as evenly as he could.

“Ichigo.” Liltotto said, drawing his attention. “She was...*sadistic*. And she loved to fuck with people. You...” She hesitated, “*Might* need to let things get a little violent when she shows up. Especially if she acts the way I think she will.” She sighed, “If nothing else, it should help with *some* of the bad blood.”

Ichigo closed his eyes and dipped his hands in the water to wash the suds from the shampoo he was using on Meninas away. He brought his hand up and pinched the bridge of his nose, fighting a sudden headache. “Fine.” He spat, “But if I say it’s over, *it is over*. Understood?”

“Good enough for me.” Bambietta spat out, but she had her own axe-crazy look on her face. Ichigo wondered what the hell he had just agreed to.

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The bath hadn’t lasted too much longer after that, the mood thoroughly ruined. And now, they were dressed and waiting for the probable girl to show up. And then the moment of truth came, and Ichigo’s shadow surged. Again, it crept Orihime and Chad out, and unlike the other times, Giselle Gewelle flew out of the shadow like a spring-loaded jack-in-the-box. She squealed as she flew through the air, flapping her arms as though they were wings, before faceplanting on the ground. Like, full-on belly flop. She lay there, arms spread out, her knees bent, and her feet pointed at the roof. A muffled, “Owieeeee...” came from the girl.

Thoroughly disarmed, Ichigo, Yoruichi, Chad, and Orihime stared at the sight. “I-Is she alright?” Orihime blinked owlishly.

“Seriously?” Ichigo scratched his head, “Is this *her*? This?!” The girl in question was a little taller than Bambietta and had long, dark-blue hair. He eyed the two little strands of hair coming off her head in disbelief, ‘*I’ve heard of ahoge but that’s ridiculous. Those two little tufts look like cockroach antennae.*’

“Yup/Yes.” Candice, Meninas, Liltotto, and Bambietta said, all with varying levels of anger in their tones.

Liltotto shook her head, “Don’t let her cutesy act fool you.” She murmured so Giselle wouldn’t hear, “Her favorite act was the old ‘*Oh please, I’m not a fighter! Don’t hurt me!*’ routine to make enemies overconfident.”

As she said so, Giselle got herself up, “Owowowow...” She muttered as she shook her head. ‘*That hurt... why did that hurt?*’ She thought to herself, before opening her blue eyes. She blinked them a few times, and the first one she saw was Yoruichi. She blinked again, before looking over at Ichigo, and then her friends, “Candi, Meni, Lili!” She waved at them, “Hey, hey!”

“Gigi.” Candice said, her face carved from stone.

Giselle pouted, “Aww, you sound mad. What did I do?” She asked, and Candice clenched her fists. But something else caught Giselle’s attention, and she bent her torso slightly to the right to look. Bambietta wasn’t even facing her, afraid of what she would do if she even *looked* at

Giselle. Just Giselle's voice was sending signals of rage and terror and heartbreak racing through her brain. Said girl gasped in delight, "BAMBI-CHAN!" She screamed in excitement, looking legitimately like her day had been made.

If someone had been looking inside Bambietta's head right then and there, they would have seen a violin string snap. "DIE!" She turned around and, with her veins looking practically *molten* from how red they were glowing, she briefly approached *Yoruichi's* speed. Giselle barely had any time at all to put up a defense before Bambietta's fist landed on her very slightly blue chin. Her head snapped to the side as the bone fractured and she almost comically was flung away. She skipped like a rock, hitting her head, then her ass, then her hands, then her face again before she slid to a stop.

And she was feeling something she hadn't truly felt in *years*. Pain. "Ah!" She flinched as she brought her hand up to her jaw, and flinched again when she touched it. "It-it hurts!" She mewled, "Why does it hurt?!"

"THAT'S GOING TO FEEL LIKE A LOVE TAP BEFORE I'M DONE WITH YOU, YOU FUCKING BITCH!" Bambietta landed and smashed a kick into Giselle's ribs. She hacked and almost vomited from the pain.

"Ichigo!" Orihime said urgently. "Stop this! You- you can't!" She flinched at Candice's glare.

"You have *no idea* what she did to us, and specifically what she did to Bambi." Candice said, "You can heal her when we're done, but if Bambi doesn't get to blow off at least a little steam, this little group we've got here is going to *implode* before we get anything done."

Meninas sighed, "I don't think this is very nice either, Inoue-chan." She said softly, "But Bambi's rage is like an explosion. Incredibly destructive, but gone in a flash." Candice and Liltotto nodded in agreement.

In the distance, Bambietta was working up a full head of steam, "WE WERE FRIENDS!" She cried out as she mounted Giselle. Giselle lifted her arms to try to defend her face, "I TRUSTED YOU!" Her fist broke through Giselle's weak guard and broke her nose. "AND YOU USED ME! ABUSED ME! MADE ME BEG! YOU ENJOYED IT! YOU'RE NOT EVEN SORRY!" Blow after blow landed on Giselle's face and hands until she was so dazed and injured she couldn't even defend herself. Finally, Bambietta stopped, panting with her right fist raised beside her head, "Why did you do it, Gigi? Why *you*...?" She asked, her voice breaking as she stared at the girl below her. Unbidden, tears began to gather in her eyes as she sat back on her haunches, staring at the girl.

"B-Bambi-chan, pl-please..." Giselle rasped through broken teeth and a bloody mouth as she held her trembling hands with broken fingers in front of her. Tears were leaking from her eyes. She was utterly *terrified*. She had no idea what was going on, but her powers weren't working, and she hadn't been hurt like this *ever*. She hadn't felt fear like this for over a decade, not since she was a street urchin in the city surrounding Silbern. "Pl-please don't." She managed to get out.

But that just enraged Bambietta once more. “Are you begging me?! LIKE I BEGGED?!” Giselle flinched at the dead tone coming from Bambietta. And then Bambietta’s hands were around Giselle’s throat, and she was squeezing *hard*. “I BEGGED YOU NOT TO DO IT!” Giselle started to spasm, trying to do anything to free herself. “I DIDN’T WANT TO DIE EITHER!” Her face started to turn blue as her struggles began to weaken. She couldn’t even get a grip herself due to her broken and very-much-not-healing fingers. She reached up for Bambietta’s face, trying just to push her away. But she was far too weak for that, even at full strength. “BUT YOU JUST-”

And then Ichigo was behind her, and his hands effortlessly pried Bambietta’s hands off Giselle’s throat. “*Enough*.” Giselle immediately started hacking out tortured coughs as she was able to breathe again. “*Enough, Bambi*.” He said harshly as the girl continued to struggle to try to reach for Giselle’s throat.

Finally, her struggle ended, and she fell limp in his arms and started to cry, “I thought we were friends, Gigi.” She finally sobbed out. Ichigo carefully picked her up and backed away as a horrified Orihime landed next to them. Bambietta turned and buried her face into Ichigo’s chest as she sobbed.

