

Crossing Over

Von konpaku

Kapitel 11: Bad News

In the Village Hidden in the Leaves

After her initial talk with Matsumoto, Tsunade had sent out word to the other Kages and they had agreed to meet up in Konoha. Incidentally when the Hokage and Renji were on their way to the infirmary, the examination was delayed thanks to the arrival of the Raikage and his entourage, including the two remaining Jinchuuriki. Renji was sent back to the group gathered on the training ground, so the Shinobi could be brought up to speed.

On his return Renji explained to the others what had happened and it didn't take long for the new arrivals to join them and back up his story.

In their talk with Tsunade the two Jinchuuriki had agreed to take part in the unofficial observation of the outsiders. Naruto took an immediate liking for Renji, thanks to the Shinigamis open nature. Byakuya on the other hand, he found to be quite suspicious due to the aloof air about him. Of course Sakura-chan considered him to be gorgeous, as she didn't miss to tell him, but for Naruto he was just a grown up version of Sasuke and that annoyed him a lot. That guy even had a similar attitude towards Sakura when he had told her with a mere look that her advances were not welcome.

According to his friends accounts she didn't have luck with the feathered weirdo either. Even though that one had accepted her compliment, he had repaid it by mocking Sakura-chans forehead. Well, that didn't end that well for him and there was still a blue hue on his pretty face and even though Naruto hadn't been there when it happened, he still was quite amused by it. Served him well to underestimate and mock Sakura-chan

Naruto snickered at the thought of his former team-mate hitting one of the strangers.

The man beside him looked questioningly down at him.

"Ah, it's nothing. Just thought of something funny!" He assured Renji and put his hands behind his head.

The Shinigami shrugged his shoulders and accepted that explanation. He liked the kid. Even though he reminded him a bit of Ichigo, did Naruto seem way more fun than the former substitute Shinigami. When it didn't seem like the Hokage would be free to look at him anytime soon, he and some others had agreed to accompany Naruto to get some '*super delicious*' Ramen.

Renji feared that the salesman would be overwhelmed with these masses of people that came with them – aside from him and the kid, there was also Rangiku and the

Suna kids. Rukia had to stay behind with her brother for negotiations with the Kages and was also tasked to inform Hitsugaya about their newest information. Ikkaku had send Yumichika out to get some food for Killerbee and them and had stayed behind with the Jinchuuriki. The rest of them either went home for lunch or with Choji and his friends to get barbeque.

They were nearly at the Ramen place, when all of a sudden the released force of an enormous Reiatsu made its way through Konoha causing people to stop in their tracks.

Realizing who caused the breathtaking sensation Renji's first reaction consisted of one word that summarized his thoughts: "Fuck"

Having a bad feeling and the tingling in his guts that warned him of approaching danger he acted accordingly.

"Rangiku-san! We gotta stop them!" He urged his colleague laying his hands on the stunned woman's shoulder.

Snapping out of her daze she nodded and they started off into the direction of the spiritual pressure, using Shunpo instead of running; not giving a second thought to the people they just conversed with.

"I have a bad feeling." Renji informed her while they raced through the streets.

"Me too"

It did not take them long to arrive at the training ground they had just left.

"Holy cow." Was the Sixth Squad's lieutenant's reaction to seeing the fully released Eight Tailed Demon Ox.

Standing in awe for a moment gave their pursuers time to catch up.

"The hell they're doing?" Kankurou asked rhetorically.

Not getting an answer he just settled for watching the fight.

"How will you stop them?" The Kazekage asked calmly and curiously.

"I have an idea. Renji get Ikkaku's attention." Rangiku proceeded and pulled her sleeves up, preparing to intervene.

"Hai." He simply agreed seeing the woman's determination.

Moving closer to the fight scene he lifted his arms, waved them above his head and he yelled: "Ikkaku-san! Stop it!"

Being about to hit the ox with his weapon straight ahead the other stopped in mid air giving Killerbee the chance to wipe him away with one of his tails, causing the bald man to crash into the ground.

"Outta the way Spiky!" Rangiku yelled from above before she threw the glowing rod of a Hyapporankan at the Tailed Beast.

While thrown it duplicated itself a hundred times and rained down upon the Hachibi pinning him to the ground.

"Hey sista what'cha doing to this mista?!" The immobilized cursed.

"Conceal your powers or..." , the rest of her sentence was left untold as a screeching roar emitted from the far distance.

