Unto the Soul, Unto the Flesh

by Chaos_Greymistchild

Summary

What happens to the soul, must surely reflect on the flesh...

Ichigo slides his fingers across the skin of his chest, feeling the ridges and bumps where Aizen had nearly cleaved him in half, the circular scar where he had been speared through the chest (hisSoulSleephiscorethecentreofhisSoulPROTECTPROTECTPROTECT) then the larger circle of lighter skin overlapping it. Softer skin. Newer skin. Skin that had been regenerated (alongwiththemajorityofhischesthisheartishisunsheshasahollowwholeahollowwholeohgodohgodPROTECTPRC)

He moves onto other parts of his body. He runs his fingers over his hands and arms, the slight discolorations the only sign of the marks Senbonzakura had left on his body (heneedstorescueshersaveherherbrotherdoesnotdeserveherhewillbeherbigbrotherthenPROTECTPROTECT). He runs his fingers over his face, his eyes, the countless thin, nearly invisible scars where people had aimed for his Hollow mask, his eyes, his brain (he’shalfmadandattackinganythingthatmoves|cutoffmyarmandlegisthisanywaytowin|heistheirownlyshieldP)

He traces intricate swirls and tribal tattoos over his hips and spine, weaving his way around that near-constant ache of chipped spinal cord.

Ichigo takes his hands away.

His body is his canvas and his art, painted in muscle and carved by blood, but all there are there, are marks made by others.

Kisuke keeps his hat tipped dangerously low over his head nowadays to hide the scars on his face. It
doesn’t help, it never helps, not when his hat wobbles dangerously whenever he so much as turns his head, and he must look up every time a customer comes in to greet them, exposing those thin, cursed lines, running like tears down his cheeks. Sometimes he wishes that he could have hidden away from the world, from Aizen. Wishes he had never tried to fix his mistakes and just run, far, far away from anything and everything (the Hogyoku sees hears watches never wish never want keeps silent don’t speak).

Kisuke leaves the shop counter early on the bad days, resolutely ignoring the way Tessai stares at him disapprovingly even as he says that he’s got something cooking in his lab, could he just mind the counter for him while he takes notes, thank you very much Tessai, such a gem, in a cheerful (always cheerful not allowed to be sad has sorrow activate the Hogyoku never wish never want keeps silent don’t speak) voice.

He stares and stares at the walls in his lab blankly until night falls, and then the moon dies, and then sun rises on the new day again, not knowing what it is to want for anything anymore.

Ichigo refuses to go to the shouten anymore. Urahara is rarely there and on the single occasion he was, he had been so shattered and broken and hiding behind his mask, that Ichigo hadn’t the heart to keep going.

Kisuke wishes, sometimes, that Ichigo would come back, but he squashes that feeling immediately, buries it with a century of experience and instinct, and turns away.

Yoruichi kidnaps the two, throws them into a room, and guards the exits with watchful eyes.

The student may have surpassed the teacher, and her friend may know how to free himself regardless, but her boys know her well, and know not to attempt to escape.

She would not allow them to destroy themselves over an absence of faith.

Ichigo stumbles a little while speaking. “Did—did, you, Yoruichi—”

Kisuke refrains from nodding. “She did,” he says instead.

An awkward silence settles between them, a rift that had been created when they couldn’t see each other without pain.

A stubborn expression spreads across Ichigo’s face. Kisuke recognises it as the same grimly determined expression he had worn when battling Aizen and fighting against insurmountable odds.

With a deliberate slowness that Ichigo rarely exhibits, he reaches out to cradle Kisuke’s scarred cheeks, an action the other allows with a flinch. “Kisuke,” he says to the older man, scarred and broken and wrapped in splintered, jagged edges designed to draw blood, yet yearning all the same, “Urahara Kisuke, you made me who I am today, trained me, marked me with a Hollow’s power, and carved with blood into my flesh. You are my maker, do not think of hiding away from me now.”

Ichigo watches as Kisuke trembles beneath his hands, shaking for reasons he cannot fathom.

Kisuke wants to rip his student’s hand from his face, wants to hide away from them, wants to unleash his confusion and fear and crushing guilt as a wave of crimson energy ready and willing to rip and tear through his student’s body and slice the other into the tiniest pieces—
A pulse of killing intent, near drowning the wave of fear that rode under that current, flashes through his reiatsu before he can hold it in.