Orihime quickly set about healing Giselle, before rounding on Ichigo. “How could you, Kurosaki-kun?!” She said, tears of her own in her eyes, “You let that go way too far.”

Ichigo looked at her somberly, “Inoue, you didn’t hear their story.” He said gently, but firmly, “I have, and it was *awful*. Their people were awful. Their home was awful. And they were even awful to each other, despite supposedly being friends. If I didn’t let this happen now, it might have happened when I *couldn’t* stop it.”

“You can put me down.” A red-eyed Bambietta said softly. She looked down at Giselle, who was looking much better already, but also looked utterly terrified of her. “Aren-” Bambietta’s voice broke. “Aren’t you even going to *apologize*, Gigi?” She finished hoarsely, another lone tear leaking from her left eye.

Giselle was silent for a moment, “I j-just... Th-they would have k-killed you. Th-they would have-have killed any of us... if we f-failed. Th-they would have t-taken you *away*.” Giselle began to cry too, “I just w-wanted you with me forever, Bambi-chan.”

Bambietta flinched and turned around. “I-” She stopped short and shook her head. “I just can’t right now.” She stomped away, trying valiantly to keep her tears in.

Orihime was biting her lip, realizing just how much more complicated this was than she had thought. Ichigo closed his eyes, before looking at Giselle, “I’ll tell you what they’ve figured out for themselves.” He said, and her eyes snapped to his, “This is a new chance for you all. A chance for you to be better than you were.”

“People-” Giselle stopped as she stood, now fully healed, thanks to Orihime, “People don’t change overnight.”

“No.” Ichigo said, “You have to put some fucking effort in.” He glared at her, and she unconsciously took a step back, realizing he had his new Zanpakutō and likely overwhelming power at least three years early. She vividly remembered him breaking her neck with a simple punch. To her *chest*. “You don’t have that Schrift thing of yours right now, and we have no idea if you girls will be able to get them back. So I’ll tell you this now. If you *do* end up regaining it somehow, and you use it on *anyone* other than an enemy...” He trailed off leadingly.

“O-Okay!” She said, “S-Say no more, Chief!” She put on a happy-go-lucky look on her face.

“Good.” He grabbed both of them, and brought them all back to the main group. Giselle flinched as she saw Bambietta stomping towards them and hid behind Ichigo.

“You.” She grabbed him by the collar and yanked him down. “How good are your massages?” She asked, and Ichigo blinked in surprise.

“Uhhh, pretty good?” He scratched the back of his neck, “It was one of the few things I could help with at the clinic that wasn’t administrative without further schooling. Dad taught me and the girls, though I’ve obviously had more practice.”

“Good.” She grabbed his arm and started to drag him away. “You’re giving me one. I fucking need it. Let’s go.”

Ichigo followed in bemusement, before Candice and Meninas stopped them. “Have fun.” Meninas said softly, before kissing him gently.

“Knock her dead, tiger.” Candice grinned evilly as she murmured in his ear, before kissing him with much less gentleness. “We’ll join you two tonight.” She pulled away, but not before spanking him.

‘*They don’t mean...*’ Ichigo thought in bemusement as he followed Bambietta, who he abruptly realized was rolling her hips a lot more than usual and making her booty bounce. And in those so-tight-they-looked-painted-on jeans, her *bakery* was on full display. ‘*Oh hell, they do...*’ What had his life become? Orihime was wondering the exact same thing, gaping at the sight of the purple-haired woman leading him away.

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As Ichigo stepped into his room with Bambietta, he froze. “Hey, what gives?” She asked irritably as she ran into his back. He stepped to the side, and her jaw dropped. They both took a look around the room in disbelief. It was now roughly three times the size of the room he remembered from that morning.

“...What the fuck?” He asked blandly.

She started to snicker, “Well, at least no one will know unless you bring one of the normies up here.”

He shook his head, ‘*Thanks Dad, Geta-Boshi.*’ He strode inside and put the portable massage table he was carrying on the floor, before beginning to set it up. Bambietta sat on his bed as she

waited, and soon, it was sitting sturdily in the middle of his now much larger room. “Okay Bambi, you go ahead and get ready. I’m going to go and get the rest ready.”

“Sure thing.” Bambietta smirked lightly at the one-piece swimsuit he had prepared for her as he closed the door. “Moron.” She tossed the swimsuit away and started to strip, getting herself completely naked before laying down on the massage bed. She grabbed one of the small towels and laid it across her hips, before grabbing another and putting it over her breasts. A few minutes later, Ichigo knocked on the door, and she called out for him to come on in.

He walked in, and completely froze for a step, his eyes wide, and his cheeks reddening. He collected himself and walked in, noting idly that she was on her back. He figured she would have wanted him to start there. She apparently had other ideas though, and from her smirk, she knew exactly what she was doing.

Sighing internally, he smiled at her and was rewarded with a small blush. He started at her feet, dribbling some warm, soothing massage oil on his hands, and then picking up her right foot. She let out a pleased sigh as he began working her toes and feet over and closed her eyes. He pressed gently, making small, circular motions, and working his way from her toes to her heel. When done, he gently put her leg down and massaged his way up her calf and then thigh.

Her breath hitched the closer he got, and he smirked as she let out a little whine when he avoided touching her where she quite clearly wanted. With firm, gentle motions, he massaged right up to her groin but never touched her underneath the towel. When done, he went back down to her left foot and started over. She was biting her lip by the time he got back up to where she wanted, and this time, let out a little keening noise as he avoided it.

He then pulled down her towel just a little, still keeping her pussy hidden, but exposing more of her belly. He dribbled more oil on her and was practically mesmerized by the sight of her glistening skin. He was *definitely* doing this with Meninas and Candice as well. He gently rubbed down her sides and encountered his first problem as she spasmed. A little noise escaped her as well, and she looked mortified. “Are you *ticklish*?” He asked in delight.

“Sh-shut up!” She mewled, “Don’t you dare!”

He chuckled as he continued to gently squeeze her body, delighting in her quick spasms every time he hit that one spot on her sides. He again teased her, massaging right up beneath her breasts but never touching them. Finishing, he moved on to her left arm, taking his time working out the tension in her muscles. He massaged all the way down to her fingers, enjoying the pleased little moans she was letting out. She had been under a *tremendous* amount of stress. As he finished her other arm, she reached up and tore the towel off her chest, throwing it on the bed.

His mouth watered as he saw her milky-white, perfect breasts. But he raised an eyebrow, “I didn’t think you would have any piercings.” He said softly.

She blushed, “Candi and I did them together.” She looked off to the side, “I wasn’t going to get any, but she dared me.”

He chuckled, “They’re cute.” He said, before lining himself up with her head, “I’m going to touch your neck now, okay?” She stiffened immediately, before nodding after a few moments.

“Okay...” She said, her voice small.

As slowly and gently as he could, he began massaging the sides of her neck, “Tell me if I need to stop.” He said firmly, “And relax, Bambi. I won’t hurt you. I promise.”

