

# Crossing Over

Von konpaku

## Kapitel 6: Gaining Trust

### Gaining Trust

*Between Konoha and Suna*

Towards the end of the day they finally reached the first trees of the forest that started shortly after the borders to the land of fire. Hosting the Village Hidden in the Leaves within its depths. When the branches grew thicker and provided more cover they stopped to make their camp for the night.

"Thank god, I'm out of that filthy sand!" Yumichika praised when he sat down.

Only to hit quite a wet spot.

Jumping up again he yelled: "This can't be true! After enduring so much I have to sleep in a swamp!"

For a brief moment Gaara considered if going back to old habits and just killing him would be a good idea, but decided against it. He was a Kage now after all. And this person, though seemingly unimportant could provide them with useful information later on. Eying the strange – and utterly annoying – man he sat down on a dry root.

"Ayasegawa – san just some more. The village isn't that far away." Rukia assured him, trying to calm him, like she did in the desert.

Even though she knew it was a three days journey from Sunagakure to Konohagakure, she hoped this would help him keep quiet to not strain everyone's nerves even more. Yumichika was someone she barely could be around herself. She was close to snapping at him, but she knew that wouldn't help either.

"I know, I know, but this place is just as filthy as the stupid desert..." He complained again picking at some weeds on the ground.

"Bear with it." Kankurou told him, throwing a mat and a blanket at him.

"Here so you won't have to sleep on the ground." He offered sarcastically settling down himself.

"How generous of you." Yumichika remarked making his bedding as comfortable as possible.

They weren't sure whether he really appreciated the gesture or was simply making fun of the Sand – Ninja.

Temari then lit a small fire to prepare a small meal for them, while the others finished the camp for the night. Rolling out her mat as well Rukia then used her Shinigami robes to form a pillow.

This would be a rather uncomfortable night, but she had had worse.

As he had offered his mat and blanket to the complaining stranger Kankurou would

have to sleep on the mere ground, bracing himself for this he crossed his arms in front of his chest to keep the warmth of his body.

"Take mine." Gaara offered holding his own stuff in front of his brother.

"Gaara, but..."

"Take it. I don't need it anyway." He ordered him this time.

"Thank you." Kankurou reluctantly replied taking his brother's offer.

When everyone had eaten their small meal, Gaara sat down on the root again.

He watched as the others slowly fell asleep one after the other. Normally they would take turns guarding their camp, but whenever he was on a mission or journey with his siblings it would be his self-imposed duty to do so.

Feeling his own tiredness settling in, he tried to fight it off. But as it was harder for him to do so since the Shukaku had been removed, he simply closed his eyes, submitting to his urges. Even if he would fall asleep, he would awake if someone tried to ambush them.

He could hear the steady breathing of his companions, the quiet rustling of the wind in the branches, small animals rushing through the grass. It was a calm night.

The soothing sounds calmed him as well and helped him to find some much needed rest.

But as usual his sleep didn't last long.

Even without the sand demon inside him he still couldn't sleep easily.

He would wake up after short periods of time. Sometimes even more restless than before, looking around frantically. As if the demon still was inside of him providing danger to everyone around him. Other times, like tonight, he would just open his eyes and realize that he was awake and it would take him hours to fall asleep again.

He still just wasn't used to it. Making him one of the best guards.

After several failed attempts he tried what helped him most in his sleepless nights: Taking a walk.

The rustling of clothes and footsteps, accompanied with the feeling of an approaching spiritual energy caused Rukia to slowly open her eyes. Growing up in Rukongai left her aware of her surroundings, even while sleeping. Seeing the young Kazekage walking off of their campground left her curious and suspicious as to why he would do so.

She decided to follow him.

"What are you doing here?" He asked when he finally noticed her, a good while later.

"I could ask you the same thing." She replied mimicking their previous conversation.

"Why did you follow me?"

"I wondered why you left our camp in the middle of the night."

"There is nothing to wonder about. I just felt like going for a walk." He told her ending the topic.

With this Rukia again was reminded of her older brother, but the boy wasn't as skilled in it as him, so she tried again: "What is bothering you Gaara – dono?"

"Nothing."

"I told you my story, now it's your turn to tell me yours. Don't you think?" She stated.

"No I don't think so."

Getting impatient Rukia crossed her arms and leaned against a nearby tree.

"You try to be all high and mighty in order to show people that you are the Kazekage, but you still have a long way to go and to learn a lot of things to make people

acknowledge that." She stated causing him to turn around in surprise.

