

## Heart of an Oracle

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# Heart of an Oracle

by [Im\\_ur\\_Misconception](#)

## Summary

It is the Heian Period of Japan. And the Hayato people are fighting in defiance of the current emperor. During this time a foreign woman with blond hair washes up on the shores after a storm and takes her as his wife. A woman who has a unique gift as an oracle that she passes to her daughter, knowing her daughter's life will be fraught with strife. Follow along as Lucy grows, is sold as a slave/servant to a noble house. Grows, adapts, and comes into her own as an oracle and finds love.

## Notes

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# So the Tale Begins

Year 813, Month August, Day 31

Many of the Hayato Clan were down on the beach to see what had washed ashore due to the storm the night before. Everyone on edge with the war with the Imperial Emperor, whom they did have a treatise with though they didn't honor it due to the Nobility being liars and backstabbers. They were currently in a lull with both sides recouping their losses and healing the wounds. They were a proud people and just wanted to be free of the tyranny of the Nobility and Imperial Dynasty.

“Reo ( れお ), over here there is a ship,” A man shouted.

The tall raven-haired man looked in the direction the call had come from to see his second in command, waving at him to hurry. Narrowing dark, guarded brown eyes, Reo made his way towards Sora. Curious about this ship and what could have had him sounding almost excited. He was hoping that there might be some supplies, since the raids by the Nobility under the order of his Imperial Highness Shunsui Kyōraku to bring them to heel.

Taking his time to climb over other bits of debris, eyes scanning everything just in case as he made his way through the growing wreckage. The material that the ship seemed to be made out of didn't look like anything he had ever seen a boat made out of. It was some pale, thin wood. And there was what seemed to be reeds and resin used to seal the planks together into a long, odd oval shape. Though Reo came to a halt as he looked at his friend who was standing beside a person.

What struck him as odd, was this person was pale of skin and their hair looked like liquid sunlight. That and they wore a gown that was white and so thin it didn't hide anything at all of the person's body. With careful, measured steps, Reo came to stand beside Sora before kneeling to check and see if the person was even alive. The moment his hand touched the body, a soft moan came from them. Tensing, he roughly rolled the person over only to fall on his ass in shock. What he was looking at was a woman, one who was well endowed and showing every asset to the world with her thin white gown.

Never before had he seen anyone who looked like her. Though her skin was pale, there was an odd undertone of tan to it making it appear browner than it was. Contrasting against the yellow of the bound hair. His eyes scanned the soft angles of the woman's face as he saw her pale lashes flutter before opening and revealing the warmest brown eyes he had ever seen.

“ Βοήθησέ με.” (Greek for Help, me.)

The words were foreign to him. It was a language that was not one he had heard in his many travels all over Japan. Where there were many dialects for the language, though all were the same except for how they were spoken in each region. This was something entirely else, and

it scared and fascinated him. And he knew what she said in that hoarse sounding whisper. The look on her face was pleading as she slipped back into an unconscious state of being.

Lifting his head, he looked at Sora, who was staring with his mouth hanging open. Reo reached out and smacked his companion's shin, getting his attention. Seeing understanding appear in his eyes, Reo gave a curt nod and shifted himself so he could scoop the woman up and carry her back to their small sea-side village. Knowing that her presence would cause problems.

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Year 817, Month July, Day 7

Reo looked down at the small bundle in his arms in amazement, unaware of the love shining in his eyes. It had been almost four years since he had found his now-wife washed up on the shore. And now he was holding his new daughter, who was so tiny in his large hands. The girl had the same eyes as her mother, warm, gentle brown orbs that seemed to see everything. And the small tufts of yellow on her head let him know she would have her mother's hair as well.

"Love, I would like to name her, Lucy," Layla said from where she lay on the futon.

Glancing down at his wife, seeing that unique smile she reserved for him and him alone. Knowing he couldn't tell her no, because she had told him months ago that they would have a girl and that she already knew her name. It was one of the odd things about his wife. She was a messenger of the gods. Or that was how he understands what she had explained to him after she was finally able to master their language and speak to each other.

Layla had escaped a large army that had come to destroy and enslave her people on her island called Greece. And that she had been given to a group or sect of people because she had been born with her hair color to be what is called an Oracle. A group of people who held the blood of the sun God Apollo. That had led to rather considerable debate and fight between them because the Sun was the embodiment of a Goddess, Amaterasu. Though in the end, it hadn't mattered, for Layla could read the messages written in the stars by the Gods. She had known her whole life that she was not meant to be kept a virgin in the temple, upon a mountain.

"It is beautiful, just like her, Layla," Reo told his wife as he crouched down and handed his precious daughter back to her mother. "I am glad to be home for this. Tomorrow I must be back to the front line and lead our people."



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Year 821, Month July, Day 7

It was supposed to be a happy day, but it wasn't. This day that celebrated her birth was now to celebrate death and loss. Closing her eyes, Lucy did her best not to cry as she smelled the funeral, pyre burned her mother's corpse. Now four years of age, Lucy knew that she had to make her father happy. She hated seeing him so sad.

Opening her eyes, she reached out a small, still chubby hand and grasped his fingers. Lifting her head, she looked at her father as he looked down. Unsure of how or why Lucy knew that things would get better. Not able to communicate that with the world, Lucy smiled up at her father, seeing his eyes widen. Next thing she knew was, she was being scooped up and held in a fierce hug. It was rare for her father showed this kind of affection to her, being the leader and strongest warrior in their clan.

Again she felt that something was telling her that things would get better. Lucy recalled the talks her mother had with her as she watched her mother slowly wither away and die. Her mother kept telling her to listen with her heart, not her ears, and she too would be able to hear the stars talk. She had no clue what that meant, but if her mother said it, then it was true.

"Papa, I will always be there for you," she whispered as she finally felt the first of many tears to come to slip down her face.

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Year 822, Month September, Day 23

Lucy stared at the woman that was to be her new mother and said nothing as the woman's black eyes stared back down at her. She wasn't happy that her father had taken a new wife only a year after her mother's death. But he had explained that she had to have a female role model in her life. That she couldn't grow up to be a woman who couldn't be tamed. A part of her could accept it, her needing a new mommy. Lucy didn't want this woman to be her

mother.

“These are my two sons, Lucy,” The woman, Sarah, said as she pushed the two boys forward towards her.

Lucy looked at the two boys. She knew who they were; she had played a few times with one or both of them, alongside the other village kids, and knew that Sarah knew it as well. Meaning this was what her dad called a formality? So she gave a small nod of her head as she let her eyes flick to each boy. The eldest was called Rogue; he had odd hair that was half black and half white. While his eyes were brown with a strange red tint to them and a scar across the bridge of his nose, he was older than her by two years, making him six. And the younger was almost a carbon copy of him, except for the white hair and lacking a scar. His name was Ryos and her age.

“We shall be living with you from now on, Lucy,” Sarah said in a tone that let held that final note. “I do hope we shall get along. I always wanted a daughter.”

At this, Lucy let her eyes narrow a little at Sarah. She wasn't stupid, no, she heard the whispers of the other adults about her Sarah how she had been vying for her father before her mother had arrived after a storm. And noticed how the woman before her would always stare coldly at her mother when they were out and about the village. Lucy was sure that Sarah had something to do with her mother getting sick and dying. But there was no way to prove it, except for the fact her mother got ill after Sarah visited and then would get worse with each visit that kept getting more frequent.

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Year 825, Month August, Day 3rd

Lucy felt broken inside as she watched the row of funeral pyres burn. The acrid smell of burnt flesh and smoke, making it hard for her to breathe. All her mind could think was that it wasn't fair. First, her mother four years ago passed away from illness and now her father. He had been alive when they'd brought him back from the battlefield. But due to too much blood loss, he had slipped from the world of the living to join her mother in the underworld. And it had her chest hurting.

“You have no right to cry, Lucy.”