She let out a shuddering breath, “Thank you, Ichi.” She said softly. Almost against her will, she did start to relax, the tension in her shoulders decreasing as it became more and more clear that he *wasn’t* Giselle and was just trying to help. He never made her feel *afraid*.

Once she was relaxed fully, he *finally* lowered his hands to her breasts and began working on them. She moaned as his hands circled them completely and firmly squeezed. By now, her breaths were coming in hot pants, and she was biting her lip to keep from moaning. Her entire front glistened from the oil, and Ichigo currently wanted nothing more than to make this massage a little *dirtier*. But he refrained and kept things professional. “Turn around.” He said to her, she hurried to do so, flinging the towel away as well and leaving her completely exposed.

His mouth was watering, but he continued to work rubbing her shoulders for a few moments before running his hands down her back and sides. “You’re so *tense*.” He muttered as he had to use a bit more force to work out the knots on her back.

“The Wandenreich *sucked*.” She said shortly, getting a snort from him. “I...I’ve been here for less than a week, and I’ve never felt so relaxed. *Never*. Not even Gigi can ruin this for me.” She mumbled; glad she was finally able to say it out loud.

“I’m glad.” He smiled, before continuing to work on her back. It was a bit of a battle, because of how tightly wound up she was. It took a *long* while of diligent work before he finally felt her tension was completely gone, and he was able to move down to her legs again.

She inhaled sharply several times from his amazing hands working on the back of her thighs and calves, and hissed out a long, “Yessssss!” as he finally started massaging her butt. She was just waiting for him to finally touch her asshole and pussy, and was getting a bit frustrated that he was avoiding her special places. She even raised her hips off the table, pushing herself into his hands, and whining in frustration when he didn’t take the bait. ‘*He’s not this fucking dense! There’s no fucking way he thinks this is just a massage!*’ She was as wet as could be! She was practically drenching the damn table! There’s no damn way he didn’t notice!

And then, his hands vanished, “All done, Bambi.” He tried to hide a smirk as she looked outraged.

“No, we’re fucking not!” She huffed as she lay flat on the table in disbelief, “You missed a spot!” She reached behind her with her right hand and spread her slick ass for him, showing him her gushing lips. “Don’t make me beg...” She whined as she wiggled her hips. He walked over to his dresser while taking off his shirt and activated the little Kidō doodad Urahara had made for him.

As he walked back, he threw off his pants and revealed his absolutely *throbbing* erection. He may have been teasing the hell out of her, but that didn't mean she hadn't been scoring critical hits against him. As he reached her, his hand came up and then sharply down with a loud crack, making her squeal as he left a lovely, red handprint on her right cheek. "F-Fuck yes!" She panted as he climbed onto the table and mounted her, his thighs on either side of hers.

He leaned forward above her and turned her head up towards his. He kissed her roughly, possessively, and she moaned, propping herself up with her left forearm and reaching behind them to grab his hair in joy. And then he entered her, and Bambietta saw stars. '*Best decision EVER!*' It was the last coherent thought she had for quite a while.

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'*This is my life now, huh?*' It was the first thought that ran through his mind as he woke up the next morning. Meninas was lying to his left as naked as the day she was born, wrapped in his embrace with a peaceful look on her face. To his right, Bambietta did the same, sleeping contently. Behind her, Candice was pressed up against Bambietta's back and had an arm around her dark-haired friend. Ichigo could feel her fingers, and realized she was definitely cupping one of her friend's boobs. '*How did I get this lucky? What the fuck happened?*' He had been a virgin less than three days ago!

He honestly did not want to get up. Like, at all. But he was hungry. Starving even, seeing as he never had dinner. Once Candice and Meninas had shown up yesterday and watched him blow Bambietta's back out, the three Quincy had gotten *competitive*. They had not left his room at all for the rest of the day, and their sex marathon had continued well into the night.

Ichigo could not have been happier to learn about the existence of **Blut**, because without it even *his* stamina would have run out.

His stomach gurgled, and he was debating the risks of trying to get out of bed without waking the girls when Bambietta began to stir. "Mhmmm..." She moaned, before opening her eyes and blinking rapidly. She eyed him almost with confusion, before the memory of the previous day hit her and she flushed slightly.

"Morning Bambi." He murmured to her.

She turned her head slightly and pecked him good morning, "Morning Ichi." She paused, "Is that your hand on my tit?"

"Nope, that's Candi." Ichigo sounded amused.

"Thought so." She blushed a bit harder, '*D-Did I really do that?*' She thought to herself, remembering when she had been so caught up in their fun that she had lustfully *demand*ed that Candice sit on her face when she saw Meninas doing it to Ichigo. And she had enjoyed it a thousand times more than she ever thought she would. '*Damn it, if I knew it could feel that good I would have tried to bed the girls years ago...*' Would have saved all of them a lot of problems, honestly.

She looked so cute that Ichigo couldn't resist leaning forward and claiming her lips again. She let out a surprised moan as she felt his hand slide from her hip to her ass and squeeze her right cheek. "D-Didn't you have enough?" She asked, despite sliding her hand down to grab him.

"Of you girls?" He asked huskily, and his voice sent shivers down her spine. "***Never.***"

And then both their stomachs growled, ruining the mood. She snickered, "Well, we *are* still human."

"Only in my body." He grumbled, "I'm *starving*."

"Same." She said, rubbing her belly.

"Mhmmmm..." Meninas sounded irritated as she moaned. "It's too earlyyyyyy." She pouted as she mock-glared up at him. He snickered. Meninas was definitely the cutest of them in the morning. She *hated* waking up. He pressed his lips to hers, and she refused to respond for a few attempts, before relenting and kissing back.

He slipped his arm from underneath Bambietta and then moved over Meninas, before getting off the bed, "I'm going to go see if Yuzu needs any help for breakfast. I'll call you when we're ready."

"Kay." Bambietta yawned, and surprised Meninas by pulling her close to take Ichigo's spot.

Ichigo grinned knowingly at Bambietta, "Give Candi a kiss from me when she wakes up."

The dark-haired girl blushed. '*Damn it... last night **did** awaken things in me.*'

"You happy, Bambi?" Meninas asked as she snuggled with her friend.

Bambietta looked at her for a few moments before she again surprised Meninas by pressing her lips to hers. Meninas looked surprised, but returned the affection, and Bambietta smirked when she pulled away, "You know what?" She asked, "Yeah... I think I am."

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"I could not be prouder!" Isshin was playing the fool the second Ichigo got down to the lower level, sobbing playfully, "A fifth daughter! My delinquent of a son has surpassed my every expectation!"

Ichigo rolled his eyes, "Shut up, Goat-chin."

Isshin did, surprisingly, "So, you fought Aizen's Arrancar." He said in a low tone, to ensure they didn't bother Yuzu, who was hard at work on breakfast.

