

“Captain Aizen, please have a seat.” Harry cordially welcomed his former sensei into his office and served tea to the gentle captain of Squad 5.

“Thank you, Lieutenant Harry.” Aizen accepted the tea graciously. “I’m afraid I’m here on a matter of official business. But that doesn’t hold me back from extending congratulations on your well-earned promotion.”

“Thank you, Captain Aizen.” Harry nodded. “Captain Ukitake and Kyoraku briefed me about your inquiry because of the unauthorised release of my Zanpakuto in Seireitei.”

“Ah, I had hoped they would when I passed on the information to Captain Kyoraku.” Captain Aizen smiled pleasantly. “Some mishaps tend to happen in training. Unfortunately, the Central 46 insists on needless oversights even in Squad 1.”

“I don’t mind. Checks and balances make a robust system.” said Harry.

“You haven’t changed a bit, have you, Harry san?” Captain Aizen shook his head with a grin. “Frankly, I was surprised you didn’t insist on joining Squad 6. You’d have fit right in with your strict adherence to the rule of law and procedures.”

“I would have joined Squad 6, but then I thought I’d offend you, Captain Aizen.”

“What do you mean?” Captain Aizen asked in surprise.

“You offered me a spot in Squad 5 during my final year at Shino Academy. I thought it’d offend you if I were to choose Captain Kuchiki’s squad over your own. Therefore, I applied for Squad 1, a squad known for its disciplined Shinigami and power for obvious reasons.” Harry admitted, making Captain Aizen chuckle.

“Harry san, you’d have never offended me. Although, I admit I was a bit disappointed that you chose to turn down my offer. But that was born out of the influence of my curiosity in your case.”

“I have asked this many times, and you’ve always never told me why you think I’m a curious case. I’m sure there must be other Shinigami of European descent in Seireitei in its long history,” said Harry.

“Hmm. Actually, no. You are the first.” said Captain Aizen, but he suddenly looked hesitant before sighing. “I suppose there is no harm in showing you why you are a unique case. Come by my office at Squad 5 barracks on a free evening. As you have risen to the rank of a Lieutenant, you automatically get clearance for certain information.”

“I’ll do that, Captain Aizen.” Harry nodded, as he was curious why Captain Aizen considered his entry into Soul Society a rare case.

“Now, then – we can come to the matter hand.” said Captain Aizen, taking out several papers from inside his Captain’s coat. “The first point of inquiry would be the barrier that you used. You’ll have to demonstrate the barrier you used for your training purposes on the day in question, and you need to produce the permission slip for your Zanpakuto release.”

Harry understood why Captain Aizen always complained about the Central 46 being too restrictive and sometimes obstructive to the working of Gotei 13. They always loved to lord over the Gotei 13 by burying the Squads under paperwork. As a result, most squads had to expand their recruit pool among the Shinigami, searching for those with administrative skills. It was a waste of time and resources when looking from the angle of Gotei 13's primary objective. Tying down the Gotei 13 in the slow-spinning wheels of bureaucracy tend to hold back the Shinigami from tackling the hollows properly in the World of the Living. This, in turn, increases the strength of Hollows in Hueco Mundo and weakens Soul Society in the long run as Seireitei is deprived of more spiritually powerful souls.

Time moved on, and Captain Aizen continued to ask questions while marking down his answers on the official inquest papers from Central 46. Harry looked at the clock, and he saw an hour had passed.

"I told you this would take up a lot of time." Captain Aizen said, being the perspective guy he was without even looking up from the paperwork.

"I know, Captain. It's just that I had scheduled a training session with some subordinates." said Harry.

"I understand. Now, the last question. Was it the first time you unleashed your Bankai?"

"Yes." Harry answered truthfully.

"And that's it. We're finished here." said Captain Aizen, setting down his pen. "I'll be submitting the report to the inquiry committee of the Central 46. They'll review the report and summon you to take your testimony in... let's see...hmm...a decade from now or maybe twenty years."

Harry stared at Captain Aizen incredulously.

"Wait! A decade?" Harry asked with wide eyes.