She was lifting her head to look at her now permanent caretaker. Lucy felt the anger bubble in her chest at the woman's harsh words. Sarah had no right to speak words like that to her. This was her father, and Lucy knew that she had every right to cry for her father. But wisely she said nothing to the woman, who after their first meeting told her (only after her father and

Rogue and Ryos had left) that she was not to call her mother or mom unless the others were present. Something that Lucy was okay with since this woman could never come close to being anything like her mother.

“Do not stare at me like that or I will hit you, girl,” Sarah hissed to her. “I am now your caretaker and what I say goes. As your father’s late wife, you are now my burden to bear. And that is all you will ever be is a burden, born from a harlot witch that took the man that was to be my husband from the beginning.”

Lucy did her best to keep her thoughts from showing on her face at Sarah’s words. She knew how this woman felt about her mother — calling her a harlot, whore and unworthy whenever she could and making Lucy just plain miserable — often striking her for things that Lucy had no control over. It had made Lucy exceptionally observant and agile so that she would not bruise too severely. And served to help Lucy open her heart and hear what the stars said. Each painful experience in her life was a trial that earned her a new friend after she survived it.

Subtly Lucy ran on hand over her hip and waistline, feeling the faint outlines through the material of her cloak she was forced to wear to hide her pale skin from outsiders that came to the village for either safety or to trade because Sarah didn’t want questions asked and had gotten her father believing that because of how she looked that they’d try to kidnap her and sell her as a slave. Something her father always had worried about with her mother and her beauty.

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Year 832, Month July, Day 21st

Lucy leaned herself against the window and looked out it from under the edge of her hooded cloak. Giving a worried huff, she watched the clouds move across the blue sky. A squadron of the Imperial Army had made it to the village. And with both Rogue and Ryos out on the front lines fighting to keep them safe they were unprotected and left open, except for a few of the younger warriors and retired elder warriors, which means that Sarah was the spokesperson for the Village as the late Leaders wife.

It made Lucy sick that Sarah was so greedy for power. She had thought that the woman had finally capped after she had obtained her father when she was young, and her mother had died the previous year. No, it seemed to make things that much worse. Over the past seven years, the Village Elders had tried to get Sarah to marry. But the woman had always manipulated her sons by lying and said that the men were forceful of her person. Or worse,

trying to hurt Lucy by forcing her into their beds. This train of thought had Lucy snorting loudly.

No, Sarah had taken to rubbing ink and ash into her golden hair to make it black so she would blend in better. Not that it did much since Lucy was forbidden from leaving the house without her hooded cloak. Then again, if her blond hair were noticed, it would be cause for concern since Sarah claimed that Lucy was her biological daughter from her late husband and very shy and sick. A bunch of bullshit if Lucy were to be asked. No, Sarah feared that if people saw her without her hair darkened and the hood that they'd try to make Lucy marry as the daughter of the previous Leader and make her new husband the new leader.

Closing her eyes, Lucy let her hand fall to her hips and stroke the keys she had hidden there. Over the years of being made to do all the menial labor in the house, beaten when she displeased Sarah, amongst many other atrocities, Lucy had gained many keys. Most were silver, but she had a few gold ones now. She loved each one and called them her family as she didn't have a family anymore. And the fact she heard them and they were teaching her how to read the stars slowly was terrific.

"Lucy, come here this instant!"

At the shrill call from Sarah, Lucy flinched and opened her eyes. Giving the sky one more fond look, Lucy made her way from her tiny little room to the main living area of the house. Her body was going stiff at the sight of two ranked Imperial officers. One whom she knew by sight because he was the one who killed her father. It was the last thing her father had told her was the name of the man and what he looked like. His last breath was to warn her of this man, a General, who was able to beat her proud father.

"This is whom you mentioned?"

"Yes, now if we can be on our way?"

Cold filled Lucy's veins, freezing her blood as she caught the malicious glint in Sarah's eyes as she looked at her. The thing she had made her father paranoid about was the thing she was doing and selling her to the enemy to be a slave.

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Year 832, Month July, Day 31

Pain and heat radiated from her cheek where Sarah had slapped her before their *escort* had come to get them for their meeting with the Emperor of Japan. Staying silent as she listened to Sarah work a *deal* with the Emperor for all of the Hayate people to surrender and accept the Imperial rule and Lucy was the bargaining chip as the *daughter* of the late former Leader of all the Hayate, Reo and Sarah. She wasn't thrilled about this at all. But Lucy was far from stupid. Her mother educated her in the basics of reading and speaking greek, the native language of her mother. Something she still practiced in secret, making Lucy a rarity among the women of the village and countryside. A thing she hoped to use to her advantage.

“You are willing to give your only daughter to end this war?”

Lucy turned her gaze to the tall, white-haired man standing beside the Emperor himself. She knew who Ukitake Jushiro was. The man was a fearsome warrior in his own right even if he didn't get on the battlefield often. His tactical abilities were something Ryos loved to speculate on to her when he was home. Even Rogue had said that the man was brilliant and got a compliment of any out Sarah's eldest son was like pulling a tooth from a dogs mouth, painfully hard.

“Yes, I give you my beloved daughter to stop this war that has gone on for too long. I lost my husband Reo and fear to lose my sons now,” Sarah said in a sad, plaintive voice. “So I give you to Emperor Kyōraku, my daughter to either be a servant to you or a Noble of your choice in good faith since I know no noble would marry a commoner.”

Shooting Sarah a side glance, Lucy glared daggers at the woman who was now bent over low in a bow simpering openly like a woman desperate. No, Lucy wasn't ignorant of what this woman was doing.

“Your Majesty?” Jushiro asked, his voice soft and holding a note that drew Lucy's attention back to him.

There was something about the white-haired man that felt familiar and comfortable, but as far as she was concerned, he was the enemy for who he served.

“I accept, Jushiro. And I believe that she will be given to the Kuchiki household since it was them that brought us this plea for peace to our court,” Emperor Kyōraku said in a bored sounding voice.

When Lucy turned her gaze from Jushiro to the Emperor, she had to force herself from jerking back. The man was looking directly at her with scary clarity. His posture and bored tone said one thing, his gaze said another. She knew he was not a man to underestimate.

“Is that alright with you, Ginrei? Do you think you can place her in your household as a servant?” Emperor Kyōraku spoke.

There was a brief pause before a simple yes was spoken. Her fate sealed, Lucy bowed her head and tried to rationalize a good point, which came naturally to her. She was no longer under Sarah's rule so that she wouldn't be abused anymore. And as she was used for a peace agreement, that meant no harm could come to her without breaking the treatise, so Lucy

knew she was relatively safe. Besides, moving from one servitude to another wasn't going to be wrong. She just had to show her new owner that she was worth more than they all knew. At least without letting them know she could read and hear the stars, to understand the paths that the future could take.

*TBC*

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

Lucy gets to know her new master, Lord Genrei Kuchiki on the way to his family compound. And then gets a massive shock to the system after meeting his family.

### Chapter Notes

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Year 832, Month July, Day 31

Lucy sat there, silent and staring at her clasped hands in her lap. Her mind was going over what had happened after she had been given to the head of the Kuchiki Clan, Genrei. Sarah had been promptly dismissed, and she had been shuffled away by the palace servants to be checked her over. They were rather rude in their shock at how clean she was. Not a single tick, flea, or lice on her body. Though their attention to her skin was annoying and left Lucy uncomfortable.

From there, she was again shuffled with her meager belongings (keys had vanished when she had been stripped thankfully) into a private study where she was *educated* about *proper etiquette* and stuff for her *new position* in the Kuchiki house. Again, the headmistress was rude in her level of shock at the fact that Lucy knew what she needed to know. Before her hands were roughly grabbed and inspected, revealing the callouses she had gained from years of doing all the chores and whatever else Sarah had given her.

The moment she was presented back to Emperor Shunshui, Advisor Jushiro, and the Genrei. Lucy had to listen as the report was given. Then she was being dragged along behind the head of the Kuchiki Clan, Jushiro beside her oddly enough. He talked in a whisper to her, telling her that if she ever needed to, she had a safe haven to return to in the palace and then slipped her a small beaded talisman with the Ukitake Clan symbol on it. Lucy was not stupid; she knew what this was and meant.

"Lucy."