"Yeah." Ichigo kept his tone low as well, "They're strong. Even the weaker of the two could have killed Chad in one hit."

Isshin sighed, "And you killed one and forced the other to retreat." He let out a groan, "That's... probably going to cause some issues. The Seireitei is going to wonder about what the fuck happened, because you weren't even using Bankai."

“Is it bad if they know about it?” Ichigo asked cluelessly, “We’re all on the same side, despite the bullshit with the badge.”

“You’re an unknown, you just *rapidly* increased in power for no discernable reason and have a very different Zanpakutō than you did even a week ago.” Isshin said dryly, “And you did this all without touching your badge to let them monitor it at all, and that’s without even getting into the Quincy and Hollow messes.”

He let out a groan, “This is going to be a huge pain in the ass, isn’t it?”

“Usually is with the Seireitei.” Isshin snorted, “Honestly, we should legitimately be grateful to Aizen for at least taking out the trash on the way out.”

Ichigo gaped at his father, “What the hell does that mean?”

“Roughly seventy-five percent of all of the afterlife’s woes can be directly tied to the Central 46 having way too much power.” Isshin replied, “They’ve made some utterly *disastrous* decisions in the last few millennia. One of which was unilaterally deciding to have your new friends, the Vizards, executed without trial for the crime of having Hollow powers forced on them a hundred years ago.” Isshin glared at the floor, “All of them loyal Captains and Lieutenants before the incident.”

Ichigo’s expression locked up. “I see.” He sighed, “Maybe I *should* give them a visit.” He rubbed his chin, before nodding, “Yeah, once the last person shows up, we’ll get some plans going and then we’ll go visit them.”

“Sounds good.” Isshin replied, “When will that be?”

“If I have *any* luck at all-” and he knew he did, seeing as he had left the three beautiful girls he now called girlfriends in his bed upstairs, “-during lunch today at school.”

Isshin snickered, “And if you don’t?”

“Not like I haven’t left class in a hurry before.” Was the deadpan answer.

“Will it be a sixth girl?” Isshin grinned, jabbing his elbow into Ichigo’s ribs.

“Not unless they’re either genderbent or an original character.” Ichigo joked back for once. After last night, it was going to be hard to put him in a bad mood.

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Thankfully, for once, his luck *had* held, and he was now alone on the roof. “Ichiiiiigooooooo!” Correction, he now had one dumbass with him on the roof.

“Why are you here?” He asked blandly as he put Keigo in a headlock.

“What do you mean?!” Keigo asked indignantly. Ichigo’s eyebrow twitched as a *bunch of fucking people* joined them. First Chad and Orihime, and then Tatsuki, and then Mizuiro, Ryō, Michiru, Mahana, and Chizuru.

Oh great. It was a fucking *party* today. Ichigo rubbed the bridge of his nose. “Why. The fuck. Are you all here. *Today of all days?*”

“You don’t own the roof, Kurosaki!” Chizuru proclaimed, before going for a flying glomp on Orihime, “And I go where my precious ‘Hime goes!” Tatsuki grabbed her by the head and slammed her down sharply without saying a word. She was *still* pissed over yesterday.

“What makes today special, huh?” Mahana put her hands on her hips and stared at him.

“Sorry Ichigo.” Chad rumbled, “But once Keigo was running up here, it was too late.”

Ichigo sighed, “For fuck’s sake. Fucking half the class is going to be spiritually aware before the week is over at this rate.” He grumbled, not bothering to keep things a secret seeing as they were about to have someone literally crash their party.

“E-Eh?” Michiru said what all of them were thinking, “S-Spiritually aware?”

“Heh, you got up into some weird stuff over the summer break, huh?” Keigo laughed nervously.

“Ha! This is perfect!” Chizuru was grinning evilly, “With you going crazy, that means one less ugly joc-”

Ichigo held a finger up, and everyone shut up as his fingertip began to glow red. A small blast erupted, and despite its speed, everyone followed as it rose up into the sky and blew a large hole in the cloud that was moving above them.

Keigo pointed a shaking finger at him, “M-M-Magic!”

“Nope.” Orihime sighed, “Like he said, it’s spiritual.” She took a bite of her sandwich, and Ichigo was quite sure he didn’t even want to think to ask what was in it.

Ryō swallowed, “So... wait, are you saying those stories about you being able to see ghosts when you were younger were true?”

“Yup.” He said shortly.

“Ghosts are real?!” Michiru looked faint, and was holding Mahana’s arm tightly.

“Mhm.” Ichigo hummed in agreement.

Chizuru gasped, “Wait, is that why that babe dropped from the ceiling a few days ago?”

“Yup.” Tatsuki snarked, “Apparently they’re coming out of Ichigo’s shadow. What is it now, five girls?” She glared at him.

“Correct.”

Mizuiro tried to put on a grin, “Oh, are you becoming a playboy, Ichigo?” He joked, trying to lighten the atmosphere a little.

Keigo forced a guffaw, “Ha, Ichigo’s too busy avoiding girls for that!” Some of the girls giggled as well, though they were still obviously nervous.

“Oh, is that right?” Ichigo finally smirked, “*Maidenless.*”

Keigo looked like a ghost had popped up in front of him. He looked like he had turned to stone. That got Orihime to start giggling, and it set the others off as well. But that just irritated Tatsuki, who was *still* mad, and even more mad that Orihime had apparently missed her chance, “Yeah, plus you’re not even right, Keigo. He was sucking face with two of them yesterday.” She lashed out.

Almost everyone gasped, as Keigo screamed, “WHAT?! NO WAY?!”

‘*Oh, is that how it’s going to be, Tatsuki?*’ Ichigo’s eyebrow twitched as he glared at Tatsuki, “Three.”

Tatsuki glared back, “What was that?”

He shrugged, “You were wrong. It was *three* of them.” Orihime almost fell over as the rooftop erupted in noise.

‘*Hey King, as fun as this is, you’ve got incoming.*’ Zangetsu said, warning him.

“Do you think this is fucking *funny*, Ichigo?” Tatsuki clenched her fists but was surprised when Ichigo laid down rather than answer her. “What are you-”

And then Ichigo popped out of his body, dressed in full Shinigami regalia, making some of the girls (and Keigo) scream as he was standing over what looked like his own corpse. “Inoue, shield everyone.” He ordered. “Chad, you be ready too.”

Orihime snapped to readiness instantly, “**Santen Kesshun, I reject!**”

They all clamored as Chad stood and his arm transformed, while Orihime shielded them. “What is this?!” Mahana asked in wonder as she reached out to tap the shield, only for Orihime to grab her hand and shake her head. She and Chad were filled with tension as they watched Ichigo’s shadow surge.

