Seasons Like Shooting Stars

by bacchanalia

Summary

It's been ten years since the outbreak of an infection that almost succeeded in wiping out mankind. Grimmjow is an Alpha who's finally broken free of his past, and Ichigo is an Omega who won't give up on a future. Or, the story of how Grimmjow and Ichigo crash into each other's lives over the course of a year, and how warmth is found in desperate embraces after the sun sets.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
If there was one thing that hadn’t changed about this fucked up world, it was the humid and miserable heat that shone down in the middle of July. For the most part, Grimmjow was the type of man who’d prefer cold weather to hot, and traversing through the woods with his hair matted in sweat to his face and neck sucked; oh, there was also a knife sticking out of his side and a nasty gash creating a cesspool of bacteria on his right bicep. Minor details, he still blamed the shittiness of the day on the sun no matter how fleeting its light was nowadays. It was as if the earth had been so forsaken that even its only source of warmth had given up on it. Giving it some thought, it was damn poetic.

A cough signaled Grimmjow’s location more so than his footsteps; for as large of a man as he was (six feet one inch, to be exact) he still managed to move with enough stealth to commonly sneak up on deer. Back in the day, the group he’d been running with had called him Pantera, (it meant panther in spanish, he’d been told) now he just gave the name to the sleek black metal handgun he kept tucked into the waistband of his dark denim jeans.

When he pulled his hand back from his lips, the skin of his palm was spattered in dark blood.

“Well, shit.” He spoke in a rough texture, half due to the natural baritone of his voice and the other because he’d just been informed abruptly that blood was getting into his lungs. At first, he’d considered himself lucky that the dagger hadn’t seemed to have pierced anything important, but he’d obviously been wrong. It couldn’t be helped; Grimmjow knew that if he didn’t manage to find shelter before the sun set then he’d be royally fucked, and not in the fun way. Not that there was much of that going around either.

Being an Alpha, his safety was almost secured as far as sexual encounters went (not taking into account the fact that he’d rip anyone apart who tried that shit on him), but as for Omegas… The last time he’d seen any, they’d been tied up in a rundown warehouse that acted as a Hunter-run brothel. He wasn’t ashamed that it was also the last time he’d fucked. When the world went to shit, you either kept up or died. Grimmjow never claimed to be a saint, and for Alphas, Omegas, and even Betas alike, sometimes giving control up to your instincts was the biggest comfort you were ever gonna get. Now, though...

His eyes scanned the brush and bramble surrounding him as light seemed to pour into his vision. If he could look at himself in the mirror, he knew his skin would have begun to take on a sallow sheen and his pupils would be blown wide with the rush of adrenaline and pain. Needless to say, when he saw that bastard Tousen again, he was going to kill him. If his assumption was correct, that would be sooner rather than later. There was no doubt that his assailants were tailing him as he stood around, bumbling his way to some sort of safety. Grimmjow only hoped as he fought back the need to vomit that he’d have a chance to get his side taken care of before then.

Don’t be a little bitch… You gonna let them kill you here? His mind supplied the harsh pep talk for him and he grit his teeth subsequently. Fuck no, was the answer. Nobody took down Grimmjow Jaegerjaquez, and they sure as hell didn’t do it with something as measly as a stab wound.

Suddenly, a snapped twig to his left had Grimmjow’s head swiveling in its direction, causing him to wince as his equilibrium took him for a ride at the fast movement. His left arm reached out instinctively, bracing his body weight against the trunk of a tree just as something that didn’t even look remotely human came barreling out of the brush. It’s skin was a mixture of yellowish gray,
mottled with bruise like blossoms just under the blistered surface. The second their eyes locked, Grimmjow knew it was basing his location of him off scent rather than sight. With a clouded over cornea and one empty socket that seemed to have fungus growing from it, there was no way in hell this thing could really see him.

He pulled out his gun the second it screamed, a blood-curdling sound that ripped from its throat as its jaw hung open at an unnatural angle. Grimmjow mused briefly that the wet sound of it probably wasn’t all that far off from what his voice would sound like in an hour or so, but now wasn’t the time for that. One round in his forehead would do the trick, but it’d also alert every Infected within a mile radius of his presence. Did he have time to weigh the pros and cons? No. But that didn’t stop him from taking the route of a man with too much pride who wanted to prove to himself that his own injury wouldn’t slow him down no matter what.

Grimmjow pushed himself away from the tree roughly, forcing down the need to cough once more and inhaling deeply through his nose. He felt his right lung gurgling in protest but mentally told it to fuck off as he lunged for the monster running at him on four gangly limbs bent backwards in places and twisted in others. The fact that this was once a human being blared in his mind as he grabbed it by the throat; the knowledge that he could become reduced to something so pathetic caused him to grit his teeth and bash the barrel of his gun into its skull. Over and over again he brought the metal harshly against the creature’s softening, decayed bone. Until its deformed facial structure was broken down into something unrecognizable, until Grimmjow himself was panting from over-exertion and coughing up deep scarlet over its unmoving corpse.

Roughly, he threw its body to the ground and wiped the back of his hand over his mouth. No gunshot, no unnecessary sound. He kept moving forward, pushing his knowledge of how infections spread from his mind.

When he finally reached a broken down building on the outskirts of a city, the sun’s rays were beginning to disappear over the horizon. For a brief moment and with labored breath, he paused to stare at the sunset. To him, the image of striking gold and purple hues that cascaded across the sky and bounced off the clouds was nothing but a cruel lie; a vision of the beauty once held in a world that was now nothing but bleak and feral. Grimmjow could remember clearly what it was like before it all went to shit, but the memories that had once acted as beacons of hope, of shreds of truth to strive towards restoring, were now nothing but recollections that festered the bitterness within him. There was no saving this world, there was only surviving in it.

Blood trailed Grimmjow’s steps, dripping from his lips, his side, it streaked down his arm like a bread trail for attackers and if he were in a better frame of mind and body, he could have covered his tracks. But as it was, the only thing he could do was climb over the rubble, under broken down eaves that used to be concrete doorways with shattered glass acting as linoleum. He was thankful for a staircase that had its last few steps either broken or missing. It wouldn’t stop the infected entirely if they began to pile up, but it would hold them off. After what seemed like hours and with a pounding headache, Grimmjow finally found (mock) safety in a room at the end of the upstairs hall. As his consciousness began to wane, he thought of how ironic it was that a man who’d built his life on violence and crime would end up dying in an old office building.

He woke up to what felt like a battering ram hitting him in the ribs (on his good side, thankfully). It took more effort than he expected to open his eyes, and when he did so, the world spun. Holy shit, this really was bad. Weakly, he felt around for the knife, sighing minimally when he felt it still adjacent from his side. If it’d fallen out, his blood loss would have been overwhelming.
As the prodding continued (it didn’t feel so severe anymore), Grimmjow furrowed his brows and spoke to the wavering ceiling.

“Knock that shit off…” His voice didn’t sound like his own, and he turned his head toward the source. What filled his (double) vision was a man with orange messy hair looming over him with a gun pointed at his face. Grimmjow looked past it, his gaze honing in on the man’s eyes that seemed to be the only unmoving thing in his line of sight. They looked beautiful… Was he dead? Did angels carry guns? Grimmjow thought he’d be down for heaven a whole lot more if everyone up there was packing.

“Are you one of them?” The man’s voice was just as nice as his chocolate eyes, and Jesus Christ-- Grimmjow knew he must really be on his last leg if he was thinking this sappy shit so freely. Still, he tried to focus on the sound, to pull himself to lucidity. It was hard. He knew the guy was asking if he was a Hunter, the guys who worked in droves killing whoever they wanted wherever they ended up, and taking supplies for themselves.

“Depends.” He coughed again. “You an angel?” Blood must have coming down his chin or something because Orangey lowered his gun as if he noticed for the first time what state Grimmjow was in. Personally, he didn’t know how the guy could miss a knife in his side but, maybe not everyone was as observant as him.

“Holy shit-- what happened?” Grimmjow felt the guy kneel beside him, felt cool hands touching his face and pressing against his forehead, checking his pulse. A curse was muttered before the touch went away. “Can you breathe?”

“Still talkin’, ain’t I? Your voice is fuckin’ loud…”

“Hold still.” Grimmjow felt pressure on the blade buried within him and froze, the new burst of white hot pain shooting through him and granting him clarity in his foggy mind. He sat up, wincing as he did so and snarled, voice coming out in a tone that dripped with Alpha authority.

“Don’t touch me.” Their eyes met and he watched as the guy reluctantly dropped his hold as if he’d been forced into doing so. Though the implication was lost on him in his current state, Grimmjow didn’t miss the defiance in the other man’s eyes. It was a fire that drew him in and pissed him off at the same time. No one ever dared to look at him like that without paying for it and if this guy wanted a fight, Grimmjow would use up every last shred of energy to give it to him. Instead, he was met with a frustrated sigh.

“Look, you Alpha asshole-- I’m trying to help you, okay? You’re going to die if I don’t.”

“Don’t need your help.” It was pride. It always came back to pride. But how the hell could he hold his head high if he knew his very life existed solely due to someone else? It would be a weakness, a pathetic existence. If he couldn’t keep himself alive then he didn’t deserve to live in the first place, it was as simple as that.

“Like hell you don’t! Just hold still, yeah?”

The searing pain of this stranger yanking the knife free from his side was the last thing Grimmjow remembered before blacking out.

Grimmjow came awake in stages. The first thing he noticed was that the pain in his side had lessened-- though was undoubtedly still there. But what was once a raging inferno that seemed to be
draining the very life from him was now a dull ache; he risked moving and sucked in a painful breath. Not a good idea yet. Noted.