At the sound of her name, Lucy lifted her head but didn't meet the man's eyes. Knowing it was a sign of disrespect. And she didn't want to be beaten upon arrival to the house. Silently she waited for Lord Genrei to continue to speak. Knowing he was going to question her.

"Tell me what you know how to do," Lord Genrei commanded.

Taking a deep breath to help keep her calm. Lucy answered his question, "My Lord, I am quite capable of cooking, cleaning, and sewing. And know how to chop wood, basic carpentry to do repairs, tacking. Again fixing and cleaning it. I know the basics of reading and writing, as well."

Lucy didn't tell him that she knew how to play two instruments, do Ikebana, Dance, knew how to do simple math, and was versed in History. Or how to do basic hand to hand fighting. Something her step-brothers had intentionally taught her to defend herself after she started to mature physically. Women were not supposed to know such things; it was blasphemy.

"And you are the daughter of the former head of the Hayato People," Lord Genrei responded. "I was not aware that they would put a person of importance to menial labor."

She couldn't help it as her body stiffened at the insult. And she knew that it had displeased Lord Genrei by how his hands curled in his lap.

"Speak your piece, child; this will be the only time you will be able to," Lord Genrei stated.



Slowly giving a nod of her head, Lucy took another deep breath and spoke, "Our Village, while near the sea, is not as prosperous. And even though I am my father's daughter, that does not make me above anyone else in the Village, my Lord. I am human, just like them. If you were to cut me open, I'd bleed red just like them. So, I did my fair share of the work around the Village. As a woman, I know my place, but I also know that a good Leader, a true Leader, helps their people. And does not Lord it over them like they are lesser beings."

A heavy silence filled the carriage as it swayed back and forth. He had given her the right to speak freely. And while she had spoken true, Lucy hadn't told the whole truth. It started slowly and softly, breaking the silence in the carriage, before growing in louder. Lucy lifted her head to see the man across from her, laughing in what seemed to be good nature. His dark gray eyes were glimmering as he met her gaze head-on before Lucy dropped her head again.

"You are most definitely your father's daughter," Lord Genrei stated. "He as a warrior that kept me on my toes when I took to the battlefield. A man of honor and principal. I watched him break from his fight with me to help one of his own before returning to finish his fight against me. I can respect a person for that. It was just a shame and waste to me that his people chose to continue to cause strife by keeping the war going."

Lucy said nothing as she kept her eyes pinned to Lord Genrei's hands on his lap. Her mother had a few times that Lucy could recall, said the same things to her father in the privacy of their own home. She, too, didn't understand the need to keep this fight going, it was pointless in her mind. The number of people who died and the pain of that loss that those left behind carried on both sides. If she remembered, Rogue said that Lord Genrei's own son and daughter-in-law had died because of an ambush by her own people. Leaving their two sons without parents.

"I have one more thing to ask you, and you need to answer honestly, Lucy," Lord Genrei spoke, his voice going hard. "I do not tolerate liars and certain other things in my household. It causes descent and divides."

Swallowing as she felt his gaze grow heavy on the top of her head, Lucy nodded that she would answer.

"Have you taken many men to your bed?" Lord Genrei asked.

The question was offensive and embarrassing. And Lucy felt heat flood her face as she jerked up to glare at the man sitting across from her. She hated how he looked detached and uncaring.

"I will say this only once, my *Lord*," she said, stressing his title by hissing it. "I am not a whore. No man has ever graced my bed and will not until the day I am married if I ever chose to get married. And I am well aware that all Nobility think that because we are country folk, savage warriors, the women must be loose and whore themselves for both pleasure and survival."

She saw shock appear briefly in his eyes before they narrowed at her for the tone she was using and the way she spoke to him, insulting him.

"I stated that you could speak freely in the carriage. But that does not mean you have the right as a servant in my house to degrade me," Lord Genrei said, his voice soft and cold at the same time. "And let me inform you, I do not think all common women, whether in the city or country, are whores. So, think before you speak thus again, or I will have you whipped with a cane, do you understand me?"

Lucy kept her eyes narrowed as she continued to stare at him. She was assessing as she tried to figure out if he was lying to her or not. Finally, she gave a small nod of her head before dropping her gaze. It was apparent he was telling the truth. A slight shock to her system. So, she did as her mother and father taught her to do for being brash and rude like she just had been.

"I am sorry, my Lord. I will do my best not to speak like that again," she said as a way of apologizing.

"Good, we have arrived," Lord Genrei stated as the carriage came to a halt. "Let me introduce you to those of my family that is currently in the compound."

With that, Lucy waited until he got out of the carriage, then offered her a hand to help her out before Lucy was his whole household. Family and staff.

"Lucy, this young man here is my grandson Byakuya and next to him is my granddaughter by marriage, Rukia," Lord Genrei stated. "And those gathered are the head of my maids, manservants, kitchen, and stables."

She gave a polite bow, not raising her eyes from their waistline. Knowing it would overstep her place.

"Grandfather, have you figured out where you will place her in the household?"

Lucy felt her eyes go wide as the deep, softly spoken words. She hadn't heard a voice that smooth and cultured before, and it affected her in a way that she didn't want to acknowledge.

"Yes, I am going to make her Rukia's hand-maiden. She will attend to Rukia," Lord Genrei answered his grandson. "Rukia, she will help you get ready, be presentable, and attend to you throughout the day, as well as clean for you."

There was a tension in the air that made Lucy feel as if it was hard to breathe. This was not what she had expected. Being told she was going to serve as his granddaughter (of which she wasn't aware existed) hand-maiden was a great honor. But it also put her where he could also observe her.

"Grandfather, why?"

"Because, Rukia, she is the same age as you. And more than capable of being able to do something as simple as keeping you from acting like a tomboy and more like a Lady of your station," Lord Genrei said.

At that moment, Lucy couldn't help but feel that she had a near-impossible task set before her. The idea of doing the house laundry was more appealing.

***TBC!***

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Summary

A budding friendship between Lucy and Rukia, while a meeting happens with the newly returned eldest brother Koga.

## Chapter Notes

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Author's Note 2: November is National Novelist Writers Month, aka Nanowrimo! I will again be participating in it. And this year I am going to solely focus on all my Fairy Tail Stories. So, my other stories will not be updated during the month of November. Sorry, not sorry. I am still going to leave this fandom after they are all done. And if, at some point, down the road I find my love for FT again, I will come back with new stories and hopefully a less toxic fandom.

### **Year 832, Month August, Day 18**

Lucy stood up and pressed her hands into the small of her back as she smiled at what she had accomplished. It had been over two weeks since being brought to this place. Rukia was definitely a delight to be around, except for mornings. That girl never wanted to wake up and get ready. Then again, they were the same age, roughly. And having finally found a routine that worked for both of them had been a wonderful thing.

Of course, Lord Genrei had cautioned her to not talk about her past, or rather her origins. So, Lucy had explained that she was from the country and that she left her family. It wasn't a direct lie, no, and skirted the truth while still being the truth. Turning Lucy, Lucy bent over to

grab the basket. Today was linen day, and it was already hot and humid. The next thing on her list was to wrangle Rukia to get her to practice on her Gaku Biwa. It was an instrument Lucy knew how to place, so she could make it easier for Rukia.

"Oh, the young master is home!"

"Really! Well, you know what that means, right?"

"Oh, you are so naughty."

"Hey, if the young master has preferences, then so be it. I won't deny a summons... and I know you wouldn't either."

Lucy felt heat rush to her face as she openly blanched as she made her way back to Rukia's rooms. She had not met the eldest of the two brothers, not that she wanted to. Hearing the maids and the other staff talk about Koga Kuchiki was more than enough. In fact, if she could, she would try her damndest to avoid the man without being rude.

Sighing as she stepped upon to wrap-around veranda, Lucy made her way back to her Mistresses rooms. Already she could hear Rukia complaining about having to sit still and practice. Pressing her lips into a thin line to keep from openly smiling, Lucy paused and knocked softly on the Shoji door. When Rukia's voice called for her to enter, Lucy slid the door open, stepped in, and shut it softly behind her. Though her eyes were trained before her, she snuck a peek at a petulant Rukia as she made her way towards the back of the room to store the basket for now.