Ichigo wasn’t sure this was even necessary. Old Man Zangetsu hadn’t been wrong yet about who was going to pop up. But the girls were really worried that it was going to be Pepe Waccabrada, and after telling him everything they knew about him (including the fact that he regularly used his ‘Love’ on female Soldats), Ichigo was fully ready to do what needed to be done if it *was* him who showed up. He was just *pissed* that everyone had fucking decided to show up right when he needed some privacy. He should have just snuck off to Urahara’s instead of waiting on the roof.

At least his trust in Old Man Zangetsu was rewarded as his shadow retreated, leaving a man kneeling before him. He was dressed in that same white uniform, though with the sleeves pulled back slightly. He had pink hair styled in a mohawk. “Finally.” He growled as he got to his feet, though he stumbled a bit as he did so. “What a pain.” He ran his hand through his hair.

‘*Looks like we got lucky.*’ Ichigo had a ghost of a smile, “You’re Bazz-B.”

“Heh, looks like my reputation precedes me.” He grinned, “Ain’t that right, Kurosaki Ichigo?”

“Nah, the girls told me about you.” Ichigo smirked as Bazz-B’s eye twitched.

“Girls? Damn, are those bitches here too?” He asked, growling slightly.

“Three of them are my girlfriends, so cool it with the insults.” Ichigo shot back.

“Three of those sluts? You poor bastard.” Bazz-B didn’t care a lick for Ichigo’s order.

Ichigo growled, “I think you should shut the fuck up.”

“Why don’t you make me?” Bazz smirked, “You know, I never got to see how we stacked up...” He held his hand out, “**Burner Finger 4!**” He declared, before looking off to his hand when his Schrift refused to activate.

Ichigo snorted, “Performance issues, huh? It’s cool, man. One-in-ten you know.” He jeered at the man, despite knowing it was probably a bad idea. That startled some giggles from the mesmerized onlookers.

Bazz-B growled and used **Hirenkyaku** to launch himself at Ichigo, “Fine! Fists!” With his veins glowing red, he punched out at Ichigo. Ichigo merely raised his hand, his own veins glowing blue, and caught the man’s fist. The impact caused a shockwave that smashed into Orihime’s Shun Shun Rikka, and made it flash for a moment. The girls (and even Keigo and Mizuiro) screamed in fear as the winds made the fence on the roof shake ominously. Down below, the people who didn’t know any better in the school thought a powerful but short-lived earthquake had hit!

And Tatsuki was clenching her fists in despair. Even after watching Ichigo carve up Yammy, she had thought that all she needed was some training of her own and she would be capable of amazing feats too. But this time it was just pure fists, something she excelled at. She instantly understood the sheer *gap* that existed between her and Ichigo now. That punch would have put a *building* on the ground, and Ichigo caught it without even a hint of strain on his face.

No, the strain was all on Bazz-B’s face. “What?!” He gaped at seeing the **Blut** active on Ichigo’s skin. “BWAH?!” And then Ichigo’s right uppercut thundered into his gut, outright lifting him off his feet. He gagged as he landed on his knees, vomiting blood out, much to the horror of most of the people watching, who were certain they had watched their friend *murder* someone. He keeled forward, clutching his gut, and putting his head on the roof.

“I suggest you cool it, hothead.” Ichigo said darkly, “Or else next I’ll give that mohawk you’re so proud of a *close shave*.” He threw Old Man Zangetsu point first into the roof next to Bazz-B’s head, making sure he could see it.

‘Fuck! We can’t be this far apart! WE CAN’T! IF I CAN’T EVEN BEAT HIM, HOW COULD I EVER KILL YHWACH?!’ Bazz-B trembled in pain as he lifted his head and glared at Ichigo. He realized he couldn’t feel his **Vollständig** either and it frustrated him immensely.

“We good?” Ichigo asked, holding out his hand.

Bazz-B spat bloody spittle on the roof, before reaching out, “Don’t fucking touch my hair.” He grasped Ichigo’s hand.

Ichigo started to chuckle, “Damn, you’re madder about that than the punch?” He shook his head in bemusement, “Yeah, you’ll fit right into this madhouse.” He helped the man to his feet. “Hey Inoue, can you heal him?”

“Sure!” Orihime dropped her shield in relief that the fight had ended quickly. Ichigo quickly jumped back into his body, but the eyes of their school friends were on Bazz-B, who quickly looked right as rain. Even the blood on the floor just vanished, making it look like nothing had ever happened. They gazed at the sight with awe in their gazes.

“Damn, that’s some healing.” Bazz-B whistled as he patted his stomach. “Good on ya, pretty lady.”

“Ehehehe.” Orihime giggled only a *little* nervously, and his compliment made her blush just a little.

“Alright, I still have class in a few minutes, so let’s go.” Ichigo said, “I’ll take you to the others. We’ve got a lot to discuss once I get out of school later.”

“Fine, fine.” Bazz-B ran his hand down his face, “Not looking forward to meeting those five again.” He muttered, but Ichigo’s response was cut off as they both *vanished*.

Tatsuki gaped as she snapped her eyes to the right, realizing she was *feeling* Ichigo about three kilometers away in the time it took her to blink.

Orihime rubbed the back of her head sheepishly, “Ehehehe, any questions?” She asked nervously.

Immediately, a cacophony erupted from their friends as they blurted out questions, their voices having to wait in line to be heard.

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The entire rest of the school day, Ichigo was feeling eyes all over him. He ignored them studiously, trying to focus on his lessons. He did feel a bit of regret for not just moving away when he had the chance, because Michiru the little mouse of the class felt even more terrified of him now than she used to.

The second the bell rang, he avoided everyone except Orihime and Chad, with the three of them vanishing off to Urahara’s. The man in question looked like he wanted to physically grab Ichigo and **Shunpo** him the rest of the way. “They’re all down below.”

“Thanks. Let’s go.” Ichigo said as they descended into the depths, “And thanks for the room upgrade, Geta-Boshi.”

“Ohoho, you’re thanking me, Kurosaki-san? It was nothing.” Urahara laughed cheesily behind his fan.

They landed, and Bambietta let out a sigh, “Fucking finally!” She growled out, “Can’t you just skip?”

He smirked at her, “I don’t know, maybe I should get you girls enrolled too. I’m sure it would be easy for Geta-Boshi.”

“Indeed! I can have it done by tonight!” Urahara exclaimed, a wide grin on his face.

“Don’t you fucking dare! I’ll kill you, asshole!” Bambietta exclaimed, trying to punch him in the arm. He dodged with a short laugh, “Get back here and take your lumps!” She chased after him.

“Ehehe... Bambi-chan looks much happier today.” Giselle muttered to Liltotto, the only one of the girls who wasn’t giving her a much colder shoulder than she was used to. She was still feeling really skittish and not her normal self after the absolute beating Bambietta had given her yesterday. The lack of The Zombie was *really* messing with her.

“Can’t imagine why.” Liltotto drawled, smirking lightly.

Ichigo suddenly turned around and caught a leaping Bambietta, making her squeak as he gave her a sharp spank and carried her over the rest of the way, “Down girl.”

“Why you little-” She growled out.