"This is a minor offence, Harry san. The Central 46 likes to interfere, but they also don't act arbitrarily against a Lieutenant ranked officer of Gotei 13 who achieved Bankai recently. You also had taken permission for training with your Shikai."

"But still... a decade?"

"They'll look for any previous violations. I know you have a squeaky clean record, and therefore, they'll give it a decade or two for you to become sloppy to lord it over you during the trial." Captain Aizen shrugged, holding out the papers for Harry to sign.

Harry went over the report quickly before signing the papers one after the other.

"All right then." said Captain Aizen, standing up with all the papers in hand. "We both lost an hour of valuable time, and a decade from now, you'll be bored out of your mind as you wait outside a sessions court in the Central 46."

Harry escorted his former sensei from the Academy. Many of Captain Aizen's former students in the division came by to greet the gentle Captain of Squad 5 along the way. He

had no difficulty admitting Captain Aizen taught him the proper Kanji and calligraphy, not to mention that the Squad 5 Captain was highly resourceful. He even developed his administrative skills thanks to Captain Aizen.

Sometimes, Harry even saw a reflection of himself in Aizen. He got the feeling the Squad 5 Captain was a lonely soul.

‘Perhaps Captain Aizen focuses on helping others to escape from that pit of loneliness.’ Harry thought.

“Don’t forget what I told you. Come by my office when you have free time.” said Captain Aizen before speeding away using Shunpo.

Harry stared after the Captain of Squad 5 for a time before shaking his head. Taking a deep breath, he returned to the barracks as he had to test out another group that day. He suspected it was going to be another disappointing bout.

But a few minutes into the fight, Harry felt an iota of hope for Squad 13.

“Sokatsui.”

A wave of blue flames rushed towards Harry, making his eyes crease. His eyes found the onyx eyes of Rukia Kuchiki.

‘Hmm. Promising.’ Harry thought before disappearing using Shunpo.

He reappeared a few paces away from Kuchiki with a spell of his own to return fire. But before he could do so, his senses picked up on a blade coming his way. Harry flipped upside down mid-air, dodging the attack but also keeping track of Kiyone Kotetsu's movement.

‘Not bad.’ Harry thought, slightly impressed by the third seat’s speed. ‘But not enough.’

The gathered spirit energy on the palm of his hand fluctuated as he shaped it into the spell he had in mind.

“Hadou 11: Tsuzuri Raiden.”

The layer of spirit energy on his palm turned into static electricity. He reached out and touched Kiyone’s head. The static pulsating on his palm immediately passed through Kiyone’s body, leaving her to fall face down, unconscious.

The moment Kiyone’s body hit the floor, he was surrounded from all sides by her team, all trying to stab him with their swords save for one. Rukia Kuchiki was nowhere to be seen.

‘Above.’ Harry thought as he felt the air displace right above him.

Harry immediately surrounded his body with more spirit energy. With a sharp tug, he released a portion of his power in the form of a defensive vortex infused with a subtle kido spell that allowed him to manipulate the air. A torrent of spirit energy infused with a whirlpool of wind was created around him, blowing away all his opponents.

“Excellent teamwork. Using Kiyone san as bait was a daring move but acceptable under the current circumstances.” Harry commented offhandedly.

His fellow Squad 13 Shinigami grunted and screamed as violent gales of wind swept them away. Harry could hear the muttering coming from the crowd watching the fight. Most of them were under the impression that he was using the power of his Zanpakuto. Harry had to hold back the urge to shake his head when he heard such comments being passed among his subordinates. It was not as if he was touching his Zanpakuto, nor was it in a released state. His Zanpakuto was in its sealed form, strapped to his back for all to see.

‘If they can’t even understand that, then Squad 13 is doomed. I’m doomed.’ Harry thought.

Harry dodged a rope of energy that tried to ensnare him thrown by Kiyone san. A third seat was not supposed to be this weak. He was frankly disappointed in Kiyone, and it only became apparent just how screwed Squad 13 was compared to other divisions. He disappeared using Shunpo, sneaking past Kiyone’s guard and punching the petite brown-haired woman on her stomach, knocking the wind out of her. He immediately followed the punch by striking the back of the woman’s neck with a sharp jab, leaving Kiyone unconscious.