“Hey-- you awake? Don’t move, idiot…” The second thing he noticed was that guy’s voice. Oddly enough, it was soothing. He took as deep of a breath as his body would permit and blew out an exhale as his eyes opened. Adjusting to the light sucked, he frowned and turned his head to the side only to be met by a head of orange hair and a pair of brown eyes staring back at him in-- what was that? Relief?

“Where the...hell am I?” Grimmjow’s voice was hoarse, and he licked his too dry lips after speaking.

“About a mile away from where I found you.” A mile.

“How the fuck did I get here?” Grimmjow tried to sit up again, gritting his teeth and grasping at his side as he did so. It was covered in bandages.

“What did I just tell you--!” A palm splayed gently against his pectoral, guiding him back against what Grimmjow just realized were pillows. Stranger Angel sighed in annoyance. “And I carried you here, fuck you very much. You’re heavy.”

“Carried me.” To say he was dumbstruck at the concept might have been a little dramatic, but the idea was still ridiculous to him, so his voice came out as deadpanned as he felt over the idea.

“Some of us weren’t stabbed in the side and could actually walk, so yeah. You’re welcome.”

Grimmjow scrutinized every feature of the man’s face before him. Sun-kissed skin led way to the faintest brush of freckles over the bridge of his nose, and like Grimmjow’s, his brows were pulled into a furrow. After appraising him for a while, Grimmjow’s lips quirked up into a side smirk.

“Alright-- so who are you, huh? What’s your angle?”

“Excuse me?”

“Nobody just finds someone on death’s fuckin’ doorstep in this world and saves their ass for nothin’.”

Orangey seemed to mull that over before his face looked more somber than it had thus far, it made Grimmjow’s eyes narrow. Then, he spoke. “My dad was a doctor… So, kinda felt like I’d be dishonoring him or something if I just left you there…” He sighed with a shake of his head, lips ghosting over a smile. “Either that, or he’d show up in my dreams and give me a jump-kick to the head for it.”

“He dead?”

“Everyone’s dead.”

They stared at each other for a while.

“What’s your name?” Grimmjow asked.

“Ichigo Kurosaki. Or-- like you called me earlier, Angel.” And to think, Grimmjow was about to be thankful for this asshole.

“People say a lotta shit when they’re about to die, Kurosaki.” He paused. “I’m Grimmjow.” It was unexpected, and thinking back on it, Grimmjow couldn’t remember the last time he’d heard the sound… But Ichigo laughed at his comment and it rushed through his ears like a cleansing river.
“Fair enough-- Grimmjow.” Ichigo paused before speaking his name, as if uncertain about trying it out on his tongue, then rustled with something at the side of the bed. He pulled gauze and more bandaging from a box. No, not just a box, a first aid kit. Nobody had that shit anymore. “Now hang on a second while I check the bleeding. Can you breathe okay?” Grimmjow was about to respond, something along the lines of being able to breathe just damn fine, when Ichigo leaned over his torso to get a better look at his right side. The moment his bare neck was within inches of Grimmjow’s lips was when he smelled him.

*Omega.*

His pupils dilated as the scent rushed in through his senses, and in the pit of his gut, Grimmjow felt the beginnings of a yearning he ached to quash immediately. It stirred much like a foreign substance, pulling him towards the man before him which only succeeded in reminding him of the wound still very much present in his ribs. It was unheard of to not only see an Omega alive, but to see one traveling alone. How much of a fucking idiot was this Kurosaki Ichigo? To take him in when he was obviously an Alpha? Either the guy had zero sense of self preservation, or he mistakenly thought Grimmjow to no longer be a threat due to injury. Both options pissed him off. Without even truly planning on it, a low groan left Grimmjow’s lips. Ichigo froze in place.

“You didn’t really strike me as a dipshit, Kurosaki…” He knew his voice had taken on its naturally predatory tone, Ichigo gulped noticeably, but held his ground. Grimmjow found himself thrown for a loop when Ichigo chose to continue tending to his bandages.

“I’d take that as a compliment first but you sound like you want to bite my throat out, so I’ll hold off.”

“You smell damn good…”

“Try anything and I’ll shove that knife back in you.” Feisty. Grimmjow could get behind that. Both literally and figuratively. He settled for leaning back into the comfort of the pillows behind him, chuckling in a way that lacked any true humor.

“Still didn’t answer my question--” Grimmjow winced as an antiseptic was applied to the gouge in his skin. “--by the way.”

“Told you my name already, didn’t I?”

“Didn’t tell me what you wanted.”

“Geez, people really can’t be nice anymore can they…” It was rhetorical, and dismissive in all the ways Grimmjow hated. He wasn’t some kid who was still wet behind the ears, people couldn’t get away with shit as long as he was still breathing.

“Cut the shit, Kurosaki. An Omega doesn’t survive out here by bein’ a bleedin’ heart.” Grimmjow brought his eyes to Ichigo’s face, stare cutthroat and in the middle of assessing just how he was going to handle this if shit got ugly. With the meds in his system, he’d get a lot farther than should be possible.

“I have somewhere I need to get to. Safely.” Ichigo finally glanced up at him then, only to be met with Grimmjow’s intimidatingly analytical stare.

“And what the fuck does that have to do with me?”

“Well for starters, I saved your life, asshole. So I think the least you can do is take me there.” Instantly, Grimmjow’s lip curled, baring teeth as the implication of that processed. Debt. Owing his
life to someone else threatened to leave him sick to his stomach, but it would have been there regardless. A life in return for a tour guide? It wasn’t equal at all. Even if Ichigo knew he’d need an Alpha to do any real traveling— and even then, it left him open to plenty of attack, it was still one sided. So maybe the guy was soft after all. He was damn lucky to still be breathing.

“Who says I won’t just off you and take your shit once my side heals, huh?” When Ichigo moved closer to him, his nostrils flared as awareness over that sweet, enticing aroma grew more prominent. Still, he kept his eyes trained on those pools of chocolate brown irises, refusing to give in to the need to scent and mark the first Omega he’d been near in years as His. Grimmjow considered himself a monster, and he was never one to deny himself any instinctual inclination, but he’d be damned if any weakness would be presented to a potential enemy.

“Because I can see the pride in your eyes. And I’m willing to bet there’s honor there too.”

“Honor doesn’t exist in this world anymore.” As Grimmjow spoke, Ichigo extended his hand.

“Help me find out about that?”

Sunlight filtered through a window a few feet off from where they sat, dancing off the dust that twined through the air as Grimmjow took Ichigo’s hand in his own and shook it.
“Grimm, I think we were supposed to go right.”

“Fuck off, Kurosaki. Who’s got the map, me or you?”

“Have the map all you want. I’m telling you, you’re wrong.”

“Say that shit again to my face!”

“I said it to your face! You’re looking right at me!”

Overhead, the call of a scavenger bird redirected Grimmjow’s attention before he had the chance to form a retort, and for Ichigo it was the same. Its wings were outstretched, carrying the predator in an eerie glide past them and down the broken road they’d been walking along. At one point, no doubt, this used to be a major highway. Now, however, there was nothing to indicate that save for the fractured asphalt that lay trampled by the earth’s reclamation. Nature was a hard-ass bitch, that was for sure.

“Wrong way or not, that guy says there might be fresh meat nearby.” Grimmjow jutted a thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the bird, raising a questioning brow at Ichigo as he did so. Ichigo sighed.

“Roadkill. Gotta love the apocalypse.”

Their steps quickly turned to jogging, eyes trained on the animal leading them. If they were lucky, whatever it was going towards would be salvageable for dinner. If they weren’t, there was most likely only an hour or so of sunlight left and they’d be shit out of luck. Already, the warmth of its rays filtered through the clouds, casting twilight shadows over decaying buildings. Fitting.

They’d ran for about two-hundred feet when Grimmjow lurched his arm out to stop both him and Ichigo in their tracks. In front of them, a man was lying in the middle of the road writhing in obvious pain with blood surrounding his body. Taking in the scene was instantaneous for Grimmjow, and with a vice-grip on Ichigo’s wrist, he yanked them down into the coverage of brush.

For anyone else, they may feel inclined to rush to the man’s aid, to fruitlessly try to stop the blood-flow. That’s what any good human being still alive in this world would do.

But Grimmjow had seen this setup before.

“What are you doing?” Ichigo’s whispered fiercely, tugging at the hold on his wrist. It didn’t budge.

“Stay down.” Grimmjow held his voice back, refusing to let any influential tone soak into it. Ichigo didn’t need to listen to him because he was an Alpha, he needed to listen because this was a trap.

“What do you mean ‘stay down’? He’s hurt, asshole! Remember when you were hurt? I didn’t stay down.” God, Kurosaki was such a stubborn shit.

But he didn’t say that to him. Instead, Grimmjow tried to take his glare down a notch from ‘just do what I say’ to ‘work with me here’.
“Can you just fuckin’ trust me for a goddamn second?”

“Help!” the man in the road called out, intercepting their whisper battle, “Help me!”

There was only a beat of silence in which Grimmjow began to loosen his grip.

*Trust me.*

Ichigo wrenched his hand free and bolted out of their cover.

Grimmjow heard the gravel crunch beneath Ichigo’s determined footsteps, heard his voice calling out to offer comfort, and with a curse under moved out of the bramble as well. Maybe this would truly just be some unlucky fuck who’d gotten mauled by infected. But the fact of the matter remained; there was none in sight.

Just as he shot out into the open, Grimmjow’s feet came to a grinding halt.

A man with dark skin and dreadlocks was holding a knife to the front of Ichigo’s throat as he knelt in the blood of a man who was no longer screaming for help.

Grimmjow felt his blood boil. Tousen.

