

Crossing Over

Von konpaku

Kapitel 2: The Lion's Den

Chapter 2 – The Lion's Den

In the village of Konohagakure

"Why is the first thing you guys build an academy?" Rangiku asked as she sat down in one of the classrooms.

Iruka had given her some medicine against the headache. Now she waited for his many questions to come as she was certain this would become some kind of interrogation. She knew she couldn't answer all of them. Especially as she simply wasn't allowed to tell certain things to mortals.

Yet she tried to distract him as long as possible so she could make up a good story.

Looking around, the room reminded her of her time in the Shinigami academy. The gradually lined up tables just looked similar to those in Seireitei. With the difference that these benches were only suited for two people and the students here seemed to be much younger than she had been back then.

"We didn't build it, we rebuilt it." The man replied as he sat down across from her.

As she looked at him with an uncomprehending expression he continued:

"The village Hidden in the Leaves was destroyed in a fight. We are rebuilding it in order to regain some normality in this war ridden time...", he looked down, sadness clear on his face.

"Oh, I'm sorry I didn't know!"

"Don't be! Don't be! We are making the best out of this situation. Besides the students don't mind not having classes." He assured her waving his arms.

"You said this is a Ninja academy. That means you're a Ninja too, right?"

"Yes I'm a Chuunin and also an instructor of the ones who are not yet Genin's." He answered proudly puffing himself up a bit.

"Chuunin? Genin?" The Shinigami asked, not understanding him.

"Ah, so you're not used to our rank system are you? Well, let me explain: The first grade as you want to see it is Genin. Every student that passes the exams here in the academy becomes one. The next step is becoming a Chuunin. Which is done throughout the so called 'Chunin exam' that culminates in a tournament, where the most capable in skill and leading abilities are selected. After that a Shinobi is able to become Jounin or a Tokubetsu Jounin, if he or she is specialized in one field rather than being an allround talent. The highest of all ranks however, is the Kage. In our case the Hokage, which is Tsunade – sama, whom you'll be meeting later." He taught Rangiku.

Even though she already had the suspicion that she was held here to figure out whether she was an enemy, she now was certain that he tried to stall time till this Hokage – person would arrive. Pretending that she did not grasp this she smiled and asked: "So that means you're strong?"

Positioning herself to present him two arguments that she hoped would imply her innocence to him, her smile became mischievous.

"A – ah...well...uhm...there are stronger ones, b – but I'm not that bad myself." He answered bright red and awkwardly scratched his head.

"Don't be so meek. You wouldn't teach the kids if you hadn't one thing or the other up your sleeves." Another male interjected.

His face was nearly completely covered by a cloth over his mouth and nose and a similar bird – headband over his left eye. His messy gray hair reminded Rangiku of something Orihime told her about humans touching electricity.

"K – Kakashi – san!" Iruka exclaimed surprised.

"Yo." The man merely greeted lifting one hand, while the other remained in his pocket, a grin plastered on his face.

Even though she could only see his right eye, she could clearly guess his expression from that. The squinted eye reminded her of someone she had lost not long ago. Catching herself before showing the sadness welling up inside her she returned the smile.

"And you are?" Rangiku asked innocently laying her head on her folded hands.

"I'm Hatake Kakashi. Pleased to meet you." He answered tilting his head, never breaking the grin.

"Pleased to meet you too, Hatake – san. " She cooed, obviously flirting now.

"Oh just call me Kakashi. Everyone does so." He offered holding his hands up in defeat.

"If you insist." Rangiku kept her grin.

This man was so similar to Gin, yet so different. Like her lost one he had the silvery hair, still his was wildly standing up and not smoothly covering his face. He had a sly, yet so warm grin unlike the other's coldness. Suppressing a sigh she brought the smile back into her eyes.

"Is something bothering you Miss ... ?" Kakashi asked having noticed the change.

"Matsumoto, but you can call me Rangiku." She flirted again, trying to get him off the track.

"May I ask you what is bothering you, Rangiku – san?" He reformulated his question.

The still reddened Iruka could only stare at the two of them without being able to say a word.

"Of course Kakashi – san. " Rangiku answered leaning back and showing more of her bosom, fanning herself she continued: "It is awfully hot in here and I don't even know where here is and aww everything's so confusing...", she theatrically laid one of her arms over her eyes leaning back even further, leaving both men staring.

"Then we should find out where you are from first." A new voice suggested.

"Hokage – sama!" The Shinobi yelled in surprise breaking out of their trance.

Slowly lifting her arm and looking past where it had been the Shinigami concluded:

"You're a woman!"

"Yes I am and you won't fool me like these idiots. So tell me who you are and what you

want in my village!" She demanded, slamming her hands on the desk. Anger shone in her brown eyes and her deadly expression promised pain if she wasn't obeyed. Her face was enclosed by strands of blond hair and in difference to the men her forehead sported a rectangular point instead of the headband. She wore a green Haori over grey colored robes that barely covered her well endowed chest. Feeling slightly intimidated by the other woman Rangiku sat up straight so she could be seen clearly as well.

In the village of Sunagakure

After she had properly introduced herself the Kazekage and his siblings, as she now knew, led her to the Kazekage's office. There they would probably start interrogations right away. Desperately she tried to think of a suitable story that wouldn't be too much of a lie. Rukia knew she was a brilliant actor, but without a good background all her talent would be wasted.