Harry spared a glance at the unmoving form of Kiyone, holding back a snort.

‘So weak. This is pathetic. She didn’t even release her Zanpakuto.’ Harry thought before turning his attention away from Kiyone to Rukia Kuchiki, who was busy gathering a dense amount of spirit energy in her palm.

“Hadou 31: Shakkaho.”

A red ball of energy punched through the air, and Harry smacked it away with the back of his hand while coating it with far more denser spirit energy. The Kido splashed next to a group of Shinigami, trying to sneak up on him. The resulting explosion blew away the last few Shinigami, leaving Rukia Kuchiki as the sole Shinigami standing.

“Dance, Sode no Shirayuki.”

Harry observed Rukia Kuchiki’s Zanpakuto assume Shikai form, but he could feel her spiritual pressure become dull once it crested over assuming the released state.

“I see.” Harry muttered, looking into the eyes of Rukia Kuchiki, seeing someone who feared conflict.

He knew the reason why there was no conviction and only hesitation in Kuchiki’s eyes.

“Bakudo 61: Rikujokoro.”

Six wide beams made of spirit energy slammed into Rukia Kuchiki’s waist, holding the petite woman in place. Using Shunpo, Harry appeared right next to Kuchiki and knocked her Zanpakuto out of her hands. Harry got the urge to say something but held off on that front. He knew Kuchiki san suffered from guilt, which weighed her down and affected her abilities. Standing close to Rukia Kuchiki, he could feel the conflict that was raging inside her spirit

energy. Subconsciously, Kuchiki san was suppressing her own power. He could feel the power within her collapsing in on itself as a portion of her power was fighting off the other. It was almost fascinating to watch as he had never seen something happen so visibly in anyone.

Despite the self-imposed limits, Harry saw Rukia Kuchiki as the most competent Shinigami among the seated officers so far. He hoped that perception would change and someone better would come along in the days ahead.

“It was a valiant effort. Your teamwork was good, but it could be better.” said Harry once the timer reached one hour.

Harry watched the downtrodden faces perk up at the minor compliment he gave. As he allowed the rest of his subordinates to help the injured, Harry understood his work in Squad 13 would only be far more difficult than he initially imagined. At least, he could see the Shinigami in Squad 13 showed remarkable teamwork skills.

‘Perhaps. I can train them better by splitting them off into different teams.’ Harry mused.

The next few days, Harry engaged with different teams in the training yard until he finished facing off all teams. There were no hidden gems as he had desperately hoped in the other teams he tested. However, he was almost certain Rukia Kuchiki deserved a promotion to the spot of third seat. But he held off on that particular change for the time being. Harry wanted to make sure Rukia could improve, and he wanted to give Sentaro and Kiyone a chance despite their lack of Shikai. While juggling with the training and reorganisation of Squad 13, he also had to spend a considerable amount of time and energy on focusing the Squad on their duty of protecting the Jureichi and patrolling the nearby human settlements close to Karakura Town.

To make matters worse, there were increased hollow appearances close to Karakura town, which gave his squad a busy schedule on most days. Squad 12 was also playing a game of cat and mouse on his request to upgrade the current monitoring devices in Squad 13’s possession. Harry was almost sure that he’d have to take up the matter of updating their gadgets with Squad 12 Lieutenant Nemu. While Harry found Captain Kurotsuchi Mayuri’s supposed daughter a little off-putting, he had to admit the woman was effective in her job.

All of these different problems kept him from taking Captain Aizen's offer to chat about his uniqueness among the Shinigami populace of Seireitei. When he finally got some free time, Harry went straight for Squad 5 barracks to meet Captain Aizen. While inquiring about Captain Aizen’s whereabouts to a Squad 5 Shinigami, he was interrupted by a hell butterfly sent by one of his division members. Harry immediately abandoned his plans to visit Squad 5 and returned abruptly to Squad 13 barracks.

“What’s happening?” Harry asked, rushing into the communications wing of the squad.