“The fuck do you think you’re doin’?” Grimmjow spoke with all the authority he could muster in his voice at that moment. He felt it, thrumming through his veins, the unmistakable anger known to overtake Alphas who had their Omegas threatened. The notion pissed him off. Any idea that biology could make him feel protective over some guy he hadn’t even fucked was enough to grit his teeth. But in this situation, it went ignored. There was only one thing going through his head:

*Don’t you fuckin’ touch him.*

“Grimmjow, there you are.” This voice, not coming from Tousen who only stood there like some pretentious dipshit who couldn’t be bothered to talk, was smoother, filled with something unsettling that Grimmjow would never get used to. Aizen Sousuke.

He stepped into the tension-filled standoff as if he’d simply appeared out of nowhere, and in tow was his right hand man, Ichimaru Gin. He knew them, and he should’ve known they’d find him.

“Well, well, if it ain’t the kitty~!” Gin seemed to bounce in his step as he came a bit closer to Grimmjow. Not the best move. “Still stalkin’ the forests at night?”

Grimmjow took a step forward, ignoring Gin and looking directly at Aizen who only stared back with eyes like chocolate ice. “*Let him go.*”

“You disappoint me, Grimmjow,” Aizen said, ignoring the absolute feral look in Grimmjow’s eyes. “Our best Hunter, gone rogue. Such a shame.”

He felt Ichigo’s eyes on him at the drop of the word, knew the weight it carried. Somewhere within him, the information leak pissed him off. Like he should’ve been the one to tell Ichigo. But what was there to tell? It was no surprise that when the world went to shit, you either followed suit or died. Grimmjow was a survivor. He did that however possible.

But Ichigo had survived too and he did it with a light in his heart.

Lucky.

“Got tired of your prissy asses crampin’ my style.”
“The only style you had,” Tousen said, finally deciding to speak up with his knife’s blade still against Ichigo’s throat. “Was being renowned at the whore house.”

Ichigo’s eyes widened, but considering his situation, Grimmjow figured he wasn’t planning on saying much.

Gin looked between them, a grotesque smile pulling at his lips.

“Careful, Kaname. Grimmjow’s little Omega don’t know about that.”

“He ain’t mine.”

“No? Then you won’t mind if we slice him up a bit, hm? I wanna know how he’s still kickin’ out in the wild.”

Grimmjow pulled his pistol out and in the span of his next breath, had it pointed at Tousen’s head.

“I didn’t fuckin’ stutter when I said let him go.”

Gin’s smile fell an infinitesimal amount at the weapon. In the open as they were, there was an unspoken rule: save the bullets for last. Any amount of confrontation that could be solved without a gun would be. After all, humans were leagues easier to deal with than hordes of Infected coming out of the woodwork once they heard a loud sound. Judging by the forest’s edge beginning only a few meters to their right, and extending in a curve around their backs at a farther distance, a gunshot in this location would be a death sentence.

One Grimmjow was willing to take head-on if it meant settling the debt between them. Ichigo had saved his life. Now, Grimmjow would save his.

“‘Fraid we don’t negotiate like that,” Gin continued. “Now, if you gave up your supply location like a good little kitty--”

Grimmjow fired the gun.

There was always something so satisfying about the sound of metal boring its way through flesh and bones. He’d missed it.

Tousen hit the broken concrete like the deadweight he was, brain-matter glazing the earth in a gorey spatter. The knife clattered to the floor.

There, Grimmjow thought to himself. We’re even. His eyes spoke the sentiment to Ichigo when their gazes locked. Gin’s eyes, widened for once, immediately took to scan the tree line. And though Aizen was the ever-present image of stoicism, Grimmjow could see his jaw clenched.

It was only a matter of tense seconds before they heard it: the stampeding sound of footsteps, their cadence irregular, and before long, the wheezing wet breath that always followed. Infected.

“Aizen--” Gin began, but was cut off by branches being trampled and broken only mere feet from where they stood. The decrepit monsters broke the tree line next. Twisted and bent limbs grappling at awkward angles to propel their bodies forward, mouths hanging open with fungus seeming to spread outwards from every orifice.

None of them would have time to form a strategy before they were in the thick of it, with gnashing teeth threatening to end it all there and then.
The thrill of it was one thing Grimmjow lived for.

He smiled, a rare occurrence that ate up the space on his face with crazed ferocity. This is what he loved, battle, carnage, knowing the only thing that would let him live to see another day was the death of his enemy. It was simple. It was living.

The first one came upon him, its decaying skin was mottled with earthy-colored bruises and open festering sores, arms outstretched as if to grab. Grimmjow let his fist fly directly into the creature’s nose, his free hand reaching into his back pocket to retrieve his knife. In the next moment, he had its jugular gutted like a fish.

Next.

The wave of them seemed relentless, and on more occasion that one, Grimmjow wondered if the fabric of his shirt was becoming soaked through by sweat or from the blood of a wound he hadn’t yet noticed. Though he continued to tear and slice through flesh with incredible precision, he couldn’t stop his eyes from flicking up towards Ichigo.

Kurosaki fought like nobody he’d seen, which surprised the hell out of him and turned him on at the same time. The guy could reach his leg up so high, Grimmjow watched him kick an Infected square in the face. At the image, Grimmjow wondered just what the limits of his flexibility were.

But of course, he couldn’t afford to look for long.

The onslaught continued.

Time seemed to both pass in slow motion and yet simultaneously move at hyper speed. By the time Grimmjow’s leather boot crunched down on the windpipe of the last monster in his path, his chest was heaving with exertion. Locks of sweat-drenched blue hair fell into his face, and he shoved them back with grime-covered and blistered hands. He looked around. At his feet were bodies beginning to pile up as if they were corpses prepared for a mass grave, their curdling body fluids already attracting flies.

It was quiet.

No one was there.

“Kurosaki?” he called out, but received no answer. In the duration of the attack, the sun had sunk lower until now only a sliver of its light splintered over the edges of mountains in the west. There was no time to be separated. His breathing increased further from the exhaustion that ached through every limb he possessed. If Ichigo was hurt, if Aizen--

Aizen.

Grimmjow’s eyes darted around once more, double checking his earlier assessment that he was indeed alone. How had he not noticed that Gin and Aizen were gone as well? Looking to the left, he saw Tousen’s body partially eclipsed by the Infected.

“Good,” he spoke to the corpse, spitting on the pile. “Rot.”

Grimmjow stared at the skyline once more, a war waging itself within him. He needed to get to shelter, and fast. With the fading light came Infected that roamed in droves. What he’d just witnessed would only be the beginning if he decided to stay out much longer. He knew that first hand.

Still…
Where the fuck are you?

The fact that the possibilities were endless pissed him off, the fact that he felt like he might actually give a shit was even worse. Who the fuck was he becoming? Since when did hanging around a guy for a few months mean the steel exterior he’d build out of necessity should turn to putty? It didn’t, it wouldn’t. The only thing eating at his conscience was the fact that it didn’t count as saving a guy’s life if they still died the same day. Grimmjow couldn’t afford to let Kurosaki die yet, not when his debt remained unpaid.

He started walking.

In his one hand, Grimmjow gripped the hilt of his dagger now decorated in a crusted splatter of blood. In his other, and now in his pockets as well, he held rocks strewn about the road. Infected couldn’t see, and sound could be a confusing son of a bitch if you made enough noise in multiple directions.

Shit would be easier if he could yell into the night until Ichigo called back to him. That was always how the missing person’s scene went, but well, he’d already had enough of loud noises for the night.

Unable to stop himself from considering it, the idea of Gin and Aizen taking Ichigo as some sort of hostage to hold as leverage over him made his skin crawl and anger boil in his veins. He’d kill them. Both of them. But not like Tousen. Tousen was fast, easy, a get back for the stab wound he’d dished out to Grimmjow’s side. But the other two? He’d make them pay for even the notion that he could be swayed through something like compassion.

Weak shit.

The sun sank now entirely behind the horizon, casting shadows that grew until they swallowed the ground whole. The temperature drop did nothing but cause Grimmjow’s gait to widen, and his eyes scanned the surroundings like a predator. Winter was closing in on them.

Where are you? Where the fuck are you?

Just then, on the broken pavement beneath his feet, Grimmjow noticed a wetness that sparkled as the sparse moonlight danced over its surface. Unidentifiable to most in this lack of light, but as Grimmjow knelt down he knew by the tang in the air what it was. Blood.

The drops melded together to form small puddles, and he scanned them as they led around a corner. It’s nothing. He told himself as his heart rate increased, as he knew how slim the likelihood of having the fresh blood of any other person was. Maybe it was Aizen. Maybe it was Gin. Grimmjow did nothing to stop those two sentences from running through his mind at a mile a minute because if it were anyone other than those two, then it only left one.

And if he was bitten, then of course, he was as good as dead already.

Grimmjow wondered how brown eyes flecked in gold would look with mold seeping out of their irises. How Kurosaki’s sun-kissed freckles would appear when his skin was drained of its blood and color and life. Would Ichigo still look like an angel after he’d become a victim of this godless world?

The trail of blood led him to a rock that was slowly getting overcome by plants, and in front of it was a man whose upper half was covered by the body of an infected. Neither were moving.

Grimmjow stared down at the sneakers, previously white, now marred in what looked like tar in the night. He knew them. He knew the light-washed tight denim jeans tearing at the knees. They were Ichigo’s.
“You weren’t supposed to fuckin’ die on me…” Grimmjow hadn’t realized he’d spoken out loud until the sound of his own voice caught him off guard. Quieter than usual, his baritone scratched like gravel in his throat. It shouldn’t matter. How many people had he lost since this all went to shit? Too many to count. Everyone.

What was one more?

