

# Destiny Vs Chaos

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**Summary:** Having left Nerima, Ranma is trying to figure out what to do with his life when his government decides it needs his help dealing with a problem over in the Kanto Region. This may just be the start of something incredible. Destiny, meet chaos, chaos meet destiny, last one standing wins!

## \*Chapter 1\*: Chapter 1

Damn. Just damn. I didn't realize until *the devian* and others pointed it out to me that my formatting hadn't carried over into the online chapter, which is really weird because it was all there after I cut and pasted it in. So here is the story with format changes. Special thanks also *the devian* and *Vandenbz* for showing me some of my writing mistakes. Does anyone know why indenting doesn't work? It makes the story look a little strange.

insert standard disclaimer here: Me no own, so sorry.

Warning, this Ranma is going to be a grown man, one who takes his word of honor seriously and has no ties whatsoever to Nerima any longer, and who has developed a libido, though he still doesn't know what to do with it without some instruction. How he separated those ties will be hinted at but not fully explained until later in the story. Be aware the romance portion of the story will be moving slightly slower than in the Anime Adventure thread I got the idea from, and Ranma will possibly be building a harem in this story.

### Destiny vs. Chaos

#### Chapter 1 My kingdom for a (wild) horse

In an emergency meeting of the ministers of the interior:

"How could this have happened!?" An elderly man moaned into his hands, looking at the pack of papers in front of him, much of which was comprised of photos and what looked like hospital reports. "This is an unmitigated disaster. How can we get the public to believe we can protect them when our police force can't even protect itself?" Around him other elderly gentlemen all muttered their agreement with emotions ranging from anger to shock.

A younger man still fit and spry despite his desk job shrugged. "I can't say I saw this particular idiocy coming, but the trouble in Kanto has been building for over two years now."

Another younger man, barely in his thirties and still in good shape from his time as a beat cop, nodded sharply expression showing his own anguish at the news. "We told you that the Kanto issue was getting away from us. The fact that some of the gangs are now targeting the police force is awful but not the worst of it to my mind. At least there were no deaths on the force, unlike when the gangs fight each other or when bystanders are involved."

His ally on this council of incompetence nodded sharply. "Agreed, and the fact that the few female officers still willing to serve in Kanto were not there is a blessing considering what has been reported at times from the Kanto Hospital. I assume now that you will allow our police force to start using lethal force? Our side arms are useless unless we can use them after all." His sarcasm could have cut glass as sharp as it was.

One of the older men shook his head. "As we have explained before we cannot simply let your officers start shooting unarmed people"

The younger man interrupted him rudely. "Unarmed is a bit of a stretch when you're talking about people who can lift cars or rip apart a human being with their bare hands! And what about the ones who use weapons! The report says that someone using a sword opened the front of the police station like it was a tin can!"

There was a moment of shock at this severe breach of decorum and then the older man took a deep breath to put this young upstart in his place. He was interrupted by the man at the head of the table. A middle aged man, paunchy but with quick lively eyes, he had been silent up to now, simply looking at the images in the report before him. "Are these reports accurate? That none of the main attackers were arrested or even injured in the attack? What exactly happened?"

The police commissioner nodded sharply. "At about 3:15, a mob of about fifty gang members stormed the Kanto police precinct. Of that group only five low ranked, what the gangs all call d-rank fighters, were injured and taken into custody when reinforcements from the patrols out in the district and the other city precincts arrived two hours later. Of the hundred and twenty-five police officers there at the time of the attack only forty are able to continue their duties for the foreseeable future. Thirty-six were critically injured with five that might not make it, and the rest received injuries from severe to mild. It would have been worse if the patrols hadn't responded so rapidly, and at least the officers locked down the armory quickly. The gangs weren't able to grab any of the guns or anything."

"I see. And how do you think this will affect the morale of the policemen?" The older man asked, still calmly.

The police commissioner snorted at the idiotic question. "Badly. We have already had several reassignment requests backed up by threats of quitting entirely. A police force is not like an army unit where they are trained to take casualties like this. Our policemen are overmatched in terms of skill and numbers and after this incident they know they can't even protect themselves. This is why I respectfully request that we allow them to break out the damn firearms and let us shut this gang war down hard!"

The man at the head of the table shook his head sorrowfully. "What you fail to understand is that our government cannot condone the use of firearms when the opposition is not using them. It would mean all our jobs, a complete shake up of the government from top to bottom."

"Then I am afraid we can't handle it alone." The police commissioner said grimly. "None of our police units, not even the SAT have the training necessary to take these punks on in their own game. These 'Fighters' think they're acting out some war from ancient China and they take it very seriously. There is even some evidence to suggest that the idea may have some merit, the names of the factions along with the leaders and their troops, as well as the outcomes to the various fights between the factions all seem to point to something going on there."

"Then we will have to look elsewhere for aid. We have to fight fire with fire."

"And how are we going to do that minister?" Another cabinet member asked. "None of the martial artists that work for the government are good enough to handle something as large and widespread as this, and the freelancers we can contact I wouldn't trust." The government did keep a small crew of skilled martial artists on retainer for various jobs, but none of them were among the best in that particular subgroup. Martial artists tended to be a fractious and anti-authoritarian lot, far more loyal to their schools their own pursuits and the Art than to the nation or government.

"What about Ranma Saotome?" The minister asked quietly.

A silence spread across the table at this question. Ranma Saotome, formerly the best martial artist of the Nerima SD (special district) had a formidable reputation in his field, and was known as being very honorable. None of the cabinet members however liked to admit that several of their departments, the health/family and education departments in particular, had dropped the ball badly when it came to the young man and his situation in Nerima, which no doubt added to the carnage that broke out when the young man in question turned 18 –legally an adult - and moved to solve his problems in a decisive and final manner.

Nine months later the district had yet to recover from the battles that raged that day. Not a single member of the so-called Nerima Wrecking Crew was still operating there. Haposai and Genma No-Clan had been apprehended and put behind bars for life after Ranma had finished with them, leaving both shadows of what they had been. None of the others had walked away unscathed either, most especially the Kuno clan, whose three living members were now guests in diverse insane asylums, and the Tendos, who while all still free had been disgraced, their name tarnished beyond recognition because of the actions of the two youngest daughters and the patriarch. Kasumi alone had moved on. She had moved out and was now attending Tokyo women's college on a scholarship, taking her mother's name of Todo at the behest of her aunt and uncle on that side.

Ranma himself had disappeared directly after, cutting all ties with the very few who had remained unscathed from his problem solving. Still he was easily the greatest martial artist of his generation, so "If we can find him, I suppose he could help us get control of the situation." Said the police commissioner cautiously, "but finding him in the first place will be difficult."

The prime minister shook his head. "Not difficult at all if you know where to look."

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Deep in the woods of the Kyushu national reserve a government employee was badly dressed for the outdoors. He stood in front of a small but well built tree house looking up at it askance as he fiddled with his necktie, loosening it and rubbing his legs while wincing in pain. The trek out here had been strenuous even with the help of the park rangers but he had found his quarry, which made the pain worth it. "Ranma Saotome?"

A rustle above and suddenly a young man stood in front of him, startling the government worker so much he jumped backward in astonishment, nearly falling on his ass. A strong hand shot forward and caught him by the arm before he could and the young man rubbed the back of his head abashed. "Sorry about that dude. But what the hell are you doing way out here in a suit of all things? And what do ya want with me?"

Ranma moved back and sat down on a tree limb watching the man, who took a moment to take in Ranma's own appearance. The young man was dressed in loose silk pants, with bare feet, and a simple green t-shirt. His hair, which looked in desperate need of a haircut, went down to his shoulders. For a man who had spent most of nine

months on the road or in the woods he looked remarkably good.

The government worker decided to go with the blunt approach. "Your government needs your help Mr. Saotome."

Ranma's blue eyes darkened noticeably for a second then he sighed. "I could ask something like 'oh and where was it when I needed help?'" The man in front of him winced, he had read the file on one Genma Saotome and knew the government had dropped the ball several times there. "Or why I should give a flying fuck about the government, but I won't. That wouldn't be worthy of The Code, so why don't you tell me why the government needs my help then I can tell ya if I can actually help ya."

The worker, one Yamada by name, nodded and gave a brief overview of what was going on in the Kanto region, how the violence was escalating and becoming more open between the various school-based gangs involving more bystanders and how the government was slowly losing control, finishing up with the assault on the police station a few days prior.

Through it all Ranma's face hardened noticeably. *What the hell do these bastards think they're doing? They call themselves warriors, and this is how they act? Well, someone's got to step up and show them how wrong they are.* He looked at the man in front of him and snorted internally. *Though that don't mean I'm going to do it for free.*

"Alright, here is what I'm going to need for this. One, an apartment somewhere in the area, a nice apartment with a kitchen and everything, I've gotten tired o' eating camp food. Two, I'll want to be paid at least 60,000 yen every week while working on this. Three, I don't want any of the remaining crazies showing up without warning, that means none of the Tendos and no bloody Amazons. And four, I want complete control of how I handle this problem for ya."

That last bit Yamada objected to. The first two the government would no doubt have no issues with, the salary he was asking for was very low to deal with a problem of this size, and the apartment in the area just made sense as did the other matter, though he didn't have as much information there as he would have liked. But as for the fourth, "I don't think my employers will like that idea at all. They will almost definitely want to have some say in how you go about solving this issue for them."

"Too bad." Ranma said bluntly. "Y'all would solve this your way if you could, but ya can't. I might be able to, but it's probably gonna involve a lot of things the government would rather not believe in." With barely a thought, Ranma summoned up a ball of ki in his hands, and Yamada's eyes widened. "I don't need some stiff necked asshole showing up and telling me how to act or what ta do when he can't fight worth shit." The time away from civilization had done little to curb Ranma's already sharp tongue and distrust of authority figures.

Yamada gulped. He wasn't a martial artist, he'd never even seen a single martial arts movie and seeing something like this was well beyond his ability to comprehend. He kept his cool though and nodded. "I will relay that to my superiors. But would you take suggestions?"

Ranma nodded, and the ball of impossibility disappeared. "Sure, but the final say in what I do is mine. Oh, and I want the first two weeks up front, that'll let me stock up on food and other stuff."

Yamada nodded, and pulled out a cell phone, moving away so that he could not be heard. Fifteen minutes later, he came back. "My supervisor the police commissioner agrees to your terms, but suggests that you go undercover first to figure out the lay of the land. He says that Seito private school would allow you to finish your high school diploma without taking a full course load."

Ranma grimaced but nodded. He knew he would eventually have to take math and science classes, so that made sense. But he was not looking forward to the literature course at all. "Alright then we have a deal mister. Where should I go to fill out the paperwork for the apartment and whatnot?"

Yamada breathed a sigh of relief then handed the cell phone across. "Once you get to a road, this will give you directions to where you need to go. It's the Kanto prefectural court, and if you give them your name at the desk, they'll direct you to the proper floor and office. They will be expecting you there in a few days. The phone is yours to keep, a gesture of good faith."

"A few days," Ranma laughed. "You guys don't know me too well do ya?" Ranma jumped up into his makeshift tree cabin. A second later he jumped down with a small bag on his back. "You gonna be all right to get outta here by yourself?"

Yamada nodded. "Yes, there are a few rangers a mile back towards the entrance waiting for me. But don't you want a drive to the bus station at least?"

"Nah, waiting will only slow me down. See ya dude." Without another word Ranma jumped off, running swiftly away through the trees. In a second, he was out of sight and Yamada was left standing there shocked.

For his part Ranma ran swiftly, his mind on fire. He had been adrift for so long, his past problems now gone but unable to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. And now this happened, a chance to use his arts the way they were meant to be used and to make some money, possibly even make some friends if there were at least a few 'Fighters' that were worth the name. Yes, Ranma was looking forward to this.

In Kanto several people working under the fate of the sacred bead shivered uncontrollably for some reason they could not understand.

One day of nonstop running and jumping later Ranma arrived at the address he was given. After startling the secretary at the front he was directed to the third floor and then to a corner office. Inside he found a man dressed in a suit sitting behind a large western style desk. A plaque on the desk read 'police Commissioner'.

The man stood up and bowed formally to Ranma as he came in. "Ranma, I want to thank you for agreeing to work with us on this. This isn't like in Nerima, where the martial artists only bothered each other and never really made any permanent harm that they themselves did not fix, and our police force is woefully inadequate to the task. Would you like me to give you an overview of what we're dealing with here now or would you like to read it yourself?"

Ranma nodded "Both please, let me see what ya have now and let me read over it myself later." Without being asked he took a seat in front of the man's desk.

The police Commissioner turned a computer screen to face Ranma and punched some buttons on his keyboard and a presentation started up on the screen. At first it showed a map of the district, with seven highlighted areas of differing colors. "The problems first began about two years ago. At that point in time, every police station in the region began to notice that there were a higher number of martial art students in the area than had previously been the case, and an increase in martial arts fights of all levels of skill. They ranged from simple fistfights where we would throw both fighters into jail, to extremely skilled marital artists who would cause a little damage to the surrounding area and be long gone before police arrived."

"We didn't think anything about it at first but then they started to split into factions and the fights began to do more damage to both the fighters and the landscape. The schools involved are these seven schools." Here the presentation changed, showing each faction's territories and the school that served them as their headquarters. "Every fighter involved thinks they are reenacting the three kingdoms war from Chinese. In many cases in fact these fighters seem to believe they are reincarnated souls of the fighters and leaders of those areas. That seems to be connected to these magatama, or sacred beads that each fighter wears as either an earring or necklace." Another image popped up showing several pictures of the beads in question. They were all shaped like a fat nine with a bead in the center, and made of stone, bronze, silver, gold or jade. Next to each was a line saying what level the beads signified. The stone was D-rank, bronze was C, silver B, gold A and jade had a question mark next to it. "These factions, of which we think there are only four now, began to fight it out in tournaments to decide who will be the top dog. Other than bragging rights we don't know if that actually means anything, but the ones at the top seem to set the tone for everything else."

As Ranma looked at the beads and wondered how many fighters fell into each category the commissioner continued. "We were worried, but decided to put the special district protocols in place, much like you are familiar with in Nerima." The image on the computer screen changed to show pictures of the damage done in fights and a small video of construction teams fixing said damage.

"These protocols worked fairly well to keep the damage to a minimum just as they did in Nerima. We still did our jobs in keeping the peace with the rest of the population and the fighters kept to themselves, and there was very little overlap all of which we handled as it occurred. There were more deaths among the marital artists than any of us on the force were happy with, ten in the first year to be exact but as normal crime had decreased sharply over the same period we knew it could have been much worse."

"The situation began to get out of hand about a year ago. First, the fighters began to fight back when we tried to arrest them rather than go quietly on minor infractions like misdemeanors, vagrancy and lewd acts, and most of them no longer helped repair the damages after fights. Moreover, said acts along with more serious crimes like rapes and murders began to escalate sharply. We think it has something to do with the tournament, but we're not sure what. Among those dead were several low ranked fighters that were willing to cooperate with us and give us information about the whole system. In the past year the total number of deaths has skyrocketed to eighteen, with a few others crippled for life. The fights got more brutal, the damage escalated. We reinforced our patrols in an attempt to try and contain things, but we knew we were losing control." Again the presentation changed this time showing a hospital

room with every bed filled and then to a video of horribly injured fighters being carted off in an ambulance.

"About three months ago things escalated again, with the fighters not only not cooperating with the police but actually attacking any police patrol they saw out on the streets. It got so bad that we shut down our traffic department duties in the region and the police who walk around the city were doubled in strength and given swat vests along with the okay to defend themselves by striking first. And then two days ago came the attack on a police station, which I assume you were told about. The Police force simply can't handle this escalation of violence. None of our policemen are trained in hand-to-hand combat to the level of skill that even the least fighter is able to call on, and the A ranked fighters are simply monsters."

Ranma nodded thoughtfully. "Can you give me the names of some of the top fighters?"

"I can give you some names, the few that were willing to cooperate with us before the shit really hit the fan. That's why I said you should start going to Seito high school. The fighters there and in two other schools are known to be much more defensive, and they actively work with us to police their own factions. Unfortunately, they're too few in number to take on whoever is controlling the escalation of violence that has most of the low ranked fighters following his tune."

"Are there any limits to how I solve this problem for you?" asked Ranma carefully, face and voice not showing any of his thoughts about what he was talking about.

The police Commissioner however understood what he was really asking. He leaned back and steepled his hands for a moment, thinking very hard before he spoke in a neutral tone. "As I said, we are ill-equipped to handle something like this. Almost anything you do in regards to solving the crisis as long as it is permanent will be alright by the government, so long as it isn't too flashy or over the top. We would prefer not to have to clean up scores of bodies for example, but if you think that is the correct solution then we are willing to go along with it. Frankly, the fact that you didn't actually kill anyone in Nerima despite monstrous provocation leads my colleagues and I to believe that anything you do will be well thought out and well deserved. We would also prefer not to see monstrous collateral damage, but we can handle that for a short amount of time. Say, two months give or take of escalated combat, and then everything going back to normal." Yes, he thought said thoughtfully. *Everyone in my department will be ecstatic about that.*

Ranma nodded. "Okay cool and do you have my apartment ready?"

"Yes," the police commissioner said and spouted out an address. "We haven't removed it from the public records yet, so you might want to wait a bit before moving in."

Ranma shook his head quickly. "Don't do that. I want 'em to know where I am if they start lookin'."

"B-but w-why?" the police commissioner sputtered. "They'll attack you there if they know where you live."

Ranma grinned a shark's grin. "It's like a siege. I let 'em know where I am and force them to come to me. That way the rest of the district ain't bothered. Frankly, the more that try to attack me the faster this'll get done."

The police Commissioner looked dubious, but reached across and handed Ranma the keys to the new apartment as well as some paperwork he had to sign. 10 minutes later, Ranma walked out the door a special government employee with a mission.

An hour later Ranma finished checking out his new apartment. While it didn't have much in the way of furniture, it had a good kitchen and a great bed, which was all he really needed. Now he was scouting out the area, jumping from roof to roof with a half eaten ice cream cone in his hand.

*Hopefully I'll find some of the action and see if the government's right about what's going on. The info they gave me is so sketchy. Beads to show rank I can understand but marital artists lettin' the beads tell 'em what they do and who they are, that's sounds like possession to me. Still, we'll see, I'm willin' to bet most of 'em are just usin' it as an excuse. It's the more powerful fighters, the B and A rankers that I need to see in action first, figure out if they believe this shit and which of them are abusing their skills and which aren't.*

Wrapped in the Umi-sen-ken Ranma was jumping through a decent sized junk yard, the kind of place he thought gang members would hang out, when he saw a large group of guys ahead of him. All of them had beads in their ears like the one he had been given during his more lengthy briefing at the government office. *And here we go.*

As he neared he saw that one teen was being held down by two others, surrounded by about fifteen more people, all of high school age and all wearing pieces of the same school uniform. Some of them were armed with makeshift

weapons but nothing was happening just yet, though the atmosphere was definitely getting nasty.

As he neared, one of the gang members who looked like he was in charge said, "Don't worry Kokin you're not the one targeted here. All we need you to do is just stay here with us until your cousin shows up."

"What's this all about Hanno?" the one named Kokin demanded from under the two guys holding him down. "Yoshuu Private School isn't supposed to be fighting Nanyo Academy!" From where he was listening Ranma filed their names away and the names of their schools, making a note to look them up later.

"My boss told me to do it," the smug-looking mob leader called Hanno replied. "It's an imperial order. That's all." Hanno then smirked evilly before adding, "Plus, to have the already famous Booby-bomb Girl as an opponent is something I'm looking forward to."

It was clear from Hanno's tone that it wasn't the fight he was looking forward to, but what he planned to do to Hakufu when he defeated her. When he realized what the bastard was talking about so glibly Ranma's eyes narrowed dangerously and he nearly lost the Umi-sen-ken before he controlled himself.

"Totaku. Shit," the one called Kokin muttered and then to the visible surprise of Hanno threw off the guys holding him down. "If that's what you want, then I won't hold back," Kokin growled.

Ranma nodded, this was just getting interesting and from what he was sensing he wouldn't need to step in just yet. *Imperial order and Totaku huh, that gives me a name and a rank I guess. Once I start cleaning up this pit I should probably 'talk' with him first.*

"You bastard, are you trying to fight us all?" The thug smirked. "You have a lot of courage, but no sense. Tear him to pieces!" Kokin took up a standard karate stance and met the charge of the first fighter to attack. He leveled the guy with a powerful punch to the diaphragm and then jumped forward before they could encircle him, putting down another guy with a hay-maker to the face and knocking out another with a kick to the head. Another fell to a punch to the chest leaving no one between him and where Hanno was standing for a few seconds.

Ranma nodded approvingly then tensed. *It looks like one of the main players just arrived. I wonder whose side he's gonna be on?*

Below, Hanno snarled in surprise as his men went down in front of him. "You're all useless!" Hanno spat while grabbing a crowbar from where he had put it on the ground next to him. "I'll do it then," Hanno grinned wickedly and was just about to charge when a voice from behind the mob interrupted him.

"What's this about, Hanno?" Hanno froze as his eyes turned to the man who spoke.

Ranma took a long look at this new guy. He was a large guy, about six feet five wearing sunglasses, a loose white t-shirt, and a bandana with two long braids of dark hair pulled over his shoulders. However it was his ki that interested Ranma. While he didn't have much, about as much as Kuno or Akane back in Nerima, it was much more controlled than either, and he moved with much more grace than they did. He moved like a well trained martial artist, something neither of them had been despite their delusions to the contrary.

"I-I thought I didn't need your help," Hanno stuttered at the fighter regally standing atop a pile of junk cars. "I thought I could handle one little chick."

"Just because she is a chick," the fighter sneered. "You took a hostage to lure her here just so you could have your way with her." From where he was standing Ranma nodded, an evil smile appearing on his face as he decided on what he was going to do soon to the would-be rapist, regardless of what else happened.

"What's the difference anyway? The big boss just wants her dead, he doesn't care what" Hanno fell silent as the fighter jumped down from the stack of cars and snatched the crowbar out of his hand tossing it behind him to land quivering top first in the dirt.

"You are..." the newcomer said to Hanno in a cold, ominous tone, "...not a Fighter."

Most of the crew who had engaged Kokin and the teen himself had not noticed the newcomer's arrival, still fighting it out in the middle of the mob, but the exterior started to notice him and pull back, allowing him to see the ongoing action.

Kokin panted from his battle stance, having downed two more as the cerebral discussion between the newcomer and Hanno was going on, but he had taken a few shots in turn from the others and was feeling pretty woozy.

Everyone pulled back when the newcomer stepped forward, the others giving way before him in surprise. "Taishiji?" one asked.

Kokin visibly gulped at the name, but his back stiffened and he brought his fists up into position again.

"Sorry," the large fighter said amiably. "One of our stupid members went too far. I'll have them withdraw. My only target is Hakufu Sonsaku. That was the order given to me." He looked around at his fellows. "Now withdraw."

The others all began to back off, some reluctantly some hastily. "Taishiji! Why you..." Hanno growled.

From where he was still standing covered in the Umi-sen-ken Ranma kept one eye on the little weasel as he backed off.

"Don't worry," Taishiji reassured Kokin. "I have no intention of fighting with you."

To Taishiji's visible surprise, Kokin merely firmed his stance.

"I won't let you touch Hakufu," Kokin vowed.

From where he was standing Ranma groaned. *The kid's gutsy but has no ki to speak of and his physical skills are nowhere near good enough to take on this new guy.*

"Don't you know who I am?" Taishiji blinked behind his sunglasses, amazed that this boy had the courage to stand up to him. Ranma was too, but he was prepared to intervene if the fight got too nasty. Until then though, he wouldn't interfere in someone else's fight.

"Taishiji Shigi," Kokin replied. "I know you are one of the top five fighters in the Kanto area."

That was new information to Ranma and important to think about but he didn't think it was accurate. Just by running around the area the past few hours he had felt at least seven or eight ki sources that were far larger than Taishiji.

Back on the ground the shaded fighter nodded in respect. "Knowing that, you raise your fist against me?" Taishiji he asked.

"Because even if we end up killing each other, I won't let you fight Hakufu," Kokin declared.

"Don't underestimate me," Taishiji cautioned. "Why don't you try repeating that declaration after you've managed to land a hit on me? If you can hit me just once, I'll withdraw rather than fight Sonsaku."

"Taishiji!" Hanno protested, only halfway to where his crowbar had landed. "You can't just go around making your own rules!"

"Is that a promise?" Kokin smiled.

"Of course," Taishiji said. "You have my word."

Ranma nodded approvingly. Whatever else he was, Shades was an honorable sort.

The pair faced off staring at each other, one waiting for the other to make his move and the other waiting for the perfect moment. Time ticked by seemingly unnoticed by the fighters.

"It's already been five minutes," one of the watching goons remarked.

"Yeah," agreed another. "I've never seen Taishiji take this long sizing up an enemy. It's a first."

Behind them Ranma turned to the left, watching as one of the weirdest ki signatures he'd ever felt came close enough to see with his eyes. Reminding Ranma a little too strongly of Shampoo, a female fighter riding a bicycle came into view jumping the bicycle easily over an intervening pile of junked cars before crashing into the ground with concussive force

Taishiji glanced at her for a moment and Kokin saw the opening he was waiting for. He charged in with a hay-maker. Taishiji casually took his right hand out of his pocket as the girl jumped over a pile of cars to fly over the heads of the two fighters, landing with a crash in a pile of other cars.

While this was going on Ranma and the onlookers all looked at the newcomer. She was extremely fit but short,

maybe as short as Ranma's female form. She had orange-brown hair, an open expression and possessed truly huge breasts which bounced free unencumbered by a bra as she jumped out of the crater her entrance had made still riding her bike.

Shivering at how much the new girl reminded him of Shampoo, bicycle, bouncing and all, Ranma turned back to see the Kokin guy was standing with his fist outstretched toward Taishiji's head while Taishiji stood with his fist buried in Kokin's gut. The glass in Taishiji's shades shattered and Kokin slowly slumped to the ground. *Crap I could have told him that was gonna happen. That guy's too good to be open to that kinda surprise attack.*

Hakufu slid her bike to a stop right next to where Kokin was now lying on the ground. "Kokin!" she shouted as she kneeled down next to him. "Are you okay?" Kokin eloquently answered her by groaning and coughing up blood.

"Call him an ambulance," Taishiji said, removing his broken sunglasses and dropping them to the ground.

"Kokin..." Hakufu repeated sadly as Ranma leapt down from his hiding place to land between the Hakufu chick and Taishiji, still wrapped in the Umi-sen-ken.

"Where are you going?" growled Hanno, staring from Taishiji to where the new girl was down on her knees next to Kokin.

"I gave my word," Taishiji said. "Even though it was just my sunglasses, the young man managed to hit me. Everyone, withdraw."

"What? Are you crazy!? We have orders to execute her damn it!" Hanno shouted.

"Wait right there!" Hakufu commanded Taishiji, standing up and angrily raising her fists. "How dare you! How dare you do this to Kokin! I won't forgive you!"

"Don't do it," Taishiji cautioned. "This young man risked his life to protect you."

Ranma decided to step in at this point and allowed his hold on the Umi-sen-ken to fade slowly appearing between Taishiji and Hakufu. While everyone was gaping at him in shock and alarm he reached out and tapped a pressure point on the girl's neck, freezing her entire body in place. "Stay put girl. You're outta your league here." Both Kokin and Hakufu looked at him still in shock from his sudden appearance as were most of the other fighters around him.

"Who are you?" Taishiji asked, wondering where the hell the other man had come from and slipping into a combat stance. He didn't let the fact that this newcomer didn't have a magatama affect his appraisal, the man's skill was obvious and overrode that concern.

"Ranma Saotome," Ranma replied. "And I gotta say if you and the rest of this lot are what Kanto has to offer, I ain't impressed."

"You don't know what you're getting into stranger," Kokin protested from where he stood on wobbly legs next to his cousin. "He's one of the top five fighters in the Kanto area."

Ranma snorted. "Around here he may be a badass, but where I come from he'd be well down the totem pole. I used to know little old ladies that could lay the smack down on him without breaking a sweat."

"Is that so?" Taishiji smirked.

"Yeah, it is," Ranma replied. "You look like yer a pretty good brawler, but now yer about to find out what it means to face a Master of the Art. Don't worry though, I won't do any permanent damage," Ranma assured him. "You've got a code of honor and I respect that."

Taishiji nodded, "Bring it."

Ranma smirked and leaped into the air, bringing down an overhead kick aimed at his opponent's head. As he expected, Taishiji easily avoided the attack by stepping to the side...only to get caught off guard by his opponent's other foot coming in at head height to smash into the left side of his head.

Taishiji winced but kept on his feet and launching the same devastating ki charged punch combo that he had used on Kokin. To his surprise, Ranma just stood there, and accepted the hit.

Ranma let his enemies punch land, moving with the power and soaking it up. He landed feet first against the side of a

junk car behind him and looked back at Taishiji, who was staring at him in surprise. "Wow, not bad, that's almost as strong a punch as the tomboy could dish out when she was pissed at me."

Everyone gasped at this new kid's unreal toughness as Ranma jumped down from his perch completely unhurt. "Come on, I took hits like that or worse every day for nearly two years, don't tell me that's all you got?"