"How do these buildings hold together?" She asked curiously when she was satisfied with her preparations.

"Ah...that's easy! They just...", Kankurou explained crossing his arms behind his head while he turned his face towards her.

Rukia bit her lip as to not break into a grin. She still had a hard time stifling a laugh at his attire.

"Why do they hold?" He then wondered himself.

"Kankurou you idiot! They hold because they..." His sister tried, but stopped when she realized she didn't know it either, her face turning some shades darker.

By now the little group had come to a halt in the middle of the street, trying to find a solution.

"It is some sort of special clay mixed with the desert sand." Finally the Kage himself spoke in a calm tone.

By this the Shinigami was reminded of her older brother, as he used a similar tone to explain something he himself didn't know, daring people to oppose him.

"Of course...what else could it be?" Rukia agreed after shortly contemplating this.

Her arms crossed she nodded her head and smiled slightly.

Not noticing their brother's blunt lie or rather completely made up answer the others nodded in agreement.

"Yeah makes sense." The cat boy spoke his thoughts.

Catching Rukia's eyes the red haired boy asked through his own, why she played along, but she just shrugged it off with another smile.

Even though he held a high position he seemed young and a bit uncertain, so she tried to assure him that a little lie didn't hurt occasionally. Turning his gaze away he concluded that she tried to be nice so the interrogation wouldn't be too painful.

"We should move on" He then suggested taking the lead.

Advancing through the sandy streets Rukia used this chance to search for the presence hidden from her since she awoke. The usual tingling that accompanied her Zanpakuto spirit was gone. Though it didn't felt like that time when she lent Ichigo her powers, where Sode no Shirayuki had been gone for months. Trying not to dwell on the sadness of her parting with the boy the Shinigami again focused her attention

on her sword.

Calling out her name didn't bring the result Rukia hoped for. There was no reply.

Nevertheless she could still feel the power etched into her very being. Due to the heat she could also see it.

She was surrounded by a slight sheath of snow causing her every step to leave little icy footprints on the ground.

Fearing that she would collapse like she did so long ago in the hot summers of Rukongai she tried to focus the snow to keep her head cool and her body chilled.

In the forest

The Venus flytrap man lead him through the vast forest Byakuya awoke in. However they soon reached a clearing that showed them the base of a mountain.

Looking up Byakuya could see several caves. Wondering if the other's lair would be located in one of them, he tried to think of a way to get there without showing what he was capable of.

"We're here"

"Just up there" The man told him in his different voices pointing to a cave far above them.

Just as he'd done several times before he then vanished into the earth beneath him to reappear some steps ahead. Keeping track of this on the ground wasn't hard, but spotting him between the rocky cliffs proved difficult.

Still Byakuya wasn't fooled easily. While he looked for the best route to take, he contemplated for a moment whether he should use Shunpo as the other was far ahead of him by now.

Glaring at the mountainside as if he wanted it to build a stairway just for him; he resigned himself to his fate and started climbing. Telling himself again and again why he had to do this.

After he had retrieved as much information as possible he would make a tactical retreat to use them to find his sister. And maybe locate the others as well.

Even though he considered leaving the eleventh division's officers behind, at least for a while.

This way he wouldn't have to endure Zarak's complaining and especially not Yachiru's, for that long, but on the other hand his own lieutenant would get less distracted from his duties and training if Madarame and Ayasegawa weren't around.

He definitely wouldn't leave behind his fellow captain. Though that one would probably like to get a vacation from his lieutenant. But he wouldn't leave her either. With Matsumoto staying his already small circle of friends would be reduced to two persons. With one of them being mad at him for abandoning his subordinates and the other still obsessing over her returned crush. No he didn't want to be left alone with them.

As the remaining people all held high enough positions, he didn't wanted to be made responsible for even more gaps in the hierarchy either. As result he would have to search for everyone. Therefore he needed information.

Deep in thought he got to the opening of the cave. As he reached out to lift himself up a hand grasped his and helped him.

"Thank you." Byakuya shortly said fully standing up.

"You're welcome." The man replied.

He wore a white mask that had black circles with three comma shapes, two of them trumped out , leaving open slots for his eyes. One of them had the same comma shapes and circles as the mask, but was otherwise red. While the other only had circles and a violet color.

"Whom have you brought us here Zetsu?" The man asked not looking away.

"I found him sleeping in the forest..."

"and thought we should tell you before we eat him." The creature explained.

"So you are either dumb or brave to follow Zetsu here. I can assure you that nothing you see or hear will ever leave this place." The other then insulted and threatened the Kuchiki.

"I am aware. Though I would prefer dying knowing where I am instead of being eaten in a forest I have never been in before." Byakuya calmly stated not wavering a bit.

"Is that so? Then it seems I would be a bad host to not at least fill this void of information." He suggested motioning for the Shinigami to enter the cave.

"I would appreciate that." He nodded shortly and stepped forward.

He had to be careful as he did not know what powers these men possessed. Knowing he wouldn't be able to call upon Senbonzakura he would have to use only Kidou and Shunpo to fight his way out if necessary. Bracing himself for what would come he entered the cave.