He was about to turn around and leave when he heard it, the wheeze of a breath. Even if Kurosaki had been bitten, this turn-rate would be impressively fast. Grimmjow grit his teeth, his grip tightening on the hilt of his dagger. This is what he got for almost giving a fuck.

“...Grimmjow?” What? His grip on the blade faltered. Ichigo spoken again, this time, shoving at the body on top of him until it toppled lifeless to the side. Camouflage? “That’s you, right?”

Immediately, Grimmjow knelt down, his arm moving underneath Ichigo’s back to pull him up from the ground.

“Kurosaki? How the hell-- the blood. I could’a sworn you’d been--” Grimmjow’s eyes dilated a moment later at the sight before him. Ichigo’s shirt, torn at the shoulder, was soaked in blood. On his skin, in two opposing jagged crescents, was a bite mark. His hold threatened to drop.

“Grimmjow, wait,” Ichigo spoke in the space of Grimmjow’s silence, obviously inferring the reason his sentence had broken off.

“You’re bit.” So he was still dead. After all this, Grimmjow was able to find him only to watch him die. Anger rose in his stomach again. Holding a guy in your arms and knowing there wasn’t shit you could do to stop them from turning into another mindless, decrepit thing was a new kind of helpless. Despite logic from his brain, Grimmjow’s hormones supplied him with everything he needed to feel like a piece of shit: as an Alpha, he’d failed.

“I’m okay.” Ichigo spoke slowly, like he were talking to a child. “Are you listening to me?” But Grimmjow wasn’t. Mine. Protect... failed. “Grimmjow!” Ichigo reached out with his hand and gripped Grimmjow’s jaw in a vice, forcing eye contact between them. “Lift up my shirt.”

That snapped him out of his little instinctual spiral.

“...What?”

“Lift up my shirt. Just do it, okay?”

Another reason he knew the world had lost its shit was that somehow Grimmjow was hesitant to take off someone’s shirt. But after a moment, he did so, and what lay beneath the fabric was something his mind couldn’t grasp in one moment. Across Ichigo’s pale skin was a litany of bite-mark scars. Some clearly newer than others, some near faded into nothingness. It was like nothing he’d ever seen before.

“What the fuck..?”

“To answer your question from when we first met, this is how I’ve survived this long.”

“You have an antidote?”

“I’m immune.”
Thank you for reading, and thank you even more for still riding and dying with this old ass ship. I'll never leave GrimmIchi, please don't either! Actually, I've been thinking about starting up a long fic with angst/slowburn for them... I just have to find the time T_T

Anyways! If you like my writing and want to support me/ listening to me scream about things, follow me on twitter @knottygalra! Xoxo<3
“Y’know,” Ichigo began as he dug his fingers into a can of peaches. “We’ve still never talked about it.” They were sitting in front of a fire that crackled in the crisp night air as if it were threatening the fragile snowfall just beginning to settle around them.

Grimmjow glanced over and stole the can back from him. “Nothin’ to say.”

He knew it was bullshit. But he’d never been the type of man who thought talking about the past did anything but keep you stuck there. Nobody healed by keeping a knife lodged in their body, all it did was make them bleed out slower. Maybe mental shit worked different, but Grimmjow didn’t care to find out.

Ichigo moved closer to him, and Grimmjow didn’t even have to look over to know what sort of expression was on his face. It’d be that irritating as fuck concern that always seemed to hover over everything he did. Made him want to lash out in anger to push it away. Maybe that was because it also made a part of him want to give in.

Ichigo always knew exactly how far to push him without overstepping. But each time, Grimmjow felt the cracks in his resolve widening. Soon, he feared, he’d break.

“Are there a lot of them?” Ichigo asked. “Omegas, I mean. In the, uh…”

Fuckin’ Kurosaki. Couldn’t even say the words ‘whore house’.

Grimmjow snorted without amusement. “Not enough, I’ll put it that way.” He didn’t want to go into the gruesome details of what he’d done to get off. Who he’d shared meals with, so to speak.

“Well there’s no shortage of Alphas, so I can guess what you mean.” Ichigo cleared his throat. “Were they…okay?”

Finally, Grimmjow turned to give the man his full attention. They were closer than he thought. In another life, sitting by the fireside, he could’ve made a jab at this being romantic. Could’ve smirked at Ichigo while he said it in a way he knew would make him blush. Not now, though. So all he said was, “Why’re you askin’ me about this?”

“It’s kind of a personal topic, so--”

Grimmjow didn’t expect his body to react in such a visceral manner to the implication that Ichigo would know anything about brothels personally, but suddenly there was tension in every fibre of his being and he felt a snarl on the tip of his tongue. “What?”

Ichigo must have followed Grimmjow’s train of thought easily, because his eyes widened and he reached up to touch Grimmjow’s face softly. “Woah– hey, not like that. I just meant Omegas in general and their treatment kinda hits home, y’know?”
Grimmjow took a deep breath and leaned into Ichigo’s touch without allowing himself to think about why. “The Alphas weren’t allowed to hurt ‘em, or get too rough. But they were doped up on heat enhancers so take that for what it is.”

Ichigo nodded, as if he expected as much. His hands slid down from Grimmjow’s face, one stopping to playfully pinch his bicep. “Should I take you getting all Alpha Protective on me for what it is too?”

Grimmjow’s lips turned down into a scowl. “And what would that be?” He realized once the words were already out of his mouth that he’d done nothing to deny the accusation.

Ichigo’s smile made him not give a shit. “Charming.”

Grimmjow snorted. “Charming, huh? Just what I was goin’ for.”

“I figured.” Ichigo trailed his fingers down Grimmjow’s arm.

“Keep it up, Kurosaki, and I’m gonna take all your touchin’ for what it is too.” His voice lowered when he spoke. The result of the end of the world may be evident all around them, and death may be yearning to soak into their bones, but Grimmjow’s libido was nothing if not voracious after being neglected for months, and he knew flirting when he saw it.

Ichigo, on the other hand, seemed to become aware of his actions only after they were pointed out. His chocolate eyes widened just a fraction as he pulled his hand back and clasped it with his other. “Sorry.”

“Didn’t say it was a bad thing.”

Ichigo moved to put a bit of distance between them. “Anyways, there’s something we should talk about.”

The frown on Grimmjow’s lips only deepened at the change in not only conversation, but tone. Any Alpha worth his salt would be able to detect an Omega who was distressed or nervous, it was always the easiest emotion outside of lust to smell. And now it began to waft from Ichigo in waves. Grimmjow wanted to lean in, wanted to scent him to be sure and then comfort him in the strength of his body.

But instead he made a sound of frustration and internally cursed the softer side of his biological instincts. “If it’ll make you quit smellin’ like that, I’m all ears.”

The scarlet flush that blossomed over Ichigo’s cheeks was almost as satisfying as it was alluring.

“What do I smell like?” There was an edge to Ichigo’s tone that Grimmjow couldn’t place.

“Like somethin’ freakin’ you out.” Against his better judgment, Grimmjow moved to close the gap between them. When Ichigo looked into his eyes, Grimmjow wondered what emotion would be prevalent there. If his weakness were on display ratting him out just as Ichigo’s scent did to him. “And how bad I wanna fix it for you is pissin’ me off so just spit it out, yeah?”

“Like I said, charming.” Ichigo laughed, and the sound was tinged in nervousness. Though he didn’t move away again, Grimmjow felt like there was a space dividing them. “When I found you in the city, I wasn’t there looking for supplies.”

“Sightseeing?”
“No,” Ichigo said with amusement back in his voice. “I was supposed to meet people. Members of a… resistance, I guess.” There was a beat of silence. “But no one was there.”

“Wouldn’t consider my sexy ass ‘no one’, but don’t stop the story on my account.”

“They were killed before your sexy ass got there, I think.”

There was something in the way Ichigo always took his remarks in stride and tossed them back that hit all the right spots inside Grimmjow. It was one of the things that kept his thoughts going back to all the what-ifs. What if the world wasn’t a shit show. Would they have even met each other?

In any case, it didn’t do shit to dwell on it.

“How d’ya know they were ever here?”

Ichigo pulled out a worn piece of paper from his jeans, and it was only for a moment but the scent that rushed off of him from the movement caused Grimmjow to stir. “I found this.” He pointed to a mark in red ink trailing from the location of the city. “I think it’s leading me here.”

“That X has gotta be at least one hundred miles from here,” Grimmjow said with his voice tapering off at the end, lost in the remnants of an aroma.

“Yeah, but I think if I, actually I was gonna ask if we -- Grimm, what’re you doing?”

“You just…” Grimmjow’s voice was lower, taking on a husky tone as he leaned in to Ichigo’s neck and felt the Omega go very still. “You smell so fuckin’ good all of the sudden…”

“Grimmjow.” The tone in Ichigo’s voice caused his brows to furrow. It wasn’t the typical aroused or even shy sound Omegas tended to have when they were being scented. And it set off that something was wrong to Grimmjow’s instincts because Ichigo sounded nervous.

There was a time in his life where Grimmjow would have revelled in the power trip that came with the notion, but now it felt deeply upsetting on a level he couldn’t even describe. No Omega in his care should ever feel anything but safe. That’s what his senses told him. *Fuckin’ sappy, shitty hormones…*

“Yeah?” He moved back, only enough to look into Ichigo’s eyes, his own were dark.

“I thought I told you not to do that.” When Ichigo moved away from him and covered the area of his scent gland with a palm, Grimmjow couldn’t help the low growl that left his lips.

“You means seven months ago when you didn’t know if I was a psycho or not?”

“Technically that’s still up for debate.”

He was dodging. Grimmjow narrowed his eyes. “Kurosaki, if you thought you could get anywhere near goin’ into heat without me noticin’, you’re a fuckin’ moron.”