"Who the hell are you?" Taishiji asked in awe.

"I told ya, I'm Ranma Saotome, grandmaster of the Anything Goes School of martial arts," Ranma smirked. "You ready to continue?"

With a battle cry, Taishiji charged in and began swinging at the smirking man. He led off with a sweeping right cross that Ranma merely leaned to the side slightly to casually avoid. The right cross was followed by a left uppercut which Ranma leaned backward to dodge. The backward lean was followed up by a handstand flip when Taishiji dropped to attempt a foot sweep. Taishiji was now very worried. Not only could the new guy take a hit, but he was about as elusive as smoke when he wanted to be.

"My turn," the grinning man announced.

Taishiji's fears were well founded as suddenly he found himself on the defensive as Ranma launched into a series of lightning fast kicks and punches that crashed against his guard. He was forced to give up ground even as he was amazed at the power behind the strikes. *It's like fighting Ukitsu, speed and power expertly mixed. I can't keep this up for long!* Desperately, the larger man launched a wild punch to try and get some space.

Ranma ducked the punch and suddenly, Taishiji's ribs exploded in pain as Ranma landed a kick to his kidneys, launching the bigger man into a pile of cars with a huge crash. Hanno's goon squad gasped. "Whoa," one of them commented. "I've never seen Taishiji get taken apart like that."

Meanwhile, Hanno had found the crowbar he had picked up earlier and had slipped around behind where Kokin and Hakufu were gaping at the one sided fight occurring before them. He just had to wait for the right moment to strike.

Taishiji coughed and clutched his cracked ribs as he climbed to his feet. He looked up at Ranma who was standing there waiting for him to pull himself together. It wasn't often that he was outclassed, but he couldn't shake the impression that the other man was just toying with him. The grin on Ranma's face and the excitement in his eyes didn't help any. Still, Taishiji didn't become the fighter he was by giving up so easily. He gathered himself and charged the pigtailed martial artist.

Ranma cracked his neck and set himself to receive the other man's charge. The larger man barreled towards him and leapt into the air in a flying drop kick. Ranma deftly stepped to the side and then almost lazily ducked the spinning back fist Taishiji launched immediately after landing. Suddenly Ranma was inside his guard.

"Kachuu Tenshin Amaguriken!" Ranma shouted. There was a rumbling roar like that of a machinegun and the amazed spectators watched at Taishiji's body began to float several inches off the ground while seeming to convulse. The roar ceased after about two seconds and before Taishiji could fall to the ground he was nailed with a spinning back kick to the chest. Taishiji was in a world of pain as he flew back from the kick that cracked even more ribs to land heavily on his back several meters away. He rolled to the side and coughed up some blood before blissfully passing out.

Everyone was frozen in shock at seeing one of the top fighters in the seven schools taken out so quickly.

As Ranma walked over to check on Taishiji, Hanno recovered his wits and decided that now was his chance. "You're mine, Booby Bombs!" he shouted and swung the crowbar around in a swing that would cave her head in where she was standing in front of her boy toy.

What happened next was terrifying to everyone who witnessed it. As Kokin threw himself on top of Hakufu knocking her flat to the ground Ranma reacted, hands blazing with blue energy as he unerringly turned to where he knew Hanno stood. "Mouko Takabishi!" Ranma shouted and fired a blinding blue ball of energy at the dishonorable weasel.

Hanno was caught completely off guard when the ki blast hit him dead center. His chest exploded in pain as his shirt disintegrated under the force of the blast that hit him. He was thrown backwards to violently slam into a stack of cars before he collapsed to the ground with several broken ribs and his torso covered with third degree burns.

"What the hell was that?" one of the goon squad shouted.

"Hell if I know! Let's get out of here!" another cried fearfully.

"No shit! No way I'm messing with someone that can do that!" a third agreed as the whole group turned to run but was stopped by a shout from the new fighter.

**"Hold it!** Run away and I'll chase yer asses down!" All the gang members froze, too terrified to move and too terrified to stay. After making certain none of his witnesses were moving he turned to the two victims of this little get-together. "You guys okay?"

"Um...yeah," Kokin muttered, slightly in awe and greatly afraid of what he had just seen.

"That was awesome!" Hakufu gushed happily. "How did you do that?"

"It was just a ki blast," Ranma replied, shrugging his shoulders. "A lot of people back where I used to live could do 'em one way or another." He walked over and checked Hanno's wounds. While severe the man would recover eventually. He looked up at the watching crowd. "When I first arrived this asshole was sayin' somethin' about playin' with the girl. Was that just talk or somethin' that happens a lot around here?" None of the fighters who had worked with Hanno would look him in the eyes. Hakufu looked clueless but Kokin looked grim and Ranma nodded angrily. "About what I thought. Well boys, the fun time's over. There's a new sheriff in town and you lot are gonna tell all your friends what he thinks of would-be rapists."

With that Ranma lifted one foot and brought it down hard on the unconscious Hanno's crotch. Hanno jolted out of his stunned state screaming in agony, his testicles and pelvic bone pulverized under the blow. Every man watching even the waking Taishiji winced in shared sympathy, some even crying out in horror. Ranma reached down and with a single pressure point put Hanno out again. At the same time, he grabbed the thug's magatama off his ear. He wanted to see what he could figure out about the thing. Standing up he nodded to the weasel's gang. "Now, get him and your own asses outta here before I think all of you had the same idea."

There was a mad scramble to pick up the maimed gang leader as Ranma knelt down beside Taishiji. "Yo big guy you okay?" Ranma asked solicitously as the large man began to groan.

"I'm just lucky you didn't do that to me. But what did you hit me with?" Taishiji moaned as he crossed his arms over his aching torso.

"That'd be the Kachuu Tenshin Amaguriken," Ranma chuckled, "a technique where you use your ki to push the speed of one or two body parts way above what ya do normally. You gonna be okay?"

"I'll live," Taishiji said, sitting up. "That was some technique. How many times did you hit me, anyway?"

"About fifty times, give or take," Ranma grinned briefly before going on more seriously. "Sorry about your friend there," Ranma said not sounding apologetic at all. "He ain't as honorable as you. He used our fight as a distraction to sneak up behind the girl and try to cave her head in with a crowbar. I took him out with a ki blast and then decided to make an example of him."

"A ki blast?" Taishiji blinked. "Interesting. And you needn't worry about me. Hanno has always been one of the ones saying that those who follow the magatama should simply take what we want from those weaker. I certainly won't miss him, though Totaku may miss having one of his tools in my school for a while."

Ranma filed that information away for later standing up and offering his hand to the larger man to help him up. "I know, you're honorable and a decent fighter that's why I wanted to fight you, not just to help those two." He jerked his head to where Hakufu and Kokin were still standing

Taishiji took the offered hand and allowed himself to be pulled to his feet, wincing as his cracked ribs reminded him of their presence.

"The others ran away carrying that other guy" Ranma continued. "You think you'll be okay on your own?"

"I should be," the larger man nodded.

"Great," Ranma grinned. "That was fun. Maybe we can spar again sometime?"

"Um...right," Taishiji sweat-dropped, "sure."

"Cool," Ranma said. He turned to the couple, "what about you two?"

Hakufu grinned. "Yeah we can get home ourselves, but first I want to fight you! You're so strong it makes my blood boil!"

"No." Ranma said emphatically. "Not only no, but hell no. You fighting me would be like a raw white belt fighting a fourth level dan. You're too slow, too quick to anger, and ya don't have enough skill." *And until I find out what that other malevolent ki inside of you is I'm going to make damn sure I keep my distance!*

What Ranma sensed from the girl was beyond odd. She had two distinct ki signatures inside her body! Not even a Jusenkyo victim had two different ki auras, and the way they were distributed was even weirder than the fact that she had two in the first place. One ki signature was obviously her own, large for someone with as little skill as Hakufu obviously had, being around the size of Shampoo's when he left Nerima. That aura was spread normally around her body, but the second aura was solely centered in her heart and central body. It was contained there within her own aura, but it was far deeper, stronger, and gave off a malevolent, almost evil feel. He had never even heard of something like this, and it almost scared him how powerful it was.

"How do I know that until I try?!" Hakufu yelled dashing forward with her fist cocked only to be halted by another pressure point strike paralyzing her entire body for a second time.

Ranma sighed. "Word of advice girl, never enter a battle half-cocked. If ya do, your enemy's already won. Ya need to train a hell of a lot more before you're in my league. You sure you can get her home?" He asked Kokin, who nodded meekly. "Good, then I'm outta here. I hear my dinner callin' and I still have to actually make it so see ya around." With that he jumped up to the nearby pile of wrecks and away, leaving behind him one massively irritated Shou Haou and one astonished Kokin.

end chapter.

I'll be interested in what people think of this story, and the genre in general. It seems as if Naruto has taken over the crossover male/harem sector, but i prefer Ranma simply because of the amount of chaos that is his very nature. Updates will be once every five days or so unless no one seems to like my story(s).

## \*Chapter 2\*: Chapter 2

I do not own Ranma or Battle Vixens/Ikkitousen whatever you want to call it. If I did Kanu would be the main character not Hakufu, who is simply fan-service fluff personified without her inner dragon.

A review mentioned the fact that I glossed over what happened to the other Nerimites when Ranma made his bid for freedom. I won't tell a lie, most of my stories do this, though I at least try to mix up what happens to them, simply because I want to get to the meat of the story i.e. Ranma interacting and changing another story. If I ever write a crossover with something like Sailor Moon, which also is set in a ward of Tokyo (I think) that will be different, but in this story I will be dropping bits and pieces as background from time to time and that will be it. Also, was wondering if you all would like to see the story continued from this crossover into others. Like a Ranma/Kanu/whoever else being forced to become governmental trouble shooters to pay for the damages caused...

thanks to Vandenbz for reviewing and looking for typos!

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### Chapter 2 The word chemistry can mean so many things

The next day Ranma stood in front of the class full of students as he waited for the sensei to bring them to order. It was a mixed class of boys and girls, with the boys in black jackets with a straight collar and the girls in sailor suits consisting of white blouses with blue striped cuffs, medium blue pleated miniskirts, and tan neckerchiefs under the blue with white striped sailor collar. Both genders were looking at him with interest as he stood before them in a black tang, a minimal nod to the dress code that he wouldn't be caught dead following, and his usual black kung-fu pants with the draw string ties at the waist and ankles.

The girls had a decidedly more appreciative and predatory look than the guys did as they sized him up, and as he looked at them he had to force himself not to think of his experiences in Nerima. *Hell, maybe I can finally get a real, actual girlfriend out of this gig. Stranger things have been known to happen haven't they? No father beating me every time he catches me with a stiffy saying it weakens my dedication to the art, no Akane etc. to smash me every time I'm nice to someone else, and no damn engagements!*

"Class, we have a new student this morning," the sensei said. "Please introduce yourself."

"Yo," Ranma said. "I'm Ranma Saotome. I'm a martial artist and am ranked grandmaster of my own school Anything Goes. I haven't been in school much at all because I was on training trips most of my life, but I passed my senior exams in history, English and Geography. I'm only goin' to be in the math, literature and science courses, but if anyone wants to study another language let me know and I might be able to help in return for some notes 'n stuff in those three." Wondering what kind of reaction it would get, he started playing with the magatama he had taken from Hanno in one hand as he spoke. The reports he had from the police said this school had a far smaller and much more decent gang than most of the others, but he wanted to make his own evaluation.

"So you're a Fighter then?" one of the guys asked, spotting the magatama.

Ranma caught the magatama in his hand, pocketing it swiftly. "No, I'm a martial artist, I follow The Code. The fighters as you call 'em around here don't and that makes 'em no better than normal thugs and murderers."

Another guy asked angrily. "Then why do you have a sacred bead?"

Ranma grinned. "Spoils of war." There were murmurs of surprise and anger at that.

The teacher interrupted before the war of words could go any further. "Very well, Saotome-san, please take any available seat and that will be yours for the rest of your time here."

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Ranma was eternally grateful when the lunch bell rang. While actually getting a full night's sleep (something that happened incredibly rarely during his time in Nerima) was immensely helpful to staying awake in class it was still a struggle to stave off the boredom he felt. Still, he knew he needed to pass the math and science courses if he wanted to get a high school diploma, something his father had apparently never been able to do.

He grabbed his bento and exited from the classroom window the same way he always had at Furinkan. Gasps from behind him told him that however accustomed to violence the students around here were, acts of normal martial art skill still amazed them.

He had barely sat down on a bench in the school yard when a group of about twenty people from around the school yard began to make their way toward him. Ranma noticed they all had magatama on their ears and smirked. *The welcoming committee huh? I wonder if they've heard what I did to that little weasel Hanno yet.*

"So you're a Fighter, huh?" one of the tougher looking guys said with his arms crossed over his chest, sizing Ranma up with vague disapproval while a few of the ones behind him, the ones from Ranma's own class, were looking at him angrily clenching and unclenching their fists and generally trying to look intimidating. Needless to say it didn't work. When you've faced an enraged demigod nothing less is going to faze you.

"I thought we went over this inside. I'm a martial artist, not a Fighter. I don't go 'round in packs, I don't bully those weaker than me, and I don't think that just 'cause I think I'm operatin' under some kinda 'grim destiny' that I can get away with shit like that." Ranma replied.

This caused even angrier muttering to break out, but the spokesmen continued. "Well, here at Seito Private School, it's tradition that new Fighters have an initiation. You have to beat as many of us as you can so we can see how good you are and that goes double for someone like you who runs his mouth off about stuff that doesn't concern him."

"Is that a challenge?" Ranma inquired, looking over the crowd and snorting in dismissal.

"If you want to put it that way, yeah" the leader said.

"All at once or one at a time?" Ranma asked smirking.

Several of the crowd of spectators and even some Fighters gaped at the audacity of the question. "Up to you," the leader smirked, thinking the other man was overreaching by a wide margin.

"If it's all the same to you, there're a lot of you and it'd take too long to fight you one at a time, and I'm hungry." Ranma shrugged, "I'd just as soon take you all down at once. That way I can get back to my lunch in peace."

Ranma sat his pack of books down on the ground by the door and cracked his knuckles. He then walked over and took a stance about ten feet away from the mob of fighters. "Let's dance," Ranma said calmly.

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Kanu Unchou stepped out of the student government's suite and made her way out of the building, still smiling slightly at the news her leader had shared with them. Ryuubi Gentoku had told Kanu, Chou'un and Chouhi that a low ranked fighter known for making assaults on female fighters had been effectively neutered yesterday during an altercation. Needless to say she and her fellows, all women themselves, had been quite happy about the news. She went outside to see how the newcomer's initiation was going only to stop astonished at the sight before her.

Ranma stood on a small pile of unconscious fighters, eyes flashing with what she thought was humor at the situation. His pig tail moved gently in the breeze as he looked around at his downed opponents. Even as she approached he turned to her blue eyes still flashing with humor as he spotted her. "Ah, the main event arrives. Sorry I started the party without ya." He bowed quickly and came up a lopsided smile still on his face. "Name's Ranma Saotome, ya want ta spar too?"

Kanu smiled at him in turn. "An impressive feat, regardless" she said, approaching the fighter to introduce herself. "I am Kanu Unchou, Seito Private School's top Fighter, and yes, I would like to have a match with you."

As she moved closer, Kanu studied Ranma closely. His clothing, which only made the barest nod at the dress code, did little to hide the well-toned and refined muscles underneath. His blue eyes sparkled in a handsome yet strangely mature face. There was nothing in his face to indicate condescension or lust, things she almost always saw in any male fighter she fought, something which impressed her. Although he stood with his hands in his pockets she could find few openings to exploit all of which were well guarded and likely traps. While her ki sight was limited, what she could tell was he had a lot of control over his aura, so much so that she could not tell how large his ki reservoir was. The cocky grin he gave her may have been irritating to most but she saw beneath it and realized how much the young man before her truly enjoyed the challenge of combat, something that appealed to her as she saw in it a mirror of her own attitude. The total package was impressive and rather appealing.

Ranma himself was also analyzing his opponent. To his irritation the girl was slightly taller than he was standing there in a school girl uniform stretched to the max to cover her assets up top and red fighting gloves on her hands. He could tell from her movements that she was well-versed in the Art. The muscles on her legs, arms, and torso were honed to near perfection. Her ki aura was large, but well controlled, much more than he had seen in most fighters his age. In terms of size her reservoir was somewhere between Ryoga's and Genma's, but with more control than either.

Other than her obvious skill however her features were also striking. She had very long dark purple hair that nearly brushed the ground and was gathered by a silver hair ornament about a third of the way up its length. She had long bangs which covered the left side of her face and obscured her left eye from view and her skin was a vibrant tan color. Her uniform was at least a size too small, showing off a taut midriff below large, perfectly formed d-cup breasts. Within a few seconds of observation Ranma knew he had never seen a girl more beautiful or dangerous and he felt his blood quicken in anticipation.

Furthermore the naginata she carried was putting him slightly on edge. He could tell from where he was standing it was at least on level with the Genjikata he had taken from Saffron the year before.

Ranma was about to agree to fight her when a thought occurred to him. *Hot female; check. Hot female fighter; check. Hot female fighter with a large weapon; check. Oh shit.*

Kanu blinked in shock as the self-assured young man before her lost his confident air. Looking almost panicky for a moment, his eyes locked on hers as he slowly crouched in preparation for flight. "Um, one thing though, ya wouldn't happen to be an Amazon or anything like that would ya?"

Kanu blinked again in surprise before an amused smirk spread across her face. "Was that a compliment or a question? No, I'm not an Amazon, why, would that be a problem?"

Ranma relaxed and grinned and began to walk towards her moving away from the still comatose bodies of his former welcoming committee. "Yeah, see the Chinese Amazons have this weird ass law that makes them married in their eyes to the first man who beats them. A load of dung if ya ask me but no one ever did, so whatever."

Kanu's smirk widened. "You sound like you've had personal experience with that law."

"More experience than I'd like ta think about," Ranma growled, muttering something about Chinese Amazons, heat seeking bicycles and crazy Shampoo's.

Kanu decided to have a bit of fun with him. "Well, normally, I don't follow any laws like that, but... in your case I could make an exception," she giggled, eyeing him with a familiar predatory look.

Ranma gulped, both unnerved and strangely excited by the reply. He had only been away from his fiancée troubles for a few months, but still this girl...there was something about her. His cheeks warmed with a blush as he tried to come up with a reply that didn't sound totally lame, not wanting to shoot the idea down but not wanting to move quickly either. "T-that's really n-not necessary, I mean, not to say you ain't worth it or anythin' you're gorgeous! It's just that...um...I-I hardly know you, and um" Ranma stammered. Inwardly he groaned. *Gods that sounded so lame! Why can't talkin' to people make as much sense as a fight?*

Kanu's grin widened as she blushed slightly at the inadvertent compliment which had come out genuine despite the stuttering. "True, time enough to get to know one another better and see about something along those lines later, but for now, I believe we were about to have a match?"

"Oh, right. Umm, you gonna fight with that?" Ranma asked pointing to the naginata resting on her shoulder, even more wary of it now that he was closer. *Yep, definitely as powerful as the Genjikata, I wonder if it can do elemental attacks as well.*

"Not at all, a friendly bout like ours would only be hindered by a weapon." Kanu replied, going over and leaning the naginata against a nearby tree. She came back over and took up a stance, her right leg forward and her right hand held out in front of her palm open while her left hand was clenched into a fist close to her body ready to strike.

"Whenever you're ready," Ranma said, adopting his loose, deceptive stance, grinning broadly. *I was right, she's way better than that Taishiji guy. This could be a fun fight.*

Kanu decided to make the first move. Trying to gauge her opponent's speed and reaction time she darted forward starting off with a six punch combo. Ranma knew what she was up to though and decided to match her speed and see what she did next. He dodged around the blows easily, his own hands darting forward to be blocked in turn.

Kanu ended the combo with a spinning sweep kick but Ranma jumped into the air soaring over it and landing a bruising kick to her chest as he did. Her return shot even while off balance tagged his retreating leg with a punch and the two separated.

Ranma took a hand from his pocket to rub the spot on his hip where Kanu's attack struck. It hurt a little, something that surprised him since given his fights against Ryoga and his constant beatings from his fiancée's his ability to take a

hit was quite high. *She's fast as hell and stronger than she looks, this is fun!* "Not bad," he grinned across at Kanu, eye alight with the joy of a good fight. "Now that we've sounded each other out, why don't we start for real?"

Kanu quirked an eyebrow and smiled, her own light blue eyes flashing with joy to match his own. "I don't see why not," she agreed.

Kanu lunged forward again a swift kick spearing toward Ranma's torso, but Ranma dropped under the kick only to meet the other foot as it came up in an arc, Kanu's body performing a spin in midair a foot off the ground, her hair scraping the ground as her kick connected.

Ranma felt his teeth smash together as the surprise blow landed but his hands glided along the back of her legs, touching two points on them before going for hard chops aimed at her stomach.

Kanu dodged this first salvo but failed to dodge the following two fist combo as she regained her footing, answering with a hard knee to the stomach. The two continued to exchange blows and punches, grinning all the while. *He's strong. Kanu thought. My speed seems to be better than his but I can't tell, he may still be holding back. He's skilled, even better than I am, and is far stronger than his frame suggests, those punches hurt even if he isn't putting everything he has into them. What a Man! But let's see if he can handle this!*

What Kanu didn't know was that Ranma had already hit her with a devastating attack. The pressure points he had hit her with wouldn't take effect quickly, but when they did...

Ranma's eyes widened as he saw the flow of ki in Kanu's body change, the ki in her hands beginning to pulse oddly. Unlike in a speed technique it seemed to form in her palms rather than her entire arm and the pulsing effect was even stranger, each pulse seemed to add to the ki stored in her hands.

Realizing she was trying some kind of strange power blow he began to bring his own ki up to reinforce his skin in a shield technique he had come up with a month ago but had yet to truly test out, something he called Steel Body.

It filled him slowly as the two continued to exchange blows, neither able to land a decent hit for another thirty minutes of intense combat, neither gaining the upper hand.

Kanu ended the stalemate by tripping Ranma up via a sneaky toe stomp just long enough to land what she hoped would be the finishing blow. "Explosive Palm!" The open palm strike hammered into Ranma's midriff and an explosion of ki ignited on impact throwing him backwards and through a tree behind him with a startled cry.

As the blow landed Kanu felt her legs give out from under her. For a moment she panicked wondering what had happened before she recalled the two light touches she had felt on her legs when she had landed her spinning high kick. She had ignored them in favor of dodging his chops at her stomach at the time, but now it was obvious those chops had been a cover. *Some kind of paralyzing technique, but it took too long to work.* She held her body up by her arms, looking over at where Ranma had landed. *I was able to continue and I think win this fight.*

No sooner did she think that than the tree which had collapsed on top of Ranma moved. After a few more seconds the man himself emerged. His shirt was in tatters, and he ripped it away almost absentmindedly, his chest from what she could see seemed to be bruised, but that was all, and he threw the remnants of the tree off him with one hand as the other went to his stomach.

Ranma shook his head groggily. *I think my Steel Body technique needs a bit more work. Geez I feel as if I've gone three rounds with Ryoga and Lime at the same time! No broken bones or anything, but thank Buddha for my accelerated healing! Wow, not only could she almost match my speed and strength but she has a move like that, fantastic!*

He walked over to Kanu hands up in sign of peace and she watched almost mesmerized by the smooth movement of his skin over his amazing abs. He stopped and crouched down in front of her. Reaching out a slow hand he gently poked her forehead smiling softly, blushing as the thought entered his head that her skin under his finger was very soft and smooth to the touch. "That was an amazing strike, but if yer opponent can see your ki building up they can prepare for it. I can teach ya ways to make your ki flow faster if ya want. For now though, I think it's my victory. Sorry."

Kanu's lips twitched as she tore her eyes away from his chest and looked into those wonderful deep blue eyes with her own. "I suppose it is; a bit of a cheap shot though, using a paralyzing move. How long does it last by the way?" She tried to shift herself to a more comfortable position and Ranma turned away when she inadvertently flashed him a bit of panty while manually moving her legs, something that made her smile when she saw it. *Oh he is going to be so much fun to tease!*

"The effect should wear off in about three hours or so give or take." Ranma said. "And it wasn't a paralyzing strike, just two pressure points. I didn't want to use my ki attacks on ya 'cause I couldn't tell how durable ya were. Though by the amount of punishment you took, I probably should have, sorry" He added ruefully, rubbing his bruised chest.

Kanu nodded but her eyes narrowed in speculation. "Are you the warrior who neutered Hanno of Yoshuu the other day?" Ranma stiffened but nodded affirmatively and Kanu smiled. "Good. He was a pig, one of many around here unfortunately. But what did you mean by saying, what was it, something about 'sheriffs'?"

Ranma shrugged uncomfortably, having forgotten the job he was here to do in the enjoyment of fighting someone as close to his level as Kanu was. "I should probably tell that to you and the leader of the school at the same time. I promise it ain't bad, not for fighters like you who have honor and live by the code."

Kanu frowned and was about to reply when Ranma's stomach let out a loud roar, startling them both. She took one look at his blushing face and lost it, laughing so hard her stomach hurt as her arms gave out, her upper body landing on the ground. Ranma muttered, "Er, I don't suppose I could go and eat now could I? Only, I didn't get to have breakfast."

Kanu nodded gaily still chortling and he picked her up gently. She blushed a little finding herself pressed into his hard though admittedly battered chest as he carried her over to the bench where he had set his bento. He opened his lunchbox and her eyes widened in surprise. "Did you make that yourself? I don't know many martial artists who can also cook." *Including myself*, Kanu thought ruefully. *Ryuubi and Chouhi's attempts at cooking are terrible and Chou'un's cooking is far too bland for the rest of us.*

Ranma nodded, and with a playful grin flipped a small piece of hamburger up and into her mouth. Kanu blinked in shock as one hand came up to cover her now closed mouth as she chewed. "Yeah, I've lived by myself for nearly a year, and I learned cooking before that from someone who worked kata into her cooking movements. What do you think, good huh?"

Kanu swallowed and decided to get back at him for surprising her. She leaned into his side, pressing her breasts into his left arm. "I think your **meat** is very tasty Ranma, I can't wait to have another **taste**." She said as seductively as she could manage, nearly purring the words.

Ranma's face turned an intense shade of red as he got her innuendo. She pulled back laughing as he stammered and floundered. Her own stomach rumbling quietly however interrupted her, and she flushed slightly, a light pink to Ranma's dark maroon. Ranma got control of himself and offered her his chopsticks. "We can share if yer hungry."

Kanu nodded looking around. Apparently their fight had gone on far longer than she had thought. The schoolyard was empty, and she could see silhouettes inside some of the classrooms from where she sat. *Hmm, so I am missing either chemistry or history about now, too bad, I like history. Still I can't exactly go to class with my legs still not working can I? Besides the 'subject' I'm studying now is much more interesting.* Turning back to her new acquaintance she took a bite from his bento before asking "So, what style do you use? I thought I recognized some of your moves from karate and judo, even a bit of capoeira, but the total was too chaotic to follow."

Ranma nodded. "That's sort of the point. I'm grandmaster of Anything Goes martial arts, 'cause I beat the old master for the title, it's a style that emphasizes speed, adaptation and ki control." He took a bite, and went on, somewhat fearfully "Er, the previous master and his students weren't the most honorable sort. I don't suppose you've heard of a Happosai or a Genma Saotome?"

Kanu's lips pursed as she thought. "I don't think so, why?"

Ranma visibly relaxed. "The two of them were more thieves than anythin' else, I've been tryin' to hunt down all the people they ripped off and repay 'em, but I still have a lot of scrolls and stuff from schools I can't find or that have died out." He gulped as he went on, looking at her sideways. "And, er, Genma was my old man, and he had his own way of stealing shit, using um, certain promises involving me."

Kanu took the second to last bite and looked at him thoughtfully as she chewed. "I try to take people solely on their own merits, and I won't hold your father's actions against you. Is that what you're doing here in Kanto?"

Ranma shook his head as he took back the chopsticks. "Thanks, and no. Like I said, I'll tell ya why I'm here at the same time I tell this Ryuubi lady." A thought occurred to him, and he handed back one of the chopsticks to Kanu, grinning impishly. "How about a little match? My old man trained my speed by fighting me for food. Want ta see how well you do?"

Kanu smirked in answer and without any warning her chopstick flashed toward the last bit of hamburger only to be stopped by Ranma's own. She kept up the conversation as their chopsticks met and smacked together over and over, hands flashing near amiguriken speed as they fought, the hamburger piece seeming to hover in the air between them. "Interesting idea, though obviously something you would only do with an advanced student. When did you start?"

Their chopsticks locked together and they strained against one another, the piece of hamburger caught in the cleft between them as Ranma thought about the answer. "Um, hell I can't remember, it went on every meal as far back as I can remember so when I was five or so? I remember going hungry a lot when I was younger."

Kanu gaped at him in shock, but looked back down as his chopstick snapped. He pouted outrageously as she smiled victoriously lifting the last piece of food to her mouth. A thought occurred to her and her smile turned wicked. "Don't worry, we can share." She popped the piece of hamburger halfway into her mouth and held it there, leaning towards him invitingly.