"Fuck." Was everything Renji could come up with again.

He had jumped aside to not be in the way of the Kidou, Ikkaku was lying somewhere in the grass nearby and Rangiku still stood midair, but all three of them turned into the direction of the screaming Hollow.

It didn't take them long to sense a new, but now familiar Reiatsu nearby the creature,

so Renji's next word, uttered in shock, became: "Whiskers!"

"Go! I'll handle them!" Rangiku urged.

Abiding to the given order he used Flash Steps again to pass the distance.

"What is the meaning of this?" Gaara asked again ready to fight if the other broke the trust they had put into them any further.

"I will explain this later, first we have to conceal this one!" Rangiku assured, turning her attention back to still bound Eight Tails.

Jumping over the rooftops Renji could see the Hollow from afar. Close to it was the orange kid who eagerly tried to defeat the beast by slamming a ball of energy into its face.

Instead of inflicting the usual damage he was used to, his Rasengan and the Shadow Clone wielding it were simply slammed into a nearby building, causing both of them to disperse.

"Damn it!" Naruto cursed, preparing for another attack.

"Back off!" Came a yell as the tall visitor landed on a rooftop holding a red globe in his hand, followed by: "Hado No Sanjuuichi Shakkahou!"

Renji released the Kidou at the beast and jumped to the ground, in front of Naruto, causing the other to fall backwards in the process. The Hollow was enclosed in a cloud of smoke, but was otherwise not injured.

"Stay put!" He ordered the blond shielding him to defend him from the now attacking monster.

He raised his arms in front of his face and gathered his energy to prepare for the incoming attack as a cold "Hado No Yon Byakurai" emitted behind them.

Struck directly through the mask by the lightning bolt the Hollow was defeated in an instant and dissolved into nothingness.

Turning around Renji bowed slightly.

"Thank you, Captain."

"You still have a long way to go." The Kuchiki only replied letting his arm sink to his side again.

"W-what was that?!" The nearly forgotten Shinobi asked the man standing above him, motioning in the direction of the vanishing unknown.

"A Hollow."

"A what?" The kid asked again jumping up this time and starting to get into a rant of that thing being creepy and other things.

"It seems like we have to discuss a few things with the Hokage. Again." Byakuya concluded turning around to walk away.

Looking once more at Naruto Renji tried to remember where he had experienced something similar before. Bringing his thoughts into order he shrugged it off and followed his superior with a "Hai Taicho" leaving behind the now yelling Jinchuuriki.

Back in the Court of Pure Souls

The man was strapped to a chair. The Shinigami that had found him, had left him here and now he was waiting for the interrogation to start. He wasn't sure what he should expect. His captor had assured him that it wouldn't be that bad, but the people they had passed on the way seemed rather mad at him. It felt like hours had passed when a short and slim woman in a white armless coat entered the room. She crossed her arms and stood some steps away from him; eying him in distaste. It took another half an

hour until a second figure entered. That one looked rather weird as his face was painted all in black and he wore white laboratory coat. He was accompanied by a girl dressed all in black with a short skirt. She looked timid and calm and he was still focused on her legs when the other woman suddenly talked, breaking the suffocating silence that had settled in the room.

"Who are you?" She wanted to know.

Startled from his thoughts he looked at her in confusion.

"Who are you?" Sui Feng repeated the question more forcefully.

He looked at her for another moment before he answered in a calm tone: "Jiraya"

"Huh. So the girl was right." The man in the mask concluded scratching his chin with a long fingernail.

"Nemu. The pictures." He ordered the girl in the skirt.

She took out a folder and opened it to reveal several headshots of different people. Jiraya could see many dark haired ones, but also a bald one, a busty and skinny blonde, a white haired kid and a red head that reminded him of the guy that had saved him about a week ago.

"Do you recognize any of these people?" The short woman asked him.

She now stood directly beside him.

"Wouldn't it be nicer if you introduced yourselves first?" He asked in return, feigning ignorance.

He preferred to not whom he was dealing with, before he gave away information.

"You cannot expect courtesy for what you did!" She snapped at him, her body language showing signs that she was ready to strike him, if he misbehaved.

"Now, now, Sui Feng. A little courtesy never hurt anyone." The other remarked.

The woman raised an eyebrow at him, as if he was the last person she would have thought to make such a suggestion, but only received a weird and bright grin and knew that he might play the nice card now, but was totally willing to dissect the man in a heartbeat. This exchange did not go unnoticed by Jiraya either.

