

Bleach - In the End I Started

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In the end he started thinking about the beginning. Ukitake drabble thing. Shunsui appears as well. Read and review!

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In the End I Started Thinking about the Beginning

Ukitake stared aimlessly out into garden that surrounded the 13. division's office. A relentless autumn breeze insisted upon disturbing the peace and chasing away the summer.

He was trying to enjoy the quiet and the solitude. *Peace*. He smiled to himself, he had sent his two third seats away on errand that would keep them occupied at the very least until morning. A sigh escaped his pale lips as he realized he still had the afternoon and the evening to himself. Time alone was a rare commodity in the Seireitei even with thousands of years at one's disposal.

His attention returned the ever growing amount of paper work that he should be concentration on, but somehow he couldn't force himself to continue. He was only about halfway through the pile...

He coughed a harsh and wet cough that testified to the fact that it hadn't been a good morning health wise and that was partly why he'd sent Kiyone and Kotsubaki away.

His lungs slightly felt as if they were burning but so far the pain had been bearable. Still he knew he would be in for a rough night.

He would try not to let it ruin his day. He told himself that he was too old to worry about something like that and he knew that Unohana wouldn't be able to help anyway when hell broke loose.

A ghost of bitter smile played across his lips. He hated his own weakness, his body's betrayal. Oh, how he hated to be the cause of worry to his friends and even more he hated to be such a burden when his body said stop.

As if on cue his breathing rattled a little and he focused on the familiar tightness that was filling his chest with alarming speed. Perhaps he should've prepared the bed chamber before processing the paper work.

His foot was going completely numb so he decided to change his position a little. Even if the movement's impact on his upper torso should've minimal it was enough. He was cut short by shot of pain that pierced his chest as the congestion in his lungs suddenly flared up and his right hand flew to his chest as he doubled over in a vicious coughing fit.

The sound of his chest rumbling unnaturally loud filled the room and after a few minutes of relentless coughing the sound changed character from wet to liquid as some of the fine blood vessels in his lungs gave out under the strain. His free hand caught whatever the disease might have produced.

It was sad that he wasn't even surprised at the metallic taste in his mouth or the blood spatter on his hand – he knew his lungs were broken, but he was taken aback by the swift escalation the attack had progressed with. He had expected he had hours yet before his body would turn on him.

He cursed and produced a handkerchief from a hidden pocket on his robes and wiped the blood away from his hand and his lips.

He found himself in a less than desirable situation. His breath was shortening by the minute and his bed chamber was not equipped to a night of sickness. Staying in the chilled office was not an option so he gathered that the only option was to try and make it to the bedroom and improvise the rest.

However, thousands of years of living with this disease told him that the next attack was minutes away and it would be a critical time to be moving, but it could hardly be any worse than sitting by his desk.

With the handkerchief standing by in his fist he slowly got up from the chair and while performing every breathing technique he knew of he carefully made his way to his private domicile.

Only a few strides away from the door the coughing fit attacked with obscene force and he immediately fell to his knees. The blood flowed more easily this time and the amount spilled doubled from the previous fit. His vision suddenly blackened and he found himself on all fours, still coughing violently. He allowed his body to slump to floor as the coughing kept on draining him for energy. Staying put suddenly seemed a much more appealing idea, just to give in and let sleep claim him. To forget.

The coughing ceased and the ease that followed only brought more weight on his eyelids.

Like a warm blanket the darkness surrounded him and Ukitake found himself wishing that his third seat was there. Or Shunsui. *Shunsui*. Ukitake chuckled silently as the memory of their first encounter on the very first day of school in Yamamoto's Academy. Shunsui had pulled some prank on one of the teachers and he was being chased by a furious Yamamoto. Ukitake had saved his sorry behind as he had done so many times afterwards as well.

In the end I started thinking about the beginning

Shunsui's voice sounded through the halls yelling something quite inappropriate. He couldn't make out if it was a dream.