Ranma gulped, again reminded of his fiancé's before he moved forward swiftly, taking a bite out of the hamburger piece, making certain their lips didn't touch. He pulled back, chewing and blushing hotly.

Kanu finished chewing first, looking at him thoughtfully. "Can I ask you a question? You seem a little nervous around me, is there a reason for that other than that Amazon law you mentioned? You don't have a jealous girlfriend or anything, do you?" The question came out jokingly, but for some reason she was very hurt that he hadn't taken her invitation. His reactions to her flirting thus far had been very defensive and almost scared at times.

Ranma winced but decided to answer her truthfully. "Um not so much a present day jealous girlfriend as I used to have a couple of jealous, extremely violent fiancées." Her expression of shock and disbelief invited more of an explanation and he went on to describe the problems his father had caused him, as well as giving a brief overview of his life in Nerima.

Kanu listened in shock and growing fury to the crap that Ranma had gone through in his life. *So what he needs is some positive reinforcement to overcome those bitches programming. Well, I can do that.* Her thoughts turned rather perverted at that idea, involving silk sheets, chocolate, sweat, lots of moaning and for some reason an image of herself wearing an apron and nothing else sitting on a kitchen table. *Yes, I can do that happily!*

The talk continued touching on many subjects over the next few hours as school first continued than let out. Many students looked over at them wondering why they were still sitting there but did not interrupt the conversation, though many girls were tempted to do so seeing Ranma sitting there shirtless, his ripped muscles on display to their appreciative eyes, but one look at Kanu discouraged them.

During this discussion, Ranma learned that Rakuyo High School was the top school because it had won a fighting tournament last year, and it was under its control that lawlessness had truly begun to grow, influenced by its leader Totaku. Moreover, assassination orders were being sent out by him at a far more profligate rate than any leader before him. He led not only his own school but five of the other seven schools and was too powerful for the remaining independent schools, Seito and Kyosho Academy to go against openly. With this confirmation, Ranma knew he'd have to look into Totaku as soon as he could.

He was also becoming disturbed by how casually these fighters talked about killing; even the honorable ones like Taishiji and Kanu were relaxed about it. On the other hand, he was going to have to probably kill someone to get everything back under control, and he was resigned to that. He also had no problem making the punishment fit the crime like he had with Hanno.

Other than that disturbing topic their conversation was easily the longest and most pleasant discussion he'd ever had with a girl his entire life. No fiancées popping up to bash him for being a pervert or ignoring them, no old man popping up and attacking him for not concentrating on the art. It was easy to talk to Kanu, she had some of the same interest he had (The Art, food, training, school/hating school, travel, history, even the few movies he had seen she had seen and enjoyed) was serious about The Art, not clingy, self-confident but not arrogant or blind to her own weaknesses, and did not jump to conclusions as she listened to him talking about his past.

For her part Kanu was enjoying herself just as much. Ranma was easy to talk to: he listened, had a good sense of humor and did not disparage her skills or talk down to her like many male fighters tried to do (before she kicked their asses anyway). He listened to her problems with the way the competition between the schools was going and her concerns with her own skills and did not give her empty platitudes but actual suggestions on how she could become better. He was also respectful and did not ogle her. Not once did his eyes leave her face to travel downwards as they talked, something the eyes of every other man she talked to did, sooner or later. Even when they fought he hadn't

tried to get in a quick feel or anything, and this impressed her.

In short, these two formidable individuals were finding that the more time they spent together the more they were attracted to one another, above and beyond their physical attraction.

At a break in the conversation Ranma looked around the schoolyard and looked up at the school. He was surprised to see no one in any of the classrooms he could see. "Hey we've been talking for quite a bit, maybe we should start heading home ourselves."

Kanu nodded and attempted to lift a leg but neither one would budge. "It seems your pressure point attacks are still working, though I can at least feel my legs now. I thought you said it would only be a few hours."

Ranma scratched his head in embarrassment. "Sorry, I started incorporating pressure points into my style recently but I ain't exactly mastered it yet, so the time it takes 'em to wear off is kinda up in the air. It won't take longer than six hours though, I didn't hit 'em nearly hard enough for longer." As he talked he reached into his weapons pace pocket and pulled out a spare shirt, then pulled it on.

"I see..." Kanu said a sly smile crossing her face, even as she pouted inwardly at the loss of her muscely view, "In that case since I'm unable to get home on my own how about a lift?" Once again the look on Ranma's face was priceless.

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As he carried the exotically attractive Kanu Unchou out of the schoolyard on his back with her naginata strapped to her back, Ranma couldn't help but eye every corner, bush and shadow defensively. His instincts from his days in Nerima were still too ingrained into his thoughts to ignore.

This instinctive reaction was heightened further because for the first time ever he was carrying someone he knew, not thought or was obligated to think he was, but **knew** he was attracted to. Far too often in his life happiness was immediately followed by pain. With every guilty thought he had about how good she felt against his back, how her breasts felt amazing pressed into his shoulders or how smooth the skin on her legs was under his hands he became more and more convinced his karma was going to come up and kick him in the ass hard, perhaps repeatedly, and most certainly with steel toed boots.

Kanu noticed Ranma's nervousness but ignored it as she relished in the feeling of her body molding to Ranma's. Thinking this a good time to start her positive reinforcement, she made a point to move and grind her body into his back, smiling wickedly with every groan and twitch she felt through his splendid muscles. As the trip went on and they continued their conversation her own body started to react to the twitches of Ranma's back muscles under her breasts and between her legs. Even as she continued to tease him by shifting against him and talking into his ear she began to look forward to some private time at the end of the trip.

Other than the rising sexual tension the trip was going smoothly until their route took them through a park. Two young boys were running around shooting water pistols at one another and one of them accidentally nailed Ranma right in the face, with unfortunate results.

"W-What?" Kanu said in confusion as she experienced something that few before her ever had, feeling the change as it took place. The well toned and very male back she was riding became narrower and softer, and the height she was carried at shrunk dramatically.

"I can explain this." Ranma said and barely held back a surprised moan when Kanu's hands, which had been wrapped around her chest, give an experimental squeeze to her breasts. *That felt **good**, what the hell, other people have done that a time or two but it never felt good before!* "C-could you please stop doing that?"

"Ah! Gomen." Kanu very reluctantly took her hands off Ranko's breasts. *Whatever else is going on those breasts certainly feel real!* Ranko found a bench nearby and helped Kanu to sit on it before facing her.

Kanu took this opportunity to give him (her?) a once over. Ranma had been a five foot eleven black haired male with a build somewhere between a swimmers and a gymnasts with the most alluring sea blue eyes she had ever seen. Now he was a she, with only her eyes the same as before. She had shrunk to a petite five feet, her build still showed the same level of fitness but for a girl, and her hair had changed from black to red. Her breasts, which like magnets had immediately attracted Kanu's hands, were probably the same size as Ryuubi-san's, a very firm D-cup equal to Kanu's own. The overall package was a girl that was just as attractive as Ranma the man had been. *My god, she's sooo cute! Oh, I can't wait to hear the explanation for this!*

"I-I guess I've got some explaining to do, don't I?" Ranko asked sadly, already resigned to losing his new friend thanks to his freakishness.

"Ranma, you suddenly changed into a girl, a very pretty girl I might add. Yes I think I would like an explanation please." Kanu said sarcastically.

"You remember me saying how my old man was an utter idiot?" Kanu nodded, *oh yes this is going to be interesting. I really must see if I can find this Genma worm and do... permanent things to him.* "See, he and I were on a thirteen year training trip and he decided to go to China to use a training ground called Jusenkyo. Only one problem, neither of us knew a word of Chinese when we started. By the time we actually reached the place I was able to speak a few sentences, but he hadn't bothered learning any, saying it was a waste of time."

Kanu groaned, running a hand through her dark purple hair. "I'm not going to like this am I?"

Ranko's lips twitched. "He was going by this old ratty scroll that he couldn't even read and when we got there we found it was full of cursed springs which make the person who falls into them take on the form of something that drowned there." Ranko said.

"So you fell into the spring of a girl?" Kanu said.

"Close, but not quite, I got myself hit into it by my old man. We were fightin', jumping around these bamboo poles set into the springs, and I got the drop on him and he fell into the spring of drowned panda." Kanu laughed aloud but Ranma went on sadly. "I was so shocked when this giant panda burst out of the water that I didn't even try to dodge and he smacked me a good one sending me into another pool."

Kanu shook her head. "And he didn't notice his body had changed?"

Ranma smiled weakly. "Well, my old man has always been fat and lazy he really didn't change much with his new form."

"Well that's quite an interesting condition you have Ranma."

"Yeah well, I'll leave ya here, yer legs should be fine soon, I know ya don't want to be around a freak like me," Ranko said sadly, close to tears at the thought of losing yet another friend because of his curse.

Kanu blinked in surprise. "Now why would you say that?"

Now it was Ranko's turn to be surprised. "Well, it's 'cause I change into a girl, don't ya think I'm a freak and a pervert?"

"Why, have you used your form to spy on girls changing or something like that?" Ranko shook her head wildly, pigtail flying around and Kanu smiled as she continued. "Also it's not like I am unfamiliar with magic myself." Kanu gestured to Seiryutou on her back. "We who labor under the fate of the sacred beads are not exactly what others would call normal."

Ranko blinked. She could count on the fingers of one hand the amount of people who took her curse calmly without calling him names or screaming. Hell, most people that did react calmly either had their own curses or wanted to take advantage of him/her. Kanu's calm understanding and acceptance of the curse was beyond surprising, and really, really nice. "Y-You really don't think it's weird and well, disgusting?"

"Why would I, it isn't your fault after all, and it does give you insight no other man can have" Kanu stated, a coy smile on her face. Kanu had become more and more worried lately that her tastes, which she had known since puberty were bisexual, had swung completely to the fairer sex. While she still enjoyed looking at a nice looking man she had been growing closer and closer to her leader Ryuubi Gentoku.

That changed today upon meeting Ranma. From her first look at him there was something that attracted her to him like a lodestone. That appeal increased significantly when they sparred. His movements, graceful and strong yet so precise, and the look on his face filled with excitement as they clashed, eyes alight in happiness positively entranced her. When he won their fight and walked away from one of her best –unarmed anyway- blows she was absolutely convinced her attraction to Ranma was something she wanted to pursue. This thought became even more certain when they talked while eating his bento and she realized they had quite a bit in common, making her initial physical attraction to him change into something else altogether.

Ranma's gender curse was a pleasant bonus rather than an obstacle for her. He was a powerful fighter, handsome

as a male, cute as a female, and possessed a rough but caring and strangely sweet personality that made he who was currently a she appealing in the extreme.

"Well uh, thanks Kanu-san. That, um that means a lot to me." Ranko said blushing and twiddling her fingers together.

"It isn't a problem Ranma in fact you might say you were made for me." Ranma looked at her blankly, and she coughed delicately giving the red head a long smoldering look. "I am attracted to both genders Ranma."

Ranma blushed hotly, but didn't run away or panic, something that would have undoubtedly happened in Nerima if someone had said something like that to him/her there regardless of who it was. Here however he was attracted to the girl saying it, and that made all the difference, even if he still didn't quite understand his own feelings. "Um, well, I'm used to it, y'know, turning into a girl, but I still don't like it much. The, ah, monthly visitor is a bitch and a half."

Kanu goggled at the redhead for a moment then laughed. "I doubt you will find any woman who would argue with you about that one. Now tell me more about your curse. Is it just physical or is it mental as well? Do you like girls or guys or both?" Either of those last two would be a problem for her. Kanu patted the place beside her on the bench, indicating Ranma should sit back down. After all, Ryuubi was with both Chouhi and Chou'un, so she was in no rush to get home.

Ranma answered her easily. "It's just physical, though like I said it's a complete change. I **don't** like guys, I mean I've had guys hit on me and try to feel me up and the idea makes me want to throw up, afterward I normally stayed in the bath for a few hours just scrubbing my skin to get the feeling off. The only mental change is in the sense of taste; my sense of taste is way different. I like the same things, but they affect me way more as a girl. Ice cream and chocolate tastes **sooo** much better as a girl," Ranma blushed remembering the taste induced coma chocolate ice cream could put her into.

Kanu nodded, that made sense. "So how did your so-called fiancé's take the curse?"

"One hated it," Ranma sighed. "She was jealous of the way my female form looked, and was always accusing me of being a pervert because I had it. Never mind that the idea never occurred to me, she saw the world one way and never allowed anything to contradict her view. One ignored it after the novelty of changing me back and forth wore off. Of course she also ignored my thoughts and feelings if they weren't convenient for her." Ranma spat out bitterly. Of all his fiancés in Nerima the way Ukyo and Akane had acted had hurt the most. Neither one of them had as good an excuse for how they acted as Shampoo, who had been brought up in an isolated village dominated by women, or even Kodachi, who was just insane. "As for Shampoo, she had her own curse. She changed into a cat. Plus, I don't think the Amazons were too hung up on same sex encounters. But it'd never've worked 'cause of the way her people treat men in their village. I was already way stronger than they were comfortable with when we first met, and only got stronger. They'd never've let me keep trainin'."

They talked for another thirty minutes with Ranko describing the differences in his body in terms of combat and Kanu making suggestions on different types of exercises a female fighter could do to emphasize endurance and flexibility. He in turn described some of his own school's exercises and katas that worked just as well for either form, and promised to show a few to her, something that would have sent his father screaming at him for debasing the art by showing it to a woman and Akane wanting to pound him into the dirt because he never offered to do the same to her. Kanu however had the one major factor Akane never had: control, and that made all the difference. She was also highly skilled already, whereas from Ranma's perspective, Akane had never amounted to anything more than a blue belt on her best day.

After telling her about the fight with Cologne over the phoenix pill, Ranko looked around to see that the streetlights were coming on and that dusk was fading quickly into night. "We better go, it's getting darker out and I still ain't used to finding my new apartment in the day time, let alone at night." She crouched in front of Kanu with her back facing the taller girl.

A second later the pigtailed martial artist let out a muffled gasp and jerked her head around to look at Kanu who looked back at her with a wicked grin on her face as she pulled herself onto the smaller girl's back. Ranma turned her head forward again a deep red rising to her cheeks as once again she felt Kanu's hands caress her rear for a moment before encircling her shoulders. But she didn't bolt or run away, instead simply walking on as the taller girl spoke up.

"Your experience with this Akane of yours reminds me of how my fellow students reacted when I received our clan's magatama." Ranma nodded encouragement and Kanu went on, placing her chin on the top of the shorter girl's head. "I was actually the youngest girl in our family, but I was by far the most skilled at arms and the most... developed as well. The older students thought I had slept with the clan elder to convince him to give the magatama to me, and kept

on spreading rumors to that effect until I confronted all three and beat them down all at the same time. But for a while I hated the fact that I was the first to grow."

Ranma nodded, filing away that bit about getting a magatama based on skill for later. He didn't want to bring that topic up just yet, not until he examined the bead he had taken from Hanno and knew what the hell they were. "Yep, Akane could never understand that I saw my girl form as a problem, and always hated the fact that I was better built and better at martial arts. She never saw how much I had to sacrifice to get as good as I was. She never wanted to put in the time she just wanted everything handed to her!"

Kanu nodded emphatically, pressing her breasts even harder into the blushing redhead's back as she did so. "That's it exactly! None of my rivals in the clan realized how much more I practiced than them, how I used my free time to train, how I never went out on weekends, all the little things I had to give up to be the best."

"Yep." Ranma agreed, understanding exactly what she went through. "And then you run into the problem of being the best: to be the best. You have to stay ahead of everyone else, keep practicing, keep getting better 'cause there's always assholes waitin' to challenge you for your place at the top." Again Kanu nodded agreement, having gone through the same thing her whole life and especially since the curse of the sacred bead had started up again.

The two continued on in the same vein, comparing their respective encounters with challengers, until they arrived in front of her house, an old temple complex she shared with Chouhi, Chou'un and Ryuubi. "This is it." To her surprise when she went to get off Ranma's back, her legs worked, a bit stiffly but they were able to take her weight. "My, what perfect timing. That technique is definitely one you will have to teach me."

Ranma grinned at her. "Sure, though the first technique I want to show you is something a little more practical for a weapon user like yourself." He reached into his pocket pulling out a bottle of water that should never have fit in there and Kanu blinked in surprise. Ranma asked her unanswered question as he began to heat the water via ki in his hand. "It's a martial arts technique called hidden weapon space. Ya can basically make a small space huge if you pump your ki into it in a certain way. I can start showin' ya how ta do it tomorrow after school if you want."

Kanu nodded; there was a technique that would definitely come in handy if she could learn it. *A way to carry Seiryutou around without people knowing I have it, oh yes I'll take that any day!*

Ranma paused just as she was about to pour the hot water over her head. "I understand yer point about the whole insight thing ya mentioned in the park y'know. Like I said my female form is fully functional so I can completely understand a woman's fears about rape and that kinda stuff. That's part of why I neutered that asshole yesterday, to send a message that that kind of crap won't be tolerated anymore."

Kanu's eyes widened. That right there was one of her worst fears, not just for herself, but for her friends and especially her leader, and here was a boy who could truly understand that fear and had already taken steps to see it never happened. Impulsively she leaned forward, kissing Ranma on the lips. She once more felt the change occur as Ranma's form changed from feminine to masculine, his lips changing from soft and feminine to hard and masculine under her own.

At first Ranma was too shocked to react to the kiss, but as the hot water hit the top of his head it knocked some sense into him and he began to return the kiss eagerly, his arms going around her waist and holding her body gently against his. Within seconds the spur of the moment kiss had become a full on make out session, and Ranma began to use his ki senses to watch for sparks of pleasure in her ki, adjusting his kiss to match. He soon had Kanu moaning into the kiss but eventually they had to come up for air.

Kanu pulled back, eyes glazed with passion. *My god is he a fast learner, from no response to master kisser in a few minutes! Oh yes, this man is definitely a keeper!* She looked at him through hooded eyes, body still trembling. "Thank you for that Ranma. I'll see you tomorrow at school all right?"

Ranma nodded one hand reaching up to touch his lips almost reverently. *My first kiss, my first real kiss, wow did that feel great!* "Y-yeah sure Kanu-san, I'll see ya tomorrow." He watched as she walked through the temple archway, the sway of her hips mesmerizing before he shook his head and jumped up to a nearby rooftop. He had a date with a sacred bead to keep.

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As Ranma jumped away, Kanu sped through the outer temple area toward the bathhouse. Ryuubi, who was at the kitchen table reading a book glanced up and called out to her. "Hey, Kanu-san, you're back pretty late, anything wrong?"

"Tadaima Ryuubi-san please excuse me I need to take a bath." With that very brief greeting Kanu sped on leaving a startled Ryuubi behind. She ignored Chouhi as the younger girl came out of her room and swiftly reached the door to the bathhouse.

Locking it behind her she immediately plunged both her hands down the front of her skirt and underneath her panties, furiously fingering herself. Not a minute later her back arched and she bit her lip to keep from screaming as the strongest orgasm she'd ever felt rolled through her.

Kanu fell onto her side on the furo's floor gasping, her wobbly legs unable to support her any longer. Being around Ranma had affected her a lot, feeling his hard muscles under her breasts and rubbing against them, then the softness of his female form under her. Then came the kiss, by far the best kiss she'd ever had (from a small pool of three boyfriends over the years but that didn't matter) which pushed her over the edge. She needed some relief desperately after that.

As she recovered she pulled off her now ruined panties, gaping at the amount of liquid she had let loose. She shook her head, bemused by how much this new fighter affected her. "Ranma" the name came out part groan part moan as she slowly removed her clothing in preparation for a bath.

Outside the bath, a silver-haired swordswoman stood, having heard all that went on inside. *This Ranma certainly must be an interesting fellow to affect the great Kanu Unchou so. I think I must meet him somehow tomorrow. As the nearly overpowering smell of female arousal hit her through the door she nodded decisively. Oh yes, I definitely must meet him if he can do that to the self-contained and aloof Kanu-san.*

By the time Ranma got home, the sun had finished setting and he decided to put off his analysis of the sacred bead he had taken from Hanno until after he had something to eat. However, after a simple meal of rice and fish he could no longer put it off.

This was something he had never done before, but he had read the technique and mastered it enough that he thought he would be able to do it. What he was contemplating doing was sending a probe into the sacred bead, much like he could send out a pulse of his own ki to analyze the environment around him in a certain radius, which gave him a watered down view of what he could see using aura sight. Ancient masters like Cologne and Happosai did this so much it had become second nature to them, giving them a kind of sixth sense at all times, while he only did it when he thought of it. The probe was different however, in that it was much more invasive and much more accurate than either aura sight or a ki pulse. It was used by healers like Dr. Tofu to figure out what was wrong with someone who had internal injuries before x-rays and other technologies had been discovered and some like Dr. Tofu still used it instead.

He had never heard of it being tried on an object before but thought it was worth a try considering that the object in question may be demonically possessed. The three possessed things he had seen in the past, the shadow incense burner, the oni's box, and the cursed doll had all had auras, so a probe would hopefully tell him something about the damn things other than they were possessed.

After a moment's concentration to bring his aura out of his body he reached out a single finger and touched the sacred bead gently and with a thought pushed his ki out through his finger and into the bead.

*He was a simple foot soldier, a thug in a uniform. He'd been press-ganged off the streets from a street gang wanted for murder and rape of an elderly couple and given the opportunity to join the Imperial Army or die. When the central authority collapsed he was quick to sign up along with many others to serve under the usurper's banner. He was never happier than when he was helping to sack a city. He became a specialist, a scout and saboteur, allowing him far more leeway away from those who would have objected to his practices. Over and over, the times changed, but this thing's desires and monstrous appetites never changed, only the venue; Violence, anarchy, fire, causing pain to others. A sudden memory, stronger and with far greater clarity than the others, something that the soul in the bead made certain to do in every life... A little girl no more than ten or eleven held down by a knife to her throat as he pulled down his pants and...*

With the enraged snarl of a wounded animal Ranma brought a ki enhanced fist slamming down onto the sacred bead. For a second it tried to resist him, but only for a second. Then it gave way, shattering into a million pieces as a soul cried out in agony, the damned soul within finally facing the long dark it had brought on so many others over the centuries.

A slight reverberation of power rippled over Ranma, but he didn't even notice as he fell to his knees, breath coming in shallow gulps as he fought not to retch, nauseated from the images he'd seen. *Gods that was awful. I'm sorry I didn't just kill the sick son of a bitch that went along with that thing.* He recovered enough to sit up and shake his head

groggily. *Still at least I know they can be destroyed now. All I need to figure out now is what the hell that weird ki in that girl was and if it has anything to do with these things.* At that point he noticed that in hitting the bead he had also wrecked the table underneath the bead, the whole thing had disintegrated from his punch. He had also put a dent in the floor and he could already hear the people from downstairs on their way up to complain. "Well, fuck."

end chapter.

## \*Chapter 3\*: Chapter 3

I do not own Ranma or Ikkitousen, though I sure as hell would like to own some of its characters. Yum...

I will be updating next on Wednesday. Real life interferes more during the week naturally, though I will be going back and correcting some of the typos/grammar issues that were pointed out to me my works tonight, especially the point About Ranko/Ranma pointed out to me by Kariston Draconis, cheers man.

I would also like to give a shout out to Isacrock, EdminReb and BlessingMan for answering the question I posed in my last authors intro. Thanks for the feedback, though Isacrock I haven't seen/read Higurashi Kai. I was thinking more along the lines of Rosario Vampire (the government has always known about the monsters, and are worried about the rise of Fairy Tail), Sekirei (much more humorous and upbeat story than Warrior's Way) or something else. Not Sailor Moon though. If I write a Sailor Moon/Ranma crossover I'll write one from the very beginning and mix them up from the moment Ranma gets back from the training journey. And he'll have another curse entirely. Ranma-chan has been way too over used in those.

Thanks to Vandenz for reviewing and typos! I'm always willing to go back and correct things like that.

### Chapter 3 the outsider sees more of the game

When Ranma arrived at school the following day, he discovered that he had somehow achieved celebrity status. Much like at Furinkan, he had once more proven to be at the top of the totem pole, and the students afforded him the status his skill earned him. The other side of the equation however was much better than it had been at back in Nerima. Instead of a self-deluded kendo user who refused to see reason or even acknowledge he had lost, he had made a friend in Kan'u. A friend moreover, that he could have a friendly spar with, that could push him without making it personal, and who could possibly become something more in the near future. As he thought about this Ranma saw Kan'u leaning against a nearby tree, Seiryutou resting next to her. "Hey Kan-chan." Ranma greeted.

Kan'u, who had a full night to recover from her extreme reaction to their kiss and was back in control of herself, smiled at the informality, already seeing success in her positive reinforcement plan and responding in kind. "Ma-chan. There are a couple of people that want to meet you today. Can I introduce you to them at lunch time?"

Ranma shook his head, "Sorry Kan-chan I don't know if I'll be free at lunch. I got a meeting with the lit. teacher to go over a paper that I need to do to stay in his class at some point today, and I haven't memorized my schedule yet. I need to show 'em that I already know the work enough to stay in the senior year and graduate."

Kan'u frowned but nodded as schoolwork was important to her as well. After all, it was her last year here and she was hoping to go on to a good college and then possibly travel the world, even though she didn't really know what she wanted to do with her life other than help her leader Ryuubi win this conflict. *Of course, the future for those of us under the destiny of the sacred bead is always in limbo.* "Very well, I will check in with you at the beginning of lunch. If you cannot meet us then are you free after school?"

Ranma nodded "Sure. I'll meet you outside my last class before lunch, I think it's chemistry."

Kan'u nodded again and the two walked inside, changing the conversation to when they could meet to exchange techniques. Kan'u was very interested in learning Ranma's hidden weapons technique, and Ranma was already thinking of ways to improve on her Explosive Palm.

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An hour and a half later, Ranma was about to enter undiscovered country, well for him at least. It was called the library, and he had never been in one before. Of course the least said about what Genma thought books were good for the better (kindling was the soft option). And Furinkan didn't even have one. The price of keeping books in stock with martial arts battles (and chemistry club experiments) destroying the building every other week was not something even the Kuno family, who owned the school, was willing to put up with. After all while there was the cheap option of Martial Arts Construction for the buildings, there was no Martial Arts School of Book Repair.

Here however the library was a pretty decent size and within 5 minutes of entering Ranma was completely lost. He knew he had to find one contemporary and two classic novels to compare and contrast on his essay for the lit teacher, and he knew the classics he wanted to use. The old style romance novels by Alexander Dumas were among his favorites as were the stories of the Monkey King (both of which he had borrowed from Kasumi).

But for the third book he needed a contemporary novel, and unfortunately he had no idea where to begin. He had

downplayed his ability to read and learn when he arrived back in the country because he was even then thinking of splitting from his father and wanted everyone around him to underestimate him. But because of this he had never really gotten into any contemporary books. Kasumi, the only one who knew of his reading skills only read classics and romance novels, which Ranma wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole.

So here he was wandering the aisles looking around desperately for some book he could use. *It isn't like this is going to be important to me later on anyway*, he thought to himself irritably. Ranma didn't have any idea what his future would hold, but he knew that it didn't hold any more schooling i.e. college. What he really wanted to do was explore the world, learn more martial arts styles, and finish returning all the old scrolls and tomes his father and Happosai had stolen from other martial art schools. Maybe with a girlfriend by his side, maybe alone, though the first choice had definitely gained some ground after he clicked with Kan'u the day before.

After 15 min. of searching Ranma was at the end of his tether and he stomped over to a table where a slightly younger girl was sitting behind a huge pile of books. She looked up as he came near and cocked her head quizzically, obviously not having seen him before.

"Excuse me," Ranma said, exasperatedly, "but I need help. I'm looking for a contemporary book I can use on a compare and contrast essay on heroic tropes found in literature. I've got Western and Eastern classics I can use, but I still need a contemporary book."

The girl blinked in confusion and looked over at the librarian's desk only to see her already helping several freshmen. "W-well", she stammered for a moment before controlling herself, "you could probably use this book." She pulled out a book from her pile and handed it over to him. On the cover it read Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. "It's the first in a series." She added helpfully, "And I think there are several heroic tropes in it that you can compare and contrast to other books with heroes. What other books did you choose?"

Without asking permission Ranma sat down across from her and pulled open the book to look at the summary inside. "Oh I chose the Monkey King's tale and the Three Musketeers. I always liked the Athos and Richelieu characters, although the sword fighting involved is so stupid it's not even funny. I mean come on a rapier? Good weapon if your enemy's wearing chain mail, but really? And everythin' the Monkey King's father put him through kind of struck home with me." With that he opened the book and started to read the first chapter. The girl across from him glanced up at him from time to time, sometimes quizzically, sometimes with a smile on her face as she saw him get more and more into the book.

About 30 min. later she sighed, a long irritated despairing sigh and Ranma looked up at her. "That's a sigh number twenty-two if I ever heard one."

The girl looked up at him through her large Coke bottle glasses. "Sigh number twenty-two? You've been able to number them?"

Ranma smiled slightly, though there was no humor in it and his voice was as dry as a desert. "Trust me I've sighed often enough to note the difference in the tone and duration of sighs, also screams and groans."

The girl smiled slightly. "So what does a number twenty-two tell you?"