"I am Kurotsuchi Mayuri. Captain of the Twelfth Division of the Court of Pure Souls. This is Captain Sui Feng of the Second Division." He introduced himself and the short woman.

"And this is my lieutenant Nemu." He added dismissively with a wave of his hand in the direction of the girl.

"Nice to meet you." Jiraya remarked and flashed them a warm smile.

"Do you recognize any of these people?" Sui Feng repeated her question impatiently. Jiraya took another moment to look at them before he nodded.

"Yes. I think I've met the red haired one." He answered truthfully.

He wasn't sure what to make of these people, but their rank at least suggested that his information were important to them. Otherwise he would have been interrogated by lesser soldiers.

"This one?" She asked pointing at the picture. "Lieutenant Abarai Renji of the Sixth Division?"

She deepened her question.

"Yeaah...I believe that is what the others called him." He answered trying to remember it.

"What have you done to him?" She inquired next, getting even closer to him.

"What do you mean? Has something happened to him?"

"Don't play coy! You know exactly what I mean!" She ordered putting her hands on his

shoulders, looking him straight in the eyes.

"He and the other Shinigami on these pictures vanished without a trace and the only thing lingering behind was a hint of your Reiatu, even though you have never been to Seireitei. So you must have done something to that officer from the outside." She summarized, a tone of treat underlying her words.

Jiraya looked at her with wide eyes and open mouth.

"So it worked?" He finally got out.

"What worked? What have you done?!" The captain demanded to know, while putting her arm to Jiraya's throat.

"I'll explain!" He managed to say through the pressure on his wind pipe.

Back in Konoha

"What the hell was that thing?" Tsunade shouted when Byakuya and other Shinigami were gathered in her office.

"It's called a Hollow." The Kuchiki explained in a calm tone.

"And what the hell is a Hollow?" The Hokage asked next, her temper still flaring.

Byakuya sighed, he feared that this would be a long discussion.

"It's a spirit that lost all its humanity and now hungers after spiritual energy to fill the void of its heart."

"A spirit that is after spiritual energy? And you want me to believe that?" She demanded, crossing her arms.

"Believe it or not. That is what a Hollow is. How it managed to get here, however, I cannot tell, but I'm afraid that our appearance here might have allowed it to enter into this realm." Byakuya explained.

Tsunade looked at him and contemplated his words. They had told them, that they came from a realm where people used purely spiritual energy instead of Chakra and it did make sense that such a creature might have followed them, when they crossed over.

"And what about Naruto? Why did it attack him?" The Kazekage now continued the questioning.

"Hollows usually go for the highest source of Reiatu. As Matsumoto had interfered with the foolish fight between Madarame and Killerbee-san that had attracted its attention, the next target became the other Jinchuuriki."

"It does make sense." Tsunade concluded, leaning against her desk.

"I have sent a message to our people. Until they manage to create a passage for us, I would advice you to forbid any high Reiatu-emitting fights. It is possible that another such creature appears if such a thing happens again." The Kuchiki continued after a moment, eying the Third Seat in disdain.

Every head turned to Ikkaku for a moment. The fight had seemed like a good idea at a time. A possibility to finally let out some steam. And he was really curious about those Tailed Beast. He had not wanted to release a Hollow. Embarrassed by the attention and frustrated at the outcome of his own stupidity, he lowered his head.

"If such a fight cannot be avoided, how can we protect ourselves if even the Rasengan didn't work?" Tsunade changed the topic, drawing the attention back to her.

"The only way to defeat them is to use concentrated spiritual energy, if you have an attack like that it should work. Attacks that have a balanced amount of spiritual and physical energy might slow them down, but in case of the Rasengan we saw that it

simply dissolved as the Reitsu was not enough to cause any damage. Otherwise your only choice is to hope one of us is close by, so we can get rid of it."

"You seem to know a lot about these things." The Raikage interjected.

"Of course. One of our duties is to destroy Hollows." Byakuya admitted.

He did not say that they were basically reaping them, but he hoped the connection would still be lost to the present Shinobi. After all were there seemingly three Kages, who did not know about a contract with or the existence of Shinigami, but for now he wanted to stay on the safe side of this matter.

"How long will it take for your people to get here?" Tsunade wanted to know.

"As I do not know, if the message has even reached them, I cannot say." He admitted in defeat.