Ichigo somehow managed to pale and flush at the same time. “I didn’t say I thought you wouldn’t notice! I just-- I can handle it, okay? So if you start doing that shit it’ll only make it harder.”

“You smellin’ like that’s gonna make a lot of things harder —.”

“Can you fucking stop for one second?”

Grimmjow sighed and straightened his posture. “Fine— okay, just. Gimme a second.” He didn’t just
put a little more distance between them, he stood up from the broken log they’d been using as a bench. Taking deep breaths from the direction upwind from Ichigo let him clear his head enough to think outside what he wanted as an Alpha. “Alright, hit me.”

“That’s…” Ichigo faltered, clearly uncomfortable. “That’s all. You just, can’t touch me or get near me like that, I guess.”

Grimmjow dragged a hand over his face. “You’re tellin’ me— let me just get this straight for both of us, Kurosaki. You’re. Tellin’ me. That you wanna go through heat by your goddamn self when I’m stuck in the same room as you? That’s your plan? Thought you said your old man was a doctor, ain’t doctors supposed to be smart?”

Ichigo’s face had gone considerably more red during Grimmjow’s rant. “You never shut the fuck up, do you? I used to do this by myself all the time.”

“Used to? The hell did you do last time?”

“The… suppressants I had just finally ran out from this pharmacy back in the city I found you in.”

Ichigo Kurosaki was genuinely a fucking idiot. Even Grimmjow, who had dropped out of highschool, knew that heats after coming off suppressants were always worse. That was on the damn warning label.

“Right.” Grimmjow nodded along as if it all made sense. It didn’t. And if he were a man of lesser confidence, he’d find it in him to be offended. “Well, we’ll see how much you wanna stick to your plan when you’re so gone you’re beggin’ for my knot.”

Ichigo, who had taken a bite of canned peaches to pointedly ignore what Grimmjow was about to say, promptly spit them out. “Fuck you, Grimmjow!”

“Can’t, sweetheart. You don’t want my help.”

The next few days were a living hell.

Which, Grimmjow thought, was certainly saying something considering the windows in the little shack him and Ichigo shared had to be boarded up and blacked out to stop rabid Infected from trying to break them.

It took exactly two nights before Grimmjow wanted to lose his damn mind. For the entirety of that day, a blizzard had kept them inside with a small fire in the run-down fireplace to keep the temperature vying for anything above zero. Their blankets were a few feet away from the soft blaze, with Ichigo closest due to his ever growing…condition.

“Nn…” Ichigo shifted a bit, tousled the scent that covered him and the room once again, and though Grimmjow actually was considering death, he couldn’t help but inhale. It smelled so good, so good. All he wanted to do was give in to what Ichigo’s Omega scent was doing to him but he couldn’t.

“You still like your idea more than mine?”

“I’m not gonna… I don’t need…”

“Don’t need what?” Grimmjow turned on his side facing Ichigo. Seeing him like this, panting with a sheen of sweat covering his forehead and a blush taking over his cheeks, it was almost too much.
“Fuck, Grimm, I’m so hard…”

Grimmjow’s groan reverberated through their small space. He moved closer, careful not to touch. “Ichi, you’re killin’ me…”

Ichigo leaned in towards him, lips pressing feather light kisses to Grimmjow’s throat and nuzzling into him. What the hell was this special brand of torture? What had he done in a past life to deserve this? Grimmjow’s hand moved before he could process it, pulling Ichigo flush against him.

“You smell good…” Ichigo’s voice was muffled by Grimmjow’s throat.

“No shit. That’s the point.” He took Ichigo’s jaw in his grip, forcing him to look up. “Why don’t you want me to take care of you, baby? I can make it so fuckin’ good for you.”

Ichigo squirmed against him and the obvious press of his hard-on spurred Grimmjow into rolling his own hips against him. “It’s not… you. It’s just—”

“I swear to god, if you give me the ‘it’s not you, it’s me’ speech I’m walkin’ out this door to freeze myself to death.”

Ichigo, in the midst of holding onto Grimmjow tighter, managed to laugh. “No, shut up, I’m trying to talk.”

“You’re doin’ a shitty job of it,” Grimmjow said as he ducked his head, pressing his lips against Ichigo’s scent gland and rocking his hips again when he heard Ichigo keen from it.

“Just— just touch me, okay? I’ll tell you after.”

Grimmjow frowned. “I’ve been jackin’ off into the snow for two because you didn’t want me near you. I’m not gonna fuck you now just ‘cause your dick’s not lettin’ you think.”

Ichigo cursed under his breath. “Since when are you so noble? It wasn’t—” he threw his head back and moaned when Grimmjow shifted his hips to press their clothed erections together. “It wasn’t that I didn’t want you, just trust me.”

“You want me to trust you, or fuck you?” Grimmjow let the little comment about his nobility slip by. Kurosaki had a point with that one and like hell he was gonna agree.

“Both, just— don’t make me say please.”

Grimmjow reached down in between them, easily slipping his hand beneath the band of Ichigo’s pants and wrapping his fingers around the hardened flesh he found there. Ichigo gasped and brought his mouth to Grimmjow’s, kissing with more tongue and hot breaths than actual finesse.

“I kinda wanna hear you beg,” Grimmjow said. “You want to be a good little knot slut for me?”

“F-fuck…”

Oh no, he actually liked that? This guy really was trying to kill him. There was no way Grimmjow was ever meant to survive him.

“Tell me yeah.” Grimmjow sped his hand up, already feeling Ichigo twitch and throb within his grasp.

“Yes! Just get inside me, already I feel like I’m gonna combust.”
“Definitely gonna make you blow for me, don’t worry.” In one swift motion, Ichigo’s pants were down by his ankles and luckily the guy had enough sense to kick them the rest of the way off. Grimmjow moved himself in between Ichigo’s legs and spread his thighs wider. Suddenly, he was extremely bitter to the temperature and the fact that the blanket had to remain over their bodies. All Grimmjow wanted to do was soak in the way Ichigo looked all hot and bothered writhing beneath him. But that would have to wait for warmer months.

The slick weeping from Ichigo’s hole was soaking into the thin mattress pad already, and his cock was only adding to the mess from the way it was leaking into Grimmjow’s hand and down onto Ichigo’s stomach. He was such a fucking mess. And Grimmjow couldn’t wait to wreck him further.

In one motion, he pressed his middle finger against Ichigo’s entrance and pushed inside him.

“Shit—!” Ichigo gasped, and any concern over hurting the Omega went out the window when he pushed his hips back onto Grimmjow’s finger.

“Yeah?” Grimmjow obliged him by adding another. “You like it?”

Ichigo didn’t get a chance to answer, he was too busy coming in thick ropes up onto his chest and his scent— his scent nearly had Grimmjow blowing his load right along with him. When they kissed, it was heady and rough. Grimmjow bit into Ichigo’s bottom lip harder than he’d intended to allow himself and Ichigo moaned as if he were orgasming again.

“Fuck— fuck me, Grimmjow please.”

The sound that left Grimmjow’s lips was nothing short of feral. Even if he’d wanted to, there was nothing in the world that could make him deny Ichigo that request. “Say it again,” he said in a tone that was entirely saturated in Alpha vibrato, demanding submission from his Omega to give him what he needs. “C’mon, Kurosaki.”

He knew the moment Ichigo came down from this hormone high, he’d tear Grimmjow apart up one side of the snowbank and down the other, but right now Ichigo just slung an arm over his face to cover his expression.

“Please. Grimmjow— Alpha, fuck me.”

The entire length of Grimmjow’s cock was inside him in the next instant. In one thrust, he sheathed himself, not bothering to wait for any verbal cues before starting up a brutal pace. He couldn’t hold it back. Ichigo was around his dick so tight and hot that it threatened to burn him alive if the smell didn’t suffocate him to nirvana first. Over and over again he fucked into him, relishing in the whimpers that were choked off to make way for more guttural groans as if even in the throws of passion Ichigo couldn’t allow himself to let go of his pride.

When Grimmjow angled his hips just so, Ichigo’s legs wrapped around his waist, entire body pulsed around Grimmjow’s cock as if he were trying to milk his knot for all it was worth. And that was going to be a lot with how long it’d been since he’d fucked anyone.

“Shit… I’m gettin’ close. God damn you feel so good… Better than any Omega I’ve had.”

Ichigo’s body preened at the praise, his hips moving back in harsher, jerkier motions that told Grimmjow he was getting close too, hurtling towards the precipice of pleasure once more.

“Knot me,” Ichigo said as his beautiful dark eyes stared up at Grimmjow, lips kiss-swollen and parted. “C’mon, Grimm, knot me so good I can’t move for a damn week, okay? Please, please…”
Grimmjow could feel the flesh of his cock engorging as if spurred by Ichigo’s words. His breathing grew harsher, thrusts tighter and tighter until finally he caught inside Ichigo and stuck. With a growl and not an ounce of thought to what he was doing, Grimmjow sunk his teeth into the flesh just beneath Ichigo’s scent gland as he came. It was like an anchor tethering Grimmjow to reality as he emptied himself into Ichigo who seemed to come again from the bite alone. After what seemed like at least a minute, he pulled back in realization.

“Oh, fuck--”

“Yeah, ‘oh fuck’ is right,” Ichigo said, still panting and with a voice that sounded deliciously fucked out. “I didn’t tell you to mark me, asshole.”

Comically, Grimmjow struggled to shift himself up onto his elbows enough (considering the fact that his knot still very much connected them) to see Ichigo properly and inspect the bite mark. “Shit, this is weird.”

“Unorthodox was the word I was going for. You didn’t even propose.”