"This is boring; why does grandfather wish for me to learn this thing? And I heard Koga is back; I want to go see him!"

Once the basket was stored, Lucy came back and sat a foot behind Rukia, where she was kneeling on a pillow, the 4-stringed Lute across her lap.

"Young Miss, it is important you learn to do these things. If you marry into a good house, your husband will expect you to act like a lady and help entertain his retainers and visiting guests."

Lucy knew very well what the matron who was in charge of teaching Rukia was getting at. Still keeping her eyes on her lap, head held low, Lucy allowed herself to smile widely. She could relate to how free-spirited Rukia really was since she was that way. Though that had changed, and a harsh reality became her life. A part of her wanted to help Rukia, but that would expose her knowledge and skill. Then again, Rukia was mischievous so that it couldn't be a bad thing?

" **Miss!** Don't make that face; you are a daughter, even if it is by marriage, to the Noble Kuchiki house. And I think Lord Genrei has been more than *patient* with you. Do not forget that you can be *whipped* still for disobeying."

Lucy stilled and held her breath, her mind flashing back to her childhood and having Sarah beat her with a bamboo cane when she didn't do something the right way, the first time. When a Mullen apology came from Rukia, Lucy peeked up through her black-stained hair to see the Matron sniff disdainfully as she stood.

"Well, as long as you remember your place here," the woman snapped. "That is all. Practice for an hour, and I will come back and check on you. My time is better spent on those who actually have the will and drive to achieve."

Flinching internally, Lucy watched as the dour woman left and shut the Shoji door a bit harder than she should have. Once the footsteps faded into the distance, Lucy waited until Rukia turned and faced her.

"What do you think? Am I really so helpless?"

Lifting her head, Lucy looked at Rukia before replying, "No, Mistress, I do not think so. I think that you have the talent and aptitude and do not wish to see you hurt. If I may be so bold to ask you a question?"

The way Rukia looked sadly at her before bobbing her head, causing that short hair to shift around her angular face.

"What is it you want to do? I mean, playing the Gaku Biwa is actually easy as it only has four strings total," Lucy said.

Lucy enjoyed watching Rukia's eyes wide as she picked up on what she was asking. Or rather, no asking.

"You... know how to play this evil thing? And what I want is to be outside riding horses, practicing with a sword and climbing trees," Rukia said in a rushed whisper.

"Yes, I do, Mistress. And if you'd like, I can help you learn to play it. Since that harsh criticism isn't helping you, nor is her lack of instruction, Mistress," Lucy said, placing her hands before her and bowing at the waist.

"Lucy, why didn't you tell my grandfather you knew how to play?" Rukia asked her voice, still a whisper but now conspiratorial. "And if you can help me get that hag off my back so I can enjoy myself, then I will keep it a secret."

Knowing she had Rukia hook, line, and sinker, Lucy looked the girl in the eyes and smiled.

"Because a smart person never reveals all their skills. It is the first thing one learns in the art of war. And I know a few other things like Ikebana, tea ceremony, song, dance, and I can read, write. My father was a man who believed that women should be well educated to protect themselves before he died," Lucy explained.

The sad look of understanding at the mention of her father being dead from Rukia had Lucy flushing and looking away. When a small hand rested on her own, Lucy looked up at her Mistress and smiled. There was an understanding between them, and Lucy knew she would become invaluable to Rukia as a Hand-maid and possibly a friend? That would be nice since she never had one.

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The silence hung over the main meeting hall was heavy as the three men looked at each other. The news that had just been delivered by the newly returned Koga Kuchiki didn't bode well. This news could set the Imperial Troops back and extend the war even longer with the Hayate Tribe. The fact that the brothers Rogue and Ryos, fierce and proud warriors each, were uniting the other people around them didn't bode well.

"I am sorry, grandfather, I thought when I had bargained with the Widow of the former leader of the Hayate for peace that they'd listen and pull back," Koga said, a small smug smile on his lips.

"Yes, that went over well, but news sometimes travels a lot slower," Genrei stated. "And our Emperor took the deal, and our house gained a new addition thanks to it."

Again silence fell as the two looked at the third member who had yet to say a single thing since they had gathered. His dark eyes were on the map on the table where the small pieces indicated the various troops and factions. A bit of shifting had been done, but yet something seemed off to him, but he'd keep his council to himself. There was no reason to doubt the news that had been brought by his elder brother. Koga was a fierce and loyal samurai of the Kuchiki house and to the Emperor himself.

"Byakuya, what do you have to say?"

Lifting his eyes to look first at his Grandfather, who knew what he thought of this supposed peace treaty. He felt that the girl, Lucy, was a spy in their midst, though she kept her head down, stayed silent, and worked diligently. He had seen a remarkable change take place in Rukia. The way she smiled now would do his former wife, Hisana, proud in the heavens.

"I have nothing to doubt. And you know how I feel about the girl," Byakuya stated blandly.

"Oh, we acquired a woman?" Koga said, perking up, a sharp gleam in his black eyes.



"Yes, she is the daughter of the Widow. Her name is Lucy, and I have assigned her to be Rukia's Hand-maiden," Genrei said. "And she is constantly under observation Byakuya, by my own guards, and I know a few of your own."

The soft humph from Byakuya had Koga giving a brief chuckle, "I see you're still paranoid. I want to meet this girl."

"Brother, leave her be," Byakuya said as he stood from his spot at the small table. "She does her job and well. That I will give her. And I have a feeling that she doesn't want to be friendly with anyone; she knows her place."

The dark glare and look of shocked affront he received from both his grandfather and brother spoke volumes. The room now filled with a heavy silence as the two watched Byakuya leave the room. Already it was clear a line had been drawn.

"Do not take it that he has an interest in the girl. He is still upset over Hisana dying and is protective of Rukia, who has been more cheerful of late due to Lucy's presence. Lucy is a good worker, doesn't ask questions, and quickly learned her role," Genrei said. "But I will say this, Koga, if she refuses any of your offers and requests, let it be."

With those words, Koga stood and shot a glance at his grandfather. It was filled with curiosity and desire. The small nod between the two as Koga turned and left the room was of understanding.

"Well, I hope that poor girl will not rear that stubborn pride of hers," Genrei muttered to himself as he smiled openly. "And I hope that Koga doesn't push because I am sure there is more to that girl than she lets on. Her father was not a normal man in the way he thought on the battlefield, nor off from the reports I had received. She shares his keen intelligence."

***TBC!***

**NEXT STORY TO UPDATE is Into the Lake**

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

Lucy is finding life both easy and difficult in the Kuchiki Household. The eldest brother is a thorn and now the youngest is proffering something that can only seem to true to be true.

## Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Fairy Tail or its characters; that right belongs to Hiro Mashima.

Author's Note: For reference, I did a bit of research to find things that were all in one time period and would overlap with my concept for this story. While this story is a Bleach and Fairy Tail crossover, I ask that you all have patience in how slow I will be updating this, along with the fact that I don't think this story will be more than 10 to 20 chapters long.

### **Year 832, Month September, Day 27**

Lucy smiled as she left Rukia's quarters; the Matron was in complete shock. It had been over a month since she had brokered that deal with Rukia and started to help her. And a part of Lucy felt satisfied and fulfilled at teaching her Mistress, who was picking up things rather quickly, which made her life so much easier, with one exception.

Slowing down, Lucy came to a halt at a three-way section of the hall. Narrowing her eyes, she peeked around the corner, then the other way. Glad Lucy didn't see the Young Lord Koga. Letting the air in her lungs escape, she turned the corner to head to the kitchen. It was almost time for Rukia to practice her Tea Ceremony, and she had to get the Tea set and boil the water.

All she wanted was to get to the kitchen, acquire the stuff, and make it back to Rukia safely with no interruptions. Lucy didn't know why she had become the target for the Kuchiki Heir.

It had made the other servants (mostly the female) ostracize her or outright be rude. While the male servants seemed to think she was loose with her favors. Which she was not.