"Sigh number twenty-two indicates 'oh I can't believe I have to deal with this I can't handle it'." Her eyes widened in surprise as he hit the nail on the head as that was exactly what she was thinking. "Anything ya want to talk about?"

The girl frowned. In the two years since her current circumstances had been thrust upon her, she had often wanted to talk to someone who did not have a connection to the problem itself, an outside source that could give her some advice. While she didn't know the boy in front of her, he was obviously a senior and seemed worldly enough that he may have some good advice for her. So she decided to ask him his opinion and spent a moment thinking of how to phrase the problem without giving him too much information or scaring him off.

"I was nominated the student body president, and here at Seito, that is a very important position that has a lot of responsibilities. But the problem is that I never wanted it. I was thought to be the best for the job because of something completely out of my control and I really don't want to be involved in the decision-making of anything at all. I would much rather be left alone to read my books, and there are certainly far better candidates for the post than I am here, people who can get things done, who other people notice and who put themselves forward. I do not do any of these and I still have the position and I-I just do not think I am doing a good job at all. I'm not doing anyone any good, neither the people I'm supposed to be serving or me." The girl flushed as she realized what she was saying and sat back down breathing heavily. She hadn't expected to let out her frustrations that much to a complete stranger, but the tension and pressure had been really getting to her.

Ranma's eyebrows rose in surprise but that was the only indicator that he was taken aback by her outburst and he leaned back for a moment thinking of what to say and then nodded decisively. "I have two pieces of advice for ya. The first one's this: things may happen because of doers, but they're thought up by thinkers. Tokyo Tower was built by builders but it was thinkers that thought up the plans, thinkers that created the government, thinkers that even command the armies o' the world. Ya were chosen for this job because ye're a thinker, not a doer and don't let anyone else make you think you need to change from one to the other. Start using your brain ta solve these problems you're running into. Ya don't have to be a doer to be a leader but you do have to be a thinker."

"The next piece of advice I have for ya is play to your strengths" he waved a hand expansively at the pile of books in front of her. "You're obviously a good reader. So how can that help you solving your problems? Think of other strengths you have too. Think 'n research and then give the other people a solution and let the doers go out and do it because by that point you'll have done your job."

The girl looked across at him in surprise before nodding slowly, then faster and more decisively as his advice percolated into her head. "Thank you Mr..."

"Ranma" he said. "Just Ranma no Mr., it makes me feel like my old man and that's just wrong." He stood up. "Thanks for the book by the way you can have it back. Now that she's free to help me find another copy I'll get the librarian. Have a nice day." The girl watched him go for a few minutes then turned back to her own reading more confident and certain than she had been more moments before.

Ranma stopped halfway to the librarian's desk and looked to the side and nodded to someone unseen for a moment before moving away. Behind him a silver haired girl, dressed in an older style school uniform and with her eyes closed appeared as if from nowhere, looking a little shocked that she had been found out. Her glance at Ranma was at first calculating then interested as her eyes traveled down his back to his rear and watched it move as he walked away. *Yum! Not only strong but intelligent and aware of his surroundings, nice ass and that back, what a beefcake! I can understand how he affected Kan'u-san so much last night. I'm afraid however dear Kan'u-san may not be the only one chasing after our new arrival by the end of today.*

About 10 min. later Ranma left the library with his new book in hand. He still had two classes before lunch, but he knew now he would be able to make that meeting that Kan'u wanted him to do.

The girl with coke bottle glasses waited until the door closed, before getting up and moving over to one of the library computers. *If I'm going to use my strengths to do my job better, then this is a good place to start.* She thought.

Behind her, the silver haired girl walked over and took a seat next to her, saying "his name is Ranma S... something, perhaps that will give you a good starting point."

The girl in glasses nodded and typed it in asking at the same time "the one who beat Kan'u yesterday?" The silver haired girl nodded again and the coke bottle glasses girl nodded and turned back to the computer "interesting."

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After his chemistry class Ranma exited into the hall of the school to find Kan'u waiting for him. He smiled happily at seeing her and walked over to her immediately as she smiled in welcome. "Turns out I do have time to go to your meeting now." He held up an overlarge lunchbox and dangled it between them his smile turning a bit mischievous. "Maybe this time we can have a match that doesn't end in a weapon malfunction."

Kan'u surprised passing students by giggling and hooking an arm around one of his arms, leading him off down the hallway. This caused all the male students to gape in surprise and envy and a few of the female students to turn away, sad they wouldn't have a chance at the new hunk with Kan'u so obviously staking her claim.

Ranma blushed at the close contact, but didn't run away. Whatever was going on between him and Kan'u, he welcomed it with open arms, something he would never have been able to do in the past.

Kan'u led him to the fourth floor and then through a conference room into an office where three other people were waiting for them. Ranma was astonished to recognize two of them, the spectacle wearing girl from the library, and the calm, stoic silver haired girl who had been trying to hide her presence from him in the library. He had her pegged as some kind of ninja, and a very good one from her ki control and the size of the ki reserve he had seen upon sighting her in the library, but the spectacle girl being here was a complete surprise, though her sitting behind the desk, given the problems that she had described to him was not. The third girl in the room was a much younger girl, looking around middle school-age, with short almost chopped off brown hair and she scowled irritably when he came in.

Kan'u moved from his side over to stand between the silver haired girl and the girl at the desk as Ranma followed her

forward to stand in front of the desk himself. From her place Kan'u spoke formally. "Ranma, be known to my friends Chouhi, Chou'un and Ryuubi Gentoku, our leader. Ryuubi this is Ranma, the man who fought and defeated me yesterday."

"We've met actually. I'm glad you went with the Harry Potter book Ranma." said Ryuubi smiling.

Ranma nodded, smirking a little himself. "Guess your problems are a little more serious than I thought when I gave you that advice huh?"

While Kan'u looked blinked in surprise the younger girl Chouhi scowled even more at his familiarity and was about to shout at him but Ryuubi simply smiled and said "yes, but your advice was very good."

Ranma nodded "Happy to help." And then he turned to Kan'u. "And don't be mad about losing yesterday Kan'u. You took me on hand-to-hand, which ya said yourself ain't your main style. There's no loss in an honorable defeat like that." Kan'u nodded, winking at him and he grinned back, while Chou'un nodded as well, putting another check mark in the tally sheet next to Ranma's image in her mind.

Chouhi however scowled, more than a little pissed that her mighty nee-sama had been defeated. Why, Kan'u-neesama had been so ashamed last night she took a bath and went right to bed without talking to anyone! "He doesn't look that tough to me."

Ryuubi spoke up before Ranma could reply, which was doubtless a good thing considering his temper. "Are you really the Ranma Saotome from Nerima Prefecture? Is it true you destroyed two mountains during two different fights?" Kan'u and Chouhi looked at her surprised at both the information and the fact that Ryuubi had it, while Chou'un twitched at the last name. She had missed that part, having to start work on a research paper of her own at the time Ryuubi was looking up information on their newest classmate.

Ranma blinked in surprise and said "Yeah, I am. And yeah I did accidentally destroy two different mountains in my fights with Herb and Saffron. How the heck do ya know about that though?"

Ryuubi smiled and held up a rather thick folder. "Your exploits are on file at the Federal Dept. of Paranormal Activity, and I'm a bit of a hacker. A lot of what is in the file I can believe given our own circumstances here, such as the curses and the rivals you seem to have collected during your time there. But the way people treated you and the way no one tried to solve the problems you kept on running into is just too weird. The multiple engagements your father made using you to cover up his own thefts that all came home to roost when you lived there was just the beginning of the report. I can honestly say that while we have many a scumbag around here, none of them would do to a friend what your so called friends put you through."

Ranma nodded and was about to answer when a slight cough from Chou'un interrupted them, looking slightly more tense than she had before learning his last name. The tension however was so well concealed under her calm, controlled appearance that only if someone looked close could they see it. "I don't suppose you are any relation to Genma Saotome?" She asked. "He is a well-known thief who stole two sacred scrolls from my martial arts school. The school has been looking for them forever, and was greatly diminished by their loss."

Ranma winced, but nodded, looking a little nervous. "Yeah, unfortunately he's my old man. In fact I probably have your scrolls 'cause I claimed all that he had taken when I beat him for leadership of the clan. And then I cast him out, one o' my best memories that. Since then finding the people who he stole from has been one o' my ongoing projects. If ya can tell me what they're about I can get them to you by tomorrow."

Chou'un lost her composure momentarily and looked very excited for a moment before regaining her self-control. "One has to do with compressing and hiding your ki signature to make it look like that of a random animal, and the other has to do with creating wind blades using your sword. Both of them are treasures of my school, if you can give me them back that will be incredible!"

Ranma nodded, but still looked nervous. "Er, he, um, did just steal from yer school right, there was no talk 'o compensation or anythin'?"

Kan'u stiffened but Chou'un shook her head sadly. "Alas no, this was an instant where he was merely a thief rather than a thief and oath breaker, he didn't make plans to affiance you to the heir of my school which from where I'm standing is a pity indeed. Though if you are offering to change that state of affairs..." She smiled seductively at him, and Kan'u had to force herself not to glare at her friend. *I saw him first damn it!*

Ranma backed away waving his hands wildly. "No, no it's cool, I mean, not that you aren't beautiful or anythin' but I'll

just return the scrolls and we'll call it square and that'll be that."

The girls all laughed at his discomfiture as Chou'un blushed at the inadvertent compliment. Kan'u laughed along with the others, but kept one eye on Chou'un. *We are going to have to have a talk sometime soon.*

Ryuubi stopped laughing but still smiled as she asked. "While I'm glad that meeting like this helps both of you, I have to ask why one of the most powerful martial artists in all of Japan has suddenly showed up here. I somehow don't think that you're here to join the game as another participant, especially considering your 'new sheriff' line when you neutered Hanno yesterday."

A wicked smirk appeared on every girl's face as they thought of that while Ranma merely nodded impassively. "Before you answer that, where did you get the sacred bead that you showed your classmates yesterday?"

"Oh that, I took it from Hanno yesterday, and I kinda destroyed it accidentally last night."

This matter-of-fact statement brought startled responses from everyone present. Kan'u and the Chou'un haired girl looked astonished, while Ryuubi looked surprised and hopeful and the younger girl looked skeptical and disbelieving. "How did you manage that?"

"A ki enhanced punch. A really powerful ki enhanced punch. I was studying it and what I found in it pissed me off so much I couldn't stop myself when I broke out of the visions it sent me. It was probably a combination of me not givin' in to the images and the punch that really destroyed it though."

"Studying it, what do you mean?" Ryuubi asked excitedly. "You mean to say you found something that could be the reason why all of us are operating under the destiny of the sacred bead?"

"I don't know about destiny" Ranma scoffed, "but the thing was definitely possessed. There was a soul inside, and it wasn't a very nice one, a soldier in the troubled times of China, who enjoyed..." he flushed "the, uh, the darker, the darker aspect of being a soldier at the time." All the women present got it and nodded as he hurriedly moved on. "The images got worse and worse until I finally snapped out of 'em and destroyed the thing. On the other hand it tells me that they can be destroyed, which gives me a clue as to how to go about following what the government has asked me to do."

"And what have they asked you to do?" Ryuubi asked, glancing at her friends.

"End or control the lawlessness in the area, round up or get rid of the murderers and fighters that break the law and endanger other people that the police can't handle." Ranma said matter-of-factly, and then looked over at Kan'u. "I told you it wouldn't bother you or the other honorable fighters here. As far as the police department are concerned, you're allowed your own tournament and allowed to fight each other in that tournament or in other controlled settings as often as you want. It's when you guys involve bystanders and innocent civilians that they have a problem with it, as well as the outcome of those fights, like murder and sometimes rape." He ended grimly. "Those problems and the attacks on the police are gonna stop one way or another."

The absolute confidence in his voice surprised all present at the young girl simply scoffed again. "You're thinking way too highly of yourself! The sacred destiny has been going on for over 1000 years now. No one has ever been able to break it, no one has been able to change it and no outside force is going to tell anyone on the inside how to act or think."

Ranma scoffed in turn. "That's nice to say chibi, but you people ain't exactly actin' in a vacuum 'round here. A lot of other people live in the area and it's their lives that get hurt the most when your factions clash. I ain't having that, I'm going to stop it one way or the other. Besides, don't any of ya want to see what yer lives could be without this so-called destiny hangin' over yer head?"

The girl was about to shout back at him when Ryuubi interrupted. "I for one don't doubt either your prowess or the fact that you want to end the ongoing cycle Ranma, but there is a lot more going on around than the beads themselves."

"Do you mean that weird ki signature that some people around here have? I ran into a girl who had one the other day, and I think that I can do something about them, but I'd have ta look at it a lot closer than I was comfortable with at the time."

"What do you mean comfortable?" Ryuubi asked. She already knew of his meeting with Hakufu of course. Something like his punishment on Hanno spread quickly.

"Well there are two normal ways of reading a ki signature." Ranma said, going over to a nearby sofa and opening his

lunchbox. The other girls looked up at the clock on the wall and hurriedly pulled out their own. Business was one thing, but the teachers still required them to be back to class on time, and a discussion was simply not a good enough reason to skip out. Kan'u had already missed half a day's worth of classes, and Chou'un and Ryuubi were both honor students. Chouhi wasn't but her homeroom teacher had devised a horrible torture to punish her for being late to classes: sitting still for an hour after school in a corner without anything to do. For someone with ADHD like her it was pure agony.

Chou'un and Kan'u both nodded and Chou'un spoke up. "You're talking about the ki sight and ki pulse techniques. Ki sight gives a fighter who can use it a decent overview of the person she or he is looking at, essentially telling them how strong the person is and some clues as to their character. A ki pulse is when you send out a pulse of your own ki like a sonar pulse that gives you a rough idea of the shape and placement of auras around you in a given radius." Ranma nodded, thinking that was a far better explanation of the techniques than he could have given as she continued. "I can use both, but my ability to understand what I am seeing is not the best."

She looked at Kan'u, who had sat down next to Ranma and was eating half from her store bought sandwich and half from his bento. After swallowing she said "I can use ki sight, but it's one of my newest techniques, and I haven't tried it in actual combat yet. The ki pulse is not something I am particularly interested in."

Ranma nodded, and took up his explanation. "I learned a third way that can tell ya a lot more about a person's aura and their bodies, but it's really invasive. Basically yer sending into their body a kinda probe and it connects you to 'em for a short amount of time, lettin' ya see all of their auras and body functions from the inside like. It takes a lot out of me ta do it, but the doc I learned it from could do it easy enough and it really paid off sometimes."

Ryuubi nodded. "So you would have to do that to get a better feel for the dragon within ones such as myself and the Shaoh Haou. But what can you tell with just ki sight?"

Ranma had stopped eating and was staring at her in consternation. "Dragon, did you say dragon?" Ryuubi nodded quizzically, wondering at his odd reaction. Ranma began to hit his head on the wall behind him, slowly making a dent as he spoke. "Why does it always have to be dragons? God damn it every time I run into a dragon it means either a tremendous amount of trouble or all out war, and most times both! **WHY** are you calling that weird ass ki a dragon?"

Ryuubi chuckled. "Run into a lot of dragons do you?"

Ranma went back to eating, counting on the fingers of his free hand. "First dragon whiskers, don't ask, second Yamato no Orochi, eight headed dragon monster that I had ta kill because it went berserk, third Mr. Turtle, psycho Kodachi's pet got turned into a dragon by a wish gone wrong and I had to fight it to get it ta change back, then bloody Prince Herb descendant of a dragon and a human who I had ta fight, durin' which we destroyed a mountain in that first fight you mentioned. So yeah I've run into a fair few."

Ryuubi and the others looked at one another in shock but Kan'u eventually nodded. She believed him. Ryuubi paused for a moment to gather her scattered thoughts before she answered Ranma's question. "According to legend the bearers of the sacred magatama are destined to continually relive the conflict known as the War of the Three Kingdoms in China. In that ancient conflict each leader received a part of a dragon's power as a blessing indicating they each were destined to conquer and rule. Today they reside in me, the Shaoh Haoh, Totaku the current emperor and Sosou of Kyosho. And before you ask, the passage of the dragon does not follow a specific magatama, and only loosely family lines. No one in my immediate family for example had been a part of this destiny for as far back as we can remember, but one of my thrice removed uncles was the last to house the dragon of Liu Bei."

"But ya can't control the power can ya." Ranma made the question a statement and Ryuubi nodded shivering as she remembered when her inner dragon had once awoken and nearly laid waste to friends and foes alike.

Ranma looked directly at Ryuubi, and all four girls gasped as his eyes glowed like twin stars for a moment. "Alright, with ki sight I can tell ya got kinda the same ki signature as that Hakufu chick. Yer own aura is spread normally throughout yer body and the dragon ki is centered in yer main torso and heart just like hers. Yer ki is decently sized, though ya could do with a little more exercise, and some control exercises as well. Your dragon looks more," he halted searching for the right word, "er, sleepy, no not quite, forgiving no, begins with a d, dormant that's it! Like it'll take a lot to rouse it and it'll go right back to sleep given the chance. It don't radiate hate, it doesn't seem angry or anythin' just sleepy. Not at all like the dragon in that Hakufu girl, that thing was angry and evil feeling. Your dragon would kill anyone around it once it woke up like a volcano; hers would actively go looking for people ta kill and enjoy it."

This accurate summation of her inner dragon shocked Ryuubi to her core and Ranma turned to Chou'un. "You had a dragon in you too didn't you? Not as powerful but there right?"

Chou'un gasped but nodded, opening her eyes slightly to show the reptilian slits her pupils had become. "If exposed to an original dragon's presence for too long without protection, a sliver of its soul may become embedded in your own. It is possible however to defeat such and merge with it as I have."

Ranma grinned. "Good fer you! And ya should open yer eyes more, they're cute. But I'd say Kan'u still has a slight edge on ya in the ki department. I'd guess her own ki overwhelmed the dragon's presence rather than mergin' right?" Kan'u nodded as Chou'un blushed at the compliment. *Ranma really doesn't know how he does it does he?* Kan'u thought as she looked at her friend, who was now looking even more interestedly at Ranma.

Chouhi, who had been silent up to this point spoke up now, having regained some of her irritation that this man had beaten her onee-sama and was now talking to them like equals. "How the hell can you tell all that just by looking at someone with ki sight!? I don't believe it!"

Ranma shrugged, tucking into his lunch once more. "I told ya, I'm grandmaster of Anything Goes. Did ya think it was just a fancy title or somethin'?" And it don't tell me what I really need to know, like how the hell it got there in the first place, or how ta remove it."

"And we're just supposed to take your word for it?" Chouhi scoffed.

Ranma looked at Ryuubi, nodding at the folder. "That only covers Nerima don't it?" She nodded and he scoffed. "Typical," He turned to address Chouhi, eyes going hard for a moment.

"Tell me somethin', did all of ya have kindergarten?" The girls, bar Kan'u who had already heard some of Ranma's life from his own lips, looked at him wondering where he was going with this. "How 'bout lower school have that? Or middle school, do you regularly attend high school? Ya finish all yer years, go to school most of the time ya have to?" Chouhi and the others nodded, still wondering as Kan'u put a hand on Ranma's shoulder. "Well I didn't chibi. From the time I was five till I was sixteen I was on the road with my old man, and the only times I went to school was when a truant officer caught up with him and forced him to let me go, normally fer a week at a time at most. Then it would be back on the road and training 24-7. I didn't eat as much as I should have, 'cause fighting him for it was a part of my trainin'. I spent weeks in the hospital for various broken bones 'cause my old man never pulled his punches 'cause that was trainin'. I had to learn on my own around age six or seven how to use my inner ki to toughen myself up so he couldn't do that anymore. All my life has been like that, struggles, hardship and **pain** to make me the best in the world. Then it got worse in Nerima, where people who should have been my friends, who should have been on my side, instead took their own damn turns to hurt me. Again I survived girl, and when I turned 18 walked away the only way I could, by going through everyone who wanted ta stop me. I learned every trick, every technique and move because it was literally life or death ta me. So don't tell me I ain't a grandmaster, girl. Ya don't have the right, not until ya walk a year in these shoes."

Kan'u saw how his memories had affected Ranma and gave him a one armed hug as the others all stared at him in horror. Chou'un, who had a few dark memories of her own, walked over and placed a hand on his free shoulder and Ranma nodded to both girls thankfully.

Again Chouhi was about to speak up, angry at being spoken down to like that. But Ryuubi waved her hand for silence and the younger girl looked at her in surprise. Ryuubi almost never put herself forward and here she was telling her to be quiet several times in the same conversation! She wasn't certain what she felt about that... "Alright that tells us what you can see, but what are you going to do with that information?"

Ranma shrugged. "Right now I'm just collectin' info. In terms of yer dragons, I ain't goin' to do anythin' just yet, not until I know how they all tie in to this so called destiny thing. The dragons would act like berserkers right, so maybe beatin' 'em hard enough would exorcise 'em or maybe somethin' like a demon container would work. I think a lot of the low ranked beads possess their owners giving them some knowledge of how to fight but also encouragin' 'em to act in a certain way and obey certain leaders. I haven't examined enough of 'em to see if that's really the case though, and as for the high ranked ones, I don't know. Hopefully after you two" he nodded at Kan'u and Chou'un, "trust me I can look at yers, but I need more info before I say yeah I can break yah out of this cycle. Controllin' the chaos is easier though. I'm just gonna make myself a big target and beat on anyone who comes after me, take their beads, and deal out some punishment accordin' to what they've done in the past."

Kan'u spoke up. "The problem I see is that your way of fighting, regardless of your long term attempts to end the game, is going to put a lot of pressure on not only you but possibly the school in general. I don't want to see you adding more pressure to what Ryuubi and the rest of us are already facing." She didn't like saying that but it had to be said.

Ryuubi cut in before Ranma could reply. "Regardless I think this is something we need to be a part of. And I can think

of a few ways to protect the school and our territory that we haven't used yet. Since this was thrust on me I've been trying to think like the original Liu Bei and not thinking like myself. I'm not going to do that anymore. I'll have some plans for you all to follow by tomorrow; that is if you all still want to follow Ryuubi, not the reincarnation of Liu Bei?" The answer was said jokingly but everyone else could see she was worried, biting her lip as she looked at her friends.

Kan'u responded by standing up and moving to grip the younger girl's hand warmly as Chou'un nodded simply and Chouhi emphatically. "While who you were in the past mattered when we first met, I follow you because I trust you to do what is best, not because of the dragon in you or because of who you were."

Ranma stood up as well. Walking forward he leaned across the desk to ruffle Ryuubi's hair. "My own plans are one thing, but I still got yer back little sister. I'll watch out fer ya, and help ya'll if the school is attacked, though I won't join ya if you attack someone else."

Ryuubi smiled happily at the nickname, and nodded agreement as the bell rang signaling the end of the lunch period. "That's fine, we won't be attacking anyone. Though if your research takes long enough would you be willing to help represent our school in the interschool tournament?"

Ranma nodded as he cleaned up after himself. "Sure, I'll think about it. See ya later."

Kan'u hurried after him and caught up before he left the student council conference room. "Ranma." He turned and she grabbed him in a tight hug. He stiffened at first then relaxed and his arms went around her loosely, his attraction to her once more overcoming his Nerima Indoctrination™. "I don't know what you said to her, but I have never seen Ryuubi put herself forward like this before. Thank you. I'll see you after school?"

Ranma nodded, looking into her eyes through her dark purple bangs. "Sure, I'll meet ya at the school's dojo okay? And I don't think I said anythin' special really, just gave her some advice."

"Well, whatever it was worked. And meeting there is fine, I look forward to seeing **everything** you can show me." She teased kissing him on the cheek and walking away, once again leaving behind a crimson colored Ranma.

A giggle behind him made Ranma turn back to the inner door to see Chou'un standing there, one snow white hand covering her mouth to hide her mirth. "I do know what you said to Ryuubi-san, and while it might not have been a big deal to you, it was what she needed to hear, and something none of us would have thought to say."

"Er, well, I'm glad ya approve."

"Very much so." Chou'un chuckled, "I will see you later as well. Perhaps there are things we can teach one another as well as you and Kan'u." And she walked out, leaving Ranma wondering if there was something unsaid there that he had missed. Shrugging he headed off to his class.

end chapter 3

## \*Chapter 4\*: Chapter 4

I do not own the hotties or Ranma. I'm going to cry. Dedicated to [the devian](#) who as I mentioned in my reposted chapters pointed out that my scene breaks weren't being copied into ff for some reason. You have to upload then go back in and put the single lines in manually. This chapter will mark the beginning of my major changes to the plot of the Anime Adventure thread I got the idea from. As we see the more people who interact with Ranma the more the story changes from what the people thought was their destiny. More on that in other chapters.

One reviewer stated he wanted Ryofu Hosen to get with Ranma, and I have to say I don't see it happening from Ranma's perspective or the story line. Ryofu is a little too... yeah. Now if she was like the way she's portrayed in Koihime Musou, then I would have leapt on the idea. Her, Aisha and Renfa (sonken) ..... I might just have to write a crossover for that series now, though not with Ranma. A more strategically minded male protagonist would be better.

I will also warn you that this story will be more explicitly raunchy than my others in keeping with the nature of the Ikkitousen world.

Thanks to [Vandenbz](#) for reviewing and typos. I'm always willing to go back and correct things like that

### Chapter 4 Let the chaos commence!

Ranma was exiting his last class for the day, classic literature (he still had to go until the teacher accepted his paper and gave him a final grade) looking forward to his spar with Kan'u when he heard a shout from his left. "You!"

The tone of voice sparked memories of Akane and Nerima so strongly Ranma was strangely happy to see only Chouhi standing a few feet away, looking at him with a hostile glare. Ranma looked at her, head cocked to one side in inquiry.

"The training hall! Now!" she commanded belligerently.

Ranma sighed. He'd been expecting something like this to happen. Chouhi had radiated irritation and anger at him in equal measure throughout the meeting at lunch, and she had none of the control that Kan'u and Chou'un had. The problem was she was a B level fighter at best and not in his league. To add to the problem Ranma was having more and more flashbacks to Akane and their interactions the more time Chouhi was around him, and he didn't know how to handle it. "Er, look, I've already got a trainin' session set up with Kan'u, can't this wait?"

"I want a match with you right now to see if you're really all that" Chouhi aggressively growled. "The training hall right now, unless you're all talk that is."

Ranma's blue eyes grew flinty. "Alright Chibi you're on. Just don't complain to me later when I beat yer butt."

A mere two minutes into their match found Chouhi screaming as she was launched across the training hall and slammed face first into the far wall. Her body bounced off the wall and piled in a heap at the bottom of it as she woozily tried to recall what the hell just happened. One minute her opponent was standing in front of her, dodging and weaving like a piece of ribbon on the wind through her attacks, then he was behind her and she was flying away.

Fighting to ignore the pain she was in, she struggled to her hands and knees, panting heavily and charged in again. Two minutes later she was in the same position against another wall. Again she woozily got to her feet and charged, this time using more kicks and spins to try and keep him off balance.

It didn't work, and Ranma sent her flying once again into a third wall.

Chouhi tried again, and yet for the fourth time became acquainted with a new wall. The most maddening thing was Ranma had yet to actually hit her. He was simply tossing her around and using her own momentum against her in a weird variant of aikido she had never seen before.

Wiping a trickle of blood from her lip with the back of her hand, she looked over at where Ranma was standing in the middle of the dojo, a place he hadn't moved from since the fight began. Ranma ran a hand through his hair. "Look, let's stop here okay, it's pretty obvious yer outclassed here."

Chouhi gritted her teeth angrily, forgetting all about her reason for fighting him, she just wanted to land one damn punch on the overconfident ass. She pushed herself up, standing unsteadily on her shaking knees, her vision blurring from the collisions to her head as she faced her opponent. "I am...Chouhi...Ekitoku...and I...will never...surrender!"

she cried, charging him again.

Ranma sighed again, but once more reminded of Akane and her anger about not being taken seriously, decided to take the fight a little more seriously. Chouhi's eyes widened as he casually caught the kick she had launched at him and then screamed in pain as he stabbed a nerve cluster in her right side with a rigid finger.

She tried to counter with a punch, but with her leg still caught he was just out of reach and he nailed her with a palm strike to the diaphragm which tore the air from her lungs and sent her skidding across the dojo to once more smash into a wall, though thankfully it was her back that hit this time, not her head.

Chouhi laid on her back trying to gasp for air as her right side felt like it had been dipped in molten metal. Her eyes were clinched shut as tears of pain squeezed out from them to trail down her cheeks. Suddenly, the pain in her side vanished and she could breathe again. Gratefully she took huge gasping breaths and opened her eyes.

"Hey, chibi, this ain't a death match, ya know," Ranma said from where he squatted next to her. "Ya called me out to see if I had the skill to back my words up, and ya found out I do. So let's end it here okay?" He smiled and offered her a hand up.

Chouhi looked from Ranma's hand to his smiling face. She had to admit when he smiled like that she could see why Kan'u-neesama might be interested in him. He also lived up to his word as he was definitely a master of the art. Chouhi was a lot better than her own B-ranking would suggest, but he still handled her easily.