"Leading a vast amount of people is not always easy. I know that from my brother and my...uhm...other people. You hold a great responsibility for all their lives, but you also have to take care of your own. You have siblings you can talk to about the things on your mind and they should be able to do the same. I am not one of them, but please tell me what is bothering you, so both of us will be able to find some more sleep tonight." She continued her speech walking closer to him.

"Nothing is bothering me." He told her again not looking away.

She somehow had hit a right spot. He didn't know why, but he somehow felt that he could trust this woman, so he added: "I'm just not used to sleeping."

"How come?" Rukia asked confused, tilting her head a little.

"You remember the Jinchuuriki I mentioned last night?" He asked, which was received with a nod.

"I was one of them. Within me the One Tailed Shukaku was sealed. A sand demon that would cause harm to everyone around when I either would fall asleep or lose consciousness. I didn't sleep for as far as I can remember. The Akatsuki removed the Shukaku not long ago. So I am able to sleep again without fearing an outbreak of the beast. But I still can't. I just don't know how to..." He told her, looking down again.

"So your dark rimmed eyes are due to insomnia..." Rukia concluded, adding: "You will learn to sleep. It will be hard, but it is possible." Rukia assured him.

"How would you know that?" He distrustfully asked her.

"I never suffered insomnia the way you did, but I grew up in a place where you had to be aware of what was around you all the time. If you lost your concentration just once you could easily have been killed. It was hard for me to get rid of the habit of waking up at every unusual noise. Even today I woke up when you passed by." She told him.

"So you say you learned how to sleep?" He asked a bit gloomy this time.

"Yes I did." Rukia assured him again and continued:

"You remember the friend I mentioned earlier? We grew up together. Even fearing I might fail I could sleep better knowing I was safe as long as he was with me. And so did he. Taking care of each other helped us through that time. When we finally managed to leave that place and our paths parted I had to learn sleeping again. He wasn't around; I was on my own again. I still feared someone would get me in my sleep as it was imprinted into my very core.

In my first nights in my new so – called home I couldn't sleep one bit. I was scared. I was so scared I didn't even dare to lie down and close my eyes. When exhaustion finally caught up to me I realized my worries had been to no avail. That I wouldn't have to fear anything anymore. As now I would be protected by the people around me, rather than harmed. Especially by my older brother." Pausing for a moment she remembered her first night in the Kuchiki – estate. The fear of the unknown. The doubt that it was for any reason other than as a sick joke that she had been brought into this situation. That she wasn't truly allowed to be there as new member of the Kuchiki – clan.

"I can see that your brother cares deeply for you. He would do everything to protect you. Just like mine. As would your sister. You have to have faith in them. It is hard, but you have to trust the people closest to you. If you are able to do that, then finding sleep becomes easier." She then prodded him.

"When I was a child I trusted my uncle, thought he would be the only one to truly understand and love me. Everyone hated me for what was sealed inside me, but he always assured me that I was his 'precious person'." Gaara revealed, staring directly

into her eyes. After a slight pause he added: "He tried to assassinate me."

Shocked for a moment Rukia then caught herself.

"He had his reasons for doing so. As did my brother when he strove for my execution not long ago." She retorted calmly.

"But you said he protects you?" The boy now asked even more confused.

"He does. As I said earlier he has to take care of a lot of people, just like you as Kazekage. Additionally, he is the head of our clan and has to uphold the rules of both society and the clan. With the sentence put on me through an intrigue I was a shame to the family and the punishment had to be fulfilled. That's what he would have done by himself. Luckily he became aware of the failure in the law in time, so in the end he saved me."

"I don't understand."

"He was torn between his loyalty towards the law and his sense of protection towards me. As he would have upheld the rules to the bitter end he would have had me killed personally. Still, as soon as he realized the rules he had obeyed were faked, he came to my rescue."

She tried again in a more simple way, leaving out her adoption and her sister's promise not to confuse the boy even more.

"All he ever did was to protect me and the thought of me being killed, by his own or someone else's hand was unbearable. He told me later. I now know that he deeply cares for me even though he doesn't show it that often. I told you, you have a similar attitude like him. So for your siblings it is probably the same as it is for me. They know that you care for them. That you love them. But also that you are not able to show it. I'm sure they care for you just as much." Rukia ended putting her hand on his shoulder. Feeling sand between her fingers made her slowly remove it again, still her look was unwavering and she returned his gaze.

"Now let's return to the camp and rest before we move on tomorrow." She then suggested motioning in said direction.

"We probably should do that..." He said with resignation, taking the lead again.