“No, fucker, I meant…” Grimmjow’s blue eyes were almost dazed staring at it as he spoke. “Seein’ you with my bond bite… I like it.”

The blush, which seemed to be the bane of Ichigo’s existence, returned in full force. “Are you serious?”

Grimmjow leaned down, nuzzled against it in a manner that was uncharacteristically soft. “Yeah. It’s kinda freakin’ me out, but I can’t stop thinkin’ about how good it looks on you.”

“It’s a wound, not a new shirt.”

“Tell me you don’t like it then, smartass.”

But judging by the expression on Ichigo’s face, he couldn’t say that. Instead of admit it, he looked away. “While my head is still kinda clear, I wanna tell you why I was trying to deny you.”

As if on cue, Grimmjow’s knot decided to free them, and Ichigo gasped as he pulled out. “Spill,” he said through a smirk as the fruits of Grimmjow’s climax started spilling down Ichigo’s thighs. “Pun intended.”

Ichigo squirmed in what seemed to be discomfort before continuing. “About a year or so after things first went down. I was by myself, obviously. I’d just run out of the suppressants I had from home.” He was staring at the ceiling. “An alpha found me.” And there was a silence that seemed to stretch with a heaviness and description no words could capture. “So, I didn’t think I’d be okay. With another one, I mean. I thought I’d puke, or remember that night, or something.”

“And?”

Ichigo finally brought his eyes back to Grimmjow. “I didn’t. I just… wanted you.” And immediately, he frowned. “Don’t let that go to your head.”

Grimmjow flashed him a grin. “Too late.”

They sat in silence for a moment, Ichigo’s eyes slid closed though a faint smile played at his lips. In the crackling of the fire, Grimmjow thought he’d fall asleep wondering why his heart was beating so quickly. Ichigo’s voice broke the silence.
“You biting me actually helps what I was trying to ask you earlier, by the way.”

“Hm?” Grimmjow forced himself to focus and keep his eyes open. “What’s that?”

“The resistance point. You said it was about a hundred miles? I want you to go with me. If the place is still there, they can use my blood to make a vaccine. We can stop this thing.”

Just because he was a difficult son of a bitch who’d never aspired to being hero of the known world, Grimmjow raised a brow and said, “and why the hell would I go?”

Beneath the blankets, Ichigo searched out and found Grimmjow’s hand. When he laced their fingers together, Grimmjow wasn’t sure whether he liked the feeling or hated it. Maybe he hated how the simple contact made his heart jump.

“Because,” Ichigo said. “You can’t rail and bail your new mate.”

“Damn, sucks to be me,” Grimmjow said, though he was smiling. Ichigo was too.

“That’s my line.”
“We should have about twenty miles left until we get there.” Ichigo said as he inspected their worn map against a fallen tree trunk. A scowl painted his face and creased his brows. Grimmjow peered over his shoulder at him.

“So, we find somewhere to crash tonight and tomorrow we save this bitch?”

Ichigo snorted, lips pulling up to a smile as he turned to look at his mate. “And by ‘this bitch’, you mean?”

Grimmjow smiled too. “The world.”

“Yeah, that sounds good.”

They kissed, and if Ichigo of almost a year ago had been told that he’d end up on an endeavor to cure the infection with an Alpha too hot for his own good by his side? He wouldn’t have believed it. Hell, Ichigo wouldn’t have even bought it after he’d first met Grimmjow. The guy was abrasive in every way possible and so full of himself Ichigo didn’t know how he even had room for food. But there was goodness in him too. Like a geostone. Sharp on the outside to protect the inside.

Ichigo darted his eyes away on the basis that having such a soft thought towards Grimmjow would end in the Alpha telling him off. Even still, the amusement prevailed.

“There’s a shack up ahead a bit. We can check it out,” Grimmjow said, having no idea the thoughts that were flowing through Ichigo’s head in regards to him. Ichigo stood, cracked his back, and looked in the direction Grimmjow had indicated.

Sure enough, there was a small, dilapidated building about two-hundred feet off from them. They’d stayed in worse, but it wasn’t anything to write home about. Then again, none of this would matter anymore after tomorrow. Tomorrow, they’d reach the resistance point filled with scientists who’d be waiting for someone like Ichigo to walk in. They’d begin working on a serum right away. Then, life would begin again. People would be able to live without fear again.

They could go home.

But the universe is nothing if not predictable in its unpredictability, and what can go wrong, more often than not, does just that.

Ichigo was woken up by the wet, gurgling screams he couldn’t yet place, and Grimmjow shaking him awake.

“Ichi, baby, get up.”

Sleep still clung to Ichigo’s eyes as he rubbed at them. “Huh? What’s--”

“We ain’t got time for questions. Get up.”

The urgency in Grimmjow’s voice caused the rest of the noise to sink in. Infected. He bolted upright, chocolate eyes widened in fear. They were in danger. “Where are they?”
“Outside. For now.” Grimmjow stood, pulling on his worn out jeans and searching their small amount of belongings for his gun. “But that door won’t hold. The wood’s got water damage from the snow when it melted. It’ll be fuckin’ useless in minutes.” He checked the magazine and frowned to himself.

“What’s our bullet count?” Ichigo asked, getting dressed as well and keeping his voice to a stage whisper.

Grimmjow popped the magazine back into place without looking over. “Shitty.”

“Awesome.”

As if on cue, rattling at the door intensified. And it wasn’t just there. All around their small enclosure, nails scratched at the walls, puss-soaked breaths seeped through the paneling. But most alarming was the splintering sound heard at the hinges.

If the Infected poured in here through a broken door, they were done for. No ifs ands or buts about it. This would be the end. Fear threatened to grip Ichigo in a paralyzing vice, but he refused to let it hold. They’d get out of this. There was too much riding on it for anything else to happen.

Grimmjow grabbed his hand, snapping Ichigo out of his thoughts, and leaned close, nuzzling his scent gland in a bout of rare tenderness. “Don’t freeze up on me.”

“I’m not. We can do this.”

Grimmjow flashed a grin against the skin of his throat, and bit him playfully for good measure. “You’re damn right we can. I watched you kick a guy in the face, Kurosaki. You’re almost as badass as I am.”

Ichigo snorted, ran his fingers through Grimmjow’s hair. “Wow, your romantic side knows no bounds.”

“Is it romantic if I wanna fuck you in the blood of our enemies after we torch these assholes?”

Ichigo rolled his eyes and shoved at Grimmjow’s chest. “Kick ass now, flirt and blood fuck later?”

“God damn, I love you.”

“You wh--”

The door gets broken down before Ichigo can finish his sentence, and for a moment, he’s almost too dazed to react.

I love you.

But there was no time to let his heart soar. The Infected tripped over themselves on entry, clawing for purchase to propel them forward and sticking putrid flesh to every splinter as they do so. Grimmjow moved into action first.

He didn’t use the limited ammunition, not yet, and Ichigo didn’t expect him to. In fact, the amount of bullets they had left had still not been disclosed to him, so he’d leave their use in Grimmjow’s hands. Ichigo shook his head clear and went to work, shoving the heel of his shoe into as much decaying flesh as he could. He felt like fucking Chun-li with the workout his thighs were getting from this.

But even after they’d taken out at least ten, more were piling in.
From his left, Ichigo heard glass shatter, and the curdling groans of the Infected began coming at them from another angle. His heart kicked into overdrive, eyes quickly scanning their small surroundings and trying, trying like hell not to let claustrophobia take hold of his lungs. They could make it out of this.

Or, they’d die here.

Ichigo drove his elbow into one of the things’ forehead, feeling bile rise to his throat at the way it cracked inward and spewed liquified brain matter. As he did so, another sank its teeth into his shoulder with a growl. He grunted in pain, using the knife he held in his opposite hand to drive into its skull.

The piercing shot of a bullet rang out and ripped Ichigo’s attention towards Grimmjow. Standing closest to the door had already been bad news, but such a loud noise in their close quarters had every Infected snapping their heads toward him.

“Fuck off you mossy pieces of shit!” he yelled, shooting another through two of their heads and slamming the barrel of his gun through another’s sunken eye socket for good measure. Grimmjow was always beautiful, but the way he fought transfixed Ichigo like nothing else. The man was in his element amongst the carnage, and despite the piling bodies, bloated limbs, and onslaught still to come surrounding them, he was smiling like a rabid animal.

“We gotta get out of here!” Ichigo shouted back to him, and moved closer to his mate to provide coverage.

“The hell do you think I’m doin’?”

“No, I mean now!” Another monster got its jaws on Ichigo, this time in the leg. He winced in pain, and stabbed it like the other. “Let me go ahead of you, I’ll push through.”

There wasn’t time for hesitation, Grimmjow only nodded. As Ichigo moved past him, Grimmjow clapped him on the back of the neck, thumb rubbing over his bond bite. It was a small gesture, but held the world of comfort. They fought their way through the doorway in such synergy, it was like they’d been side by side their whole lives.

It was crazy what a single year could do.

Once they broke through, Ichigo pushed himself into a sprint, fighting against the pain that throbbed through him. He wasn’t bleeding much, but the bite marks still hurt like a bitch. A cursory glance gave Ichigo the relief that Grimmjow was right behind him, and they booked ass through the trees out to what used to be a main road.

Ichigo bent over, panting, when they broke the tree line. His chest felt like it was on fire and his lungs were probably collapsed or something with the way they ached. “Holy shit, we made it.”

“…Yeah.” Uncertainty laced Grimmjow’s voice, and sent off alarm bells in Ichigo subsequently. He turned around.

And saw Grimmjow gripping his bicep. He was bleeding.

Ichigo felt his heart drop down straight through his stomach. “Grimm—”

“I’m fine.”