"Ah, there you are. I was beginning to wonder if I would get a chance to see you today."

Unable to stop herself as her body went rigid. Slowly Lucy turned to look at one Koga Kuchiki. Forcing a smile to appear as she let her eyes travel up to meet his, Lucy stayed silent, hoping that he would take the hint.

"Oh, no, you don't have to look like that, missy."

Still keeping her smile in place, Lucy continued to stay silent. But when he took a step towards her, she instinctively took a step back. The almost feral smile that lit up his green eyes had her swallowing. For some reason, her need to retreat seemed to spark in him the need to chase.

"Hey now, where do you think you are going? I only want to have a friendly conversation."

Feeling panic swell, Lucy recalled what he thought a *friendly* conversation was. He had pinned her to a wall and tried to kiss her, and she had stomped on his foot before running to hide. How did she know that would be challenging to him? Hell, she hadn't even known what Koga had looked like at that point and time. And certainly, he hadn't been dressed like a Noble should have been.

Knowing she had to speak, Lucy held up her hands, making Koga come to a halt as he narrowed his eyes as he looked down at her.

"Please, Young Master, I am on an errand for my Mistress. It is almost time for her Tea Ceremony Lessons, and I do not wish to keep her or the Lady Matron waiting," Lucy pleaded, hoping that he'd be nice.

The way his grin grew wider, sharper, told Lucy that he wasn't going to be playing nice. Groaning mentally as he took a quick step towards her, Lucy stepped back on instinct alone, only to feel the corner of the wall dig into her back. And before she could escape, Lucy found herself pinned between his arms. This was not a good thing.

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Byakuya heard a soft thump against the wall outside his room. Thinking nothing of it, he went back to going over the monthly expenses in the record book. This was not technically his job, but his elder brother's, who was not reliable and would rather chase skirts. When a double thump resounded against the wall, Byakuya lifted his head and narrowed his eyes.

"Please, Master Koga."

At the sound of the voice, he knew who it was and what was potentially going on. He was still shocked that she had stomped on Koga's foot the first time his brother had pinned her to the wall. Then again, the girl hadn't known who Koga was, and he was dressed in training clothes. But seeing it with his own eyes and hearing his sister's handmaiden dress his brother down rather eloquently was impressive. More-so since it seemed she was rather educated with how she spoke.

"Don't worry about it. They can send someone else. I told you I only want to have a friendly conversation."

Pressing his lips into a thin line as he stood up from his pillow and low table, Byakuya walked quietly to the shoji door and slid it open. Sticking his head out, he saw that Koga had pinned Lucy to the corner of the wall and was bearing down on her. It was clear she wanted nothing to do with Koga. In fact, her body language was tense and screaming a loud warning of an imminent attack, though he could tell she was trying her best not to attack Koga again.

"Koga," Byakuya called out.

Watching as his brother stiffened before turning his head slightly to glare. Byakuya gave a small smile as he watched Lucy dip under his brother's arms and darted off down the hall towards the kitchen. The low growl he got when Koga realized that Lucy had escaped didn't phase him in the least. Growing up with Koga, he was immune to his moods and personality quirks.

"Dammit, 'Kuya," Koga hissed.

Byakuya narrowed his eyes slightly at the detested nickname from their childhood as he watched his brother push away from the wall.

"I am sorry to interrupt, but she had duties to attend to, as do you," Byakuya stated. "Like the balancing of the expenses for the HouseHold as the Heir apparent."

The look Koga gave him was one of disgust before Koga turned and marched away. A small crisis averted, but it did bother him that his brother was pursuing the girl when she was clearly not interested. And Byakuya had heard the servants talking and knew that his brother's perusal of the girl was making them envious and jealous as his brother wasn't taking any of his regulars to his bed.

Letting out a sigh, Byakuya was about ready to pull his head back into his room and close the door when he heard the soft, quiet footfalls coming from down the hall. He didn't have to guess who it was and decided to wait. Sure enough, after a brief pause and quick peek, Lucy appeared around the corner. When she saw him, Byakuya waited as she stepped around the corner.

"Lucy, a moment, please," He said, making her halt and glance at him for a second.

He saw fear flicker in the depths of her eyes before they were dropped. It was clear she thought she was in trouble.

"Yes, M'lord?"

Her voice was barely audible. Stepping from his room, he towered over her as he spoke, "Lucy, I know you have been clear about not wanting my brother's advances. And it is becoming rather irksome in how it is starting to disrupt the natural things in this house. So, I am extending you a boon."

When he finished speaking, he waited and watched her reaction to his words. This was not something he did lightly or often. When Lucy's head jerked up, her eyes wide as they met him in obvious shock, Byakuya saw a leeriness narrow her eyes as her body stiffened.

"I can see that you do not trust me. While I would say that is wise in any other situation, I am genuine and honest," He stated as he glared down at her. "My offer is this; when you are not with my sister and my brother is back from his duties to the Imperial Army, you may hide in my room. But only if I am in my quarters. I require you to stay silent, sit, and do nothing unless I ask you to. If you accept this, then I will walk with you to inform Rukia. Since I know, she is displeased with Koga's interest in you."

He watched as the leeriness vanished from Lucys' face as her mouth dropped open in shock before she gathered her faculties and bobbed her head silently in acceptance.

***TBC!***

**NEXT STORY TO UPDATE is Into the Lake**

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Lucy is stressed on many fronts and has to attend a huge function with her mistress. All while doing her best to not lose it when her 'stalker' gets bold. Byakuya has even his limits and is curious about his sister's servant who is more skilled than they were all told.

## Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Fairy Tail or its characters; that right belongs to Hiro Mashima.

Author's Note: I am fudging some details in this chapter as none of the wiki's stated when Koga Kuchiki's Birthday was. And I want to get this chapter out of the way sooner than later. So if you do not like that, I politely ask you to turn around and leave now because I don't see the point in you wasting your time and mine.

### **Year 832, Month October, 6th**

Lucy stayed silent, slowing her breathing as she moved around behind all the hustle and bustle. The past two days had been completely chaotic, and she (like every other servant in the house) had been scripted into doing extra chores. Today was the Heir of the Kuchiki House's Birthday. And with the guests already arriving, she was no longer needed to set up and clean.

A part of Lucy was silently thankful as she made it to the eastern wing and made her way to Rukia's room. Lucy knew her mistress was not amused about the amount of fuss going into throwing the celebration for her eldest brother. Nor, Lucy knew, was Rukia amused about having to dress appropriately for it either. But Ginrei had put his foot down and hadn't budged. Even threatened to beat her if she didn't stop acting so childish. Lucy understood and sympathized with her mistress and friend.

Sighing as she heard loud mumbling from the other side of the shogi door. Lucy schooled her face to a blank mask and slid the door open with a loud clack giving her head a small shake. When all eyes turned to look in her direction, silence falling like a heavy mantle, Lucy arched an eyebrow at the maids that were in the room. The dark looks she got as she stepped aside and waited. All that mattered was the grateful look on Rukia's face as the small mini squad filed out.

Once the last one was out, Lucy stepped in and slid the shogi door shut gently, and turned to look at Rukia. The poor girl looked flustered and ready to cry.

"Thank you, Lucy."

Letting a small smile appear, Lucy walked over to her mistress, her eyes taking in the mess of clothing all over the room. It would take hours to sort, fold, press, and put it all away. And she was sure that it was done intentionally, as Ginrei had already picked out the formal fall Kimono Rukia was to wear. This was just plain spite from the others since Koga had taken an interest. In fact, Lucy was sure, some of them had pleaded to take her away from her duties full time to help with preparations.

"Sorry about the disaster; they just descended upon me like a pack of Kamaitachi. I swear I told them that there was no need to try on anything but what Grandfather had given me to wear."

The look of pain and frustration in Rukia's eyes had Lucy reaching into her Yukata sleeve and pulling out a handkerchief. Offering it to Rukia, who snagged it and dabbed at her eyes.

"Let us get you ready, and I will clean this up after Byakuya escorts you to the dinner, Lady Rukia."