“We’ve just received a line of communication from Squad 12, sir. One of our teams sent a distress signal while on patrol near Soyoto city.” the chief communications officer Ahmya Hori reported immediately.

"A distress signal? What did they encounter, Ahmya san?" Harry asked the distressed communications officer of the squad.

"A Menos Grande, sir." said Ahmya, looking ready to faint.

"A Menos Grande in the World of the Living?" Harry whispered to himself in confusion.

It was not normal for a Menos class hollow to appear in the World of the Living. Even spiritually awakened humans were not enough to satisfy the hunger of a Menos, so he couldn't fathom why a Menos would appear in the middle of a city in the World of the Living. It was not as if Hueco Mundo had a shortage of Hollows.

"Are there any seated officers among the team?" Harry immediately asked.

"Yes sir. Rukia Kuchiki."

"Kuchiki! Release the limiter seals placed on them. Tell her she is free to use her Shikai." Harry immediately ordered.

"Yes, sir."

Ahmya immediately went to work and conveyed the orders to Squad 12, from which the communications were sent to the team.

"Squad 12 has lifted the limiters, sir, but Kuchiki san is not using her Shikai." Ahmya said confusedly, staring at the readings on the monitor and noticing no major fluctuations in the spirit energy of the team.

"What is she doing?" Harry muttered, frowning at the screen.

Suddenly, an alarm blared as one of the team members rapidly lost their spirit energy. They could barely act upon it when another shinigami in the team lost their spirit energy almost completely, and after a few seconds, all readings about the second shinigami vanished.

'Dead.' Harry thought grimly.

"Request the Kido Corps to open a Senkaimon to Soyoto city." Harry ordered, seeing no other way to salvage the situation. "Tell them I'm on my way."

"Yes, sir."

Rukia was frozen in shock, and worst of her hands shook, unable to make a move against the monstrous hollow that crushed a colleague. Her sword was drenched in the blood of her fellow squad member, as was her whole body. She could feel the blood running down her face, and she remembered that dreadful day when her sword claimed the life of her friend and mentor, Kaien Shiba.

The Menos Grande gathered a massive red spheroid of energy in its gaping maw.

'Cero.' Rukia thought, staring at the massive ball of energy with wide eyes in fear.

Her hands continued to shake, and her legs refused to move as blood dripped down her hands and face. Two of her comrades were crushed beneath the giant legs of the Menos. She could hardly feel the spiritual pressure of those two. The spiritual pressure bearing down on her from the Menos strengthened as the Cero was fully formed. With a blast of air, the Cero was released from the gaping maw of the Menos, and Rukia resigned herself to her death.

The expected attack didn't touch her. Instead, Rukia saw her Lieutenant hold back the Cero with his Zanpakuto. She could see the powerful reitsu of Lieutenant Harry splitting the Cero away from their position. The power of the Cero collapsed buildings, blowing away the vehicles and turning over the road, gauging a deep scar on the earth.

"L...Lieutenant Harry sama." Rukia stuttered, seeing her Lieutenant standing before her with glowing green eyes.

"It is our sacred duty to kill the hollows and release the souls entrapped in their monstrous form to Soul Society to partake in the cycle of reincarnation. A Shinigami who fears blood and killing is useless for the Gotei 13 and the duties that entail in keeping the balance between the spirit worlds."

Rukia's attention immediately returned to the Menos as it let out an enraged howl. It pumped more power into the Cero, trying to drown them in its blasting power. She was startled when Lieutenant Harry placed his free left arm against the blade of his Zanpakuto and started a familiar chant.

"Scattered beast bones! Spire, Crimson Crystal, Steel Wheels! The wind if it moves, the sky if it stops, the tone of the spear striking fills the lone castle!"

"Hadou 63: Raikouhou!"

A massive bolt of yellow lightning gathered at Lieutenant Harry's sword before it skewered through the Cero like a long spear. The Cero was cut away cleanly in half, and the bolt of lightning would've skewered the Menos if it hadn't taken a step back. Instead, a long gash opened on the mask of the Menos Grande, making it howl in pain.