"Ukitake!" he heard again in Shunsui's easy recognizable voice sounding all cheerful. He desperately wanted to answer but he felt so weak.

"Jyuu, damned fool!" Shunsui said, his voice filled with anger, Ukitake noticed. It was followed by approaching footsteps and Shunsui's hands as he cupped his cheeks seemed like there were sent from above. Ukitake forced his eyes open although it seemed to all his power to do so. How he hated when Shunsui's face looked so drawn with concern. He looked so old.

His eyes must've closed again because suddenly he felt himself being lifted.

"Unohana or bed?" Shunsui asked in a low voice.

"Bed," Ukitake managed to croak out. That was what he loved about Shunsui; Shunsui trusted him to know himself best.

All he remembered from there on was the tightening of his chest and the coughing.

When Ukitake woke up again it was morning. The wind had died down and silence reigned. His mind cleared somewhat. *Silence?* Where the hell was Shunsui? He'd usually be snoring loudly by now.

He shot up from the bed, but an almost immediate wave of dizziness forced him back down, his body still weakened from last night's ordeal.

The fever induced half-conscious state he was in came to let him believe that Shunsui was in trouble. He somehow imagined that Shunsui had finally managed to drink himself to death. At the time it seemed a perfectly reasonable scenario.

Suddenly he was running and running and he had the feeling of not getting anywhere and he so desperately needed to help Shunsui. He kept on running but his legs were too weak and he was rapidly losing his breath.

"Shunsui!" he tried to yell, but his breath caught half way and he started coughing. He opened up his eyes and found himself in the bedroom and having a bad coughing fit. It subsided quickly but it left him wheezing and panting. Then he realized it was only a dream.

"Think! Shunsui wouldn't drink himself. He wouldn't be able to pour the sake down his throat fast enough. It would be a physical impossibility!" Ukitake told himself and chuckled. Gradually he got his

breathing under control. “*Still,*” he thought, “- *that doesn’t the fact that Shunsui isn’t here*”

Shunsui picked that moment to barge into the room and he quickly locked it behind him. Ukitake couldn’t help but notice that he looked like a cat that had swallowed a canary. They made eye contact and it clearly surprised Shunsui.

“Oh, Jyuu. You’re awake,” Shunsui commented in a carefree tone.

“What have you been up to?” Ukitake tried to say in a serious voice, but what came out sounded a lot more pitiful than accusing.

“What do you mean?” Shunsui replied in his most innocent tone he could think of. All it took was a hard glare from Jyuu. It only took Shunsui second to cave in.

“Ah, you know me to well, Jyuu,” Shunsui grinned.

“What have you done now?” Ukitake asked tiredly while massaging his aching temples. Shunsui just smiled and kept looking mischievous.

“You don’t wanna know,” Shunsui simply answered. Ukitake chuckled.

“You’re probably right” Ukitake’s eyebrows shot up in realization, “-I’m not letting you blame it on Shirou-san this time!”

Shunsui smiled at that memory, but then shook his head.

“I was thinking more in the line of Kenpachi. Don’t you think he has been looking rather bored lately?”

Ukitake burst out laughing whole heartedly, but his lungs weren’t quite ready for such rash action and it ended in coughing.

He willed it down before it drew blood. He recognized Shunsui’s silence as concern and decided to turn it around.

“I don’t think Yamamoto will satisfy his lust for blood. He’s more likely to bury Kenpachi in paper work and that will be distributed out on his subordinates” Ukitake reasoned.

“How about Mayuri?” Ukitake then suggested, “- he has been denying every request I have made for technical support these last years”

Shunsui grinned, “Even better,” he said, immediately eyeing a possibility and disappeared back out the door.

Ukitake’s smile faded. The scene reminded so much about their first encounter. “*It is funny,*” he thought, “- *in the end I started thinking about the beginning*”

He chuckled. “I’m so melodramatic,” he said out loud to no one in particular.