The look of shock and gratitude she got had Lucy smiling widely. The quick bob of Rukia's head as she turned and made her way to the futon in the western corner. Lucy followed behind as she watched as she opened the box only to hold her breath. Before her eyes was a beautiful Black Silk Kimono, with hand-stitched gold and bronze leaves, with silver cranes with red clan symbols added to the eyes, it was gorgeous, and the colors were the perfect compliment to Rukia's complexion.



"You will look beautiful, Rukia. And since it is silk and seems your Grandfather reduced the layers you have to wear under it," Lucy said softly at the look she got from Rukia. "Now, let us get you dressed."

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Lucy shifted nervously as she kept looking around the banquet hall. After learning that she was not allowed to go back to Rukia's room and clean, she had taken to staying out of sight. No, Lucy had to stay there and attend to her mistress. And to make it all fan-fucking-tastic, Koga had demanded she also serves him his wine. Lucy thought she had patience after living with Sarah after her mother and father passed. But nope, that man kept putting his hand on her hip, butt and brushing his arm against her chest when she poured.

Taking a few steps, Lucy met Rukia's eyes as the girl bent to talk to her Grandfather, who had noticed this behavior. Lucy was glad that Lord Kuchiki had that talk with her in the carriage on the way to the manor. He was well aware of what his grandson and Heir was doing and was annoyed. Darting her eyes around the banquet hall again, Lucy spotted Koga surrounded by several of the younger Noble Ladies, hoping to make a match. But she personally didn't think the man knew the meaning of monogamy at all. Those poor souls.

When her eyes moved on before Koga had a random chance to spot her, Lucy ducked behind a pillar and looked towards the head of the table again. Rukia and Lord Kuchiki had been joined by Byakuya, who was clearly displeased about something? What Lucy couldn't fathom. The man was a mystery to her, even after extending that boon to her, which she hadn't had a chance to take yet.

When Rukia seemed to lift her head and look around, Lucy stepped out from behind the pillar. When Lucy took a breath and exhaled, their eyes met, and Rukia nodded her head that she could leave. Feeling her lips twitch to smile, Lucy looked at Ginrei to see him, and Byakuya was looking at her. Giving a quick bow of her head, Lucy turned and quickly weaved her way to the servant's entrance to the room. She wanted to take no chance of Koga getting a hold of her. That or the other servants who were directly under Koga. They'd try to bring her to him again like they'd been ordered to.

Once in the hall, Lucy didn't even hesitate before breaking out into a full run. All she wanted was to get back to Rukia's room and relax by cleaning. Times like this made her wish to be back in the village under Sarah's rule, before shoving that aside since Lucy knew she had a good deal here, even if it was under false reasons.

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He was not amused at all. In fact, he was rather embarrassed about what he had just done. It was shameful even to help a servant make and escape from their duties. Yet Byakuya could not deny that his brother was acting like a fool, even if it was his party to celebrate the day of his birth. The way he was openly favoring a servant and touching her before all the guests who had come. It was improper and would set the rumor mill to working.

Though, Byakuya was also at his limit with staying in the hall. Dinner was finished, and now it was time to mingle. He did not need to wait and have hopeful lower Nobels come and try to impose their obnoxious daughters off on him. He had married the love of his life, Hisana, and she had passed away a few years ago due to sickness and childbirth. The child had passed with her. And that wound was still raw. Yet, the damn vultures didn't seem to understand that at all.

No, his honorable clan, with its long history of serving each Emperor, drew those in droves. And it wasn't just the lower Clans or Noble families either. The other three Nobel Clans and houses often tried to marry into the Kuchiki and distant relatives or bastard children. That alone left a bad taste in his mouth.

"Brother?"

Shifting his gaze from Koga, who had just sent off one of his servants, no doubt to find Lucy, to Rukia. The look of worry on her face as she stared up at him. He was amazed at how good she looked in her formal Kimono. It reminded him of Hisana, the way her hair was piled up on her head, with the red, black, and gold lacquered ornamental chopsticks held it all in place. Byakuya would give Lucy praise for her skills. Even the make-up on his sister's face was done perfectly. It was not heavy but accentuated what was already there, drawing out Rukia's best feature, her eyes.

"Yes?"

"Would you do me a favor, please?"

Her voice trembled as she spoke, which was odd for Rukia. While he didn't agree with her tomboyish acts, Byakuya was proud that she was strong-willed and capable, never afraid to state her opinion. So, he felt a bit put off at her being uncertain.

"If it is within my abilities, you know I will help you, Rukia," he said softly, trying to ease her and determine why she was acting like this.

"Can you please check on Lucy? It gives you a reason to leave, and away from those demons in female flesh," Rukia stated bluntly, her tone shifting to irritation. "Besides, I had a whole slew of our female servants descend upon my room before the banquet. They didn't listen to me when I told them my Grandfather had prepared my outfit and threw a lot of my clothes all over the room for Lucy to clean water."

Arching an eyebrow at the lack of etiquette his sister used when talking about her hand-maid, Byakuya was happy that Rukia cared about her servant. Lucy had done a lot to help Rukia; he had found out, get better at her lessons, and improve her decorum. It made him curious about Lucy since she was supposed to be from a village that was at the Southern Coast, even if she was the daughter of the former leader of the Hayato.

"Of course, and thank you, Rukia."

Once those words were spoken, Byakuya rose and gave his Grandfather a nod, and left. When he was approached, he gave a withering look sending whoever it was scurrying away, since he was famous for being cold and angry all the time, though it never got physical. He would head to Rukia's private rooms; first, check-in on Lucy, see how much of the room was cleaned, and then go to his own with the said girl in tow back to his room.

Byakuya figured it would be good to practice his calligraphy and watch Lucy and see how she reacted to sitting in silence, doing nothing for hours. One thing he prided himself on was observing and planning things out. And something told him that with all that this girl did for Rukia, there was much more to her than appeared. That she had a secret or two, she was hiding from the family.

***TBC!***

**The Next chapter to update is His Brother; Blood & Magic .**

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Things kept as a secret are seen after a confrontation. And the piece of the chessboard is being moved forward a bit, by bit.

## Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Fairy Tail or its characters; that right belongs to Hiro Mashima.

Author's Note: Not much to note. I am having fun with this chapter to drive the storyline.

### **Year 832, Month October, 31st**

The late fall air nipped at Lucy's face and fingertips. Anyone could tell it would snow soon. Her eyes dropped to the bucket of dirty water in her arms. She'd been tasked with many menial chores outside of caring for Rukia. And Lucy knew it was because of petty jealousy.

She sought refuge in Lord Byakuya's room seven times since Lord Koga's birthday party. That man was a petty child as far as Lucy was concerned. He'd been pissed that she'd left his banquet. While the maids, or female staff in general, had been upset by his favoritism deepening. The noble ladies in attendance were displeased with his open flirting with a lowly enslaved person like herself. It was all unnecessary drama that Lucy was used to in one manner or another.

There was no in-between. And when it became clear Lucy was hiding in Lord Byakuya's room, the bullying became worse. Yet it was nothing compared to the stuff Sarah put her through. That was a broad spectrum that covered physical, mental and emotional abuse. So now Lucy stayed quiet and did everything 'asked' of her.

" Hime? "

The soft voice in her head had Lucy feeling a bit of tension in her shoulders seep out. The voices of the stars were coming in clearer each month. And tonight, Lucy would sneak out and perform the ritual her mother had taught her as a child. A full moon would hang in the sky shedding its bright blue light so the power could gather and transfer more quickly as the stars danced and twinkled like small gems in the blackness.

"At the thought of being able to commune, Lucy smiled gently. Each step she took felt lighter as she sent a wave of gratitude to the Star's Spirits. Lucy had come to learn that her mother was what was called an Oracle, and she was one herself. A person who translated the words of the Gods to the people via a message from the stars.

And after the ritual, Lucy would have to dye her hair with ash and ink again. Otherwise, she'd have a whole different problem. One she didn't and wouldn't explain. And Lucy was sure the old man would be beyond angry. Her past was hers, and Lucy wanted to leave it in the past.

"There you are!"

