

Crossing Over

Von konpaku

Kapitel 4: Traces

Chapter 4 - Traces

Back in Soul Society

The buzzing Shinigami cleared a path for her to enter the partly destroyed training building. Not even an hour ago it exploded causing several high officers of the Gotei 13 to disappear. It was hers and the head of the Department of Research and Development's duty to investigate what happened.

"Have you found anything useful yet, Kurotsuchi?" She asked her fellow captain.

"Don't rush me." The man retorted his back turned towards her.

Rummaging through the rubber he let her wait for quite some time. Growing impatient she crossed her arms in front of her chest, glaring at his back and stomping her foot nervously. Losing so many people at once was not a good thing. Not this close to the winter war where they already had lost three captains. Yet putting this man in charge might not have been the wisest of decisions in her opinion, as he clearly loved to dwell in the details of his work and let other people suffer through making them wait.

"We found traces of a Reiatu that doesn't belong to any of the officers or even any Soul Reaper in my records." He finally informed her, facing her this time.

Looking up at the weird grin the man always wore she glared daggers at him. They had wasted nearly an hour and all they found out was that they didn't know who did it. Typically.

"Ano...Soifon Taicho? Kurotsuchi Taicho?" A timid voice called out to them.

"Who are you?" The Twelfth's captain barked.

"Kyuubantai Kyuu – Seki.." She started while bowing deeply but was cut off, by a rather sharp: "What do you want girl?"

"Anoo...ma'am...I think...I know that Reiatu..."

"What? Why didn't you say so earlier! Stupid woman!" The tall man snapped at her, lifting his arm to hit her.

"Wait. Explore." Soifon ordered him and then the woman, stepping between them.

"I think I remember that Reiatu from my previous life. It has been so constant in it that I didn't recognize it at first. But this is definitely him." She tried to explain, suppressing a smile, though the others wouldn't be able to see it, as she still held her head bowed.

"If you are that certain, then who is that man and what would be a reason for his Reiatu to be here?" The Second Squad's captain demanded to know.

Feeling confident enough she lifted her head and looked at the captain's face. Not daring to stare into the shorter woman's eyes.

"The man is called 'Jiraya', where I'm from he also bore the name 'Toad Sage' and his Reiatu held traces similar to that of an amphibian, that's how I recognized it. Well, I don't know why it is here, but I'm sure he wasn't here himself. He probably used one of his techniques on one of the officers...but that is just my assumption."

"What makes you think that?" Kurotsuchi asked lifting an eyebrow.

"Well..uhm...I just know it must be him..." She nearly mumbled looking down again.

"What nonsense!" He barked again, ready to hit her again.

"Very well...would you be able to track him down?" The shorter woman asked, holding her arm up to halt him again.

"It might be possible..."

"I don't want to hear guesses! Are you able to do it or not?" The short captain demanded.

"Yes ma'am!" The seated officer saluted and left at once, before the Taicho could scold her again.

It had been quite some time since she had seen the old man, but she was sure that she could find him, by tracking down the trail one of the officers had carried with him. She would just have to find it.

On top of the Kazekage tower

Standing on the flat roof of the Kazekage building Rukia again tried to find traces of her family and her sword, as someone interrupted her thoughts.

"Is something bothering you Kuchiki – san?"

Turning around she bowed slightly: "No, not at all Gaara – dono."

"Then what are you doing here?"

"Well, I could ask you the same question..."

"I asked first, so tell me what is bothering you." He more demanded than asked.

Looking at the sincerity his eyes displayed Rukia sighed. Lowering her head she shared her thoughts.

"I am worried, sir, even though I know I shouldn't be. I'm afraid Renji will get in some kind of trouble as he always does..."

"Renji is that the brother you mentioned?"

"N – no, my brother is able to manage difficult situations! Renji is my oldest friend and he can be pretty retarded at times..." She waved off his question blushing slightly as she remembered all the ridiculous things her friend had done before.