“Let me see your arm.”
“I said I’m fine.”

“You are not fucking fine!” Ichigo couldn’t help the yell, and as soon as it came out, he clapped a hand over his mouth and looked around. No Infected. Yet. He moved closer. “Let me see. Grimmjow, please.”

The man, in all his stubborn glory, seemed to mull it over for a minute before he exhaled harshly through his nose and looked away. Grimmjow shoved the sleeve of his shirt up and revealed twin jagged crescent moons made of teeth marks. Blood oozed down his arm.

Neither of them spoke for a while. Ichigo was too busy trying to control his breathing, to not hyperventilate and lose it right here. He wasn’t the one whose life was in danger, so why did this feel like he’d just been shot through the heart? He couldn’t lose Grimmjow. Not now, not after everything they’d been through.

*I love you.*

“Don’t look at me like that,” Grimmjow said, and let his sleeve fall back into place.

“I’m not looking at you like—”

“You *are.* Think I don’t know pity when I see it?” Pity? What? “Here.” Grimmjow held the pistol out to him. “There’s two shots left.”

Ichigo felt the weight of the gun in his hands like a foreign entity. The implication wasn’t sinking in. “You know how to use a gun better than I do, you hold onto it.”

“I’m not givin’ it to you to be held onto, Kurosaki.”

The realization sank in slowly, then all at once. Against his better judgment, tears pricked at his eyes. “What are you saying? No. Fuck no I’m not gonna use this on you, Grimmjow. What-- What kind of fucked up shit is that?” He laughed, despite the situation, but the humor didn’t reach his eyes.

When Grimmjow sighed this time, it wasn’t in anger, despite the fact that his jaw was clenched and his grip on the gun was white-knuckled. With a curse under his breath, he tucked the weapon back into its holster at his hip. “Ich we don’t got any other choice. I don’t know the odds of being immune to this shit, but I know it ain’t likely. And…” He trailed off, the grinding of his teeth almost audible. But when he stepped up towards Ichigo and gripped his mate’s face in his hands, the action was impossibly soft. “Like hell I’m gonna lose myself and hurt you. Don’t make it come to that.”

“It won’t.” Ichigo didn’t know what he was saying. He knew it was childish. But he couldn’t… He couldn’t.

“I don’t make me call you fuckin’ stupid. This isn’t--”

Ichigo leaned up on his toes and kissed Grimmjow hard enough to shut him the hell up for two seconds. And it worked, for the time being. He wound his arms around Grimmjow’s neck and pulled him closer. “I know it’s stupid, okay? I know how this infection works. But, Grimm, I can’t. You can’t ask me to kill you.”

“Guess I should’ve known the only bastard good enough to take me out in the end would be me. Shit’s kinda poetic, even.”

Ichigo slammed a hand against Grimmjow’s chest. “Can you fuck off with dying for a second? What if you made it?”
“Ichi, baby, c’mon.”

“I’m serious!” Grimmjow moved away from him, but only just. And Ichigo continued. “We’re twenty miles out from the resistance point. We can make that in a day. There’s a chance we can develop a serum before…”

“Before I become a damn grass zombie?”

“Yeah.”

For a minute, they just stared at each other.

“You’re serious.”

“About you? Yeah. As serious as the bite on your arm.”

Grimmjow chewed the inside of his lip for a second before nodding. “Okay,” he said, then ran a hand through his hair roughly and let out an exhale. “Okay. But you gotta promise me something.”

“Hit me.”

“When I turn on you,” Grimmjow said, tilting Ichigo’s face up towards his own, “you kill me.”

Ichigo shut his eyes and looked down. He pressed his forehead against Grimmjow’s broad chest and felt his heartbeat beneath him. Strong, powerful. Ichigo couldn’t imagine it becoming anything but that. “Okay,” he said and knew he was trying to convince himself of the same thing.

“Promise me.”

Ichigo looked up, tears in his red-rimmed eyes and said, “I promise.”

As the day progressed, Ichigo tried to ignore how Grimmjow’s pace was beginning to slow.

“How are you feeling?” he asked, reaching down to hold Grimmjow’s hand only for it to be yanked away from him.

“Fuckin’ peachy. How much longer we got?” His breathing was harsher than usual, and as Ichigo stared at him, he knew the sheen of sweat covering his brow was not due to the exertion of their walk.

“We’re halfway there.”

“So am I.”

Ichigo stared at the blood soaking through Grimmjow’s shirt, at the skin of his exposed bicep looking red and swollen with angry veins spidering down. “No, you aren’t.”

“You really think I’m gonna make it outta this, huh?”

“Of course I do.” Ichigo grabbed his hand again. This time, Grimmjow did not pull away. “Kinda surprised you don’t. Never thought you were a quitter.”

With a laugh, Grimmjow shook his head and rolled his eyes. “You think you can bait me that easy?”
“I dunno, can I?” They looked at each other with mirroring smirks. Ichigo’s challenging Grimmjow to back down, and knowing full well the man wouldn’t do that even in death.

“I’m gonna fuck that look off your face once I get this fungus shit outta my blood, just you watch, Kurosaki.”

“Little did you know, I’m actually into fungus. Mushrooms really get me going.”

---

“Grimm? Grimmjow, can you get up?”

“Huh? Yeah… I… when the hell did I sit down?” Grimmjow’s voice was slurred. He was laying on his side where he’d fallen down in the leaves.

“Just a minute ago. C’mon, big guy.” Ichigo lifted underneath his arms and pulled. Grimmjow swayed, leaning heavily against him. His skin was clammy and pale, so pale. Ichigo couldn’t dwell on it for long. They were almost there.

“Feels like I’m on fire.”

“You have a very high fever.” Ichigo left out the part about how beneath Grimmjow’s eyes were circles so dark it looked like he had two shiners. In all honesty, the speed of this sickness was startling him. When Grimmjow was first bitten, Ichigo assumed the incubation period would be at least twelve hours, and that was guessing the smallest time frame possible. As of currently, he guessed it’d been around six. The progression would be fascinating if he were in a lab and this were a petri dish. But here, in front of him, stealing Grimmjow with every breath, it was fucking terrifying.

When Grimmjow breathed in, the sound was a wet rattle. He coughed soon after, blood spattering down his chin to the front of his shirt. “Ah, fuck…”

“You’re okay.”

“Like hell.”

At the end of the road, he saw it. The building they’d been looking for.

Salvation.

Ichigo wrapped an arm around Grimmjow’s midsection and tugged him closer. “You said you loved me earlier.”

“I did? Sounds sappy.”

Despite the fact of their position, Ichigo laughed. “Yeah, it was.”

“Meant it, though.”

“I--”

“Don’t tell me yet.”

Ichigo frowned, they were making their way towards the building and the sun was almost set. Any longer and night would fall, they’d be vulnerable all over again. “Why not?” Time wasn’t exactly on their side.
“’Cause I’m gonna make it outta this, and I wanna--” Grimmjow coughed again, the rattling in his breaths getting louder. “I wanna hear it when I can think straight.”

**But what if you don’t make it? What if I was wrong and you die on me and I don’t get to tell you how much everything’s fucking meant? How much you’ve meant?**

“I could say it twice, you know.”

“Nah, that ruins it.”

Ichigo rolled his eyes as they finally approached an iron gate barring their entry. Suddenly, the realization that Grimmjow was very obviously sick trying to get into a place guarded against Infected hit him. There was no way in hell they’d let him in. He had to think of something, and fast.

“Grimmjow, I need to get your shirt off.”

“Takin’ advantage of me in my--” he coughed, “time of weakness?”

“More like trying to not have whoever is in here shoot you on site from having blood all over your shirt. Now, c’mon.” He maneuvered them to lean Grimmjow against the gate, and lifted his t-shirt over his head. The moment it was off, Ichigo wished he hadn’t.

Bruises had started motting Grimmjow’s flesh, painting in torso in Rorschach tests of blue, purple, and green. It made once tanned skin sallow, sickly. Ichigo grit his teeth. He didn’t know which looked worse: Grimmjow’s skin, or his bloody shirt. But maybe, just maybe, he could pass this off as them getting into a fight with hunters. All he needed was to get them into the facility. From there, he would figure it out.

Ichigo tossed Grimmjow’s shirt away from them and rang the buzzer on the gate.

After a minute of silence, a voice came through the static. “Hello?” It sounded shocked.

“My name is Kurosaki Ichigo. I’m traveling with my mate Grimmjow Jaegerjaquez. We need cover.”

“Are you infected?”

“No. But my mate is injured badly. We ran into hunters on our way here.”

“Those bastards... How did you find out about us, Kurosaki Ichigo?”

Ichigo grit his teeth. “Listen, I don’t want to be rude, but can we do this inside? The sun is setting.”

“We don’t just let anyone in. There’s a reason we haven’t been compromised.”

“I know how to cure it.”

Silence stretched out before them, the wet sounds of Grimmjow’s wheezing the only white noise against crickets chirping in the twilight.

A different voice answered them, this one softer, a middle aged woman? “That is quite the claim. How do you plan to do that?”

“I’m immune. With the scars the prove it. You can use my blood to create an antidote.”

“I don’t think I need to stress the danger you’re putting yourself in if you’re lying.”
Ichigo timed the lapsed time to his heartbeat, it was elevated. But after at least thirty seconds, a buzzer sounded, and there was an audible click from within the iron gate.

Ichigo pushed it open.

The walk up to the door was hell, and he tried to clean the blood off Grimmjow’s mouth as much as possible, shielding the bite mark with his own body. “Okay, you gotta act normal, okay?”

Grimmjow managed a laugh, and was rewarded with blood dribbling over his lips. “Sure, Angel, I got it.”