He knew their prolonged stay would cause more and more damage to this realm, if not change things that weren't supposed to be different.

The Hokage sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose.

"Is there a way we can send you back from here? No offense, but with the war on our heels, I don't think we can cope with evil spirits as well."

"None taken. I understand your predicament and I assure you that if the war breaks out again during our stay and Hollows partake in its course, we will assist you in diminishing them." He promised, knowing that this would be the interference they wanted to avoid, but it could not be helped.

"Very well then. Maybe we'll figure something out, when I take a look at your lieutenant." Tsunade suggested.

"Come along boy." She waved at Renji who followed her after exchanging a look with his captain.

In the infirmary

Awkwardly Renji removed the shirt he was wearing while Tsunade waited impatiently to examine him; Shizune was preparing the examination table in the meantime. This whole situation was embarrassing for the lieutenant. He felt utterly exposed, even though he knew they were medics, just like the people from the Fourth, but he was also afraid of what they might discover. It was already clear that their predicament was his fault.

When Shizune waved for him to lie down, he obeyed her without complains. Even though she had put a blanket on the steel surface, it felt cold on his skin and a shiver ran down his spine. Right away Tsunade went to the spot where the sign was and traced it with the tips of her fingers. It was a gentle touch, just as he expected from a healer. After a moment she pressed her palms on the spot and Renji felt her Reitsu and something else trickle into his skin, as she examined the sign with her Chakra.

She murmured something under her breath.

"Impossible." Renji at last managed to make out as the Hokage drew away from the table.

"What?" Renji asked craning his neck to look at her from the table.

Her face was even whiter than usual and her hand trembled. Somehow a phrase from Ichigo's world came to his mind: '*You look like you've seen a ghost.*' In his kind of work, he was technically seeing ghosts on a daily basis, not counting the times he looked into a mirror. Renji wanted to say something, but he didn't knew what.

"It can't be." She murmured next, placing one of her shaking hands over her mouth; tears were slowly building up in her eyes.

"Tsunade-sama?" Shizune asked, rounding the table and placing a hand on her masters shoulder.

As she didn't seem to do anything else, Renji sat up and waited for her to collect herself, his feet dangling from the table.

A tear dripped down her face, when she took away her hand to get closer to him.

"How is that possible? How can the Chakra used to create the seal on your back feel so much like someone who's been dead for nearly a year?" She demanded to know, gripping his shoulders and shaking him with nearly every word, more tears streaming down her face.

"How?" She all but whispered when she hung her head down.

"Who was it?" Renji didn't knew what else to do, so he tried to find out if maybe he really had met that person in Soul Society.

"An old friend. Heck, my best friend and the man I loved without realizing it." Tsunade told him in a whisper, still grasping his shoulders.

"What happened to him?" The Shinigami asked calmly.

"He fought to protect Naruto and was defeated." She gulped down the lump in her throat and added "I never saw his body, but we all know what happened."

"What happened to his body?"

"It's somewhere on the bottom of a lake in a different country. No one had had time to go down there to pick him up so we could give him a proper funeral." She told him, her fingers clutching his shoulders.

She didn't look at him, but he could feel her pain very clearly.

"What was his name?" He asked to break the silence.

"Jiraya." She only whispered.

"The Toad Sage." She added in a mocking tone, letting go of him.

"He was ridiculous and infuriating. You should have seen him. Bright colours as a Ninja and than that head plate...horns and oil...pfff...he was a moron..." She went on trying to not think of the sad things, hugging herself with one arm, while gesturing with the other.

"Oil?" Renji interrupted her. "Oil and horns on a head plate?" He repeated in confusion.

"Yeah. You've seen the head bands of the Shinobi, right?" She asked and waited until he nodded.

"He had a personalized one that was grey, bulky and had horns and the word 'Oil' inscribed on it." She explained.

Recognition dawned on Renji and it was clearly visible on his face.

"What? What is it?" She wanted to know, but could not get an answer out of him as they heard a knock on the door.

"Enter." Tsunade commanded after a moment that she had used to wipe away any stray tears.

A Shinobi stepped in and got to his knee.

"Tsunade-sama the Tsuchikage and his entourage have arrived." He informed her

"Thank you" She said and waved him off; he vanished within seconds.

"Our conversation is not over. You stay here!" She ordered Renji by pointing at him.

"Understood." He nodded in acknowledgment.

Then she was off to greet her colleague.