Nodding, she reached up and grasped his wrist. Ranma stood up and pulled Chouhi to her feet. As soon as she had her feet under her, she tried to launch one final attack, a straight punch at his face with her free hand while holding onto his wrist with her other hand.

A meaty, flesh-on-flesh smack echoed around the dojo and Chouhi's eyes widened. He'd caught her brutal punch seemingly without effort and was now chuckling at her while waving a finger—and her fist—at her in admonishment. "Nice try, Chibi" Ranma grinned. "Unfortunately for you, my old man was the master of cheap shots...including that knee to the groin you're about to try. Try it and I won't hold back anymore."

Chouhi smiled weakly and sagged. "Um...just kidding?" she offered, shrugging apologetically under his stare.

"Uh huh," Ranma smirked knowingly. "Are ya really done now?"

"Yeah I guess," Chouhi replied. "I've found out what I wanted to know." She now knew his victory over Kan'u-neesama had been no fluke, and that all that stuff he said during lunch was the truth. Not only did he handle her with kid gloves for most of their fight, he hadn't even used their fight as an excuse to grope her, something that nearly every male fighter she had ever fought tried to do. After all she was quite busty despite her short stature, and had quite a few admirers among the male fighters of all ranks.

His lack of a magatama still bothered her as did his long term goals. She would have much preferred if he gave Ryuubi his unconditional loyalty, but instead it was almost the other way around, something that didn't sit well with her, though she knew that both Kan'u and Ryuubi herself did not see it that way.

"Well, if we're done, do you need any help getting to the nurse's office?" Ranma asked.

"No, I'm fine," Chouhi grimaced. She was still in some degree of pain from all the walls she had been thrown into. "Nothing a nice, hot soak in the furo won't fix anyway."

"Suit yerself," Ranma nodded. "but I wonder where Kan'u-san is? I expected her ta show up during our bout?"

As Chouhi made her way back to the changing room Ranma stepped out of the dojo with the intent of going to find his friend only to see Chou'un leaning against the wall next to the door. "Chou'un-san," Ranma greeted her.

"Ranma-san," Chou'un nodded back. "You were a little rough with her at the end there, ne?"

Ranma scratched the base of his braid and chuckled. "Maybe a little," Ranma agreed. "She was giving me attitude and insultin' me during our meeting, and she kinda reminded me about someone I'd as soon forget. I guess near the end I wanted to make certain I took her seriously enough so that she knew I wasn't makin' fun of her skills or something. I didn't want ta make the same mistake twice y'know."

Chou'un cocked her head, filing that information for later when she had a chance to look through the file Ryuubi-sama had managed to get on their new ally in greater depth. "In truth, I find your restraint admirable. Not many fighters

would have held back that much in the face of Chouhi-san's treatment of you. I was just wondering about the change of tactics at the end."

"So you were watching? Ready to step in if it got too out of hand, I suppose" Ranma smirked, causing Chou'un to blush in mild embarrassment at being so easily read.

"Yes, I was observing. I confess I was curious as to both your abilities and how you would handle Chouhi-san's challenge. I am happy to see Kan'u-san's respect for you is not at all unwarranted."

"Glad ya approve, again" Ranma deadpanned.

"And again I do approve, very much so," Chou'un remarked, her enigmatic smile talking on a decidedly sly and sensual overtone. "Enjoy your weekend, Ranma-san." With a polite bow, Chou'un walked away as Ranma shook his head while trying not to admire the sensual sway of Chou'un's hips as she moved away.

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"Shiryuu-san," Kan'u greeted as Chou'un walked by her, heading in the opposite direction.

"Unchou-san," Chou'un nodded, pausing.

The air practically vibrated with tension as the two girls stood there silently. "Ranma is quite a catch, isn't he?" Kan'u observed after a few moments and breaking the silence.

"Indeed. Whoever ends up with him will be very fortunate," Chou'un replied calmly—thus informing Kan'u that she was no longer the only one interested in Ranma.

Kan'u winced internally. *Still it wasn't like I didn't see it coming*, she thought. *But I'll have to be careful about how open our competition becomes, I don't want to scare Ranma off by reminding him of those whores in Nerima*. Out loud she said "Game on," acknowledging the competition as she started moving again.

"May the best woman win," Chou'un smiled serenely as she too continued on her way. It was her day to guard Ryuubi-sama on the way home and she wasn't about to neglect her duties, even for the sake of this competition.

Kan'u walked on sighing deeply. *I've heard of animal magnetism but this is ridiculous. Just what is it about Ranma that makes him so desirable to women? First all those bitches in Nerima and now Chou'un and me. At least Chouhi-chan and Ryuubi-sama aren't interested in him*. She looked up and saw Ranma walking toward her, a small book bag over one shoulder and a wide smile appeared on his face as he saw her, prompting a return smile from her.

"Hey Kan-chan, I was gettin' worried about ya. I expected ya to show up when I was sparring with the kid." Ranma said, halting in front of her.

Kan'u smiled a little wider at the idea of someone worrying about her, the Super-A ranked Kan'u Unchou champion of Seito high school. "I'm sorry I'm late Ma-chan, but I'm afraid I have to cancel. Because of our fight yesterday I have schoolwork I have to make up and I am stuck in study hall until six tonight."

Ranma slumped. He'd been looking forward to sparring with Kan'u again all day. She was the first person he had met in a long time that could give him a good fight and not take it personally if she lost, plus it was obvious they had a lot they could teach each other. "I guess that's okay, school's important and all I guess. We can spar some other time."

He took off his book-bag and reached inside, taking out three scrolls. "These are the first techniques I wanted to teach ya. The first one" he tapped the top scroll "gives ya some idea on how to build yer weapon space. The second is a scroll I made on how to create long distance ki attacks, and the third was a gift from a school I helped hunt down some demons a few months ago, it's a list of meditations to enlarge yer ki reservoir." He scratched at his pigtail sheepishly. "Sorry if ya can't read the handwritin' on the second one. I know my handwritin' sucks."

Kan'u looked at him standing there having given her ways to become stronger, ways to protect her friends better and apologizing for them not being perfect. She giggled, her worries about why she was so attracted to this man going away with the realization that she had never met a sweeter, stronger or more handsome man in her life. She reached out and took the scrolls from him, then kissed him on the cheek. "Thank you Ranma."

Ranma grinned sheepishly then put her arms around her as she did the same to him. For a moment the two stood there, realizing that for whatever reason they simply clicked and were able to comfort each other in a way neither had ever known before, had never even known they were missing before. The moment ended and Kan'u pulled away reluctantly leaving another kiss on Ranma's cheek. "If you give me your phone number I can call you tomorrow to set

up a time we can meet to spar over the weekend."

Ranma nodded and pulled out the cell phone he had been given by the police commissioner and handed it over to Kan'u. "I know how to answer the thing but that's it so ya better try to get out the number yerself. I'd probably end up breakin' the thing."

Kan'u laughed again and found the cell phone's personal information and pulled it out, copying it into her own phone number, as well as copying her own number into his. "Well then I will most definitely see you tomorrow Ranma. I am eager to see what we can show one another." She smiled at him and he gulped blushing a bright red. She giggled and walked away. Ranma watched mesmerized as she walked away and then sighed and left the school.

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Leaving school Ranma decided to walk home rather than roof-hop as he wanted to take some time to think. He was becoming worried about both the problem the government was paying him to solve and the personal issues he was running into. The problem he had been asked to solve was much more complex than he had first thought.

*I thought it would just be exorcising possessed items and kicking ass, but that dragon ki inside of that Hakufu girl and Ryuubi tells me something else altogether. There's something tying them all together, the beads and that weird ass ki, making some of 'em act out their parts over and over. I have to figure out how to break the cycle. Just beatin' on the reincarnated leaders isn't enough if that weird ass ki and the destiny just jumps to a new group. I have to exorcise 'em somehow, but how? And there's something wrong with the story Ryuubi told me. Dragons **don't** bestow blessings like that, not that I've ever read in any real legends or histories from China anyway. I think I need to contact someone else about this; I need more information before I do anything about them and about the A-ranked fighters as well. My plans for the low ranked fighters and their beads are good enough and should solve most of the problems that the cops are having by takin' out the majority of the fighters. But there's no way someone as strong willed as Kan'u, Ryuubi, Chou'un or even Chouhi are being influenced by their beads that much.*

Which rather naturally brought him to his second dilemma: Kan'u and to a far lesser extent Chou'un. Kan'u impacted him on a level he had never run into before. If not for his 'special defender' he would have been sporting a visible hard on the entire time he was carrying her home, let alone during that kiss, which was again the first time a girl made him respond like that.

This was no small thing. His control was so good he hadn't even reacted to Shampoo when she jumped into the bath naked with him. He had still been pounded by Akane of course, but at least he hadn't shown visible encouragement to Shampoo's advances.

Kan'u however broke that self control within a few hours of their meeting. If Ranma was honest with himself he began to be turned on by her during their fight, and it only got worse during their walk home. In fact, if not for the need to study the sacred bead he would have been tempted to take the matter into 'hand' himself.

But his loss of control was caused by more than simple physical attraction. After all, nearly every girl who he had been around in Nerima had been attractive. Kan'u was more than a gorgeous body. She was bright, funny, strong, and serious about the Art as well as a good listener, everything he had ever imagined in his perfect girlfriend (those few times he had thought about it).

The fact that Chou'un, who was also intelligent, beautiful, funny in an understated way, and serious about the Art also seemed interested in him bothered him though. Not that she was unattractive, but... *I really don't want the problems in Nerima to start up again. And I still have no idea how to tell someone I ain't interested in 'em without hurtin' their feelin's and still make sure they get the message.*

It was at this point that his musing was interrupted as he suddenly found himself surrounded by several guys all wearing magatama and all radiating hostile intent.

Ranma smirked, thankful for the distraction, and cracked his knuckles expectantly, eyes lighting up with eagerness as he waited for their leader, a large scarred man with the build of a wrestler to speak.

So you're that new fighter" the thug with an ugly scar running over his right eye remarked, "the one that defeated Taishiji Shigi?"

"Yeah, who wants to know?" Ranma challenged.

"I am Ganryo from Yoshuu Academy," the scarred thug declared. "We've received an Imperial Order to execute you so we will be your executioners."

"Oh really," Ranma's smirk widened "Only ten of you? I think it's more likely that this tokkie guy sent ya 'cause ya were expendable."

"Feh, the others are just here to keep you from running away like a coward," Ganryo snorted. "Bunshu and I are more than enough to kill you."

Ranma was still smirking but his eyes hardened at the repeated mention of killing, knowing this was going to be the time to put his second type of punishment into play. "Stop yappin' and make your move Scarface."

Ganryo growled, losing his temper in the face of Ranma's cool insouciance. "If you're in such a big hurry then...DIE!" leaping into the air with a fist aimed at Ranma's head far faster than most people who only saw his size would imagine he could.

Ranma stood motionless, hands still in his pockets. Ganryo was nearly on top of him before he unleashed a perfect snap kick that caught Ganryo in the gut and instantly arrested his flight.

Ganryo curled up around Ranma's foot, his eyes bugging out as he grunted from the impact, a few ribs giving way under the blow. The watching thugs looked on in shock as he flew back the way he came to crash into the alley wall hard enough to crack the bricks he hit.

However, Ranma didn't waste time seeing if Ganryo was going to get up as his danger senses screamed an alarm at him. He leapt straight up into the air as several kunai passed through the space he had been standing in. Twisting in the air, Ranma spotted his attacker, a girl with short, gray-green hair and a red, cross-shaped mark below her left eye. As he descended, the girl threw several more kunai at him.

Ranma slapped two of them out of the air and caught two more while still in the air. He spun around and sent the two he caught back at her at high speed. The girl screamed in shock and fear as the two kunai, moving faster than she could track buried themselves deeply into the metal of the dumpster that she had backed into. They stuck there a mere centimeter from either side of her head.

Before Ranma could follow up on his advantage he was grabbed from behind by Ganryo in a choke hold as a couple more guys, despite what the scar-faced warrior had said, moved in raining punches and kicks on his body. Ignoring the blows like so many flies (which they were, not one of the fighters had the strength necessary to hurt him), Ranma brought his foot down on the big guy's right in-step with a satisfying crunch.

Bunshu bit back a scream of pain as Ranma followed this up by driving his elbows back hard into Bunshu's ribs, cracking them audibly. He then drove his other foot into the larger man's left knee, shattering the joint and this time tearing a scream from Bunshu's lungs. As his knee collapsed bending in the wrong direction the pain loosened Bunshu's hold and allowed Ranma to break free just in time to dodge a baseball bat to the gut.

He jumped up, standing on the bat for a moment and unleashing several hard punches and kicks to the surrounding fighters before they could even realize what he was doing. Another thug tried to swing a crowbar at his head but he leaned casually to the side and lashed out with a spin kick that caught that thug in the jaw. Ranma hadn't pulled his punches much, just enough to not kill the idiots attacking him and they flew away, jaws, ribs, shoulders and legs broken or shattered.

Danger sense once more tingling Ranma spun to the side and connected with a spinning back kick to the back of his next attacker's head, putting down the last of the cannon fodder as a stiletto skidded out of the punk's hand.

This however bought enough time for Ganryo, the first enemy Ranma had taken out to rejoin the fight. He charged in once more hoping to take Ranma by surprise. Ranma ended this attempt by taking to the sky once more, leaping over his attempt spinning in midair with his hands on his opponent's shoulders and bringing his leg around in a vicious spin kick that sent the scarred man flying away in a tight spiral minus a few teeth and with a broken jaw.

Ranma landed and was again forced to dodge as several kunai sped toward him from the girl he had scared at the beginning of the fight. Rolling underneath them he came up in a jump that took her to where she was standing. A quick chop to the neck and the girl was out like a light.

He turned as the sound of unintelligible screaming penetrated only to snarl in irritation as he saw the girl's kunai had both caught Ganryo where he had landed, one kunai buried in the back of his thigh and another in his lower back. Bunshu was still on the floor rolling around in agony while clutching his shattered knee.

Sighing he went over and administered two knockout pressure points to keep them from hurting themselves further

and than began to perform what first aid he could. Once he was certain of their survival he glanced at the others on the ground. None of the common thugs had injuries as severe as these two, and all of them were out of it.

Before starting on his punishment for the scum he sent out a ki pulse to make sure that no one else was in the area. He was not surprised to get a return back almost immediately. On the roof above where he stood was another aura, one that was a little more powerful than Kan'u's but much wilder, almost uncontrolled with some odd variations to it that he hadn't seen before. "Yo, you want a piece of me too, or are ya gonna stand up there and watch?"

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Ryofu Hosen, renowned as the most powerful fighter in the seven schools, had observed the fight from a nearby rooftop wanting to see if this new fighter was as good as rumor said, and rather than being disappointed had been a little shocked by how good he was. Granted Ganryo and Bunshu were not on the same level as the truly elite fighters but they were still highly ranked, and they had the advantages of limiting his maneuverability and numbers.

This Ranma Saotome had beaten them like a drum, possibly taking out both Ganryo and Bunshu permanently depending on how badly Bunshu's knee was damaged. Ganryo had taken a kunai to his spine; if he wasn't crippled for life it would be a miracle.

Then he surprised her further by noticing her presence and rather than being worried had brazenly called her out. Her Fighter's blood boiled with the urge to jump down and engage this man, but she knew too little about him to risk it right now and she had no orders to do so. "I think not right now. Perhaps another time we can dance together you and me. For now I must depart. Until we meet again..." And she jumped away, leaving her Totaku's men behind.

*This does not bode well. Seito is already formidable with Kan'u and Chou'un there, and will be an even more formidable force with this new fighter joining their ranks. It's all beginning to come undone for Totaku. Already there was talk of an alliance between Youshuu High and Nanyo Academy after Taishiji's successful coup against Ryuyu, Totaku's pawn at Youshuu. If Seito joins them it is only a matter of time before Totaku is overthrown, regardless of his machinations. He has the numbers on his side, but not the skill. Although there is of course my own participation, but I am not so egotistical to think my skills great enough to take on such odds. Kan'u and Chou'un alone would almost be a match for me, throw in the others and this new fighter and Totaku is overmatched in every way. No, she decided, Totaku's days were numbered. It only remained to be seen whether his rule would pass peacefully in the tournament in two weeks or violently before or after. I just have to figure out how best to use this situation to my advantage....*

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As the unknown ki aura moved off at speed Ranma turned back to the unconscious fighters all around him. While he didn't know what these assholes had done in the past, all of them had come into this fight with the intent to kill, and that was enough. Reaching his hand into one of his pockets, he brought out a hundred yen coin, beginning to heat it with his ki. His lopsided smile appeared as he moved to the first thug.

Ten minutes later he was finished, and called an ambulance for the thugs using a cell phone he had found on one of the cannon fodder's body.

Ranma's day however was not yet done. As it was only four in the afternoon he had several hours to kill, and he wanted to finish mapping out where in the district the 'dragon' ki holders lived just in case.

First he went to Nanyo Academy and searched around nearby for the ki of the girl he had saved, the Shou Haou or whatever her name was.

Ranma chose this target very deliberately. From what he had sensed when they met, her dragon was much closer to the surface than Ryuubi's and much more dangerous and dark too. If something happened it was likely to involve her.

He found her house just as the sun was going down but did not stick around. The sounds of the mother chasing after her daughter threatening to smack her ass a hundred times for some infraction or other scared him off. He had enough chaos in his life without inviting more.

It was as he was heading towards the next target on his list that he saw a medium-sized gang of fighters being led by someone who, judging from the fact that he was licking his knives and giggling to himself, was bat shit crazy.

Ranma would not have normally worried about it even with the crazy guy in the lead but with the attack this past weekend on a police station he was not willing to take the chance that this wasn't something similar. He wasn't about to let something like that happen again, not on his watch. Still wrapped in the Umi-sen-ken, he decided to follow them and see what they were up to. About 5 minutes after he spotted them the group turned onto a road heading towards the district hospital, which according to the police report he had read was the only hospital in the area willing to take

fighters any longer. With that realization he knew what their probable target was. *They're probably going there to finish someone off* he thought angrily. *And these people call themselves warriors?!*

Now that he knew their target Ranma had no intention of letting them continue unchallenged. *Still, they're no threat to me. Even the crazy looking guy leadin' 'em is barely on par with Mousse, and the rest're the same kind of cannon fodder that backed up Scarface and Baldy earlier. And since I've had one stand up fight already today, let's see if I can put my stealth to good use and have some fun!*

Swiftly he dropped down behind the group. He grabbed the two at the rear, knocking them unconscious with pressure points to keep them quiet and dumping them in a nearby doorway. He waited a moment to see if the rest of the group would react, but none of them even looked behind them. Ranma shook his head at that and took out a permanent marker from his bookbag. He spent a minute doodling on his victim's faces before heading after the others.

As he caught up to them the head of the group, which was still about fifteen strong, had reached the back end of the hospital and snuck inside via the ambulance entrance. Ranma followed them in, picking off one more at the entrance. He watched as he held his latest captive in a submission hold as the others bypassed the first floor receiving area and headed straight to the staircase. His captive beat futilely at his arms, but he might as well have been beating on an iron railing for all the good it did him. A second later, as the last of his fellows entered the staircase he succumbed to the darkness and Ranma dropped him where he was. He swiftly stripped the guy of all but his boxers and used his clothing to tie him up in a pretzel shape before hurrying after his targets.

Ranma took out two more in the stairwell, marveling at how easy it was. None of their fellows had even looked back, concentrating solely on their leader and where they were going and none of them seemed to realize they had lost a fourth of their group in the last few minutes. He waited until he saw which floor the remaining thugs entered before turning back to his captives. For these two Ranma again made use of their clothing, only this time he strung them up by them over the sides of the staircase so they dangled down a level like living piñatas.

As the group stalked through the hallway moving purposefully without once looking around or even checking the registry Ranma took out another two. This time he simply stuffed them in a nearby empty room tied together with their faces touching before hurrying on. He was a little startled by how quickly the group was moving, and the fact that there seemed to be no one else on this floor to get in their way. *They seem to know right where they're going, this must not be the first time they've done something like this. Either that or they've got somebody working on the hospital staff that told them where their target is. I wonder why there's nobody around though?*

Ranma picked off another pair, this time leaving them tied together head to crotch as the remaining eleven low ranked fighters and the crazy bastard reached their destination.

The crazy one entered first shouting out "Ryomou of Nanyo!" He giggled holding out a phone, showing something to the person inside the room before saying "I'll kill you, Ryomou, kill, kill!"

As the crazy bastard entered the room, Ranma took the opportunity to incapacitate four more of the bastard's followers by the simple expedient of slamming their heads together with concussion-causing force. Two of their fellows heard the noise and at last realized what was going on, but Ranma swiftly silenced their outcries via a pressure point on their throats and then silenced them permanently via chops to their necks. That left only five low ranked fighters inside the room with the crazy bastard and their target.

Ranma entered the room still wrapped in the Umi-sen-ken and saw that, unfortunately for the crazy asshole's plans, the girl he had apparently come to kill wasn't about to give up without a fight. She had a knife in her hand and had backed into a corner, knife held expertly along her forearm and fist cocked back ready to strike. This had caused the cannon fodder to pause while their leader just stood there, licking his knives and giggling. "I always knew you were a bastard Kannei! But if you think you can take me on even now you're dead wrong!"

One look at her though and Ranma knew she was putting up a brave front. Whatever happened to her drained her ki badly, and her physical injuries were pretty bad too. Her otherwise naked torso was wrapped tightly in gauze signifying broken ribs at least, one of her arms was in a cast, and her blue hair was barely visible through the bandages that covered her head.

Her injuries decided Ranma's next move for him. Normally Ranma wouldn't even think of interfering with someone else's fight, but this girl was so obviously not in a condition to fight he decided to step in. *I'm beginning to make a habit of this...*

He dropped the disguise field and hopped over everyone's head to land in between the girl and her attackers. "Sorry ta crash the party, but yer dance partner looks a little too battered ta waltz right now. Can I step in?"

The girl, whose name according to the crazy bastard was Ryomou, recovered first from the shock of his sudden appearance. "Out of the way" she growled, knife still held at the ready, "I don't need someone else to fight my fights for me."

Ranma smiled back at her, a lopsided grin that caused the girl to blush much like the girls back in Nerima sometimes had. "Sorry can't do that. You're too injured to fight right now, and I doubt these guys would 'a come here in the first place if they were the type ta take rain checks."

He turned back just in time to dodge a knife thrust from Kannei, whose followers were now looking around for their missing compatriots in consternation. Ranma kicked the knife out of his hand almost negligently and followed up with a roundhouse kick that sent Kannei flying back through his troops and out into the hallway.

The remaining fighters got over their shock at their missing friends and came on wielding a variety of knives and short weapons. Ranma jumped to meet them, a high kick sending one reeling away one way and a palm thrust smashing another into the opposite wall.

He forced the other three out into the hall and away from the girl, hands flashing and parrying their weapons with ease but they held his attention just long enough for Kannei to dodge past him back into the room. Unfortunately for him, Ryomou was waiting for him by the doorway.

Ranma's punch thundered in laying the last thug out and he turned to run back into the hospital room, but then he stopped and simply watched, face flushing slowly as he took in the scene before him.

Ryomou had leapt out from behind the door and swiftly caught Kannei in a choke hold, one leg over his shoulder, the other under his opposite arm, and locked together behind his back while using her arms to pull his head down. "It's all over," Ryomou declared. "Doesn't it feel good? This is ecstasy, right? Oooo, feels so good!"

As Kannei folded to his knees, still struggling well past the point where most people, people who still felt pain, would have been knocked out, Ranma coughed, still blushing. Ryomou looked up at her would-be savior over Kannei's head, which was stuck between her bandage covered breasts. "What!?"

"Um, y'know, it sounds kinda, um, y'know, erotic the way ya said that. Er, not that there's anything bad about it, whatever floats yer boat and all, but um...."

"Spit it out damn it!"

"Er, I'm just wonderin' if ya want **him** to think that too. The way yer kinda cradlin' his head to yer chest like that and the fact yer sayin' that to him as he passes out it's just..."

Ryomou's eyes widened and she looked between Ranma and Kannei for a moment before shrieking and jumping away from Kannei but not before kicking him hard in the temple. She curled up in the corner of the room, arms about her head mumbling "never gonna be clean again, make the bad thoughts stop, never gonna be clean again, make the bad thoughts stop."

Ranma shrugged uncomfortably and turned away, gathering up the few bodies of Kannei's followers that he had left out in the doorway and piling them up in a heap. First he tied them all together using their own clothes then out came his trusty permanent marker.

Ryomou came out of her funk to see him putting the final touches on one last heart. He turned and noticed she was back to normal and smiled. "You alright now?"

Ryomou snarled at him angrily, still trying to get the idea of Kannei thinking about her like that out of her mind. "I didn't need your help! I could've taken them out easily! Who the hell are you, anyway?"

Ranma nodded. "My name's Ranma and I know you could. Your ki may be weird, but it's at a way higher level than his was **if** you were in top form. But you ain't. If you want to fight about it when you're better I wouldn't have a problem with that. But I think right now you have more important things to worry about."

Ranma walked and picked up Kannei's cell phone from where he had dropped it as the girl moved back to her bed still keeping a wary eye on him. "What do you mean more important things to worry about, Kannei's insane, has been for a while. His talk about it being an imperial order is just talk, no way I've been targeted like that."

Ranma shrugged, holding up the cell phone to display some kind of sigil in the background and her name delineated in red. "So yer sayin' this is fake?"

Ryomou stepped closer and looked at it as Ranma blushed, her proximity once more forcing him to realize that she was only wearing bandages around her chest and abs. In fact they were coming undone from her exertions, two pink points becoming visible.

She frowned as she looked at the symbol on the phone's screen, trying to dismiss the evidence in front of her. "It, it might be. Imperial orders have been faked in the past."

Ranma twitched a hand at the pile of thugs against the far wall. "And would all of these idiots follow him? There's seven more spread out along their route up here too."

For the first time the girl looked thoughtful, examining each person's face in turn. Ranma could tell that she was thinking now and she slowly, almost unwillingly, shook her head. "I know at least half of them from my own school; they would follow him, they're sort of the same **type** as he is." The word came out as an epithet but continued. "But these other four are from different schools; I recognize them from past battles. It would take an Imperial order to get them all to work together."

Ranma took out a coin that he began to heat with his ki as he walked over to Kannei. "So would a fake imperial order trick people from more than one school?"

Ryomou very reluctantly shook her head. "Each school is on its own network, only the ruling school can get onto all of them. But that's impossible, why would, why would Totaku send out an Imperial execution order on me? I was just following orders!" she exclaimed.

Ranma shrugged from where he was by Kannei, pressing the heated coin into the knife wielder's back at a specific point. "I don't know, but I think you should find out. If you need any more help I'm staying at Seito private school. If this Emperor guy is after you, you might not want to go back to your own school. A cute girl like you shouldn't have to watch yer back all the time ya know."

Turning from his task and palming Kannei's sacred bead Ranma looked at the scantily clad girl, noticing that Ryomou's nipples were now completely uncovered, their pink points hardening in the cool hospital air staring at him before he turned away rapidly. "Er, well, I'll see ya around, I need to get back home, I still have trouble finding my apartment at night. Remember Seito high school if ya need my help." With that he turned, opened a window and jumped out.

The girl gasped in astonishment and rushed to the window, only to see Ranma land lightly on a nearby rooftop and race away over the roofs. She turned back inside still blushing from the compliment and looked over to where her former allies and acquaintances were piled. Then she looked down at the phone in her hand staring at the message. After fiddling with it for a moment, she popped up the last message, the one supposedly from Enjutsu that had sent Kannei and herself after Hakufu a few days ago. Ryomou pulled that one up and looked at it, then the one for her and nodded decisively. "Three strikes and you're out, you flirtatious bastard!"

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Kan'u walked up the street outside Ranma's apartment complex looking at her cell phone to make sure that she had the address correct before entering the building. She was about to ascend to the fifth floor where Ranma's apartment was when she saw Chou'un about to get onto the elevator. "Chou'un-san, what are you doing here?"

"Kan'u-san. Probably the same thing you are doing: checking up on Ranma." the silver haired swordswoman replied.

Kan'u nodded and the two went up together surreptitiously glancing at one another from time to time. Deep inside Kan'u knew that she was ahead of her friend in several areas in this competition for Ranma's affections, but she also knew from her discussions with him that any overt sign of competition over him would turn Ranma off and in fact might scare him away entirely. He was so different from any other man she had met. The idea of being fought over by two beautiful women would turn most men on, but not Ranma. He had been at Ground Zero for far too many such fights for too long to see any point to them whatsoever.

Kan'u came to the reluctant conclusion that sharing his attention, if not his affection would probably be the best thing to do for now. *At least, she thought, until I know whether or not Chou'un is as serious about them as I. Serious about him, she thought to herself chuckling internally. I've only known the man for two days, and I already think I can make a permanent arrangement out and be very happy. We connect so well it's incredible!*

They came to the door of apartment 502, which Ranma had said was his number and Kan'u reached over and grabbed Chou'un's arm. "I don't know how much you read about from his file Ryuubi-sama found, but Ranma will react badly if either of us are too pushy or possessive, and absolutely no fighting."

Chou'un nodded. "I thought the same myself. And just so you know Kan'u-san" she said slyly, "I am not against sharing. That way we can have our cake and eat it too."