Rukia felt the air shift as the Menos charged another Cero in its mouth. Her ears picked up the distinct sound of a sword being unsheathed. When she looked at her Lieutenant, her eyes fell clearly on her superior's Zanpakuto for the first time. Unlike the usual Zanpakutos held by the Shinigami in Seireitei, Lieutenant Harry was holding a ninjato with a black handle and a round gold guard.

Her eyes widened as Lieutenant Harry disappeared from her field of vision. The next moment, she saw Lieutenant Harry standing behind the Menos with a bloody Zanpakuto. The Menos let out a howl as its giant legs were cut off at its ankles, which made it fall face-first into the ground.

'So fast and strong.' Rukia thought, impressed by the speed and power of her superior officer.

She had heard rumours that Lieutenant Harry was as strong as a Captain, and the Head Captain wanted Lieutenant Harry to replace Captain Ukitake as Captain of Squad 13. Of course, she had junked the whole rumour as nothing but fanciful claims made by some airheads, but she could see the rumours about Lieutenant Harry's powers were not unfounded. Quickly cutting down a Menos with an unreleased Zanpakuto was no easy feat.

Rukia gasped when the Menos Grande turned its enormous head to the side and tried to use the cero against Lieutenant Harry. But Rukia watched transfixed as her superior merely pressed his forefinger against the white mask of the giant hollow.

"Hado 4: Byakuri."

A bright blue bolt of lightning punched through the mask of the Menos Grande, abruptly cutting off the cero being charged in its mouth. The Menos remained unmoving for a moment before it dissolved into reishi.

"There are only two forms of battles, Rukia san. The righteous battle and the unrighteous battle. Those who pursue unrighteous battles seek pleasure in the suffering caused by the battle. But those who fight the righteous battle fight out of duty."

"We Shinigami are engaged in a protracted war against the Hollows for the sake of keeping the balance and guiding souls to Soul Society. When you raise your sword in battle, remember that you are doing a service to the soul you reap. In the end, nothing truly dies in our world. Life as we know it is a constant exchange of energy and nothing more."

Rukia stared at the impassive green eyes of her superior as she felt his judging eyes bearing down on her with force.

"Hai, Lieutenant." Rukia stuttered out.

"Good. If I see you hesitate again while discharging your duties as a Shinigami, I'll request Captain Ukitake to reassign you to the Kido Corps or Squad 4."

With that final warning delivered, Rukia watched her superior open the Senkaimon. The gateway to Seireitei opened with a bright flash of light with Hell Butterflies crossing through the portal.

Rukia became sombre, realising her Lieutenant was considering transferring her to some of the 'safer' divisions in the Gotei 13. She wondered whether her brother was involved as it smacked of Byakuya Kuchiki's idea.

"Don't get me wrong Rukia san. You are a talented Shinigami. All you need to do is find yourself and regain your resolve. A Shinigami without confidence in her own abilities is a danger to herself and those around her." said Lieutenant Harry before walking into the Senkaimon without waiting for her.

But the Senkaimon didn't close down as Squad 4 members, escorted by Kiyone san and other members of Squad 13, came to clean up the mess left by the Menos Grande.

"Rukia chan. Are you all right?" Kiyone asked in concern.

"I think so." Rukia mumbled, her mind elsewhere as she had much to think about.

"My apologies, Captain Aizen." Harry gave the Squad 5 captain an awkward smile. "There was an emergency situation that held me up."

"It's quite understandable," said Aizen, waving away Harry's apology with a gentle smile. "From what I heard from the Kido Corps members, Rukia Kuchiki was somehow involved, and you went hard on Kuchiki san."

"Kuchiki san has some issues that hold her back in discharging her duties despite her rank." Harry was careful not to reveal too much as he didn't want to divulge details pertaining to a squad member under his command to another captain.

"I see. Kaien Shiba's unfortunate demise continues to haunt her." Aizen said with pity. "Might I suggest something, Harry san?"

"Of course, Captain." Harry nodded.

"It'd be better if Kuchiki san is delegated to the duties of unseated officers. Having her deal with low-level hollows and some time away from Seireitei might do her some good to rediscover herself. We have so few talented Shinigami in the Gotei 13, and I'd rather not see a talented Shinigami like her wasted away," said Aizen.