When they reached their camp again Gaara sat back down. Contemplating Rukia's words he felt calmed somehow. He had met another person that seemed to understand him. Without noticing he soon found sleep again. To his own surprise he awoke when the sun started to rise. The conversation had managed to ease his ever racing thoughts enough to pass through the rest of the night. Smiling slightly he waited for the others to wake up so they could continue.

### *On the streets of Konoha*

Strolling through the streets of Konoha, Rangiku was on her way to meet up with Tsunade. They had agreed on telling each other stories about their lives over some really nice Sake.

She knew that neither would reveal everything so she had to be cautious as to what she would say.

Still there was the problem that the rest of her group was scattered across this strange world.

Reminiscing on what she had found out so far, the Shinigami became lost in her own thoughts. When she had first talked with Iruka she had asked him for pins and paper. With these she had tinkered some flags. Each held a drawn symbol for each of her

friends. A bunny for Rukia, a snowflake for her captain, a Sakura – petal for Byakuya and so forth. With a map and the tracking Kidou Kakushitsuijaku she had almost located everyone's position.

As it seemed that the Shinigami arrived in different time intervals, she had found Rukia and Hisagi right away. Yesterday she detected Kira and Yumichika. Early this morning she had found Byakuya and her captain. The last time she had used the technique she had detected Hinamori.

By now Rangiku knew that Rukia was on her way here. Accompanied by some Ninja from another village. Before reaching Konoha she would meet up with Ayasegawa and her brother.

Her own captain was a bit too far away from the others, in some godawful desert. She was relieved when she found Momo – chan close to him. Hisagi and Kira where in an icy region where she would have liked her captain to be. Only Renji and Ikkaku were the only ones left whom she haven't found traces of so far.

When Ino had shown her the village Rangiku had been looking for a quiet place where she could use this and the other Kidou to contact anyone. It wasn't easy for her to skip out of things and get there. She was under permanent surveillance it seemed. For telling Rukia about Yumichika she had used an argument between Ino and her friend to make her exit.

She hoped to soon find a way to get enough time to tell everyone what she knew so far and where they would be gathering. Even though she was on her own right now, she couldn't do it, as two people were still absent.

Grumbling slightly she entered the Hokage building.

Reaching the office she could hear the rustling of paper and mumbled curses over far too much paperwork. Even this realm had to suffer from it.

Joyfully she opened the door and greeted the busy Kage.

"Hello~o"

"Ah, Rangiku. You're early." Tsunade returned her smile, shoving the papers aside.

"But, Tsunade –sama!" Her aide protested.

"There is time for that later, Shizune!" She declared and took out a large bottle of Sake from underneath the table.

Just then a rush of wind ran through the room.

"Tsunade – sama we detected a high amount of Chakra in the forest!" A black cloaked man wearing an animal mask declared right after this, kneeling on the ground before the large desk.

Looking at the unwelcome intruder Tsunade eyed him angrily, then sighed.

"Send a group to investigate then." The Hokage ordered resigned.

Letting her senses drift around the village Rangiku recognized the source of it immediately.

Rangiku also remembered what Iruka had told her about the ANBU Black Ops of Konoha. An elite group of Ninja used for assassinations and espionage quite successfully.

Thinking fast she decided that it would be best to reach those two before the ANBU did.

"I better let you do your job now." She said and waved at her new friend before skipping out of the office.

Noticing the strange behavior Tsunade was left staring at the door in confusion. This was most suspicious. Therefore another ANBU was ordered to her side and followed her swiftly.

As soon as she had closed the door Matsumoto started running and later on used Shunpo to reach the forest as soon as possible.

Not noticing the figure close behind her.

*In a short distance from Konoha*

"YOU STUPID BASTARD! THIS IS ALL YOU'R FAULT!" The bald man yelled at his taller companion, standing right in front of him.

Their noses nearly touching they stared and growled at each other.

Recently the two of them had woken up in this forest. After strolling for a while they had met and ended up in this contest of insults, yells and pride. Trying to find out who would give in first.

Their clashing Reaitsu surrounded them and built an uncontrolled orb enclosing them. Flying into every direction it looked like a red tentacle bubble.

"It's n – ..." Renji started but was silenced as he and Ikkaku were hit violently.

Causing both of their heads to clash together.

"Would you two cut it out?" Rangiku yelled, standing beside them fists raised.

Standing there in disbelief the other Shinigami subconsciously lowered their spiritual pressure.

"R – Rangiku – san?" The red haired lieutenant asked, a look of utter confusion on his face.

They both only held their heads where she'd hit them looking surprised at her.