Kan'u blushed at the insinuation in her voice but after a moment nodded her head. "Perhaps. It will certainly be a better idea than our competition over him scaring him away. But just so you know Chou'un-san I am not interested in just a roll in the hay as it were."

Chou'un nodded. "I know, I myself do not know yet what I want, but we will see." And the two knocked on the door together.

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Inside Ranma heard the doorbell as he was preparing his lunch. He looked up perplexed for a moment then reached out with his ki senses. He felt two people outside his door and they both felt familiar. After a moment he was certain one of them was Kan'u and he smiled. He hurriedly walked over to the door and opened it "Kan-chan hi, and Chou'un-san, how're you? What can I do for the two of you, not that it's not nice to see you or anything? I mean er..."

Kan'u and Chou'un both smiled at his embarrassed but heartfelt greeting. Kan'u asked "May we come in? We heard about the attack on you and wanted to know what happened."

Ranma nodded them inside and went back into the kitchen. Seeing that he was preparing lunch Chou'un volunteered "May I help? What are you making?"

Ranma smiled "Something I learned how to make when I was in America with my old man when I was around ten, it's called chicken Caesar salad, and it's really high on protein and fats, just what you need to restore energy and rejuvenate the healing process. I got myself some new beads to study last night and studying the low ranked ones kept me up most of the night. Destroying them ain't no picnic either, and if you could cut up the chicken that'd be great."

Kan'u spoke up from behind him. "I'll set the table and get out drinks if that's all right. I don't know about Chou'un but I haven't eaten yet either. I'll be happy to leave some money to pay for what we eat."

Ranma waved that away. Turning back to where he was chopping up the salad and mixing it together with Caesar dressing, parmesan cheese, tomatoes and eggs he asked, "So what have you heard about my fights last night? You tell me that I'll just fill in the blanks."

Kan'u spoke up resisting the urge to reach out and grab him by an ear for some reason. "I think we would like to hear the whole story from the horse's mouth if you please," she said rather tartly.

Ranma nodded sheepishly, and went into the story of the attack from the two B ranked fighters and their thugs. Hearing that he had taken them out so easily amused Kan'u and impressed Chou'un. Kan'u asked "and do you think this was a personal attack on you or do they think that you have allied with us and were striking at us through you?"

"Scarface said something about it being because I stopped the assassination attempt on that girl, the Shou whatever. On the plus side though, it gave me a lot of new beads to look at, and a few from B ranked fighters too though I ain't looked at those yet." He trailed off smirking lopsidedly.

Kan'u looked at him quizzically, as did Chou'un who after a moment bumped him with her hip from where she stood next to him at the sink. "You did something to them afterwards. I can tell by the way you're smirking."

Ranma blushed embarrassed at being so easily read and dropped the finished salad onto the table. "Well I did do something else." He said sheepishly. "But it's kind of a secret for now so you can't tell anyone else I can do it."

Kan'u looked at him from across the table where she had sat down after carrying the last of the drinks. "Give Ranma" she demanded reaching over the table to poke him in the forehead.

Ranma grinned at the playfulness of the act and answered readily. "Well, there's a moxibustion point, a kind of pressure point where if you apply heat to it something special happens. It's called the ultimate weakness moxibustion point, and if you hit it the person you use it on loses all their strength and ability to use ki. They become no stronger than a baby, and it's almost impossible to reverse." He sat there taking in their stunned looks and smiled beatifically. "I'm a firm believer in the punishment fitting the crime."

After staring at Ranma wide-eyed for a moment Kan'u and Chou'un both burst out into hysterical laughter. During the meal Ranma was pleased to see that there wasn't any visible tension between his two guests, indeed they seemed to

get on well together, even if they still flirted with him on and off.

Ranma wound up his tale of the fight in the alley by telling of the mysterious watcher who had left before going on to describe his saving of Ryomou at the hospital. Kan'u smiled at that, his desire to defend others was one of the things that impressed her most about Ranma. Chou'un however was a little worried about how the other schools would take his butting in, though both laughed at his description of hunting the would-be murderers down piecemeal. After that the three changed the subject to more pleasant things.

Lunch progressed well after that with the three exchanging stories of their childhoods, fun times in their own training, and their dreams for the future both before and after the ladies received their sacred beads. Kan'u had wanted to be a martial artist all her life, she had grown up in a clan of them after all but what she most wanted to do with her abilities was travel the world. She explained as they were moving from the dining table to the sitting area that it was the exploration she craved, seeing something that no one else had seen. Something like going into the Amazon rainforest, finding new places and things to see was what she desired. Ranma agreed with this dream wholeheartedly and said that he was thinking of doing the same thing after he got up enough money to pay for it.

Chou'un too said that she would like to travel before settling down, but it wasn't so much the training or exploration she was interested in, but visiting famous historical sites such as Masada in Israel and the Egyptian pyramids. Both of her companions nodded at this since the idea appealed to them.

"But with the fate of the sacred bead hanging over our heads, as well as all of the myriad demands on our time that we have created since arriving here, such dreams are only for the future, not for the now." Kan'u said sadly, but determinedly. "I won't leave Ryuubi or our other friends behind, not until this destiny thing is settled one way or the other."

Chou'un nodded resolutely as well but Ranma merely shrugged. "Dreams are for the future, but the problem of the present ain't going to be around forever. They give us something to look forward to. Besides which" he grinned. "There's no limit to the people I can use the ultimate weakness moxibustion point on."

The two girls started laughing and Chou'un leaned back from where she was sitting looking over at a box of clothing that Ranma had yet to put away. She cocked her head quizzically for a moment and reached over into it, pulling out what looked strangely like some kind of gun holster, like the type secret agents would wear around their thigh. Only rather than tapering off at one end and being large at the other, it was a long cylinder shape all the way through. "Ranma" she asked quizzically. "What is this?"

Ranma looked up from where he had been cleaning up dinner and gasped, blushing. One moment he was picking up plates from the table the next he disappeared from where he stood only to reappear grabbing the object out of her hand and turning away rapidly. "It's-it's nothing." He stammered, "just a just a thing, nothing interesting going on, nothing to see here."

Kan'u and Chou'un both grinned wickedly. They glanced at one another and then simultaneously pounced on Ranma. Ranma was unprepared for such a physical assault and toppled over losing the object over his head. Chou'un went after it as Kan'u sat on his stomach, putting her hands on his chest and leaning back. "Now come on Ranma" she coaxed kneading his chest and making him blush. "Surely it can't be that bad?"

Once more having it in her hand Chou'un looked at it for a moment, holding it up and turning it this way and that. "It almost looks like a gun strap," she mused, "or perhaps an over large knife holster, but not quite, the shape is wrong, as is the angle of the sheath itself. If someone put this on the front of the thigh, the sheath would be on the inside of the thigh aimed up between..." She suddenly blushed hotly and looked back at Ranma who was also a bright cherry color. Kan'u looked up at her friend and her eyes locked on Chou'un's own surprised eyes.

"Ranma" Kan'u said softly, reaching back from where she was sitting on his chest to feel his thigh. She was surprised when her hands struck another object underneath Ranma's clothing, only this one was filled and she gasped jumping up off him, her face so red it resembled an apple, almost matching her combat gloves.

"But, but why?" Chou'un spluttered as she hurriedly dropped the object "Surely that's incredibly painful, if you react to I mean, if you..."

Ranma blushed looking down at his feet from where he still lay on the ground. "Defense mechanism." He mumbled. "Sometimes just can't help reactin', even if you ain't attracted to the girl if she presses against you. And if I ever showed a reaction to any of them, they'd be after me even harder and I'da been pounded even worse. My old man also beat on me every time I had a stiffy when we was travellin', so I made these to help hide it."

Kan'u reached down and stroked his hair soothingly. "Poor Ranma you've been through such hell."

Chou'un nodded as she kneeled down next to his head. "Don't worry, neither of us will respond badly if you, um, react to us. In fact, if you don't react that would make us feel sad. A girl likes to know that she's been appreciated." And with that she leaned down again and kissed him. Slowly, thoroughly, she kissed him, enjoying every minute of it despite his lack of response.

Ranma stiffened and his eyes instantly twitched over to Kan'u only to see her smiling and reaching down to knead his chest again. She nodded and his eyes opened wider for a moment then closed as he started to return the kiss the silver haired girl was giving him. Again he started to use his ki senses to feel out Chou'un's ki and react to pleasure bursts in it to heighten the experience and soon she was moaning and twitching where she sat next to his still laid out body.

As the kiss continued one of Kan'u's hands twitched downward and under Ranma's pants, unbuckling his member from its confinement. Already at half mast it instantly sprang free, tenting his pants. Kan'u's eyes widened in appreciation at its size through his pants and Ranma groaned aloud, whether from ingrained fear, shock or arousal neither girl could tell.

Chou'un reluctantly broke off the kiss as she started to feel lightheaded and leaned back, gasping heavily and chest heaving as she fought to control herself. *My god the man can kiss* she thought.

As soon as Ranma regained his breath Kan'u swooped in. An open mouth kiss her tongue darting into his mouth for the first time and being met almost instantly by his as Ranma immediately got into the kiss, sea blue eyes glazing over as they stared into her light blue ones. His arms went up around her, pulling her down onto him and she moaned happily as they ground against one another, his now rigid member trapped between them. Hands roamed and hips slid together as the two got more and more into the kiss.

Chou'un smiled at the sight and got up on wobbly legs to go over and finish cleaning up before coming back for another round. By the end of the next two hours both girls had thoroughly convinced Ranma that they were willing to share him for now, as long as he was willing to be shared and treated them equally. Ranma dubiously agreed to this and was thoroughly kissed for his efforts. All in all, it was the best time in his life that he could remember, despite his initial embarrassment and his Nerima programming.

When they left at around five that evening Ranma decided to put off until tomorrow his study of the high ranking beads he had collected the night before. He was too keyed up just now to sit still so he decided instead to go out and finish mapping out the area. This decision of course had nothing to do with his reluctance to analyze Kannei's bead, no sir...

Ranma first homed in on the fighter he had fought two days ago and his school, Taishiji Shiji. It took him an hour to find his aura and another fifteen minutes to travel to the school in question. Once he arrived he found that there were no other stronger auras in the area. There were about twenty of what were called D or C-ranked fighters at the school, but the guy that he had fought was easily the strongest of them being high B low A.

Next Ranma used a map of the area to find the school that his attackers from earlier that night had come from, which took another thirty minutes of roof hopping to get to. Again he found that there were no other fighters there that even came close to matching the 2 B-ranked fighters that had come after him. *With them out of the picture, this school's basically a non-entity as far as the ongoing conflict between the schools and my job is concerned. It'll fall in line with any of the stronger schools that bother with it at all, and the police could easily handle the fighters here.*

Now that it was dark out, he sought out the person with the weird ki aura he had sensed watching his battle with Scarface and Baldy. After two hours more of periodic searching he found it, not in a school like he expected, but in a rundown apartment complex. Strangely only the façade looked run down, the interior from what he could see was decent, and the greenhouse set into the back yard was well cared for.

From outside he could sense at least three others who he thought were C or B rank judging by their signatures, along with one large aura that was somehow strange and another large one that looked somewhere between Chou'un's and Ryuubi's dragon aura. *That's probably that Tokkie guy that Ryuubi mentioned* he thought. *She said he had a sliver of a dragon aura in him, not the full thing.* For a more accurate reading he would have to drop the Umi-sen-ken or get much closer and he was not willing to do either at this point.

For now he made a note of the location and decided to call it a night, he'd come back some other time to get a better read on the place.

That night his dream was a vivid one, full of images of Kan'u and Chou'un the memories of that afternoon, and dreams of it becoming even better. This led to the natural outcome which Ranma, blushing and cursing all the while had to clean off his sheets the next day.

end chapter

## **\*Chapter 5\*: Chapter 5**

I do not own the bouncing boobies or the wild horse god dammit!

Someone pointed out that I had done double updates for both of my other stories but not Destiny VS Chaos so I decided to post this chapter today rather than on Saturday when I will update my other two stories. That means though that the next update for this story will occur next Wednesday. Oh and just so everyone knows I will be bashing Saji mercilessly.

I am also putting up a poll about whether or not I should write another crossover with these characters after the ikkitousen cross is finished. Realize that it will affect the story and how many girls Ranma gets from Ikkitousen and that I am already leaning towards the governmental trouble shooter idea for future crosses. If the outpouring of support for not creating another crossover is strong he will get two more girls permanently besides Ryomou and Kan'u, I won't write a harem larger than four, I think that number is the most manageable in terms of screen time. I am leaning heavily towards a Ranma/Kan'u/Ryomou crossover with Rosario Vampire, mainly influenced by how much fun I can have smacking and changing that entire series and how hot some of the girls are.

I want to also give a shout out to [Black Dragon6](#) whose *Big Human on Campus* story is bleeping hilarious, he is really one of the kings of humorous Ranma! If I do this cross the pairing will be Ranma et al plus Inner Moka (and won't I have fun writing about her breaking out) Mizore and possibly Ruby. Tsukune will be paired with Outer Moka (though I will be making a lot of changes there too) and Kurumu.

Oh some people might question Chou'un's insight into Ranma's nighttime activity, let me tell you some girls have a sixth sense about these things. My ex-gf certainly did (well if you didn't use the 'I have a headache' excuse so often...)

Warning: There is Raunchiness in this chapter! Don't like don't read. And there will be a bit of ofreshadowing for a Ranma character that will be appearing later, see if you all can think of who I mean.

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### **Chapter 5 Ripples on a pond ain't got nothing on him**

Saji was not in a good mood, no, not at all. For one thing, he was now officially dead, having been 'killed' by Ryofu Hosen for manipulating Imperial orders in his initial attempt to awaken the dragon within Hakufu. Why this added to his bad mood despite the fact that he had actually planned for this outcome was the fact that his 'killer' was completely unable to spend time with him, and thus his playtime while recovering from her attack was nil and his specific plan for her wasn't working. His plan to divide Ryofuu's loyalties and drive her to kill Totaku in a paranoid effort to eliminate him before he eliminated her could not move forward if she wasn't there to be so coerced.

That his plan for Hakufu had failed spectacularly was immaterial, as he had thought that he still had a lot of pawns in play to push into a position where they in turn would wake the dragon up for him. Unfortunately, he had lost several of those pieces in the past two days due to an entirely new player entering the game.

His first loss was his main source of information and tool at Youshuu. Hanno had been badly beaten and even neutered in his attempt to execute Hakufu, another attempt to awaken the dragon within her.

Hanno's beating was bad enough as it would put him out of action, therefore rendering him useless to Saji. The neutering however was downright frightening for two reasons. First was that it had in fact occurred at all and second Saji knew for a fact that his own tastes and modus operandi would get him in trouble with the person who did that to Hanno if they ever met. The fact that the man had beaten one of the top seven fighters of the schools like a drum at the same time he neutered Hanno meant that he had little chance against preventing and that scared him even more.

This problem had been exacerbated when an Imperial order came down, one that Saji himself had not posted or manipulated, to kill Taishiji for failure to carry out his orders. The fighter in question had then killed his own leader, who had been willing to follow the Imperial order, and took over the school, rebelling against Rakuyo's rule. This

infighting eliminated the only two other sources of information Saji had in Youshuu.

What was worse, his control of his own school Nanyo academy, which had been largely built on passing on the dead Enjutsu's messages to everyone else, had ended with his own 'death'. Gakushu, another of the academies Big Four had taken over and had declared that Hakufu was to be protected, and that no Imperial order regarding her was to be carried out. The school wasn't quite in rebellion just yet but it was a tense situation. He had hoped that Ryomou would have still been in place to manipulate, her infatuation with him made her very easy to influence. But she was still in the hospital, and there were rumors (passed on to him via text messages) that she had been attacked there by another of Nanyo's Big Four, Kannei and had taken him out permanently somehow with the aid of the new fighter.

"This new player is going to fuck everything up, I just know it, and here I am in my enemy's fortress, completely hidden from everyone but unable to act." he muttered. If only he knew what happened during the fight he could measure this new fighters abilities but Hanno had been the only one of his informants there at the time, and he wasn't going to be talking any time soon.

With all these new things going on and a new player on the field, he was stuck here in hiding unable to do any of his own legwork and forced to trust his few remaining sources out there to do it for him. "There's a phrase for a feeling like this, hoisted by your own petard or something. Damn unpleasant."

His only hope was that Totaku was finding this new player as irritating as he did and would do something irrational in an effort to crush him. Unfortunately, that something might be sending Ryofuu to take care of him personally and if the fight went badly, then his chosen weapon to remove Totaku himself would be useless. "Damn-it!"

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The self-styled Emperor Totaku was irritated. Oh, his sado-masochistic tendencies covered this to anyone who didn't know him well, but the two women in front of him were not among those people. First there had been the assassination order Tashijij of Youshou which not only failed but removed one of the five schools he controlled from under his thumb.

Then there was the second problem, this newcomer, who apparently was quite formidable since he had taken out Taishiji in one fight and had gone on to take out Bunshu and Ganryo as well as their cannon fodder all in the same fight. Both of them were going to be out of action for a long time, if they ever fully recovered at all. What was stranger was that not one of the fighters they had with them was still able to fight, strangely sapped of all their strength.

His orders to eliminate Ryomou for her attacking a comrade, his tool Kannei had also not worked out. Now Kannei was out of action permanently and several of their low grade fighters were in jail. Luckily he had made it seem as if that order had gone out from the same source as the imperial order that Saji had faked, so the fault would land squarely on the dead playboy's shoulders.

He turned to Ryofu. "Are you certain you didn't see this Ranma doing anything to them while you were there?"

Ryofu answered honestly, as baffled as Totaku by the weakness reported in the fighters sent after Ranma. Most of them had been arrested easily by, and Bunshu and Ganryo had been removed from the region to another hospital under heavy guard. Only two fighters had gotten away but strangely they were as weak as newborn babies and completely useless. "I didn't see him do anything, but remember that I left as soon as he noticed me. If I had stayed we would have fought, and you ordered me to only observe the fight, not participate.

"Which" she went on, deciding to stroke the masochists ego a bit "was the right move. It's obvious we don't know enough about this new fighter and his abilities to move against him effectively. What if he could do the same thing during a fight even with someone of my caliber?" The statement wasn't based on ego: she really was the strongest fighter in the region and Totaku nodded thoughtfully. Her loss to his faction would have been a terrible blow coming so soon after losing Youshuu high school and the new fighter allying himself with Ryuubi of Seito.

Ryofu went on smoothly, "I think finding some background information about him would give us an idea of how to handle him. We should also leave the Shou Haou alone for now. Moving on two different enemies would only weaken us, something we don't need so close to the tournament."

Again Totaku nodded, and Kaku glared at Ryofu from where she sat between Totaku's outstretched legs. New fighter or not, she wasn't happy with the amount of influence Ryofu was having on Totaku. She may have to take steps in the near future to pull the other woman down a peg.

Totaku nodded his head looking down at Kaku as she unzipped his pants, letting his dick fall free. Ryofu looked away as the bespectacled black haired girl started to rub her head against it at his urging. "Have our contact in the school

services look up any information on him. Until we have more we won't move against him, but I want you to crush this rebellion of Taishiji's. And if Ryomou appears and she can be taken out swiftly, do it. As for the Shou Haou, send a message to Nanyo that we were not the ones to send out that message of execution. Tell them we have already eliminated the one who did, and even the dumbest should make the connection, that should keep the school from rebelling against us further and even if Ryomou returns before we can take her out for her part in the plot we can simply say the same thing." He looked up at Ryofuu as Kaku began to fellate him. "How did that feel by the way, killing your ex-boyfriend?"

Ryofu smiled as sadistically as she could. "It felt wonderful." She purred. "But if you'll excuse me I'll go and relay your orders to the other schools."

Totaku cackled madly and began to thrust hard into Kaku's mouth, gagging the girl painfully. The new fighter was a mere distraction to his quest of defying destiny, nothing more. He would live he would conquer and defeat his destiny and the rest of the world would burn!

Outside Ryofu shook her head in disgust but went to relay the crazy bastard's orders to his followers. She really had to start thinking of an exit strategy for Chinkyu and her. More and more she was feeling like she was walking around with a target on her back.

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While the higher ranked fighters and leaders were intrigued or worried, the low ranked fighters were utterly appalled and terrified. First there was Hanno being neutered, that alone was enough to terrify any of them. Many of them had at least molested if not outright raped girls in the past year and a half, and the idea of this Ranma finding out about it and enacting his punishment on them was enough to make any low ranked fighter quake in fear.

Then there were the results of the attack on him. Only two fighters returning from a group of ten that included to B ranked fighters was bad but the weakness the two reported was even worse.

And added to that was what happened to the fighters who attacked Ryomou! The humiliation suffered by the fighters who actually managed to escape the hospital with the messages of 'weaking', 'stupid', 'fool', and 'loser' in permanent marker was bad enough without the poo shapes and hearts that went with them. The two that woke up tied together with their faces touching would be scarred for life, though they had it better than the two who woke up in a boxer clad 69 position... Even the lowest ranked fighter wasn't used to this kind of humiliation, being treated as jokes rather than threats disturbed them all.

What was worse was that none of the six who escaped the debacle had even seen their attacker. One minute everything was fine and the next they were tied up in psychologically scarring positions. This coupled with the weakness that afflicted the fighters with Ganryo and Bunshu were enough to completely unman nearly every fighter ranked c or below.

To a man they all decided to lay low for a while in hopes that this new fighter would not come after them.

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Ranma met up with Kan'u and Chou'un in a park near their temple the next day to spar and train together. As it was a Sunday they would be able to get in a whole days worth of training.

This plan nearly hit a snag when Ranma first saw them. His nocturnal issue from the night before came to his mind and he blushed crimson, and had to fight his instincts to run. Chou'un, who was the first to spot him, saw his expression and smiled wickedly, something was off about him and she thought she knew what. "Ranma, there you are. We were wondering if you were **cumming** at all today." She said seductively, winking at him. Behind her Kan'u cocked her head to the side looking at each in turn, lost for a moment.

Ranma's blush intensified at the swordswoman's choice of words, but he manfully pressed on. "Yeah, I ah, got up late this morning. Crushed another alarm clock, sorry."

Kan'u smiled. She had the same problems with alarm clocks. Put them away from the bed and she chucked Seryuutou at them. Keep them within arm reach and she smashed them to bits. "No worries Ranma we still have a solid ten hours of daylight to work with. Now, do you think we should go right into sparring, or should we discuss those scrolls you gave me."

Chou'un gasped, her playfulness evaporating for the moment. "Speaking of which, I never collected the scrolls that your father stole. Do you have them on you?"

Now that they weren't flirting with him Ranma was back on much firmer ground and he nodded decisively. "Yeah I do, I was planning to give them back to you today." He reached into his stuff space and pulled out both scrolls. They were far more tattered and battered than the three scrolls he had given Kan'u on Friday, having come from Genma's stash rather than being given to Ranma in payment for services rendered or written by him. "Er, sorry about their condition. My old man wasn't 'xactly the best when it came ta carin' fer stuff."

Chou'un took them reverently and immediately unrolled them. Finding the one that described creating long distance attacks via air pressure, she opened it reverently, sat down against a nearby tree and began to read ignoring the world around her.

Ranma blinked but shrugged and turned to Kan'u. "How far along with those scrolls I gave ya did you get?"

Kan'u looked over at her friend, a bit nonplussed at how swiftly she was enthralled by the scroll in front of her, but nodded. "I was able to enlarge my pocket a bit, but not a lot. I followed the scrolls instruction on how to push your ki into it, so I'm not certain what I'm doing wrong."

"Why don't ya try again and I'll see if I can figure out what's up." He motioned for her to seat in front of him, and she did so, teasingly flashing him a bit of her panties and a lot of her thighs, giggling wickedly as he looked away blushing once more.

Becoming serious she took out a skirt she had that had pockets in it for pens and other small items. She folded her hands over the pocket and began to gather her ki. After a few minutes she stopped and began to imagine a large net being slowly pushed into the pocket under her hands. Her ki obeyed her mind, flowing from her hands into the pocket in the proscribed shape. That done, she began to pump more ki into the net.

She was interrupted by a low voice whispering into her ear. "Wait." She nearly lost the image, but was able to just barely retain it. Ranma put his arms around her waist, resting his hands on hers as he pulled her back against his chest. "Hold the image for a bit. Wait until you have the image firmly in your mind, but then attach the tethers of the net to just one hand." Kan'u nodded, keeping her attention on what she was doing with difficulty.

Behind her Ranma looked over her shoulder using ki sight to watch as she slowly removed the strands connecting her ki net to one hand and transferred those strands to her other hand. When he was satisfied with her progress he whispered further instructions into her ear.

"Alright, now here's the tricky part. What I want ya ta do is with yer free hand start to pump ki into the space, slowly. Not the net, but the space inside the net. Think of it like ya were pumping up a balloon inside the net. The net'll expand as the balloon pushes it out."

Kan'u nodded very slightly, his voice in her ear doing all sorts of interesting things to her libido, but she kept her attention on what she was doing. After another few minutes she was able to split her concentration enough to do what Ranma was telling her, and the 'balloon' began to push her ki net out, yet somehow not changing the outer appearance of the pocket at all.

She kept on pouring power into the construct enlarging the space slowly, so slowly as Ranma looked on, tightening his hug around her. Finally, when she thought she could do no more Ranma whispered again into her ear. "Alright, now take the ends of your ki net and tie it off. Keep power to the balloon until the last minute."

Kan'u, sweating now did as she was told, but it was still hard going. Ten minutes later the last ends were tied together and Ranma nodded. "Now, stop pumping in power and pull back Kan-chan."

Kan'u did so and as she released the image of her mind slumped back against Ranma's chest, gasping for air. *That was exhausting, much more than I thought it would be. Damn, pushing ki out in two different ways at once is fucking hard!*

Ranma bumped his forehead against the back of her head smiling. "You did good Kan-chan. That took me months of trial and error ta do."

Kan'u smirked. "Well, I had a very good coach Ma-chan." She turned and kissed him on the lips and after a moment's hesitation he returned it.

They were interrupted by a quiet clapping coming from Chou'un, who had stopped reading her scroll and come over to watch. "That was impressive Kan'u-san. Ranma-san is right, such a technique should take months to get right. But can I assume I will get the same coaching when I attempt the technique?" She ended mischievously, expressive lips

curving in a sinful little smile.

Kan'u could tell Ranma was still warming to the idea of being shared between them, so she pecked him on the cheek and nodded encouragement. Ranma gulped but nodded. "Sure Chou-chan."

Kan'u tried to get to her feet to retrieve Seryuutou and put it in her new pocket, but stumbled. Chou'un caught her and she and Ranma helped her over to a park bench. "You should really eat something before ya try anything else. Using that much ki, especially when ya ain't used to sustaining it out of yer body can take a lot out of ya."

Kan'u weakly shook her head as Ranma pulled out a six tier bento box from his own stuff-space and opened it in front of her. "It wasn't that, I'm used to charging Seryuutou with ki, its part of my clan's style. It was keeping it in a shape, in two different shapes that took it out of me."

She started eating as Ranma shrugged. "I didn't have much trouble with that part, it was figgering out what ta do that held me up, but ya still did great. After we're done eating you can see for yerself if yer naginata can fit into it now. Heh, I soooo want ta be there when ya first whip it out on some unsuspecting scumbag."

"That sounded so wrong." Chou'un deadpanned, and Kan'u laughed, nearly choking on a rice ball while Ranma looked blank.

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Kan'u sat on the bench watching as her friends began to warm up in operation for a spar. She was still too weak yet to join them, a fact that irritated her immensely.

Chou'un looked across at Ranma. "Do you have a weapon to use? I'm afraid my style is much more based around my weapon than that of Kan'u. I probably would not be able to give you a good spar without my sword."

Ranma shrugged, looking uncomfortable. "Well I do have a weapon but my style don't use 'em. In fact ta my school using a weapon is seen as sort of a crutch. But don't worry about hurting me, I got a technique that I can use that makes my skin as strong as steel." From where she was sitting Kan'u raised an inquisitive eyebrow. There was obviously something behind that statement about having a weapon, but she would get the story out of him later.

Chou'un looked at him for a moment with her head cocked to one side, then shrugged. "It's your funeral." She said, then grinned again. "Of course, once you're injured, I can nurse you back to health. I bet I could find a nurse outfit somewhere" she mused.

Ranma blushed again, only this time didn't let it distract him so was prepared for Chou'un's sudden rush at him. Ranma leaped off the ground and over her head.

Chou'un turning brought her weapon to bear again only to see him standing on the edge of her sword. She smirked momentarily, then pushed some of her ki into the blade causing Ranma to jump off before being burned.

She continued pressing her advantage not giving Ranma enough time, or so she thought anyway, to call up his aura and charge his skin with ki. This hope was proven a false one, as instead of dodging back Ranma began to batter her sword strokes away with his hands.

Preliminaries over Chou'un began to press forward again moving faster and faster her sword slicing through the air only to be met at every turn by Ranma's flashing hands. A time or to he tried to go for a pressure point, the same as he had on Kan'u when they first fought, but Chou'un had run into such a technique before, and was prepared for it. Every time he struck one she would back off slightly and use a free hand to press the counter to the pressure point he used.