“Not what you were saying last night!” Candice laughed, making her flush bright red, “In fact, if I remember right, you kept saying-”

“Not in front of Dad, Candi. This is awkward enough as it is at home.” Ichigo said, making Isshin guffaw. He didn’t at all notice Orihime slumping behind him. He set Bambietta down, “So, are we all here?”

“Everyone relevant.” Yoruichi drawled from where she was lounging in cat form. “Tessai is with the kids and your sisters, so we’ll fill him in later.”

“Alright then.” Ichigo said, “For the benefit of those not fully aware of the details, introduce yourselves and your former powers.”

“Former Sternritter E: The Explode, Bambietta Basterbine.” Bambietta introduced herself first.

“Former Sternritter T: The Thunderbolt, Candice Catnipp.” Candice said cheerily.

“Former Sternritter Z: The Zombie,” Giselle said, flinching slightly as she felt Bambietta’s cold gaze on her, “Giselle Gewelle.”

“Former Sternritter G: The Glutton, Liltotto Lamperd. Feed me, bitches.” The deadpan tone the line was delivered in earned a few giggles.

“Is that *‘feed me, bitches,’* or *‘feed me bitches.’*” Ichigo snarked at her, earning a couple surprised laughs.

“Former Sternritter P: The Power, Meninas McAllon.” Meninas continued the introductions.

“Tch.” Bazz-B clicked his teeth, “Fine. Former Sternritter H: The Heat, Bazz-B.”

“His name is Bazzard Black.” Liltotto threw in.

“You bitch...” Bazz-B seethed, glaring at her.

“And who were the Sternritters?” Isshin asked.

“We were Yhwach’s Elite.” Bambietta said, “You guys had thirteen Captains, so we had twenty-six Sternritters to overwhelm you with.”

“Wait, why would you need to overwhelm them?” Orihime asked, looking confused.

Ichigo blinked and looked over at her, “Wait, did you never learn about Ishida’s sad backstory, trademark pending?” Orihime and Chad both shook their heads, “Huh.”

“Well, it all started one thousand years ago-” Urahara began, but Candice cut him off.

“If you want the full story, ask us later.” She looked over at Orihime, “Spark Notes-” heh, “The Lichtreich went to war with the Seireitei a thousand years ago because Quincy annihilated Hollows rather than purifying them, which throws off the balance of the worlds. We were slaughtered and the survivors hid away, swearing revenge once our King regained his health and power.”

“Oh.” Orihime paled considerably.

“Yeah, ‘Oh.’” Liltotto deadpanned, “The Sternritters were his twenty-six strongest soldiers, with the Schutzstaffel being the strongest of the strongest.”

“I am quite eager to hear about all the powers that you know of.” Urahara said, “Perhaps we start there?”

“Nah.” Bazz-B said, “We don’t know all of them anyway, and we can give more detailed reports later.” He glared at Ichigo, “I swore I would kill that son of a bitch for what he did, and I want to know what the plan is for *that*.”

“We still have three years to prepare.” Yoruichi drawled as she padded over to Ichigo and laid across his lap. Ichigo raised an eyebrow, so she wrapped her tail around his wrist and brought it over to her back for him to pet her, “And unfortunately, while the Blood War is an important thing to prepare for, we have to worry about Aizen as well. Last thing we need is to have him just waltz into Karakura and create the Ōken like Urahara suspects he wishes to do.”

Bazz-B growled, “Fine.” He spat out, “But we can deal with Aizen much easier, can’t we? Especially with Kurosaki here apparently getting his huge power up three years early. Let’s just march into Hueco Mundo and take the bastard out.”

Ichigo got a feeling from Old Man Zangatsu that doing that was a *terrible* idea. ‘*What’s up, old man?*’

‘Doing as Bazzard says would be a disaster.’ Old Man Zangetsu replied, “The point of divergence was your fight with Yhwach, and there were **three** people in that fight.”

‘Aizen.’ Ichigo clenched his fists, ‘Shit... Just fucking great. Does he have memories of the future too?’

‘No. He has no real connection to Yhwach, and so would only have gained more power.’ Old Man Zangetsu sounded pretty sure about that.

‘Well, at least there’s that.’ He shook his head, “No. Aizen probably got a power up too. There were three of us in that fight, not just me and Yhwach.”

“Shit.” Isshin groaned, “So much for that idea.”

“You don’t know that, Ichigo.” Yoruichi said, before turning her head up at him, “Or do you?”

Ichigo was silent for a moment, before getting a feel from Old Man Zangetsu. He sighed, “Don’t freak out, you six.” He directed at the Quincy.

“Ehh, what do you mean, Ichigo?” Candice asked him in confusion.

“This.” His Zanpakutō began to glow, and then his spirits were summoned to the land of the living.

“Heh, sup Queens? Thanks for prying that stick out of his ass!” Zangetsu grinned as he plopped down between Candice and Meninas, wrapping his arms around their shoulders.

But the six Quincy were too busy gaping at the *other* spirit to really answer him, “What the fuck?!” They all yelled, yanking their bows out and priming arrows.

“I told you not to freak out!” Ichigo yelled, making them flinch, “Now put those away and sit down.”

“My, my, what an interesting reaction.” Urahara said mildly. “Whatever did you react like that, I wonder?”

“Why?” Bazz-B spat, “Why *wouldn’t* we? You’re Yhwach! I’d recognize that fucking face anywhere, even if you look like you did a thousand years ago!”

“I am one half of Zangetsu.” Old Man Zangetsu declared, “It is true, I bear the face of your former King. However, I am both Yhwach and not Yhwach.”

“How does that make any sense? This is confusing.” Meninas pouted over at Ichigo.

“And *why* does one of your Zanpakutō spirits bear *His Majesty’s* face?” Liltotto glared at him.

“It’s cuz he has a bit of Yhwach’s soul in him.” Zangetsu cut to the chase.

“What the fuck?” Bambietta snarled, “How the fuck can we beat him if that’s the case? What’s to say he isn’t using it to spy on us right now?!”

“Your confusion and distrust are understandable, but misplaced.” Zangetsu said, “After all, every Quincy possesses a piece of his soul.”

That froze the five Quincy. “Wh-what?” Giselle croaked, “What do you mean?”

“Did you never wonder how the **Auswählen** worked, Giselle Gewelle?” Zangetsu turned to her, “What you must understand about Yhwach is that he is a *parasite*. When he was born twelve-hundred years ago, he was blind, deaf, mute, and completely paralyzed. An abhorrent position to be in, regardless of who you are or power you possess.”

“How is that possible?” Candice gaped, “He-we all followed him because of his power! He effortlessly defeated the Queen of Hueco Mundo. He cut down the Sōtaichō of the Seireitei. How could Yhwach come from such awful beginnings?” Urahara took *very* careful note of what had just come out of the girl’s mouth.