“Angel? That’s a new one.”

“When I first saw you… I was dyin’ then too. That’s what I thought you were.”

“You’re not dying. Hold it together for me.”

Ichigo barely had a chance to knock on the door before it’s being swung open. A man with muscle to rival Grimmjow stands before them, with tattoos covering his arms and a ponytail so red it almost detracts from the previous statement. Ichigo holds Grimmjow closer to himself.

“Immune, huh?” the red guy says.

“Yeah. I’m Ichigo.”

“Renji.” He pauses, then juts his head towards Grimmjow. “What about him?”

Grimmjow looks up, and against the odds, he does a damn good job at standing mostly on his own. All that pride was bound to come in handy some day. “Ain’t got a super power, just beat to hell as you can see. So if you got any alcohol in there I could use a shot and a spray down with it.”

“You can’t shoot medical alcohol, dumbass.” The tone in Renji’s voice almost makes it seem as if he found that out the hard way.

Grimmjow finds it in himself to shrug. “We’ll see about that.”

“Can we come in?” Ichigo asked, getting back to the matter at hand.

Anxiety was pulsing through his body and making Ichigo feel like he was about to choke on his aorta. Any sensible person would know right away that Grimmjow was Infected. The only hope they had was this Renji guy being a complete dumbass, but by the looks of it--

“Yeah, get in.”

By the looks of it, they’d hit the jackpot.

Ichigo managed to get Grimmjow inside with less help than he anticipated, though the strain Grimmjow was putting on himself was worrying. All it would do is elevate his pulse, thus speeding up his blood flow and spreading the infection faster. It wasn’t looking good, none of this was.

“I need access to medical supplies, if you have them. To start on the serum.”

“If we have them?” Renji snorts. “You didn’t notice this was a fucking hospital?”
And it occurred to him that no, he didn’t notice. Ichigo had been to focused on just getting Grimmjow inside that he hadn’t looked around. But he did now. The white sterile walls gleamed back at him like hope in the darkness. If this was a hospital, then there would be everything they needed here.

He could save Grimmjow’s life.

“Can we get him into a bed, then?” Ichigo nodded towards Grimmjow.

“Yeah, let’s get your—” A sly grin crept onto his face. “—Alpha?”

Ichigo flushed, and Grimmjow had the gall to smirk.

Renji snorted and didn’t need a response. He took them down the hall to a door on their right and once they entered Ichigo was immediately glancing around. It was a room that was once used for surgery, that much was apparent. Together, they got Grimmjow onto the bed, and Ichigo tried to remain on the side blocking the one thing that would give them away. He didn’t intend to keep it hidden for long, just long enough for Renji to leave them undisturbed.

If they were found out before then…

“Abarai, I see you’ve let our new friends in.” A voice sounded from the doorway, the same voice Ichigo had heard through the intercom only minutes ago. He turned to see a woman with long black hair and a kind smile.

Renji let go of Grimmjow and walked over to her. “Unohana, yeah, this guy’s pretty beat up. Hunters got to ‘em good.”

Ichigo could hear his heart in his ears. “Hi, I’m Kurosaki Ichigo. This is Grimmjow, my mate.”

Don’t come in, don’t come in.

She walked in. “Hunters, you said?”

Ichigo pressed his hip closer to Grimmjow’s arm, causing the man to wince in pain. “Yeah. Some douchebag named Aizen.”

“Oh, yes. I’ve heard that name.” Her eyes scanned over Grimmjow’s body in a calculating manner. But after a minute of inspection, she stopped. “Abarai. Let me have a moment with the patient and Ichigo for a minute.” Though she smiled, there was malice behind it that Ichigo couldn’t explain, and unsettled him in the worst ways.

“Sure thing, doc!”

Left alone in the quiet was more eerie than it ever should have been.

“Ichigo. You say you are immune to the disease, correct?”

He didn’t have time for chit-chat. Grimmjow was dying on this table right now and Unohana was keeping him from giving immediate medical attention. “That’s right.”

“Do you happen to have proof?”

Ichigo lifted his shirt without a moment’s hesitation, revealing the plethora of bite scars both fresh and old to her. “I got this.”

Unohana traced a finger over his abdomen, circling the bites. “Astounding…”
“But the most important thing right now is Grimmjow. He needs me.”

“He’s infected.”

Ichigo felt his face pale. “He isn’t.”

As if on cue, Grimmjow coughed again, forcing blood out onto his chest. He tried to breathe in, and it sounded like blowing bubbles through a straw in a glass of water. Ichigo turned towards him and touched his face, turning it to face him. “Grimm, hang on, okay? Are you still with me?”

Grimmjow opened his eyes, and they were bloodshot, the whites of them looking almost yellow. “Here… I’m here.”

“That’s my Alpha.”

Unohana stood silent for only a handful of sentences more. “The entirety of this compound’s safety is in jeopardy. You’ve killed dozens of people by bringing this lost cause into our walls.”

“He isn’t a lost cause! I told you, my blood can make the antidote. That’s why we’re here!”

“He will die before anything of the sort is made. Antidotes takes months, *years* depending on the success and the prowess of the scientists in question.”

Ichigo felt like the walls were spinning around him, the ground threatening to collapse beneath him. Grimmjow couldn’t die. They couldn’t make it this far for him to fucking die. Once again, tears stabbed at his eyes, and he grit his teeth against them to no avail.

“So, what are you going to do to us?”

“I should put your mate out of his misery, extract enough blood of yours to use for testing, and then send you out into the street.”

Ichigo positioned himself in between Unohana and Grimmjow as much as he could, the very notion of someone touching his Alpha, especially to harm him, elicited a snarl from between clenched teeth. No one would touch him. Not Unohana. Not this fucking disease. Nothing but Ichigo. If only he could give Grimmjow his blood, his immunity--

That was it.

“Give me one night.”

“Pardon?”

“Quarantine him with me for one night. If he turns and attacks me, you’ll know for sure that I can’t be affected by it, and I’ll help you develop the serum. We can save millions of people, I know we can. We can *cure* it.”

“Your idealism is naive.”

“Please,” Ichigo said with the last shreds of his pride leaving him as tears streaked down his face. “*Please* just let me try to save his life.”

Unohana regarded him for a moment longer. “One night, then. For humanity.”

She locked the door behind her, and Ichigo knew what he had to do if there was even a fraction of a chance for Grimmjow to survive.
He needed a blood transfusion.

“Grimmjow, can you hear me?”

Grimmjow’s eyes were closed, breathing shallow. Ichigo slid the IV into his arm without so much as a response. He knew how to fashion a typical IV, had done so since he was old enough to be competent and taught by his father. But he’d never siphoned blood directly out of himself to put into someone else.

First time for everything.

Ichigo hooked himself up to an empty IV bag and hung it as he’d learned to do. With the other end attached to Grimmjow’s arm, he watched his own blood feed directly into that of his mate. This was the only way. The only chance they had. If the antibodies in his own blood could keep him from getting sick, then they should be able to cure it. And if his blood type was incompatible with Grimmjow’s, well, they were almost out of time anyways.

“I love you,” Ichigo whispered to Grimmjow who wouldn’t open his eyes again, not even for him. And after an hour or so of watching and waiting, Ichigo felt his head begin to swim. But he couldn’t be tapping out from blood loss, not yet, there wasn’t enough. He hadn’t done enough yet.

He hadn’t saved Grimmjow’s life yet.

In another moment, everything went dark.

“What’s two plus two?”

“Fuck off, this ain’t math class.”

“Grimmjow, answer the question please.”

“Four.”

“And two times two?”

“Still fuckin’ four.”

“Okay, now--”

“Can you go to hell with this shit?!”

Ichigo made a noise in sleep, his brows furrowing further before they cracked open. Before him, Unohana stood at Grimmjow’s bedside, asking him questions.

Asking Grimmjow questions.

He was alive.

Ichigo’s eyes flew open the rest of the way, and he jolted from almost the same position he’d left himself in, sitting in a chair pulled up to Grimmjow’s side.

“Hey, Ichi.” Grimmjow said, and flashed him a smile. His eyes were no longer glassy and bloodshot, and the circles under them had all but disappeared. A quick glance at his torso revealed the same thing, the bruises and green tint was like it’d never existed to begin with.
“Grimmjow, you’re--”

Unohana smiled. “I’ll give you two a moment.” She left the room again.

In an instant, Ichigo was gripping Grimmjow’s face in his hands, searching for some sign that this was a dream. “You’re okay?”

“Looks like it. Doc said some crazy asshole hooked himself up directly to me and almost bled out.”

Tears, they were really starting to become a habit Ichigo never wanted. “I had to save you, I had to try. It was the only thing I could think of.”

Grimmjow pulled him down into a kiss that was crushing, and the renewed strength in his arms had relief flooding through Ichigo’s entire body. “Dumbass…” They kissed like there was no oxygen in the room. “How the hell am I supposed to repay you for savin’ my life twice, huh?”

“Don’t ever make me do it a third time.”

“I heard you, y’know.”

Ichigo blinked. “Heard me what?”

“What I told you to wait for. I couldn’t say anythin’ back. Felt like my brain was turnin’ into a damn mushpot. So say it again.”

“I love you.”

Grimmjow let his eyes close with a smile on his face. “One more time.”

Ichigo laughed. “Fuck off.”

“C’mon, Savior Of The World. Tell me again.”

“I love you. Asshole.”

“Love you too, Ichii.” Grimmjow laced their fingers together. The bite mark in his arm was no longer the swollen, angry mark it had been yesterday. Now, it looked to be nothing but a regular wound. It was hope. There was finally hope for everyone.

End Notes

Hit me up on twitter for updates and me screaming about otps @spookysheith <3

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!