To an inexperienced eye the battle looked like a stalemate, with neither opponent able to land a telling blow, but Kan'u realized that Ranma wasn't pressing the advantage, merely maneuvering Chou'un around the park area, letting her tire herself out while using the barest level of energy to fend her off, even with his steel body technique.

Chou'un realized this herself, what she didn't know was how to combat it. Not only was Ranma faster than her, he was also more skilled and had none of the weaknesses of style that her opponents usually had. She had initially been disappointed when Ranma had said he didn't have a weapon thinking that she would win handily, but now she knew that the opposite may in fact be the case.

She decided to up the ante yet again and began to charge her sword with energy in preparation for a power strike. However her limited ki sight was able to detect that Ranma rather than falling back or being perplexed by this

matched it and began to slowly push her back. Suddenly his hands began to move faster and faster as he shouted "Katchu Tenshin Amiguriken!" and it was all she could do to fend his hands off, cancelling her own build up.

When his hands suddenly began to glow blue she knew he was up to something else but had no chance to dodge or even prepare herself so engrossed in blocking those flashing hands. With another shout this time of "Moko Takabashi!" a solid sphere of blue light shot toward her chest from a mere foot away.

Her reflexes were such however that she was able to interpose her blade between herself and the oncoming rush of energy. However her blade was knocked out of her hands by the energy and the next instant she felt Ranma's gentle hand on her throat. "Match over," he said simply, and backed away not even breathing heavily.

Chou'un wiped sweat from her face and looked between him and where her sword had landed in almost complete shock. While she had expected not to win the fight, she had never expected to lose this badly. *Perhaps if I had been serious from the get go, she thought, but no.* She was too honest to want to lie to herself that way. *Ranma is simply better than me. Perhaps I should not have asked him to take me seriously from the start she mused.*

Ranma smiled. "You did okay, but you advertise yer movements a little too much, Kan'u you should listen to this too." He then went into a small presentation on how to keep from giving your opponent any tells that could be read by him or her to give clues as to what you are up to before you actually moved. Chou'un nearly winced at how easily he had read her. She was used to doing that to other people and it wasn't pleasant to have the tables turned.

They moved back to a starting position and started once again with Chou'un keeping in mind Ranma's advice to keep her movements steadier and not so easily read.

This time the battle lasted much longer and both of them were sweating by the time they finished. The match ended when Chou'un had thrust just a little too hard overextending and opening herself to Ranma's counterattack, which flipped her to her back with her sword going up and arcing elegantly to splash into the park's small pond. She pushed herself off of the sand set around the pond looking at her opponent who was standing there sheepishly. "Sorry about that. I thought that was a feint so I put a little too much oomph into it."

From where she was sitting watching the action Kan'u began to laugh.

Chou'un looked at her askance before swiftly dunking her hand into the water and splashing Ranma before he could move away. "Just for that," She said, "I think you will have to remain female for the rest of our day." She smiled regaining her footing as both Kan'u and Ranma looked at her in surprise. "Ranma's school file has quite a lot of notations about such as this." She said in a calm, even tone of voice that did not do anything to hide the bubble of laughter that welled up inside as she watched Ranma do his best drowned rat impression. "Personally I thought the notes on the fool Kuno made for the most amusing reading." Ranma and Kan'u nodded, accepting her explanation and Ranma-chan signaled she was fine with fighting in this form.

Unfortunately Chou'un soon learned this was a bit like picking your poison. In the two spars that followed, she found that Ranma's female form was **far** faster than his male form. In fact she was the fastest fighter Chou'un had ever seen. Even Ryuubi when she lost control of her inner dragon hadn't moved this fast.

As her friend was being roasted by irony, Kan'u sat watching with narrow eyes. While her ability to sense another person's aura wasn't the best, she was trying to follow the flow of energy in Ranma's body. While in his male body his ki seemed to help his speed, in his female form, it helped his strength. The ability to switch from one type of energy use to another was surprising and something she had never seen before. *I am definitely going to read those meditation techniques more closely tonight. If they can teach me to switch like that consciously the results will be amazing.*

Soon after their fourth bout ended Kan'u felt able to stand up and take part. She moved forward tapping Chou'un lightly on her shoulder. "Tag in" she said simply, and Chou'un nodded wearily.

Kan'u moved forward, raising Seryuutou to a guard position. "I expect you to take me as seriously as you did her," she said and charged.

Ranma-chan nodded and moved to meet her only to stop in surprise as she stopped halfway and unleashed an energy bolt shaped like a lightning strike at her from her spear. Ranma-chan was able to dodge but barely and Kan'u came in swiftly pressing her hard.

Kan'u had two advantages over Chou'un. One, she already knew how strong and skilled Ranma was having fought him before, and had a good idea of his female forms speed from watching the previous matches. Two she was

physically far stronger than Chou'un, her style not relying on speed and precision but a mixture of speed and strength. Therefore, while she could not match Ranma's female form in speed she could match him in strength and nearly in skill. After her initial assault was beaten back she kept her distance keeping her weapon between herself and Ranma-chan and pushing the smaller girl for all she was worth with a combination of spear strikes, kicks and hammering palm blows.

Ranma-chan desperately dodged backwards as Kan'u's spear moved in like a striking snake from every angle. Ranma-chan realized that she had been more accurate than she had known when she said that Kan'u handicapped herself by not fighting him with her naginata on the day they first met. The naginata was an extension of her body and fit into the whole, used like another hand or leg rather than simply being the sole avenue of attack, something that she had never seen done so well before in any weapon user. And she was surprised to find herself being pushed further and further back.

Another advantage Kan'u had over Chou'un, whose school had been greatly depleted by Genma's stealing their sacred scrolls, was distance attacks. When Ranma-chan tried to open up the distance to gain some breath back she used them ruthlessly. It was only the small amount of time necessary to charge them that gave Ranma the chance to dodge them all. Each strike, which was shaped like a light green lightning bolt and seemed to have some of the same properties, was much stronger than his own Moko Takabashi, though not as strong as a few of his other ki attacks.

For her part, Kan'u knew she was winning, but also knew that it was taking far too much out of her. Not just her ki but her body was giving out. Fighting Ranma-chan was like fighting a jack-in-the-box. Here there and everywhere the redhead bounced around and it was exhausting just to watch let alone try to keep up with. The longer the bout went on the more it would turn against her.

When Ranma-chan once more tried to close the distance and engage Kan'u within her spears guard she took the opportunity to end the match. Rather than charge her energy back into her spear she hit head-on with a very low powered explosive palm blowing the smaller girl backward landing on her back twenty feet away. Kan'u immediately followed up and pressed her naginata's edge against the ground near Ranma's neck. "My win I think."

Ranma-chan nodded, "Great bout Kan'u" she said and leapt to her feet hugging the girl to her exuberantly before dashing off to get his water bottle and heat it up to turn back.

As soon as the redhead acknowledged her win, Kan'u moved back breathing heavily and leaning on naginata for support, exhausted from the bout. In terms of skill she was near to Ranma's level, but in terms of speed she didn't come close to matching the speed the smaller girl could move normally and doing so had used up our reserves of energy and physical endurance.

As Ranma came back now male again he asked "are you ready to go again?"

Kan'u looked at him askance still breathing heavily and leaning on her spear, pushing her sweat streaked purple hair out of her face. "No" she said, "I don't think I am. Making that fold-space took more out of me than I expected, and keeping up with you in your female form is like trying to catch a squirrel on crack."

Ranma looked over to see Chou'un still sitting down and at his inquiring gaze she shook her head wearily. Ranma shrugged and said, "Okay well in that case I'm going to go get some more scrolls I want ya ta look at. After that I want ta show you both some katas to help yer speed and build your energy. I'll be right back okay?" Both girls nodded and he leapt off, bouncing into the trees and away.

Chou'un shook her head amused. "My, Ranma-san is certainly energetic isn't he?"

"That's one way of putting it" Kan'u agreed sighing. "I just wish I knew if he was still holding back or not. I used to think I was at the top of my game, progressing well and becoming stronger. The way my ki is so depleted and my body so sore from trying to keep up with him tells me I'm nowhere near as good as I thought I was."

Chou'un nodded. "For my part I am feeling a little miffed that there is so much more to ki sight than I had thought. I have long prided myself on my ability to use my other senses mainly hearing and ki sight to offset the need to keep my eyes closed around most people. Its irritating to see that my so-called strength is nowhere near the level it could be."

"And what can your senses tell you about Ma-chan? I confess my own ki sight is too limited, I can barely see changes in his aura at all." Kan'u asked.

"It's difficult to tell," Chou'un admitted. "His ki is so tightly controlled and condensed it's hard to get a read on how

deep his reservoir is. I was barely able to sense small flashes of his true strength when he used his long distance ki attack during our first match. What I sensed was...humbling, almost on par with Ryuubi-sama's awakened dragon."

Kan'u nodded. "I agree. I could get something from his aura, what he was consciously using his ki to enhance, but that was all, nothing about the size of his reservoir and nothing about his emotions. Most fighters you can read their surface emotions in their ki, but not Ranma, it's as if he separates his control from his emotions entirely. We will have to see if he has any scrolls that tell us how to train our ki-sight better; it obviously is an area that has more uses than I had previously thought."

Chou'un nodded but then turned to look away down the park trails. Kan'u looked at her quizzically but a moment later she heard it too. Voices, one of which was Ranma's, but the other two she had never heard before, a man's voice and girl's raised in what sounded like argument. As Ranma came through the trees, walking on the ground now, they both noticed another girl following after him with another boy trailing after her.

Chou'un looked at the boy and girl appraisingly for an instant before and nudged her friend. "Those two come from Nanyo Academy," she whispered "the girl has the aura of the Shou Haou."

Kan'u nodded slightly as they stood up to greet their friend. "Ranma" Kan'u asked "could you introduce us to your friends?"

Ranma, who had tensed the moment the two girls stood up, relaxed imperceptively. Back in Nerima showing up with another girl would have gotten him pounded on no explanations asked or listened to. Here though both Chou'un and Kan'u were merely curious, not jealous or jumping to conclusions. With that worry out of the way his exasperation with the situation came back and he waved an irritated hand at the two newcomers. "This is Kokin and Hakufu, the two I saved on my first day around here, I told ya about 'em." Both girls nodded, moving to stand next to him and look at the newcomers as he continued. "Hakufu here won't leave me alone. She wants to have a fight with me, but I keep on telling her she's nowhere near my level."

Kan'u looked at the girl thoughtfully. It was obvious from the way she stood there she was looking for a fight, her fist balled and her face angry, but there didn't seem to be anything personal in it, she looked to simply want to fight. "Assume a stance." she told Hakufu.

The girl looked at her perplexed "what do you mean take a stance?"

"Take a basic stance of your martial arts school" Kan'u said, "as if you were about to throw a right cross punch. Then work through the forms you know while we watch."

Kan'u and Chou'un watched as a girl move through her forms pouting irritably. "What's this got to do with being able to fight" she exclaimed stopping and turning to them, hands on her hips and bust thrust out.

As Ranma looked helplessly over at Kokin who shrugged Chou'un answered her as calmly as ever. "Everything. The moves you learn doing katas teach your body how to move, how to react, shapes it into a weapon. You cannot simply jump into combat and expect to be the best. You have to work at it." Kan'u, Kokin and Ranma all nodded agreeing with her.

Hakufu pouted even more. "I don't care about all that!" She exclaimed "I just want to fight."

Ranma shook his head. "No, ya don't jump straight to the top like that. Ya gotta work your way up. I ain't about ta fight ya with the skills ya got now." *Or ever*, he thought, *until I find out what the hell ta do with the dragon aura in you*. "But I'll make you a deal. In two weeks time there's supposed to be some kind of tournament going on between all the schools right?" Kan'u nodded and Ranma went on, "well if yer able to tag me at the beginning of the tournament even once, I'll fight you in that tournament later on. But ya gotta keep training until then alright?"

The girl pouted but agreed reluctantly, before being dragged away by Kokin who somehow realized their presence wasn't wanted. Behind them Kan'u and Chou'un looked at Ranma's put upon expression laughing as he muttered. "Why is it always me who has to deal with the idiots and fanatics, why huh, just why?"

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For the next two hours Ranma walked Chou'un and Kan'u through several katas and through a few meditation practices. Both girls were showing remarkable progress in the meditation techniques as well as the katas, but it would take a few days for the meditation techniques to take hold and actually grow their ki. After that they went back to sparring for a time. As the sun was going down, they stopped for the day, very happy with their progress.

Both girls came away from the days exercise feeling slightly humbled not so much in their skill as in their endurance. By the end of the day both of them were bruised, aching, and exhausted. In return Ranma looked only a little winded and bruised.

Kan'u stretched her arms above her head explosively cracking her neck. "Gods I am so sore" she moaned. "Keeping up with you is a chore Ranma."

Ranma shrugged uncomfortably "sorry about that."

Chou'un also cracked her neck and shoulders moaning. "I don't suppose either of you know any massage techniques? I'm feeling in desperate need of them right now."

Ranma blushed slightly. "Er, well, I do, I guess, like, I could try if...."

Both girls looked at him, and without even looking at one another grabbed him by the arms and dragged him further into the park's woods. Finding an open space, she stopped dragging him and pushed him down onto the ground. Looking at one another the girls played three very swift rounds of jan-ken-pon.

Smiling triumphantly Chou'un laid down face first on the ground, swishing her hair to the side. "I'm ready when you are Ranma," she purred.

Kan'u smirked at Ranma who was still standing there looking uncomfortable and blushing, but not running away, a major achievement for him. "You made us feel pain, you get to fix it. Get to work and maybe" she added in a sultry tone of voice "we'll make you feel good after."

Ranma blushed but again overcame his Nerima indoctrination™, and sat down lightly across Chou'un's back, keeping himself from reacting to her body under his legs by sheer willpower. After all, what red-blooded male could turn down an invitation like that?

Ranma started working on Chou'un's shoulders using small amount of pressure to relieve the pain and going down her back slowly, leaving a trail of warmth behind him. When he started on her lower back she began to moan under her breath. Ranma stopped gulping but Kan'u urged him on smiling encouragingly and rubbing the back of his neck and shoulders, playing with his hair as she looked on.

Ranma gulped again, but continued. He slowly moved his hands down her spine again, over the back of her arms under her arms along her sides and then to her thighs. By this point Chou'un was moaning loudly and was beginning to pant as Ranma moved down her legs massaging each inch with his dexterous fingers. She gasped as he began to work on her thighs and rear, she could feel herself beginning to get wet, and it was all she could do not to turn and jump his bones right there. She knew though that that would scare him off and annoy Kan'u, so she controlled herself, barely.

He moved to her feet and began to massage them as well, pressing certain points on them and made her moan even louder. With one hand still working one foot the other inched back up to her neck and started working it at the same time. Within seconds she arched underneath his hands moaning loudly before collapsing onto her face.

"That" she gasped "was fantastic." *Gods, I don't know if I can keep going at Kan'u's slow pace. Not even an item for two days and already I want to fuck him ragged!* Not only were her pains and pulled muscles gone but she felt almost catatonic, utterly boneless and drained even further by the orgasm that Ranma had just unwittingly given her. She could feel herself passing out from sheer bliss, her eyes closing...

Kan'u looked on a little jealous of her friend, but as Ranma stood up from his position on her back, laid down about a yard away from where Chou'un was now passed out and motioned Ranma to start on her. "Please Ranma" she whined, somehow coming off equal parts needy and sexy to Ranma "I'm in sooo much pain" and then she giggled at her own overacting, but still motioned to her back over her shoulder, moving her lustrous purple hair to the side for him to begin.

Ranma smiled as well and very cautiously sat down astride the back of her hips and put his hands on her back. He began to give her the same treatment he had just given Chou'un. Unlike the silver haired swordswoman however who just laid there and let Ranma work his magic Kan'u very deliberately arched her back underneath his hands, trying to direct them to where she wanted them to go. When he started to do her sides Kan'u reached and took his hands and placed them just below her breasts moaning as his hands automatically kneaded the muscles there before trying to move back to her back.

Again Kan'u moved them back to where she wanted them to be and this time Ranma took the hint and began to massage her stomach muscles, staying there for a few minutes. Kan'u subtly moved her body backwards until she could feel his thumbs brushing the bottom of her breasts. Ranma gulped but didn't move away for a few seconds then moved down her legs front and back and then to her feet.

Kan'u was moaning much louder than Chou'un had at this point and was mere seconds away from finishing when Ranma finally got to her feet. Ranma gingerly touched the balls of her feet massaging his knuckles hard into them and Kan'u came with a loud moan, convulsing up off the ground.

Kan'u however, unlike Chou'un who simply lay there falling asleep like a cat in a sunbeam, turned and grabbed Ranma's hand, pulling him down onto the ground next to her before sitting on top of him where he sat. She leaned in kissing him lovingly on the lips. Ranma, blushing badly from having basically just given both his girlfriends orgasms with his hands, sat there for a moment before slowly returning the kiss.

Kan'u feverishly worked at his belt buckle. Ranma reached down to stop her but Kan'u brushed his hands away. "Please Ranma" she said, looking into his eyes. "I think you really need this and besides, I want to return the favor. I'm not saying we'll go all the way, I'm not saying anything, but I think you need to be rewarded a little. Call it back pay for all the crap you put up with in Nerima and for what you just did to us! I'm not like those bitches Ranma, I believe firmly in the give and take of a regular relationship!"

Ranma looked back into her eyes and nodded slowly, but still was tense as she slowly reached into his pants and pulled out his dick. She leaned in kissing him again on the lips and Ranma put his arms around her, pulling her in closer as her hands began to work his shaft, getting used to the sheer size and width of it. It put the one dick she had seen before, her second boyfriend's, to shame. It had to be at least eleven inches long and as thick as her wrist.

"It's so hard, Ranma, so big and smooth" she moaned. "When was the last time you did something about this?" She began to move her hands a little harder and he groaned into her mouth as they kissed, tongues wriggling around one another.

He flushed even harder at her question and she smirked, pulling back from the kiss to stare into his eyes from an inch away. "Something you want to tell me?" she said mischievously stopping the movement of her hands. Ranma groaned and moved underneath her trying to get it her to start up again and she shook her head. "Tell me Ranma" she said teasingly, nibbling at his neck and ear lobe.

He panted and tried again to get her to start moving her hands, but she moved her hands away again. The entire affair should have bothered him, hell he should have run for the hills as soon as she touched him, but something older and stronger than his Genma/Akane enforced programming had him in its grip now and it wasn't about to let him go.

With no other recourse he answered her question in a halting almost scared voice. "Last n-night, I-I, w-when I was asleep..."

Kan'u started to move her hands slowly, so slowly, along his shaft kissing him again before pulling back, "and what did you think about?"

Ranma shook his head unwilling to own up to the fact that it he had in fact been thinking about her at the time along with Chou'un. Seeing him hesitate she leaned in and whispered into his ear "I'll tell you a secret Ranma. After you dropped me off at my home I fingered myself thinking about you."

Ranma had swiveled around like a gun turret locking onto her light blue eyes and she nodded mischievously blushing slightly at the admission but still smiling seductively as she kissed him again. Seeing the question still in his eyes he she nodded and whispered again into his ear, "That kiss of yours got me soo hot. It was the best I ever felt."

Ranma's blue eyes darkened with lust and he leaned in kissing her hard on the lips, pulling her against him as his hormones at last crushed their last enemy, the self-preservation subroutine that his mind had developed during his time in Nerima, and took complete control of him. "You. I dreamed about you and Chou'un." Kan'u moaned happily at his admission. He started using his energy senses to feel out where and how she wanted to be kissed or touched along her back and sides and soon had her mewling in need against him her own hands working on his cock.

He felt something building inside of it her him as Kan'u kept moaning and groaning rubbing herself against him. He pulled back from the kiss, licking away the trail of saliva connecting them as he gasped. "Kan-chan I-I'm going to...!"

Kan'u stilled her hands for a second and looked into his eyes, saying in a voice full of emotion "I love you Ranma"

and she leaned forward, kissing him again and moving her hands harder and faster.

Ranma's own hands went down to her rear and gripped her ass hard pulling her against him and they came simultaneously groaning against one another. Kan'u looked down between their bodies watching with bleary-eyed fascination as Ranma's cock shot off like a cannon, the skin literally pulling back and shooting forward with every ejaculation. Seven shots he shot off, all of them thick and large with each shot going further, over her head before dropping back to earth until the last one impacted her chin, stinging her a little with its force. When she was certain he was done she reached a hand out and wiped some up from her clothing, testing its consistency before licking it off her fingers. It tasted like nothing she ever had before, nutty with a tartness to it that was actually very good. "You're very tasty Ranma" she purred.

Ranma stared at her and could already feel himself rising again but Kan'u pushed away on wobbly legs. "If we go any farther now I'm afraid we won't be able to stop." She said. "And while I have fallen for you Ranma I'm not ready to go that far this quickly."

Ranma nodded and stuffed himself back into his pants after wiping himself off as much as he could with a napkin he kept in fold-space. "I'm never gonna push Kan'u. Frankly, I'm a little wierded out at how fast we're moving anyway."

Kan'u who by this time had regained some of her senses shook her head as she moved over to pat Chou'un on the face in an attempt to wake her up. "Blame your magic hands for that Ranma. You got me so worked up I just had to reciprocate and I don't regret it." She said looking over her shoulder and giving him a smoldering look. "For a spur of the moment thing, I think we both wanted it badly."

Ranma walked over and helped her wake-up Chou'un, kissing Kan'u on the neck as he did. "I guess I did. You're the only person that ever made me react like that. A-and I-I I-love you too." he said haltingly. The words came out much harder for him than it had for Kan'u.

Kan'u had been in relationships and knew what feelings really were, she knew how to discern infatuation or lust from love, though she had never used that word before. Ranma had never been in a positive relationship and he was feeling his way through this one slowly. He knew he felt something, a lot of feelings-happy feelings-, towards Kan'u that he had never felt before but putting a name to them was much harder.

Kan'u smiled happily kissing him on the cheek and lifted Chou'un onto her shoulders to carry her back to where they had left their training gear.

Behind them they left two sets of eyes, both glazed in the afterglow of their reactions to what they had witnessed.

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Ryomou had tried to find Ranma all day in order to ask him some questions and determine where the hell he came from. While she didn't know the name of every fighter in the area, she knew most of the more powerful ones, and his name didn't appear on that list. Her search had hit a slight snag when she ran into Hakufu who kept on badgering her about how she was and if she was alright enough to spar with. On the other hand Kokin had been much more helpful when she said she was searching for the new pigtailed fighter, and had directed her to the park where Ranma was apparently practicing with both Kan'u Unchou and Chou'un Shiryu.

This nearly halted her search. Ryomou knew that historically speaking she was destined to kill Kan'u Unchou in battle, but ever since her own defeat at Hakufu's hands she had been questioning whether or not destiny was really set in stone as she had always believed. After a few minutes deliberation her desire to speak to Ranma overrode her concern on meeting Kan'u Unchou and she made her way to the park. She arrived just in time to see Kan'u and Chou'un drag Ranma further into the park and somehow sensing that now would not be a good time to talk to him, she followed them.

What followed was at first sweet and a little sexy, then rapidly turned into the hottest thing she had ever seen even including some porno mags that she had taken one time in a fit of pique from her kinda love interest/crush Saji.

Now Ryomou was even more interested in Ranma. What had occurred with Kan'u made her cum so hard it blew away every masturbatory fantasy she ever had. Not only was he apparently able to fight both Chou'un and Kan'u to a standstill he was a good enough catch that they were sharing him. *And she thought if they're willing to share between themselves, maybe there's room for one more.*

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Ukitsu was **intrigued**. She had been watching Hakufu Sonsaku since she arrived in the area, waiting until the time was right to fulfill her fate and kill the Shou Haou in battle. But she wanted to wait until the younger girl was at least

good enough to give her a decent fight, something she had despaired of until today.

She had been following Sonsaku around the town on her semi-date with Kokin and seen her challenge the unknown braided fighter. She then followed the three and was surprised to see them meet up with Kan'u and Chou'un.

Made curious by the little speech this Ranma had given Hakufu and the amount of motivation it gave her, Ukitsu had decided to stay and watch Kan'u, Chou'un and Ranma practice. The katas looked vaguely familiar, almost as if they were connected to her own school of martial arts or perhaps even the other way around. However she wasn't close enough to hear the point to the meditation techniques Ranma walked the other two through, but even that told her that he was a formidable fighter. Why else would fighters of the caliber of Kan'u and Chou'un listen to him so intently?

She then witnessed what had occurred in the glade the trio had found. It was easily the hottest thing she had ever seen in her life. The first part where Ranma made the two girls cum by simply massaging them was hot enough, but what came after was even hotter. She could not believe how large Ranma was or how much he had shot when he came. Ukitsu was lucky she hadn't fallen out of the tree she was watching from when her hand found its way between her legs, under her sopping panties, and busily fingered herself to a climax.

Ukitsu's dreams that night were very pleasant indeed and she couldn't stop thinking about what it would be like to let this Ranma guy screw her with the massive tool that Kan'u had played with. Unfortunately she was about as straight as it was possible to be, so the idea of sharing was not something she was interested in. So either she would have to convince Ranma to date only her when he already had Kan'u and Chou'un or find someone else with the same kind of 'skill set' as it were.

*Maybe Ranma has a long lost twin or something*, she mused. It was worth a try after all. She would simply wait for the right time to introduce herself, and see if there was any hope for her with him or if he knew someone else as... promising. Until then she could follow her destiny and continue to watch Hakufu until the time was right to kill her.

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The giant ice-cream-loving warrior Gakushu looked at his, friend, -no friend was not the right word they didn't really like each other after all- acquaintance- no again that implied they had something more than a school uniform in common- ally, yes ally would do. They were allies who despite their personal attitudes respected one another, both of them being members of the Big Four of Nanyo.

And because he respected her he paused before blurting out that what she had just said was utterly insane. "What do you mean you're going to transfer?" he asked in a painfully neutral tone.

The girl looked back at him calmly, standing before his new desk as senior fighter/student body president in the maid outfit she used as a combat uniform. "Exactly what I said" she said calmly. "I'm transferring. I've had it up to here being manipulated by Saji or by the Emperor. I'm going to go to a school where they don't kwtow to either of them. And maybe, just maybe I'm going to change my destiny doing so."

The taller warrior shook his head. "Barring the news that Saji is dead and no longer manipulating anyone, the fate of those who fight their destiny is often much worse than those who simply go along with it. Besides do you honestly think that that particular school will take you?"

"I have it on the best authority that they will." She said still calmly, as if her destiny was of no moment and his objections laughable. *And once I'm there, she thought I am by God going to see if Ranma has more than just a big dick and a tremendous amount of stamina going for him. If he can beat me the way Unchou implied that he had her and Seiryu maybe, just maybe, I'll have finally found someone worthy of me.*

"But" Gakushu spluttered "but if you leave now who is going to be our fourth for the tournament? So far it's just me, Hakufu and possibly Kokin, we need a fourth. Besides do you honestly think you'll get away with transferring? The emperor may be disavowing all knowledge of the hit placed on you during your stay at the hospital, but that doesn't mean you'll just be allowed to do whatever you want."

The girl shrugged. "I don't know if I will or not but I mean to try. I don't know why but lately all this destiny crap just hasn't been making as much sense as it used to." *Not since I met Ranma* she thought. *There's just something about him that shakes up your thoughts, makes you look at things in a new light.*

Gakushu looked at her stubborn expression and sighed. "I'll be sorry to see you go" he said. "I know we never really got along, but I think this is a bad idea. Still, I won't try to stop you." Doing so may well result in both of them being in the hospital and easy meat for any of the other factions or fighters who wanted to take a shot at them, no better to cut his losses.

"In that case I'll see you either in the tournament or some other time. Take care." And without another word Ryomou of the Big Four walked out of the room and out of Nanyo academy for the final time.

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Ranma had decided on two courses of action both of which he put into motion after he dropped off Chou'un and Kan'u at their temple home. Well, he decided on them after he went home and cleaned himself up after his escapade with Kan'u, which he still wasn't certain had been a good idea, but **gods** it had felt great at the time.

The first was to drop off a letter at the Chinese embassy, addressed to a certain acquaintance/frenemy he had in China. Ranma needed more information before he moved against the tougher fighters and especially the ones with the dragons inside them. He hoped his contact would be able to answer some of the questions he had and was willing to take the chance of contacting them.

After a few minutes of the usual runaround at the embassy his letter was taken and he was told to expect a reply in a week or two. The Chinese government knew who he was and what he was capable of, of course, and despite the need to keep up appearances had no desire to see him interact with their homegrown martial artists again on their nation's soil any time soon.

The second was to go back to where the two largest and weirdest energy sources he had felt last night were and write down what he saw so that he could send it to Dr. Oden, a doctor friend that he had met on his travels after leaving the Nerima. Dr. Oden had been Dr. Tofu's master in the healing arts, but had none of his desire to not take part in conflicts around him or the willful blindness that had characterized that man's interactions with the rest of Nerima. What he didn't know about auras, odd illnesses and poisons wasn't worth knowing and after Ranma helped him run off a yakuza syndicate from his town the two had become friends

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When he got there Ranma noticed something very odd. One of the larger sources, the chaotic one was missing, which in and of itself was not so strange. What was strange was one of the smaller energy sources, which he rated to be a B or C rank fighter, fluctuating oddly, as if it was comatose or asleep. But it was still moving, surrounded by several normal or C or D-rank auras and was being moved toward the front of the building. When the auras moved outside he saw what looked like a young girl being carried by four toughs while another girl, this one older looking with black hair and glasses on her face following after.