Ichigo flinches back, gripping onto Kisuke all the harder so that his hands never leave the scientist’s scars.

Kisuke gasps and jerks, as if to free himself, but then he is clinging onto Ichigo’s wrists just as hard as he rides out the waves of suppressed wants and needs.

Then Ichigo is kissing him, hard and fierce, as wild and untamed as his reiatsu. Kisuke knows that he really shouldn’t be being poetic, but that’s his first instinct when his mind feels like it’s being poured out of his head like sand from a broken hourglass, and he’s shifting through the remnant grains for brief, bright flashes of thought. He kisses back, tentative and yearning, caught in the younger man’s gravity.

A tongue licks into his mouth, and oh Soul King, that was everything he’d longed for and more. He could taste the tea Tessai liked serving, and hands grabbed his wrists, and since when had he let go and closed his eyes?

“You okay with this?” Ichigo mumbles breathlessly against his lips.

He responds with a nibbling at Ichigo’s bottom lip that makes a whimper pass those brilliant lips.

“Gods, Kisuke,” a strangled gasp.

Wood thuds under his shoulders — the table. A brief flash of cold air, before Ichigo’s bare body covers him again. He can feel every inch of skin, every raised scar. He kisses those scars, fervently, like a worship. “Want you,” he mouths against the remnants of Ichigo’s near-bisection, “Love you,” he murmurs against the marks the Hollow hole had left behind.

A hitching breath, a hiccup in the body above him. “Love you,” Ichigo murmurs back, kisses pressed into his hair, “Love you, so, so much,” and Ichigo’s bringing his face up, and kissing his scars. “Beautiful, gorgeous, brilliant,” Ichigo murmurs, kissing worship into his skin.

A thigh brushes against him.

Kisuke swears that the sun might have exploded. He lets out a strangled groan and struggles to remember how to breathe.

Ichigo smiles down at him, unusually smug and radiant.

Then he lets go of the tight control he has over his reiatsu.

Ichigo’s pupils blow wide and his hips jerk up. Kisuke groans at the friction.

A torrent of reiatsu floods the room, Ichigo’s lust hitting him like a freight train and then all he sees are stars and light.

In short order, these things happen:

Ichigo draws on his skin. At first, they are names of loves, both platonic and romantic, then swirls and stripes like those of his Hollow form, and then tribal patterns that wind their way up his arms and down his back and sliding up his neck and creeping up onto his face (“Heyo, King,” a voice whispers in the night). It isn’t long until he learns to draw the lines of his intimately, achingly familiar
Hollow-mask on his face, freehand and without a mirror.

Kisuke begins to show his face to strangers and friends alike, baring to the world his trust in his student (not his guilt, never his guilt, not again), the relief of his burden.

Kisuke keeps two rooms empty and made-up for whenever the three Kurosaki siblings need to get away from their father. It doesn’t take long for Ichigo to move into Kisuke’s room. It takes barely a day later before the youngest generation of the Kurosaki family to move into the Urahara Shouten altogether.

Kurosaki Isshin bursts into the candy store screaming and wailing about his son’s virtue and how his family has abandoned him. Underneath all the dramatics and tears enough to drown a small puppy in (“Urahara-san! Ichi-nii said that drowning puppies is mean!”) there is a very real pain and sense of betrayal. Kisuke doesn’t allow that to sway him. Isshin had had his chance, and all he’d ever done was drive away his children.

A very smug black cat was frequently sighted around the neighbourhood.

That smugness soon turned to yowling anger as the Urahara Shouten closed its doors to meddlers.

(Yuzu soon rescued the “poor thing”, so Ichigo and Kisuke were saved Yoruichi’s revenge. Well, up to a point, anyways)

Kurosaki Ichigo and Kurosaki Kisuke lived long fulfilling lives, until Ichigo died for the last time, and the whole family began the slow move into Soul Society.

Even to this day, some say that in the town of Karakura if you pray to the right spirits on the right day for the right reasons— there might be a green-and-white fan waiting for you on your doorstep.

(Ichigo never could let go of Karakura, and his drive had always been to protect his people)

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