Harry nodded in understanding. The Gotei 13 was already understaffed. Losing a talented Shinigami like Rukia Kuchiki, a skilled kido user who achieved shikai, would be a hard blow. In the never-ending struggle between Shinigami and Hollow, the Hollows had the advantage in numbers and strength. Even the most basic hollows were far too powerful compared to the average Shinigami. The numbers and the ferocity of even the average hollows always leave the Gotei 13 in a disadvantageous position. The only advantage the Gotei 13 had was in the Captains and Lieutenants. Their skillset and overwhelming power kept Soul Society in a strong position over the innumerable Hollows of Hueco Mundo.

"I agree, Captain Aizen. I'll have a word with Captain Ukitake. He knows Kuchiki san better than anyone else." said Harry.

"Of course. Now, coming to your matter. I promised you some information, did I not?" Aizen mused aloud before taking a thick folder from a nearby table and offering it to Harry.

"What is this, Captain Aizen?" Harry asked.

“It by no accident that you were admitted into Squad 1, Harry san. You must’ve figured out by now that Academy students do not get directly recruited into Squad 1. You were offered the post because it was easier for the Head Captain to keep an eye on you under the orders of Central 46.” said Aizen, making Harry freeze.

“Why? What did I do to warrant such scrutiny?” Harry asked with a touch of disbelief.

“You didn’t do anything, Harry san. You must have understood by now that the Gotei 13 rarely sends any Shinigami to Europe. And those souls that come from beyond Asia are tracked by Squad 12. Your soul went completely unnoticed by Squad 12 despite your power. Naturally, this raised a lot of concern.”

“But I don’t understand. What does my European ancestry have to do with...”

“Everything. Either you were a Quincy spy or an anomaly born with a special power hidden deep inside your soul, which allowed you to enter Soul Society without the need for Konso.” said Captain Aizen, talking over what Harry was saying.

“Quincy? Special power in my soul?” Harry spluttered. “I don’t understand.”

“Everything that you need to know is in the file Harry san. Read it carefully, but don’t show it to anyone else. After you’ve read everything, you may ask as many questions as you want.”

Harry stared at the thick folder Captain Aizen gave him. He couldn’t help but gulp in fear as he worried about what he might find in the folder. But Captain Aizen didn’t say anything more, and Harry was allowed to take the folder to Squad 13’s barracks.

Once Harry started reading the files inside, he understood why Captain Aizen had asked him to keep the folder discreet. Contained within the files were shocking information about the Quincies and their origin, as well as another group of humans that developed extraordinary powers thanks to the Reio. The more he read about the humans with special powers, the more amazed he became. He had studied about the Quincies in the Shino Academy just like any other student. But their origins were vague and confined to pure speculation. The Academy also taught nothing about humans blessed with fractured parts of the Soul King hidden in their souls.

Harry hadn’t even known that parts of the Soul King’s body were lying around in random souls.

For Merlin’s sake, he had hoped to gain an audience with the Reio sometime in the future, who was supposed to be an Omnipotent God, the creator of all spirit dimensions. It was a shocker to know that his one hope of making sense of his unique situation was a corpse with most parts missing. He searched high and low inside the file for additional information on the Reio but could not find anything substantial.

However, he found the surveillance reports attached to a file with his name conducted by the Onmitsukido during his Academy days. Several charts were also drawn up on incisive scanning of his spiritual pressure. All the available charts showed the expected results in his eyes.

'There could be more data than what the files hold.' Harry thought.

To be honest, Harry was flummoxed with the whole reveal. He didn't know what to think, and then there was the growing fear in his mind that he could be shipped off to Squad 12 for experimentation or the Central 46 could straight up kill him if they deemed him a threat. Strangely enough, Harry could understand the concerns of Central 46. They were the governing body of the Soul Society, and their decisions were made by a popular vote. The many factions that comprise the Central 46 always engage in a tug of war in most cases. The only issue they take seriously as a united front without engaging in politics would be the safety of Seireitei. The Quincies were killed off because their power destroyed souls instead of purifying them. The humans with parts of the Reio, however, spooked him. Only he knew he was not part of either group.