A cold chill swept down Lucy's spine. It was just her luck. Lord Koga would intercept her when she was unable to escape. Forcing a smile, Lucy turned to look at the Kuchiki Heir. Her hands tightened on the bucket she held—every survival instinct she had demanded that she throw the dirty water in his face and run away.

"You are Rukia's personal maid. Why are you taking out filthy dishwater?" Lord Koga asked, his lips pulled down into a frown.

Lucy knew she had two choices. Neither did she want to choose. The first complained to Lord Koga that the female staff was bullying her. But that would make him act out and reprimand them for being petty bitches. While making Lord Koga think she was interested in him. A colossal ***fuck no!***

The second option was to play it off as she had free time and wanted to help the other servants. At the same time, this was technically the lesser of two evils. It'd still incite the

arrogant standing before her. Because he'd demand she didn't choose to come and serve him in her free time. Though Lucy already had a master in his younger sister.

Lucy opened her mouth to speak, choosing the second option since she'd not be bringing more shit onto herself with the other staff, when someone said from behind her.

"I made her do it as punishment. She had displeased me in her care of Rukia."

"Grandfather!?"

"You heard me, Koga. Now leave her alone. You have duties to attend to, and I suggest you take care of them. You are the Heir of this Clan."

Lucy watched as Lord Koga's face shifted to annoyance as he left. Silently Lucy screamed her happiness in her head. While she turned slowly to face Lord Genrei, giving a quick (albeit clumsy due to the bucket in her hands) bow.

"Rise and finish what you are doing," Lord Genrei said, dismissing her.

"Lucy straightened herself and gave a quick nod of acceptance to the head of the Clan and walked past him.

"And if the staff continue to interfere over this ridiculous matter, come find me. I do not tolerate discord in my house, as you know, Lucy."

Lucy didn't look back, but she smiled. Her chest felt as if a weight was lifted.

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Byakuya sighed as he placed his cleaned ink brush on the drying rack. His mind would not stay calm or focused. It kept going to the young lady who served his younger sister. She was not what he had expected. Each time she had hidden in his room, she remained quiet and calm. As if focused on something or another.

In fact, Byakuya was pretty sure she was meditating. Though he'd caught the girl watching him on the rare few occasions, there'd been curiosity in her eyes. It did not take much to realize she was exceptionally intelligent. He had a lengthy conversation with Rukia after their Elder Brother's birthday. He found out that all Rukia's current achievements and changes were from the girl.

Byakuya was well aware of Lucy's origins. And that her father had been a strong and honorable warrior. That he was head of his people. People he had untied himself led into battles that he won. He was sure where the girl got her intelligence from. He'd seen her mother from a distance a few times, and that woman reminded him of the conniving harem women belonging to the Emperor.

In a fluid motion, Byakuya stood enjoying how the bright light cast by the full moon illuminated his gardens, as seen through his window. Nights like this had been his and his late wife, Hisana's favorite. They sat on the veranda under a blanket, talking away till the sun rose. Or they were taking a walk (on Hisana's good days) in the zen garden he created for her. Feeling suddenly restless, Byakuya decided to take a walk through the said garden.

The distance was short and familiar. With the path clear to see, Byakuya quickly arrived. He noticed the low fog crawling lazily across the ground. It brought a smile to his lips. Hisana loved to play in the low fog. She was kicking it or running her hands through it while laughing.

Giving a quick shake of his head, Byakuya resumed his walk. After a few more steps, he stopped. The sweet-sounding chime of precious metal echoed in the chill October night air. It was a sound so out of place in the Zen Garden.

Frowning, Byakuya followed. Soon he came to a halt. The sight before him had him mesmerized. A strange pale-skinned woman with hair the color of sunlight danced unfettered. She wore a strange, almost translucent, gown and veil. But the way the blue-silver light of the full moon cast a halo around her. While the belt on her exposed, slender waist shimmered, reflecting the moon's light off gold and silver keys. Yet the chiming they made was in time to



the twisting and turning of the woman's dance. It was harmonious, as if they were one and had done this countless times.

Any words he could have spoken froze in his mouth as Byakuya tried to recall if a person such as this woman had been seen in the Kuchiki mansion before. Yet he knew if he'd seen this seductress during the day, or any time, he'd remember her. Though he couldn't help but feel something about her was familiar to him. For she was human.

Time seemed to stand still as he silently watched. Her movements are both in sync and out of sync with everything around her. When the rustling of leaves from the small cluster of Ginkgo trees filled the air, the woman froze. Byakuya saw her tense and looked around. Yet when her gaze landed on him, she fled without hesitation.

His body was moving to give chase when the rustling from the Ginkgo Trees grew louder. Halting, Byakuya turned and moved towards them. His show interrupted, the girl probably gone and hiding. Feeling his mood sour, Byakuya figured he'd take it out on whoever decided the Ginkgo Trees were an excellent hiding place.

**000000**

A smile curled their lips. He'd gotten to witness a rare sight. It had been enthralling for him. It only reinforced the idea of possessing the girl. She was beautiful, from the pale honey hair down to the bountiful curves of her scantily clad body.

When the third person had appeared, he'd felt anger swell in his chest. This man had no right to see the land walking goddess dance. She was his. So he decided to make noise as he left. It hadn't been too hard to sneak into the renowned Kuchiki manor. Patience wasn't his thing. But to acquire her, he'd be patient since she should have never been given to the Kuchiki in the first place.

***TBC!***

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Summary

Winter has come, and the land is dead. So is Honor.

## Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Fairy Tail or its characters; that right belongs to Hiro Mashima.

Author's Note: Not much to note. I am having fun with this chapter to drive the storyline.

### **Year 832, Month December, 6th**

White blanketed the ground. The land was frozen and dead for it. Many of the Hayato(Kumaso) were still sullen at the loss of their prior leader's daughter. The peace it'd brought to the Tane Providence felt hollow.

The woman(who married the former leader) Eldest son was irrational and hungry for war. A few of the older and younger warriors were of like mind. And Ryos was using Lucy as a reason for starting the war back up.

Winter had only just begun, and supplies were still plentiful. But they, as a whole, would suffer if Ryos decided to fight the Kuchiki Clan for Lucy.

Who most in the tribe felt was better off away from Sara and her older son.

---

"Jushiro, what has been bothering you of late?"

Tired, pale eyes turned to look at Emperor Shinsui. The front spoke volumes, as did the silence.

It was only the two of them in the Royal Chambers. And having been friends since youth, no words were needed between them.

The Hayate(Kumaso) were showing signs of prepping for war. Neither was ignorant about the tribe's newest leader, the Eldest son of the woman Sara, Ryos.

And it didn't bode well either that Koga Kuchiki was becoming restless. The imperial spies placed in the Kuchiki manor kept them updated periodically. So that if anything happened was reported.

"The girl, she is still fine," Emperor Shinsui said. He was trying to choose a more neutral topic.

The flat look he received had him raising his hands in defense. It was amusing that Jushiro had taken to the girl. The man was practically a Eunuch.

Though Shinsui knew it was due to being God-touched. Jushiro was linked to Amaterasu and then placed by his side. Otherwise, Shisui was sure; as a maid's son, he'd never sit on the throne.

"Koga continues to harass her. Each time he is scorned, his anger grows. Now Byakuya is showing interest in her. While Lady Rukia has made it clear without words, Lucy, an enslaved person, is her friend," Jushiro bit out. "And let's not forget each full moon, the power burst from the Kuchiki manor. IT pleases TSukiyomi and aggravates my goddess, Shinsui."

Nodding his head, Shinsui understood roughly what the problem was.

Whatever Lucy was doing was bringing her power out more and more. And if it was learned she, of foreign blood, was gifted by a god.

Giving a shake of his head, Shinsui dismissed Jushiro. All he could hope for was for Lucy to run away and return to the palace with Jushiro's jade token for her safety.

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Ginrei rubbed his temples; his Eldest Grandson and heir were being reckless. The idiot had gotten wide of the Hayate(Kumaso), prepping for war. And the Kumaso were Lucy's people who had abandoned her for peace.