“It is because Yhwach possessed a power that very, very few beings possess.” Zangetsu turned to her, “Despite being unable to see, hear, move, or speak, Yhwach survived because of those around him. Any person who touched him found themselves gaining something they lacked. Someone with ill health would recover better than ever. A blind man would regain his sight. A barren woman would suddenly find herself able to become pregnant once more. And so, year by year, decade by decade, this boy was named a Miracle Child. He was even given the name of Yhwach.” He stared deep into her eyes, “-the name of the God the people around him worshipped.”

“But why did this happen?” Urahara realized something *very* special was happening and he was *over the moon* that he was getting a front-row seat to such an important bit of history.

“Because of the power he possessed. As the son of the Reiō himself-” Isshin, Yoruichi, and Urahara let out strangled gasps, “He possessed the ability to share fragments of his soul with others, and impart a small portion of his divine blessing to them.” Bazz-B looked the most upset, his gloves audibly creaking as he clenched his fists, “But the bill comes due. Always.” Old Man Zangetsu said, “Once they died, those fragments would return to him, bringing with them all of their knowledge, abilities, and talents. And slowly, he began to see, to hear, to speak, and to move. That is who Yhwach is. Who he became. A parasite that cannot even *function* normally without the sacrifices of the people around him. Eventually, he learned how to do this *before* the holder of his Soul Fragment perished. The **Auswählen**.” There was a lot more to it than that, but he felt no need to explain it further when it would never actually be relevant for their group.

“So that’s it then?” Liltotto spat, “Can we even *fight* him with his soul inside us? He can just steal our power and souls away at any time! I saw what it did to Robert! He turned the guy into a *skeleton*!”

“Ya don’t seem too bright when yer mad, Lili!” Zangetsu chuckled as he, apparently deciding that Yoruichi had the right idea, got up and sat in front of Meninas, before laying his head on her lap. The poor girl looked so confused, and hesitantly started scratching his hair. As Liltotto growled at him, he smirked, **“That’s where the last few days come in.”**

“Indeed.” Old Man Zangetsu said, “The fight between Ichigo, Aizen Sōsuke, and Yhwach turned against him, both because of their sheer power, and because of the Hōgyoku that Aizen stole interfering with Yhwach’s strongest ability. And so Yhwach attempted to use his power as he never had before and tried to send himself a warning three years in the past. Urahara’s Hōgyoku affected the attempt and sent not only Yhwach’s warning to himself, but Ichigo’s and Aizen Sōsuke’s power back in time. Yhwach considered the risk of Ichigo’s Hollow side to be manageable and attempted to utilize the **Auswählen**. He did not consider that Ichigo was not only the one person on the planet who had the ability to resist it, but was someone who could strike back at him.”

“And why the fuck is that?” Bazz-B snarled, “What makes him so fucking special?”

“It is because Ichigo is *not* a Quincy.” Isshin smirked as he crossed his arms, “Or at least, not *just* a Quincy. He is a Shinigami as well and has Hollow powers on top of the whole thing. And because he’s a Shinigami, he has his own Inner World and could therefore go within and fight off the attack on his soul.”

“That’s it then!” Giselle exclaimed, “That’s why you exist. You’re the fragment of Yhwach inside of him turned into a Zanpakutō spirit!”

“Correct.” Old Man Zangetsu nodded at her, “And because we exist, and Ichigo was able to fight the **Auswählen** off, something incredible has happened.” For the first time ever, Ichigo witnessed him *smile*. “Yhwach cut this fragment loose. He has completely abandoned it, and all of the restrictions I had have been lifted.”

“Good for you.” Candice snarked, “But what about us?! We’re still connected to that asshole!” She then abruptly realized who she had said that to, and flushed a bit, “Uh, no offense.” She giggled nervously.

“No.” Old Man Zangetsu declared, “You are not.”

Liltotto clicked her teeth, “I was right, wasn’t I?” She glared at Ichigo, “More right than I knew. We’re not connected to *him* anymore. We’re connected to our new King, *aren’t we, Kurosaki?*”

“**Ayep!**” Zangetsu threw fuel in the fire, grinning broadly.

“What, so now *HE* can fucking **Auswählen** us instead?!” Bazz-B snarled at Ichigo.

“Fuck you, asshole. I don’t even know how to do that stupid move, and even if I did, I never would.” Ichigo glared back.

“Yeah, Kurosaki-kun would never use such an awful ability!” Orihime glared at Bazz-B, quite uncharacteristically for her.

“I assure you.” Old Man Zangetsu said dryly, “I wouldn’t even waste the time to teach Ichigo. I have much more important things to teach him that he’d actually be willing to learn.” Bazz-B spat on the ground, “Furthermore, the way you seven came to be attached is quite different. Ichigo possesses the same ability to share his soul as Yhwach and Jugram Haschwalth, it is true. That is the true reason that Inoue Orihime and Yasutora Sado gained their power, not the

Hōgyoku.” Orihime gasped and Chad stiffened. The girls were surprised, and Bazz-B glared at the *mention* of his old friend’s name.

Yoruichi mewled, “I’m feeling left out, boya. I thought we had something special!” She turned belly up in his lap, “When are you going to go deep inside me too?”

Several people sputtered out a bunch of spittle as Ichigo gaped, “Can you *not* say stuff like that in cat form?! That’s so creepy with your man voice!” Yoruichi started to howl in laughter, as did Bazz-B, Isshin, Giselle, Bambietta, and Candice. Meninas, Liltotto, and even Urahara were hiding grins. Orihime was nearly passing out and steam was rising from her head. Chad was simply smiling while fanning the orange-haired young woman.

The only one unaffected was Old Man Zangetsu, who drew their attention once more. “But even compared to that, what happened between you six and Ichigo is different. Yhwach abandoned you permanently, the same as he did to me, and did so within Ichigo’s Inner World. Your souls are attached *both* ways, not just in one direction like it was with your old master.” That got everyone to murmur, “You only get benefits from this arrangement.”

“Like what?” Bambietta asked, a little mulishly.

“**Like me, Sweet Cheeks.**” Zangetsu snarked, “**Hello? No one questioning the Hollow getting a lap pillow from the beautiful Quincy?**” Meninas flushed a bit.

Liltotto’s eyes lit up, “So we really *are* safe from Hollows?”

“From the poisonous aspect, sure.” Ichigo smiled at her, “Though it’s not like they can’t *manually* hurt you.”

“Fair enough.” Candice grinned happily.

“Furthermore,” Old Man Zangetsu said, “All six of you will no longer annihilate Hollows due to your connection with Ichigo. Now, your arrows will purify, just as if you were using a Zanpakutō.”

“Oh, sure.” For once, Bazz-B actually sounded completely dumbfounded and was completely lacking in bravado, “Let’s just throw over a thousand years of precedent in the garbage, shall we?”

“After what we saw when you killed Grand Fisher, that makes me really happy.” Meninas said, smiling at Ichigo.