"If I may say so, you remind me of those two." Rukia then revealed.

Her blush only increased through this and she looked down again.

"To what extent?"

"Well, you have the same hair color and ...uhm...your eyebrows are just as weird as Renji's. Other than that your attitude and demeanor is similar to that of my Nii – sama..." She explained unable to look at Gaara.

"So you are telling me that you trust me, because I remind you of people dear to you?" He concluded.

"I guess you could say that..." Awkwardly Rukia scratched the back of her head and smiled at him.

"How foolish..."

With this the Kazekage enveloped the Shinigami in the sand he had prepared behind her. Not being able to move Rukia could only stare at him and curse herself for being caught off guard.

"What – " She tried to speak but was interrupted.

"What are you doing in my village? Are you an accomplice of Madara? Or are you even one of the warriors they resurrected?"

Where formerly his arms had been crossed, one of them now was extended the hand balled into a loose fist. But not just his stance also his facial expression had changed. His hairless eyebrows were creased into a frown and he glared at Rukia awaiting her answer.

"Madara? Resurrected warriors? I don't even know what you're talking about!" Rukia yelled at him trying to struggle against the claw of sand that held her firmly in his grasp.

Searching her mind for a way to get out of this a faint whisper reached her ears.

'Rukia – sama...'

'Rukia – sama stay calm.'

'Just breathe slowly. My ice will rid you of this sand.'

Feeling tears of joy welling up inside her she murmured: "Mae Sode no Shirayuki"

Locking eyes with the young Kazekage she took a deep breath and exhaled a waft of icy mist, freezing the sand grains. All Gaara could do was release his technique.

"As I thought, you can use Ninjutsu." He simply stated having his sand surround him, ready to attack again.

"It's not..." Rukia responded panting.

"Then what is it?" Gaara asked threatening.

"Hard to explain. What did you mean by resurrected warriors?" She asked instead, still in a kneeling position.

"Madara summoned dead warriors to enlarge his powers to get the remaining Jinchuuriki."

"I don't understand."

"We are in a truce currently, but soon Madara will attack again to get the remaining two tailed beasts which are sealed within two Shinobi, called the Jinchuuriki. For this they use dead warriors put into immortal shells." He tried again.

A look of utter surprise on her face Rukia yelled: "What is this place? Why would someone destroy the cycle of rebirth to gain power for a war?"

Shielding her head with her hands she tried to comprehend this. As Shinigami she knew about the importance of souls staying in their rightful place. She also knew about the exception Hollows created, but forcefully bringing a soul back into a realm of the living was beyond her imagination. Remembering a report her Taicho had given her she realized that this seemed to be the reason for the disappearance of several Shinigami some weeks ago.

"This can't be..." , she mumbled realization dawning on her.

Had they been summoned as well? Has one of them lived in this realm before and dragged the rest with him?

No, no it couldn't be. As far as she knew everyone was either born in Soul Society or brought there as child, like she had been. Shaking her head she stood up regaining her composure.

"I am not an accomplice of that Madara – person. I am not using Ninjutsu or whatever you called it." She assured him.

"That technique you used to free yourself from my sand was definitely Ninjustu."

"Would you mind defining Ninjutsu then?"

"It is utilizing Chakra into an attack."

"Well, what's your definition of Chakra then?" She asked, getting more and more annoyed by this.

"Chakra is the combination of one's physical and spiritual energy." Gaara added trying not to show his own annoyance.

"That would explain why you can see me..." Rukia concluded, while standing up.

"Why shouldn't I be able to see you?" He asked confused calming down again.

"Believe me or not, but I am a spiritual being, consisting only of spiritual particles, Reishi, as we call them." She laid her cards on the table, putting her flat hand on her chest, the pose suggesting honesty.

"The ice I used earlier was pure spiritual energy unlike your Ninjutsu stuff."

"And this is the truth?" He asked suspiciously.