Ginrei was well aware it was that woman's Eldest son, Ryos. He had his informants state they'd seen him near the Kuchiki estates. This Ryos was the Hayates(Kumaso) new leader. However, a leader that acts on the impetus of youth leads their people to destruction.

' *tak,tak!* '

Lifting his gaze from the documents on his desk, Genrei frowned as he spoke, "Enter."

The door opened, revealing Rukia and Lucy. The latter looked tired and worn. She was still suffering because of Koga and the staff. He'd be chasing out servants who'd been in service for years.

They'd been warned to leave her alone. That Lucy wanted nothing to do with Koga and only to serve Rukia. But, again, Koga interfered to pressure Lucy to sleep with him.

"Grandfather, Lucy would like to talk to you," Rukia said. Her voice was soft as her eyes darted around. "Concerning her-- Clan members."

Genrei stiffened. He was unaware of anyone beside him, and his two Grandsons, the butler, and the informants knew of the brewing conflict. Yet as he met Lucy's gaze, he saw a cold, grim resignation in the ordinarily warm brown eyes. It sent a chill down his spine. He knew that look; it was the same as her father's. If she'd been born a man...

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Rukia stared in numb shock. She had been bewildered when Lucy asked her to seek an audience with her Grandfather. When Rukia had asked why Lucy was blunt and said it concerned her clan.

But now Lucy had even made her Grandfather speechless. Rukia could only hold her breath as Lucy put a scroll on his desk.

"You're telling me this was delivered to you without my guards' notice?"

"Yes. We Kumaso have many ways. And trained hawks and other small creatures are just one way. A specialty, if you will," Lucy stated coldly. "And I am a servant in your house. So this has to be reported immediately."

Rukia felt her legs grow weak. Lucy was proud of her origins. Her pride was deep, so was her honor. Yet here she was, betraying her clan and its people.

"Why are you doing this, Lucy?" Genrei asked.

"I was given as a symbol of peace, Lord Genrei. They now plan to break that peace. And honor is gone, and as you read, that arrogant piece of shit plans to attack Kuchiki manor to retrieve me; first, Lord Genrei," Lucy explained. Rukia couldn't believe how detached Lucy's voice sounded. "This is my home now. I will always protect it and the people within it, even if they treat me worse than the shit on the bottom of their slippers. That was the honor I was taught. So, outside of petty servants and your Eldest Grandson, I like my life here."

Rukia let her body slump to the floor. Lucy's words both warmed and chilled her heart. Yet she felt something was not exactly right with Lucy's words.

"I see. Thank you, Lucy. Please escort my Granddaughter back to her quarters. The two of you are to rest until further notice."

Rukia had wanted to hear those words for a long time. Now they were bitter towards her.

"I need to do some house cleaning; then I'll address this."

Rukia allowed Lucy to help her stand and guide her back to her rooms. Her mind was a chaotic mess. But the seriousness of this matter was not lost on her.

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Frowning, Rogue walked into his room. His brother was being stupid and obsessive. Yes, he, himself, missed Lucy. Their mother had no right to do what she did. Ryos was the clan leader, not her.

Then again, Rogue felt sad, and literally, nothing with Ryos slapping their mother for her indiscretion. The sight of his mother's swollen and bruised face did not stir anything in him to come to her defense. She'd overstepped her boundaries to get rid of Lady Layla's daughter.

Yet now Ryos was going to throw away all that Lucy was working for to maintain peace. He'd sent her a message via fox that Ryos knew she'd give to the head of the Kuchiki Clan. He'd heard she flourished as the young Lady of the Kuchiki Clan's handmaid. The warmth in her eyes and smile that could brighten the darkest night was back on her face(most days), according to the few merchants that came and went from the manor for deliveries.

Sighing, Rogue stripped and laid on his pallet. A crossroads would be reached soon. And he had a hard choice to make. And he had to make his choice soon.

***TBC!***

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Summary

The war between the Hayato(Kumaso) and the Imperial Army has started again. Things are not as they seem. And Rukia makes a choice.

## Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Fairy Tail or its characters; that right belongs to Hiro Mashima.

Author's Note: A massive shout out to the reader/reviewer: Purrfect. Thank you. Your review warmed my heart. Then I shared it with some of my other author friends who are/were in the FT Fandom, and it warmed their own. So, in short, this chapter is dedicated to you, Purrfect!

### **Year 833, Month January, 13th**

The sound of metal on metal rang in the air. Screams, shouts, and grunts mixed in, adding to the blood and mud-stained snow.

War had come once more. The Hayato(Kumaso) had again followed Ryos into battle against the Imperial Army. The peace bought by one young lady's (forced) sacrifice(indentured) servitude shattered. With the extreme cold of winter, many lives were already gone, more fading with each second.

Yet still, the proud continued to fight. They were feeling justified in reclaiming their former leader's daughter. The light of their clan. None any wiser of the true motive behind their new leader's reason for taking the woman back. One that he planned well in advance.

While those of the opposing faction fared only slightly better, a specific battalion was haggard and wondering why they were suffering for this young lady who served their Commander's house. However, all were aware of his personality and quirks.

---

Rukia paced back and forth in agitation. Sitting to the side was Lucy. Her maid, confidant, and friend. The only sound in the room was her footsteps as she tried to figure out what she needed to do.

The truth behind Lucy comes out when her Elder Brother, Koga, left to fight. He had announced that a person of Lucy's status did not need to be a servant.

It had made things so much worse. Now Lucy was an enemy's daughter in their midst, and although her Grandfather had spoken up, it meant nothing. Byakuya, having gone to fight, left a huge gap.

Stomping her feet, Rukia looked at Lucy. Who seemed calm though Rukia could see the pain in the depth of her eyes.

Quickly Rukia closed the distance between them and grabbed Lucy's arm. With a sharp tug, she had Lucy on her feet. Then without a word, Ruki dragged Lucy behind her onto the snow-covered veranda. It sucked; it had not been swept yet, but it was only three in the morning.

And Rukia knew Lucy was aware she'd sneak out like this if she couldn't sleep to ride her horse.

So, Rukia led Lucy to the stable and then passed it to a small side gate for merchant deliveries.

"Lady Rukia?"

With a sharp shake of her head, Rukia opened the gate revealing a small white plain's pony. It gave a soft snort as Rukia shoved Lucy toward it.

"Go. Please, go. I want you to be safe and happy. If you have a safe place to go and can hide, do it," Rukia pleaded with Lucy. Who just stared at her in shock.

"Don't quibble with me. There's two weeks' worth of provisions, blankets, a tent, and two sets of warm winter clothes," Rukia explained as she pointed to the saddle bags while shoving Lucy once more with all her strength.

Lucy's look of understanding as she went to the pony made Rukia feel relief. Glad that Lucy was going to leave, which meant there was a higher chance for Lucy to be safe. Which was what Rukia wanted; she cared about Lucy like a sister.

So, she stood and watched as Lucy mounted and rode away as a particularly strong wind blew, tossing fresh snow into the early morning air.

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He had chosen this mission specifically to ensure his sister's safety. But Rogue had not expected to see the young lady of the Kuchiki Clan make Lucy leave for her safety.

Apart from him wanted to follow Lucy immediately. But instinct told him she'd react negatively to his presence(or anyone from the clan). So instead, he waited until Lucy was out of sight to reveal himself to the young Kuchiki lady.

The way her dark eyes met told him she was aware of his presence since the beginning. It was both impressive and amusing. Then again, with Byakuya Kuchiki being one of her elder brothers and Lord Genrei's granddaughter, it wasn't surprising she'd have some training and awareness.

The soft hiss of metal being pulled from a sheath echoed in the cold morning air. Rouge stiffened at the sight of a tanto that slipped from her long kimono sleeve.

"If you try to follow her, I'll fight you with intent."

Rogue couldn't help but smile at the Rukia Kuchiki as he raised his hands.

"I promise I won't chase Lucy, young miss. I can tell you are doing it for her safety, and I thank you."

The cold, assessing look he got before she turned and walked back into the manor left Rogue feeling highly amused as he let himself blend into the darkness of the early morning.

***TBC!***



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