Giselle didn’t care too much about that. Purified or annihilated really didn’t matter to her. But Ichigo obviously looked really pleased, as did his girlfriends (even Bambietta!) so she responded accordingly while moving the conversation forward. “Awesome. But if we still have a soul connection like we used to, why can’t we use our Schrifts or **Vollständig**?”

“To understand that you must understand what the ritual you performed to acquire them actually does.” Old Man Zangetsu told her, “By drinking a small amount of Yhwach’s blood-” Again, despite having heard it once before, several noses wrinkled. Orihime in particular looked a little

queasy. “He etched a Letter denoting a word in your soul, giving you a power based on that word, correct?”

“That’s right!” Giselle chirped and was *quite* eager to have a bit of Ichigo’s blood if that was what it took.

“I regret to inform you, but that was not what it did at all.” All of them twitched in shock, gaping at him, “Did you not find it strange that Catnipp-san can still utilize her electrical arrows? Her **Galvano Blast**? How could she do this without her Schrift?”

“Hey, that’s right!” Candice exclaimed, “It’s weaker than it used to be, sure, but it’s still there! And Bambi’s arrows all have more explosive force than the rest of ours! Even Bazz-B’s kinda feel really hot.”

“Exactly.” Old Man Zangetsu declared, “Yhwach gave you no power at all. He merely awakened the power you already had without knowing it.” He grimly stared at all of them, “For a price, of course.”

All of them twitched, “Why do I have the feeling I’m about to be really, *really* mad?” Liltotto snarled out.

“Because you are an intelligent one, Liltotto Lamperd.” Old Man Zangetsu deadpanned, “The price was a much larger piece of his soul within you. And so, when he used his **Auswählen**, he could steal not only your power, but your very life force if needed. Even without being hit directly, he could still steal enough power to prevent you from using **Vollständig**, though you would not lose the Schrift itself.”

“Fucking son of a bitch!” Bambietta snarled, punching the ground.

“And moreover,” They froze as apparently there was *more*, “Should your power be something that might pose even an infinitesimal risk to him, he could seal that part of your ability away.” They all gasped sharply as he turned to look at Meninas, “Did you never find it strange, Meninas McAllon, that an ability called ‘The Power’ only gave you the ability to punch harder and mildly inflate your muscles?” She gasped as he turned to Liltotto, “Or that your power only gave you incredibly sharp teeth, a mouth that could extend a few meters, and a stomach that could consume endlessly?” He shook his head, “No, he kept from you the most important part of your own ability. Had you awakened The Glutton naturally, you would have been able to digest the abilities of anything you consumed and made it your own. Even Hollow power and Zanpakutō themselves.”

Liltotto was too busy gaping at him, so Candice and Giselle were the ones that said, “Holy *shit*.”

“But why?!” The blonde girl finally blurted out.

“Because he only ever wanted his pawns to be capable of challenging his *enemies*, not challenging him.” Old Man Zangetsu said, “Before he fully regained his power and his greatest ability, he was vulnerable. Had you betrayed him and consumed a piece of him, you would have gained his abilities too. You were likely one of the biggest threats to him in the entire

Wandenreich, though not *the* most. Two of the Schutzstaffel gained their Schrifts of their own accord, and their abilities are amongst the most powerful. It is a shame they are so fanatically loyal to their King.

“You keep talking about this ability of his.” Bazz-B snarled, “Like it makes him fucking unbeatable when he can use it or something. What the fuck is it, huh?”

Old Man Zangetsu looked down at him, “An ability that can only be fought by possessing it yourself, or by having a power of your own that cannot be affected by it. If you are familiar with human world video games, I believe you would call it ‘hax.’” Ichigo snorted at the description, “Otherwise, it cannot be fought. It cannot be planned around. It cannot be *tricked*. And it is impossible to defeat one who possesses it. It is called The Almighty, and that should tell you all you need to know for now. I will say no more on the matter.”

“The Almighty.” Liltotto growled, flashing back to being effortlessly defeated inside the throne room of the Wahrwelt.

“Fascinating.” Urahara snapped his fan shut, “You seem quite sure of that, Zangetsu-san.”

“You would understand, should you learn of it, Urahara Kisuke.” Old Man Zangetsu replied, “But the time for that is not now. Now, you have quite a bit of training to do, and you have Aizen Sōsuke to worry about. He did not regain his memories as he was not connected to Yhwach, but his power? That unfortunately came back to him, courtesy of the Hōgyoku.”

“So, he still possessed it three years from now?” Urahara sighed, “I find that...*quite disappointing.*”

“He fused with the damn thing, Geta-Boshi.” Ichigo said, “Made him functionally immortal, and your seal couldn’t separate the two. The Seireitei sealed him away.”

“Inside the Muken, I’m assuming.” Urahara said, before opening his fan and starting to cool himself off, “So, the seal I’ve been developing for that eventuality worked, but not well enough.” He smiled grimly. “*Challenge accepted.*”

“Oh, and Ichigo.” Yoruichi smirked, knowing this was going to cause a ruckus, “You *should* learn this **Auswählen** from Zangetsu here.”

“Excuse the fuck out of you, you damn cat?!” Bazz-B, Candice, Bambietta, and even Liltotto screamed.

“I assume you have a good reason for that?” Meninas was the only one who visibly kept her cool, because even Giselle was glaring at the cat.

“Anyone who touched Yhwach had a piece of his soul given to them, right?” She grinned, exposing all her fangs, “Well you’re going to be *touching* a whole lot of our enemies soon enough. With your fists and blades. And we’ve got an enemy whose power is literally called the fucking ‘*Almighty*.’ That’s terrifying! So why not put a weapon only you would be able to use to *good* use?”

“What, like stealing the power from our enemies?” Ichigo gaped at Yoruichi. “Like Kyōka Suigetsu?!”

“Exactly.” Yoruichi chuckled, “It might seem nasty and underhanded to you, but when it comes to threats that threaten the very existence of the three worlds, *nothing* is.”

Old Man Zangetsu threw a wrench into that conversation. “While a decent enough idea, it does not work like that.” He said firmly, “If you wish to take your opponent’s power for your own, you will have to find another way to do it.”

“Well, that was a waste of time then.” Isshin chuckled, “So why don’t we all share notes from this *future* of yours so we can at least create the skeleton of a proper plan?”

“Yeah.” Bazz-B smirked, “And we should get some training plans together, because The Heat is calling my fucking name now that I know it was always mine to begin with.”

“That’s the fuckin’ spirit.” Zangetsu grinned, “So hurry the fuck up and share what you lot know about what’s coming so we can leave Urahara to his plotting. I’ve been itchin’ for some action and I’m ready to break my foot off in your ass, Rooster.”

“What did you say about my fucking hair?!” Bazz-B launched at Zangetsu, who howled in laughter as he flipped away from Meninas and led the man away.

Liltotto sighed, “*Children.*” She grumbled, as the rest of them bunkered down and started sharing everything they knew.

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