"Why should I be lying? Wait don't answer that one." She held her hand out to stop him from interrupting her, causing him to quirk one of his brows at her.

Sighing and letting her arm sink to her side she then offered him: "If you don't believe me, then bring someone with no spiritual powers at all. You will see that he will not be able to see me."

"I will prove that. Now rest we will depart for Konoha early tomorrow." He ordered dismissing her for now.

Carefully Rukia passed him, making sure he wouldn't attack her again. Though she wasn't too sure as to why they would be leaving for another village. As promised he had told her about the different Ninja villages, but she didn't really see a point in this decision. Unless one of the others was in Konoha. Realization dawning on her made her eyes widen and a slight smile grace her lips. Maybe she would see her brother again soon, or even Renji. Feeling slightly relieved she made her way to the chamber they had given her for the night.

Not breaking eye contact until she had passed him, Gaara had watched her leaving the roof. The letter he had written had reached the Hokage sooner than expected and the reply said that she as well had encountered a foreigner – Matsumoto Rangiku. According to Tsunade's suggestion they would bring Rukia to the Hidden Leaf, as not only were their interrogators well known for their talent in extracting difficult information, but the village itself was located more centrally than his own. Giving it a better position for gathering people. Still he wanted to see for himself if this woman was a threat. Staying a bit longer he thought about Rukia's words, trying to find a lie in them.

Earlier in the Hokage's Office

"We received a letter from Suna!" A messenger entered the room and handed her a scroll.

Opening it the Hokage read the Kazekage's message. When turning to the second page she burst out laughing.

"Hokage – sama?" The messenger and Shizune asked in unison before she put down the picture that had been enclosed.

Bunny eared people with neatly written names beside them could be seen on it.

Looking more closely and stifling her laughter she asked: "Could that be that big breasted woman Iruka found?"

"Well it does say Matsumoto Rangiku..." Her assistant murmured quietly.

"I can see that! Bring her here!" Tsunade demanded somewhat annoyed, slamming her fist on her table and shooing them out of her office.

Yet all her anger faded when she again looked at the picture. A snicker passed her lips as she continued with her paperwork.

It didn't take long for Shizune to find Rangiku, as Iruka had brought her to the Yamanaka household, where she would be staying until they found out more about her. To not raise suspicion they also had given her new robes, making her look more like someone belonging to Konoha. Somehow she still had managed to find clothes that displayed her well endowed bosom perfectly. Sighing Tsunade waved for her to come closer.

When Matsumoto stood in front of her table she asked her: "Do you know any of these people?" pointing at the paper.

"Oh my god! That's Rukia – chan's drawings!" Rangiku exclaimed joyfully, picking up the picture and hugging it tightly.

"Where is she?" She then asked.

"She is in Sunagakure. The village Hidden in the Sand." Tsunade explained.

"Is she alright? Is someone with her?" The questions sputtered out of Matsumoto's mouth.

"She seems to be alright. The Kazekage and his siblings found her. No one else was with her."

"Poor Rukia – chan, all by herself..." Rangiku pouted, putting down the picture.

"While I waited for you I thought of something." She informed her.

"And what?" Rangiku asked curiously, a smile on her lips.

"How about I allow you to gather your people here in Konoha?" Tsunade suggested.

"You would do that? That'd be great!" The Shinigami exclaimed happily, bouncing up and down and clapping her hands together.

"So when will Rukia – chan be here?" She asked a bit calmer this time.

"Well, first I have to tell the Kazekage about this, then it will probably take about three days for them to come here. So while we wait for their arrival you can tell me more about your realm."

"Sounds good. Do you know what sounds even better? I'll tell you some of my stories and you tell me some of yours over a nice cup of my good old friend Sake here." Rangiku suggested pulling out a clay flask and a cup, presenting it to the village leader.

"Well, I cannot not accept this offering..." She replied with a grin, taking the cup.