

[Third Person. POV]

[The Palace of a King.]

Far, far away, within the profound depths of another reality, sat one man, a man feared by most due to his unspeakable power, a man known as The Monk Who Calls the Real Name, Ichibe Hyosube.

The Leader of the Zero Squad, a being whose existence was intrinsically woven into the fabric of this spiritual realm, sat in his palace, meditating in complete silence.

Around him, a full moon hung low in the sky, casting long, menacing shadows that snaked their way through the desolate landscape of his palace. Wind howled through the walls, creating an eerie symphony that matched the bleakness of the world, as flickering lanterns casted long, undulating shadows on the intricate tapestries adorning the walls of the temple.

The eyes of the Monk were closed, and his spiritual pressure was focused, both an indication of his mind journeying into realms unseen as the very air around him thrummed with the

raw, subdued power that radiated off his form, pulsating with the rhythm of the universe itself.

An eerie silence hung heavily around him, broken intermittently by the soft fluttering of an ancient parchment caught in a nonexistent breeze.

Suddenly, a smile crept upon Ichibe's face, like a serpent slithering out of the dark. It was not a warm, comforting smile. It was dark and cold, hinting at a realization only he was privy to. It held a threat, a promise, and a prophecy all at once.

His eyes remained closed, but it was clear that he had seen something. A vision, perhaps, something profound enough to warrant such an uncharacteristic reaction.

A chilling wind blew through the open window behind him, whistling eerily, as if acknowledging the shift in the future that only he had witnessed.

"It seems the future has changed, how interesting," The Monk mused, stroking his thick beard as he gazed up at the sky, seeming to take in every detail. "How very interesting, indeed."

Ichibe's smile lingered in the darkness of the night, his gaze focused, not on the empty landscape of Soul King's Palace, but

on the unseen, uncharted paths of the future that had just shifted before him.

"The fabric of fate is such a fascinating thing," Ichibe chuckled heartily, letting out a small sigh. "It's threads twist and turn, bend and break, constantly weaving a new tapestry. And now, an unexpected change...a deviation from the pattern I have always seen...how stimulating."

As the Monk continued to muse about the change in the threads of destiny, the doors to his palace groaned open as the figure of Nimaiya Ouetsu stepped through.

Ichibe spun around in delight, a bright smile beginning to form on his face. His greeting was cheerful and warm, and he raised his hands in joy as if looking for a hug. "Hoho~ Nimaiya, always glad to have you visiting!"

Nimaiya raised a thick eyebrow, stepping forward. "Visiting? Are you hallucinating my brotha? I only left my personal paradise because ya summoned me, but that's a-okay, because now that I'm here, the real party can begin~" The creator of the Zanpakutos replied, doing a dramatic pose for unknown purposes. "So, what do ya got for your old pal, big guy?"

Ichibe threw back his head and roared with laughter, slapping his thighs with such force that the material of his pants rippled, as well the floor beneath his feet. "You are hilarious," he wheezed in between gasps for air. "But now that you're

here unannounced, totally not invited by me, I might as well tell you what I saw."

Nimaiya's gaze narrowed at Ichibe's words. "The Monk Who Calls the Real Name? More like the Monk Who Gaslights, am I right?~"

"Uninvited I said!" Ichibe replied, beaming at Nimaiya with a mischievous playful grin. "So, as I was saying, I might as well tell you what I saw. That Zanpakuto you made all those years ago, it's coming back."

Nimaiya's playful expression hardened. "How is that possible? We concluded a long time ago that the blade was beyond our reach to find."

Ichibe heaved a playful tone and gave a dramatic wave of his hand. "Yes, but that was then." At this, the Monk hummed, stroking his beard. "Though, I suppose in a way that's still the case, I mean, I still have no idea where that Zanpakuto is, or could be."

"What did you see?" Nimaiya asked, rubbing his temples in mild exasperation. "Ya know I hate figuring out what you mean most of the time."

Ichibe turned to face him fully, his smile fading into a thoughtful expression, before eventually replying to Nimaiya's

question, his voice revealing no emotion, at least none real. "A man, a dragon and a woman."

"A dragon?" Nimaiya's eyes widened slightly at that. "Now I'm even more confused, not gonna lie. I mean, a dragon dragon, like in the RPGs, or a hollow?"

Ichibe's smile grew even wider, nodding enthusiastically like an overly hyped child opening his presents. "A dragon-dragon, and not just that my friend," he added, chuckling softly.

"There was a man as well. A man named Adam."

"Adam?" Nimaiya furrowed his brow in confusion. "Never heard of him."

Ichibe shrugged nonchalantly. "Neither have I, but that brings us to our first point of conversation."

Nimaiya's eyes widened in realization. "The Zanpakuto."

"Hahaha, yes!" Ichibe replied, his smile turning wry. "It seems that this man named Adam is the one in possession of that Zanpakuto. And he's coming back, or... coming for the first time? It's a bit confusing, still working on the fine details of it."

Nimaiya leaned back against the wall, his expression contemplative. "This is concerning yo. It could pose a problem for us; we never had a situation like this before."

Ichibe waved his concerns away with an air of nonchalance. "Bahh, Relax Nimaiya. This is a tale that has yet to be written. The man, the dragon, and their roles in our fate are yet unclear."

Nimaiya crossed his arms, clearly unsatisfied with Ichibe's response. "And what if their roles are against us, big guy?"

"If that happens, we just kill them," Ichibe replied simply, his smile never faltering. "I mean, it's not that difficult to crush a pair of ants Nimaiya, all it takes is a single step, I thought you better than anyone else would understand that."

Nimaiya gave Ichibe a long, hard look before finally pushing himself off the wall. "I guess there's not much we can do now, eh?" he said with a resigned shrug, his laid-back demeanor returning once more.

"Exactly! Just relax and enjoy the ride, my friend," Ichibe replied, waving him off with a grin that, for anyone in their right mind, would be more than unsettling.

Nimaiya sighed, shaking his head. "Well, I have things to do, so the Great Nimaiya is out~"

With a chuckle, and a little twist on his heels Nimaiya turned to leave. His steps echoed in the vast expanse of the palace as the heavy doors groaned shut behind him. His figure became

smaller and smaller, until he was nothing more than a speck in the distance.

As the silence of the palace settled in once more, Ichibe turned his gaze back to the night sky, the countless stars twinkling overhead. His mind wandered to the realm of possibilities this change brought.

"Change," Ichibe mused, the word rolling off his tongue as he looked at the sky. "How very interesting, indeed."

With nothing else to do, The Monk settled back into his meditative position, his spiritual pressure humming with anticipation. His eyes shut close again, but his mind was wide open, ready to perceive the smallest shift in the tapestry of fate, waiting for the future, the new future to unfold.

Things were changing.

And the Monk had to admit, he couldn't help but feel a thrill run through him at the prospect of what was to come. A sudden change, a deviation from the pattern he had always seen. His world had always been predictable, easy to read, but this change was unpredictable, and that unpredictability made it interesting.

At least enough to allow it to unfold.

Besides, he had one question he wanted answered more than anything right now. And that was, why had the Soul King, who had remained inactive since his sealing, since the creation of the world as we know it, helped this mysterious man.

His first action, in thousands of years.

And it had been for someone nobody knew a thing about. It was easy to see why The Old Monk wanted to know why.