

Quincy Archer Hates You

by debbiechan

Disclaimer: I don't own Bleach, but when Ishida reaches the age of consent in a couple months, I'm claiming him.

Warnings: Rated PG for one reference to Orihime boobage but nah, no real warnings, unless you haven't seen the Mayuri/Ishida battle or started reading the Vizored arc ... then you're going to be *SPOILED*.

Description: A teensy bit of canon filler. Ishida is walking to his father's office after Hirako makes a pass at Orihime. Yes, Kubo-san's title for manga volume #4 works for this fic's title too, but the Quincy in this case is Ryuuken.

"I could restore your Quincy ability, but there is one condition: swear to me that you will forsake all ties with the Shinigami."--Ishida Ryuuken to his son, Ishida Uryuu, Bleach manga 186:10

It had never seemed like a long walk from school to the hospital before.

Ishida's bookbag swatted his hip with each step. The strap cut his shoulder. His legs felt slow, powerless... *pathetic*.

For two days now Ishida had been consoling himself with the idea that, even though his Quincy powers were gone, he still had all the strength of a clear mind, that he could make a decision based on a fair analysis of his own motives and objectives.

Grandfather had told him that people's priorities depended on what it was they wanted to protect.

All his life, Ishida had been able to sense the Dead, to hear the cries of men, women, and children as Hollows leapt for their souls and tried to eat them. Ishida had once had the purest of motives for arching his bow and drawing upon the energy around him *to destroy*. There was no mercy or redemption in his arrow; the Shinigami sword recycled souls, but the Quincy arrow finished them... *Why? Why summon this most annihilating of powers?*

At one time, all Ishida had wanted was to silence the screaming and save souls being terrorized by Hollows.... Even though Father, looking up from his medical journal one day, had said, *"There is no point to saving the Dead. That is the job of the Shinigami."*

It was only late afternoon but rainclouds darkened the streets. Not enough to turn on the mercury lamps. The air was steamy, dense, smothering. Ishida felt his breath coming in forced huffs as he walked and walked.

Ishida knew now that he wanted *something* from his father. Maybe what he wanted was something as simple as his father's respect, but respect from *Ryuuken* carried no real merit in Ishida's book.

Ryuuken's words the night he had saved his son from the giant Hollow had been spoken with heartsickening coldness:

"You are an idiot... I have no interest in you... You have no talent."

Ishida felt grief surge in his chest at the memory of that night. *Why?* Ryuuken wasn't the one who was dead--Grandfather was. Yet Ryuuken was the one who Ishida had mourned all this life.

For two days now Ishida had considered his own motives for wanting to learn the way of the Quincy in the first place. To earn Grandfather's approval? And the day that Ishida had sensed Kurosaki's reiatsu--all Ishida had wanted from his own Quincy powers *then* had been to display them. Vengeance and vanity had motivated him, not the urge *to protect*. And what had Ishida learned facing the despicable Shinigami Captain Kurotshuchi Mayuri? That the most evolved and refined of Quincy techniques meant nothing against Shinigami might....

For two nights Ishida had sat by an open window and listened for Hollows. He could still sense them, vaguely. He could still sense the surges of Kurosaki's Shinigami sword rising to defeat the monsters.

There is no place for me in this world, Ishida had told himself as night breezes threw his hair against his face. *I'm finished as a Hollow-slayer.*

For two days, Ishida had considered what Kurosaki would do; Kurosaki Ichigo had never wanted to prove anything to anyone. The kid had simply ridden his fate--why could Ishida not ride out his own? Why did Ryuuken have to give his son a *choice*?

This morning before class, Ishida had made his decision. The strange new boy with the bowl haircut had grabbed Inoue-san and had not let go.

Ishida was used to watching boys find excuses to touch her, to brush against her hair in crowded queues, to smash against her breasts in the rush after dismissal. *But this Hirako kid ...* Even with diminished Quincy senses, Ishida had sensed something *Hollowish* about him. Hirako had held onto Inoue's arm and rubbed circles into the skin just below the short uniform sleeve.

Asano, that loud clod companion of Kurosaki's, had been the first one to jump to the girl's defense. Even Chizuru, who herself had never been above copping a feel off Inoue-san, had launched into some enraged speech:

"Orihime is such a pure, innocent girl that--"

The blood had roared in Ishida's ears. He had been unable to hear the rest. All he knew was that, in a flash, Kurosaki had the Hirako kid by the scruff and was hauling him outside.

"What are you doing?" the creepy little Hollow-thing had screamed in the hallway. *"She isn't your girlfriend, right?"*

Ishida turned the last corner towards the hospital and loosened his tie.

He hated Kurosaki, but he hated the idea of a dumb rivalry influencing his actions even more. *Kurosaki rushes in and saves everybody. Inoue-san adores him. Everybody relies on Kurosaki.*

Ishida felt his pulse quicken, and he walked faster. The old animosity was still there: *I hate Shinigami.*

Grandfather had wanted the Shinigami and the Quincy to work together. It had been Grandfather's unattainable, futile vision, but where was Ishida's allegiance supposed to fall? With Grandfather's idealism? With Ryuken's cold practicality? With the slack-jawed, orange-haired kid who had saved the day in Soul Society?

Ishida slowed his pace and rearranged his tie. He didn't want to look disheveled before his father.

It was still late summer and too hot to be walking this far. When he had Quincy powers, Ishida could make the distance to his father's office in half the time. Ishida felt ashamed of his physical weakness. Had he ever noticed how much he relied on gathering spiritrons under his heels just to walk briskly?

The worst part was that upon returning from Soul Society, Ishida had been prepared to learn how to live as a mere human. He had fought his last battle and paid the price. He had accepted his fate.

Why did Father have to give him this terrible choice? To live as a weakling or to walk under the tutelage of a man who hated him.

"You are an idiot... I have no interest in you... You have no talent."

Ishida knew that his choice was not a rational one. None of the possibilities he had been weighing for the past couple days factored into his decision at all. All he knew was that

his body and soul could only accept one way of life. All he knew was that *if he was not a Quincy*, he was not a man. It was a matter of pride, pure and simple.

Quincy pride.

He could not stand by and watch other people's miserable attempts at protecting the defenseless--*not* if there was a chance of pure, swift, efficient Quincy power being resurrected toward that end. Even Asano had tried to defend Inoue! Even Chizuru!

Ishida bolted through the waiting room and past the smiling receptionist who was offering to take his bookbag. "Your father is busy right now," she said. "He's--"

But Ryuuken did not look busy at all when his son shoved the office door open. Not startled in the slightest, Ryuuken looked up from his medical journal and pushed his glasses up his nose. His face was composed. He did not look either pleased or displeased.

"So, you've come," he said.

End

A/N: Um, yeah, I wrote this while listening to Sugiyama Noriaki as Ishida singing *Suigintou no Yoru*. I figured the song refers to the scene when Ishida tried to save Rukia from Renji, but it gave me the idea for this ficlet:

*The light of the mercury lamp emerges in the night streets
Even if I don't have tears, something is running down
My black shadow hides in the streets
Even if I don't have any sympathy, somehow my walking pace is fast
On my back is the scent of tears--it follows me, it follows me . . .
On my back is the hesitation of my heart--I tried to run from it
Yet it comes after me, it comes after me*

I flee from it and it goes right past me.

*One by one the shadows merge and stab me through the heart
The shadows come together in the evening of the mercury lamp*