Taking a deep breath, Harry engaged in a meditative trance that allowed him to connect with his Zanpakuto. He did not need to repeat what had happened, as his Zanpakuto already knew because she was a reflection of his soul.

"It could be a test, Harry." she said from the depths of his soul.

"Hmm. Are you suggesting that Captain Aizen came forward with the file under orders from the Head Captain or the Central 46?" Harry asked.

"No. It's merely suspicious that Aizen gave you information that should not be in the hands of a newly charged Lieutenant. The Gotei 13 is a military organisation, not a school like Hogwarts. Here, everything is done for the benefit of keeping the balance of spirit dimensions. I hope you haven't forgotten that, Harry."

"Of course." Harry muttered, his mind suddenly recollecting a lesson he was taught in the Shino Academy and then by the Head Captain himself before he was given a seated position in Squad 1.

"Seek no beauty in battle. Seek not beauty in death. Consider not your own life. If you wish to protect that which must be protected, strike while your opponent's back is turned."

Harry remembered those words keenly and tried his best to live by those words while serving in the Gotei 13.

"I understand what I've got to do now. Thank you." Harry whispered to the depths of his soul.

"Be careful, Harry. It'd be a shame if I can't share my garden with you." his Zanpakuto spoke softly.

Harry returned from the Jinzen trance and summoned Kiyone.

"How may I serve Lieutenant Harry sama?"

"I want you to seek out Lieutenant Sasakibe of Squad 1 and submit a request for a meeting with the head captain as soon as possible." Harry ordered.

"Yes, sir." Kiyone nodded before leaving his office.

Harry sighed and looked outside his office into the training yard of Squad 13. He could see some squad members training diligently in kido while others were training in zanjutsu.

'I guess I should join them in training.' Harry sighed, leaving the paperwork on his desk a pass.

It didn't take long for Kiyone to return from Squad 1 barracks with an appointment for a closed-door meeting with the Head Captain. Harry was more than happy that the Head Captain gave him an audience in the evening. Now, he had to ensure nothing was bothering him during that time.

When the time finally came, Harry left the Squad 13 barracks, giving the supervision of the division to Kiyone san as Captain Ukitake was under the care of Captain Unahona.

The sound of footsteps echoed in the expansive chamber, but Aizen didn't look up from his observatory. The footsteps drew ever closer until it finally stopped a few feet behind his back.

"Oh my! Now I see why you were ignoring me, Captain." Gin Ichimaru said with a thin smile as he looked at the screen showing a familiar-looking home in Karakura Town.

"What's it, Gin?" Aizen asked patiently, never taking his eyes off the Kurosaki home as one of his major experiments was living under that roof.

"Your ploy with Harry kun didn't pan out. Lieutenant Harry has sought a meeting with the Head Captain." said Gin.

"Hmm. That's disappointing." Aizen commented placidly.

"Should I take care of Harry kun?" Gin asked eagerly.

"No. Let Harry san become another bootlicker of Seireitei. I had anticipated something like this happening when the Captain Commander assigned him as the lieutenant of Squad 13 instead of the Kido Corps Commander, as I had requested." said Aizen, waving his hand dismissively.

"It's a shame though. Harry kun would've been a nice addition to our group." Gin said, the smirk never leaving his face.

"Yes, indeed. His fast-paced development intrigued me until I found out what he truly was. It'd have been quite ironic if he was by my side as I ascend to the heavens." Aizen muttered, his eyes perking up when he saw Ichigo Kurosaki stepping out of his house on the screen.

"Still, leaving him alone feels like a mistake, Captain Aizen. He could threaten your plans, and he has a scary growth rate, as you said." Gin warned, his trademark smirk dimming a little.

“True. But I’m intrigued whether he’ll be strong enough to challenge me.” Aizen admitted.
“Besides, let’s give Harry san a lifeline for now. After all, he served our interests when he assigned Rukia Kuchiki to Karakura Town as we wanted.”

‘Ichigo Kurosaki. I hope you’ll develop as I envision.’ Aizen thought, looking at the orange-haired teen with interest.