Ranma decided this just looked a little too strange and decided to follow the car the group got into as it pulled out of the apartment complex.

After about 15 minutes drive the car stopped in the front of a large warehouse. The building itself looked like it had seen better days, everything looked run down and some parts looking like it had decayed. Ranma swiftly found another entrance and flowed in, still wrapped in his cloaking field. More and more his decision to unseal this particular technique of his lay-about-no-account-bastard-of-a-father was proving to be a worthwhile one.

Inside he found about thirty low ranked fighters and, judging by the size of his core, one B rank fighter. The girl in glasses walked over to them and sat down next to him leaning on his shoulder as the four other fighters that had been in the car dragged in the insensible body of the girl. The man, who looked more like a college student than a high school student looked over at the girl and said, "and you want us to do anything we want to her no questions asked Kaku?" he said skeptically.

The girl in glasses pushed them up with one finger smirking evilly. "My rival has been gaining a little too much ground lately with Totaku. But I can't strike at her directly, so I did the next best thing. Yes I want this bitch humiliated, beaten raped, whatever, the worse the better and then dropped where my rival can find her. I have evidence we can plant that'll point the finger directly at one of our enemies, Youshou or Seito, and Ryofu will go on a rampage that'll weaken my employers enemies as well as kill her off. It's a win-win."

Around her the fighters started chuckling evilly. These fighters came from all seven of the schools in the Kanto region, and they weren't following the destiny of the sacred bead for the fighting like most of the others. What they desired, and what the beads gave them the skills and leeway to do, was cause other people pain. Rape, murder, torture it was all the same to them, and they loved every minute of it. The arrival of the new fighter with the pigtail had seriously hampered their ability to troll for victims, so this looked like it would be the most fun they would have until he moved on.

Still chuckling one of them reached down and ripped the shirt off the girl whistling appreciatively as her body came into view. The other fighters began to get up from their seats and move forward but were stopped by a voice coming out of nowhere.

Its words came out like chips of ice floating on a sea of molten rage, and seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere around them in the dark of the warehouse. "And you people call yourselves warriors?"

All the fighters began to look around worriedly, some reaching for weapons. Most of them, those who had heard of Ranma's exploits began to pray that it wasn't him, but that prayer went unanswered.

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Ranma dropped the Yama-Sen-Ken and then swiftly struck out at the five fighters nearest the girl blasting them away with hard palm shots before any of the others could even move. They skidded to a rest at the feet of the other fighters and Ranma glared at all of them, standing solidly between them and their victim.

Kaku, who recognized Ranma from the reports she had read stared at him and then started to laugh. "You, you can't honestly think you can take this many fighters on and walk away?" She gestured around and all the fighters looked around and realized she was right; they had numbers and weapons on their side, many in fact had handguns and all the others had crowbars or bats while the new fighter seemed to have no weapon and was definitely alone.

Ranma looked at her through narrowed eyes, wrapped in the first stage of the Soul of Ice, his emotions sealed off, thoughts cold as a glacier. "You know you're right. If I wanted to just make an example of you or try and take you all on and arrest you or something, I couldn't do it. There's too many of you. But you made a mistake there."

Kaku smirked as the fighters began to get up and circle him, becoming more emboldened now that the initial surprise of his appearance had worn off. "And what's that?" she said haughtily.

"Your mistake was thinking I ever wanted any of you alive." Ranma said coldly. As the fighters with guns began to move away from their fellows in order to get clear shots, he crouched bringing his hands down along the ground as if he was holding knives in them. In a voice like a winter blizzard he called out "Cat-Fist revised, Claw Storm!" and brought his hands slashing forward.

This was one of the techniques that he had created to become the grandmaster of Anything Goes. To be grandmaster of Anything Goes you had to master all the techniques of the school, modify one technique and create two entirely new techniques to add to the school. Then of course you had to beat the former grandmaster in personal combat. Ranma did all three and this was one of the results. He had beaten the cat-fist with the help of Cologne, thereby modifying one of the techniques taught to him and thus part of the school, though not something that even Happosai would have added to the school. He still didn't like cats, but everything he could do in his berserk state was his to command and more besides.

Now tiny four inch slivers of ki started flowing from his hands in every direction, and what they hit they went through like a hot knife through butter. Wood, stone, steel, flesh or bone, it didn't matter. His claws went through anything and everything.

As blood and viscera flew everywhere the screams began and fighters tried to dive out of the way, tried to escape, tried to run but there was nowhere to run to. Ranma was standing in front of the only real exit, and none of the other fighters had his ability to get up onto the third floor to get away through the break in the roof.

A few tried to raise their guns and fire on him, but fell before they could aim. Others fell on their knees begging for mercy, but the storm Ranma had unleashed and those blue flecks of glacier ice that had replaced his eyes held no pity in them.

Kaku looked on in shock as her friend Kakuha literally floated for a second struck by seventeen slivers of power the likes of which she had never even dreamed of then literally came apart at the seams, blood splattering her and everything around where he had stood.

She looked over at Ranma standing there throwing out these splinters of power and voided herself in fear, collapsing onto her knees as the piss ran down her legs and made a puddle on the floor.

Not even a minute after the maneuver began not a single fighter was left alive in the entire warehouse.

Ranma walked over to the girl who shivered uncontrollably in fear as she looked up into his eyes. "The only reason you're still alive" he hissed still in that voice of ice "is because I don't like hitting girls, let alone killing them. But that doesn't mean I'm letting you walk away." One hand flashed out touching a pressure point on her throat and Kaku knew no more.

Ranma looked around at the blood everywhere, the viscera and broken, shattered and mauled bodies and sighed

heavily. He decided to remain in the Soul of Ice to ward away his horror at what he had done until he had the girl somewhere safe. Only when that was done would he let himself feel again.

First he walked around collecting beads from the viscera and debris, knowing that he would have to destroy them later. That done he walked over to the girl who they had brought and took off his shirt wrapping it around her body before picking her up in one arm, dragging the other girl behind him back out the warehouse door. *I'm going to have to see what Kan'u and the others think about this.*

end chapter.

## **\*Chapter 6\*: Chapter 6**

I do not own the horse or the battling boobies.

In this chapter we have action, reaction and some new problems for the wild horse and his fillies. There is some more lemon/lime action near the end of the chapter as well.

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### **Chapter 6 Old acquaintances and new friends do not make a good mixture**

Ranma had stuffed the knocked out Kaku into his fold space and now was rocketing towards the temple where Kan'u and Chou'un lived with Ryuubi and Chouhi. He knew that for something like this he needed a woman's point of view on how to handle it and what to do with the girl who had apparently planned it, something that still bothered him even with the emotional control of the first form Soul of Ice. He also knew that he could not handle telling the girl he carried in his arms what had almost happened to her.

He landed in front of the Temple but before he could even ring the doorbell Chou'un's voice rang out from the outer wall of the temple area. "Ranma what are you doing here so late? It's nearly 2 AM..." Chou'un's voice trailed off as she saw the girl on Ranma's back and recognized her. "That's one of the fighters that follows the Emperor isn't it, Chinkyu I believe her name is? What happened?"

Ranma still keeping his emotional control through use of the first form Soul of Ice explained as simply as possible that he saved her from something tonight. "She needs a place to stay, and I don't think she can go back ta where her allies are, even if they're really her allies in the first place. From what happened tonight I ain't wantin' ta trust that."

Chou'un looked at him, realizing how much more of this story was left to tell but nodded anyway, "then you had better come in."

The duo had just entered the main temple area when they were met by Kan'u and Chouhi. Kan'u looked dressed to fight having slipped on her school uniform when she heard voices out front. The younger girl on the other hand was still dressed in pajamas complete with bunny slippers. "What's going on?" She asked sleepily.

Chou'un answered her. "Nothing to concern yourself about Chouhi, there was just a confrontation tonight and this girl, whose name is Chinkyu, has to stay here with us for a while."

Ranma nodded and felt his control of the soul of ice fading as Chou'un's simple words brought back to reality of what he had done tonight. He handed the girl over to Chou'un and asked "Where's your bathroom?"

Kan'u, realizing from the look on his face that now was not the time to ask silly questions merely pointed him in the right direction. Ranma took off like a shot and Kan'u followed him. Chou'un and Chouhi looked at one another before looking back at the girl that Chou'un was now holding and decided to put her in the main dining area for now. Chouhi went off to get a futon for her as well as some blankets, pausing a moment as they both heard the sound of heaving coming from the bathroom.

Within the bathroom Ranma was on his knees in front of the toilet retching. The memory of what he had done tonight kept coming back, the blood going everywhere, the smell of the guts, the screams...

He threw up some more as Kan'u moved forward to hold his head up. She put a gentle hand on the back of his head and began to massage his neck slowly letting Ranma get whatever it was out of his system.

Feeling the need to talk to someone Ranma began to tell her what had happened, not realizing that Chou'un and Chouhi had stopped what they were doing out in the hallway to listen. Ryuubi had also at last come out of her room, the noise at last waking her up from her normal heavy sleep.

Haltingly, in between short sessions of heaving, Ranma began to tell them what had occurred earlier that night. When there was nothing more in his stomach to throw up he turned to look over his shoulder at Kan'u.

Instead of the recrimination or disgust he thought he would see there, he saw only understanding and sympathy. Kan'u got down on her knees and hugged Ranma to her. Feeling the boy stiffen even now, even after what had

occurred to them earlier that day, she frowned a little, but kept on hugging him until he responded by leaning his head on her shoulder. "You did nothing wrong Ranma. Against those numbers and with them armed with guns as well as other weapons trying to take them prisoner or simply knocking them out was not an option, not with a hostage so ready at hand. You did the right thing."

Ranma answered her still occasionally having to keep his gorge down. "I know that in my head but the rest of me don't agree. Killing like that's supposed to be the last recourse. And killing that many people at once..." he shook his head and again had to fight down his stomach.

Kan'u sighed sadly. "With your skill it's hard to remember that you weren't actually trained as a warrior, but a martial artist. To a martial artist all life is sacred, but to a warrior dying or killing is simply a part of doing your duty. I wouldn't respect you as much as I do if you were the type to be so callous towards killing, but don't let it rip you up inside Ranma. Sometimes there really is no choice and tonight was one of those times."

Chou'un spoke up from the doorway an agreement. "Kan'u's right," she said, "in fact, if it was any other warrior other than you or Ryofu Hosen, I doubt if anything could have been done against those numbers armed as they were." *On the other hand*, she thought to herself *that greatly decreases the number of fighters the Emperor can call upon at one time if they all come from the schools allied with him and not the two or three that are no longer allied with him. Either way the area has taken a monstrous hit to the total number of fighters. And that is probably all to the good.*

She went on, "and I think it's a good idea for you to stay here as well as young miss Chinkyu. No offense Ranma, but after the night you've had I don't think I want you to be alone in that apartment of yours." Before Ranma could protest Kan'u agreed dragging him to his feet and out the bathroom door to where the extra futons and spare blankets were kept.

Ryuubi nodded agreement but the younger girl protested. "Now wait a minute! I'm fine with him staying in the compound but I don't want him under the same roof. He's a guy for goodness sake! No matter how good a guy he is he's still a guy and I don't want him walking in on me in the bathroom or something like that."

Kan'u smirked and picked up a cold glass of tea that Chou'un had had been drinking at the dining table while doing her homework and splashed Ranma with it. As the redhead looked at her askance and Ryuubi and Chouhi both gasped in surprise (they had both heard of his curse but never really believed in it before) she merely smiled and said "there you go, no more problem."

After much grumbling Ranma-chan agreed to spend the night as a girl, and bedded down in the dining hall. The girl he had rescued, still comatose, had been placed on a futon in a far corner. As he was making his temporary bed, he was surprised to see that both Chou'un and Kan'u had dragged their own futons out to join him. Kan'u looked at him with a face that brooked no argument. "After a night like you've had, you definitely are in need of some snuggle time."

When Ranma-chan's pretty face tightened automatically at being close to someone she went on in a gentle voice "this is just another aspect of being in a relationship Ranma, we're there for one another. And you need help tonight." Ranma-chan acquiesced with ill grace but inside she was rather relieved that she wouldn't be alone tonight with her dreams.

That matter settled Chou'un went back over to the dining room table where her English book was out and the paper that she was writing in front of it. Ranma-chan looked up from getting into bed and asked her what she was doing and Chou'un replied. "I'm working on an English paper due tomorrow. For some reason I just can't get my mind around English grammar and the entire paper has to be written in English so it's messing me up a bit." This was actually very irritating to her because she had, before being given her families sacred bead, wanted to go into the diplomatic core. But while she had a decent ear for languages, she for some reason could not make the jump to the written form. "I volunteered to take nighttime watch not only because I was the least tired of Kan'u and myself. After all I did get a nice nap this afternoon." She smiled wickedly at Ranma-chan as the redhead blushed hard enough to almost match her hair color. "But also because I knew I would have to finish this tonight."

Still blushing Ranma-chan and rose to her feet and moved over to sit next to her. "Why don't you tell me what you're having trouble with and I'll see if I can help? I'm actually pretty good at languages."

Behind them, Kan'u finished pushing her own bed next to Ranma-chan's futon and turned smiling as she watched the two working on their homework together. With Ranma's help Chou'un finished her homework and only another 45 minutes of writing. That done the two joined her in bed.

Not two hours later the two weapon users were startled awake by the sound of the redhead's quiet sobbing. Each of them put an arm around the smaller girl and hugged her tightly letting her get it out of her system and after 15

minutes or so, the girl fell silent and slowly went back to sleep.

That night, while Ranma's dreams were nowhere near as good as they had been the night before they were not plagued with memories of what he had done to save Chinkyu. The knowledge that other people saw and recognized the necessity for what he had done helped him greatly, as well as their unconditional support and affection. And thus another piece of his Genma induced brainwashing fell by the wayside.

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Chinkyu woke up the next morning to a very unfamiliar sound, the sound of a girl singing. She had a moment of panic as the brief memory of what had occurred to her right before she was knocked out. But checking her body she didn't feel any new bruises or injuries or anything like that, and she certainly would've been woken up at some point if she had been abused, which was something she wouldn't put past that sadistic bitch Kaku.

Her thought processes however halted like they had run into a wall as the smell of cooking permeated her brain. For a moment her mind had to fight her stomach for dominance before deciding on a course of action.

She tried to get up stealthily, but her attempt was interrupted by a friendly voice from her blindside. "Good, I see you're awake. We were wondering what had happened to knock you out as, alas, none of us are doctors."

Chinkyu turned to see Chou'un standing there watching her with a calm expression on her face. She knew the older girl, of course. As a friend to the strongest fighter in the territory, she of course had taught herself about the other stronger fighters around that might come around to challenge Ryofu. She immediately got to her feet and fell into a combat stance. "What the hell's going on?" she shouted, "are you working with that bitch Kaku?"

Chou'un giggled raising a hand to conquer smile as another feminine voice, this time coming from the kitchen as the singing stopped answered her "no we're not, in fact I saved you from those bastards last night."

Ranma-chan came in dressed in a frilly kitchen apron over his normal clothing with Kan'u following behind her with several more plates for breakfast.

One of the two things that Ranma actually liked about his female body was that it could hold a tune (the other was it made mooching food easier). He loved to sing, but in his original body he couldn't hold a tune to save his life. In this form however, she could and enjoyed using it. Though this was the first time she actually had an appreciative audience. Kan'u and Chou'un had walked in on her singing as she cooked breakfast for everyone and rather than be amused or condescending had been admiring, and even asked her to continue, which she did, blushing in embarrassment.

Ryuubi and Chouhi came in as well and snickered at the sight of Ranma in a frilly apron before turning to look at Chinkyu. Ryuubi nodded towards the dining table. "Sit and eat first please, then we'll talk. We don't actually have much time it being a school day after all, but we can spend an hour or so filling you in on what we know, and then you can tell us what you know."

The girl stood there for a moment undecided until Chouhi spoke up. "And don't worry about Kaku, she's tied up outside. After what Ranma told us about what she tried to have done to you, we didn't really feel like giving her a lot of hospitality."

Chinkyu thought about that for a second then smiled and sat down at the dinner table. People who were pissed off at Kaku were all right in her book.

Breakfast went smoothly, interspersed with several compliments towards the singing, the food and how well Ranma-chan looked in the frilly apron. Ranma-chan took the first two in stride and scowled at the last. She modestly agreed to make lunch for everyone from now on in return for being paid for the food supplies.

Chinkyu looked on in slight bemusement at the atmosphere for a moment before realizing that it was deceptively normal, and that they were trying to put her at her ease because they weren't certain how she would react. She put them at their own ease by reacting calmly and informing them of what had occurred to her the night before.

She had been following Kaku around because she was worried that Kaku was going to make a move against Ryofu, or turn the emperor against her. She had followed Kaku up to the fifth floor of the apartment complex that Rakuyo used as a base of operations but was surprised by a noose dropping down around her neck from behind. Before she could react she was being throttled from behind by someone she couldn't reach, and as she tried to turn two other thugs hammered her in the head with baseball bats. Her last thought before blacking out was wondering what was going to happen to her.

However hearing from Ranma what he had been forced to do to rescue her was bit of a shock.

She was a friend of Ryofu Hosen, the strongest fighter in the territory. She knew for a fact how good her friend was. And while she felt that Ryofu could have done what Ranma did last night, she couldn't have done it so easily. The idea that this new fighter that so concerned the Emperor and Ryofu had saved her and done so in such a dramatic manner was something that was going to take some getting used to.

The exchange of information over she asked Ryuubi, who she took to be the leader "so what are you going to do with me now? Am I a hostage?"

Ryuubi shook her head, speaking for the group in her role as the leader of their faction. "No, you're free to go if you want. We just ask that you tell Ryofu-san what occurred last night, and don't go anywhere until we decide what to do with the Kaku. As the wronged party, you should naturally be a part of that process, and I think your friend should have some input into it as well. In fact, if you can call your friend over, we can take care of that right now before going to school."

Kan'u nodded agreement. "That's a good idea, but I'm afraid I have a test today, Chou'un has a paper she has to hand in, and Ranma is on academic probation so none of us can afford to be late." Ranma looked over at her in surprise, and she laughed. "What, you thought I didn't know about that? We all took a long look in your academic history Ranma and let me tell you it gave us quite a lot of laughs." Ranma pouted outrageously and the other three girls laughed at him while Chinkyu looked on a little irritated at being out of the loop.

A little while later she was on the phone with her friend and Ryofu, after getting over the shock that she was all right, immediately told her that she would be over as soon as possible. However, by that time the students who needed to go to school had to leave, and her friend arrived to a temple empty except for Chinkyu and the still unconscious Kaku.

Once she arrived, it took about half an hour to explain what had occurred last night from Chinkyu's perspective. After that, Ryofu agreed to wait until the temple's residence returned in the afternoon to decide what to do about Kaku. Normally she wouldn't have agreed to that and would already have killed her but Ryofu desperately wanted to have a talk with this new fighter Ranma, and maybe something more could come out of it. He was rather handsome after all and powerful as well.

The rest of the morning for those at school passed uneventfully, but the same could not be said for people elsewhere in the region.

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Police officer Yomi Makashuta turned to his partner who was still on the ground, gagging at the stench of the scene of the crime the two had been called out to investigate. "Are you about done?"

The younger man nodded slightly. I'm sorry, sir, it's just something like that...

"I know kid, I know. Better get the police commissioner on the phone. This looks like something he'll want to know about." Yomi shook his head sadly. He'd been transferred here from Nerima to give the local police force an idea of what to expect but even he had never thought he'd ever see something like this.

The police commissioner did in fact want to know about it, and at first was both appalled and incensed that something like this at had occurred. Bringing in Ranma was supposed to end the problem, not add new ones or heighten the violence already in the district. But then he recalled the two instances that had already been reported within the last few days. The seven C and D ranked fighters that had been arrested in the last few days was only the start. Three fighters, 2 B and one A ranked Fighter that his police force could never have taken on, not only out of action permanently but crippled or weakened to the level of a two-year-old had also been taken into custody, a marked improvement over what had been happening.

Those at all been caused by Ranma, and he knew somehow without even asking the young man in question that this latest incident had to deal with him as well. However, he also knew that whatever else he was Ranma was not a cold-blooded killer. If something like this had occurred, it meant one of two things: first and perhaps the most likely was that somehow Ranma had been taken captive and then saw a cat he couldn't get away from, forcing him or her to go into his berserker rage, with disastrous results. The reports on Ranma had emphasized the damage he could do with the so called Cat Fist.

The second option was that somehow this level of violence had been justified, which was a scary thought but as more and more forensic evidence came in that there had been guns and ballistic weapons found at the scene of the massacre he became more and more certain that the second scenario was in fact the case. Still, he would have to

call Ranma and see what the hell had happened. Just because he told the boy that they could deal with an upsurge in violence for a short amount of time was no cause for something like this to occur.

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"That was probably the most normal day of school I've ever had," remarked Ranma as he and the Seito quartet walked home. "Nobody attacking me, no weird fights, nobody challenging me" he winked at Kan'u who giggled remembering how they met a few days ago "not even any strange encounters."

Chou'un smiled slightly. "Perhaps karma has decided to reward you for your good deed last night." Ranma looked at her askance and she smiled. "Or perhaps it's just balancing out the madness that you've been dealing with for the past few days."

Ranma shrugged. "Nah, no way. I mean take away the **level** of the violence and what happened last night, the past few days have been pretty normal all things considered." Kan'u and the others all laughed at what they thought was a joke, but he looked at them in surprise. Ranma was serious.

His day however was about to go pear shaped in a rather dramatic way. "Ranma for forsaking Akane prepare to die!" From above a person that Ranma had hoped to never see again jumped down at him from a nearby roof.

Standing next to Ryuubi when he heard the shout Ranma reacted quickly grabbing her and jumping backward. Kan'u, Chou'un and Chouhi moved just as fast, evading a large old fashioned umbrella as it crashed down into the pavement shattering it with concussive force in a wide circle around the point of impact.

As Ryuubi blushed at being so close to a man Ranma glared at the person in front of him, barely keeping his anger in check. "RRRRyyyooogga what the fuck are you doing here!" Ryoga, whose relationship with Akari hadn't lasted very long given he continued chasing Akane at the same time, hadn't been around when he left Nerima, and had escaped Ranma's birthday present to himself, much to his irritation at the time. *I should have known that he'd show up eventually! Damn it, why didn't he find me when I was out in the woods where we could fight without worrying about breakable things like people, buildings or cities?*

Ryoga had changed only slightly from the last time the two had seen one another. His hair was a little longer, his shoulders a little broader, his eyes wilder. But his clothing was the same, as was the look of maddened rage on his face as he stared at the man he blamed for everything that went wrong in his life. "Shut up you coward how dare you leave poor Akane like that, how dare you run away! For all that you have done to my sweet angel I'll kill you!"

Ranma put Ryuubi down gently and moved forward with a snarl but Kan'u put out a hand to stop him, which in turn caused Ryoga to halt his charge as his mad eyes glared at her. Ranma glanced at her and gulped in sudden terror at the look on his girlfriend's face. "And this is?"

"Um, uh this is Ryoga Hibiki one of my old rivals. His family has this weird curse that makes them get lost all the time." Ranma answered cautiously, his automatic terror of angry women coming to the fore.

Kan'u looked at him then at Chou'un who waved one hand forward motioning to Kan'u that she could take this one. Kan'u stepped forward, speaking in a slow controlled voice. "Greetings Ryoga Hibiki, I am Kan'u Unchou. You have not only attacked me, but my friends, my boyfriend and my leader, Ryuubi Gentoku. As such your ass is mine." Ranma made to protest but Kan'u shot him a single look and he shut up abruptly. She was **pissed!** Any attack on Ryuubi, who despite her inner dragon wasn't a warrior, would always get under Kan'u's skin.

Ryoga fit this statement into his world view and snarled angrily "Ranma how dare you leave Akane for this slut! I'll"

He was interrupted by a slap that smacked his head to the side with a violent crack! Kan'u, who had been merely angry, was now furious. "Such a label coming from you, a perverted pig that used his curse to spy on a girl is particularly irritating. Oh, don't glare at Ma-chan like that, he didn't tell me anything about you. I found out about you by reading the files on Nerima from the Federal Department of Paranormal Activities that Ryuubi-sama was able to find. And I believe I mentioned that you are fighting me."

Ryoga snarled at her as he touched the side of his face. "Fine! But after I beat your new defender down you're next Ranma! You coward, hiding behind another woman's skin" Crack! He was interrupted by another slap to his other cheek that once more rocked him back on his heels.

Kan'u's voice dripped contempt as she took up a combat stance across from Ryoga as her friends automatically backed up. Ranma followed them though he was still worried about letting Kan'u fight this battle for him. "I said you were fighting me, are you deaf as well as stupid pork chops?"

Ryoga growled but readily dropped into his own stance before charging forward with a roar, bringing his umbrella down to crush this bitch that stood between him and bringing his righteous wrath down on the man that had made his life hell.

Kan'u dodged to one side and then sped forward, slamming punches and kicks into Ryoga's rocklike body before her hands flicked toward her face, fingers looking to gouge. Ryoga was forced to dodge backward, leaving his umbrella where it had crashed into a shop's wall to guard his head and eyes from her attack. He tried to lash out and catch his attacker with his normal forceful style but Kan'u dodged backward, gathering her ki and preparing a stronger assault.

Ryoga gripped his belt and pulled it out of his pants, swiftly filling it with ki to make it into a makeshift blade. "Take this!" He shouted, bringing it down and nearly scoring on Kan'u, who dodged the slash only to take a glancing blow to her side from a kick.

She responded by thumping a five punch combo at almost amaguriken speed into his leg, deflecting most of the strength as she backed up in the face of his assault. "No thank you, no one is interested in anything in your pants."

Ryoga blushed as he kept attacking "You-you harlot, how dare you!"

Kan'u came in again and this time landed two hard palm shots to his chest, which he shrugged off like the tank he was. "I believe I mentioned how I felt about such accusations little piggy!"

Ryoga simply ignored her strikes as she expected. Ranma had not told her anything about Ryoga's curse, but he had mentioned that his style emphasized endurance and strength. Still, there were ways to combat that.

Again and again she struck out, using different variants to land blows as she easily dodged his return shots. Ryoga fell into the habit of ignoring her blows entirely save for those aimed at his face in an effort to tag her in turn.

One return blow did land, but Kan'u bit her lip and stayed in the fight even as she felt a rib give way. Her return double palm strike at first brought a sneer to Ryoga's face until she shouted "Explosive Palm!"

Both of her palms charged with her school's signature power strike landed as one. Ryoga was blown backward with a shout into and through a wall behind him by this attack. He lay covered in rubble for a minute, trying to figure out what had just happened. *Jesus what did that bitch hit me with? I think I've got a few cracked ribs! I guess it's time to up the ante!* Ryoga stood up, shaking off the debris and bringing his hands forward. "Shi shi hakoden!"

Kan'u's eyes widened momentarily at the speed with which Ryoga recovered but she responded instantly. She brought a hand down to her fold-space pocket and reaching in brought Seryuutou out quickly. "Kiiyaaa!" She brought her naginata around in an arc, intersecting the dark green ball of ki. With a shudder Seryuutou cut straight through the ball of depressed ki and Kan'u brought her weapon around in a circle.

Ryoga gaped for a second before snarling. "Damn it, I'm so depressed you could do that! Perfect shi!"

Kan'u didn't wait for his assault, instead slashing down with her own long distance attack. "Lightning Roar!" A large bolt of light green lightning flashed forward from the arc of her weapon impacting Ryoga.

Ryoga screamed as the attack landed electrocuting him where he stood, his signature durability doing little against an electric attack like this. After a moment the attack overcame him and he collapsed crackling and smoking to the ground.

Ranma ran forward as Kan'u went to one knee, holding her side and grimacing. "Kan-chan that was great, are you alright, why'd you want ta take him on when it was my fight?" He babbled anxiously.

Kan'u looked at him as she got to her feet, one of Ranma's hands under her arm helping her to stand, her other hand using Seryuutou to prop herself up. She smiled as she saw the mix of anxiety and confusion in his face. "In order, thank you, I think I have a rib broken and my hands feel like I've been using them to pound on concrete. And I fought him" She brought a hand up and touched his face gently "because your fights are mine Ma-chan. That's another part of being in a relationship we stick up for one another not just you taking everything on yourself."

Ranma looked into her eyes for a moment, face blank before he smiled widely hugging her gently. "Thanks Kan-chan, that means a lot to me." He turned to look at where Ryoga lay, his face bleak. "But now I have to fix this piece of my past so that it can't go round and bother people anymore."

Ryuubi came forward to support Kan'u as Chouhi and Chou'un moved to help Ranma clear way the rubble to make certain that no one had been injured in either of the buildings damaged in the fight.

Finding no one Ranma went over to Ryoga and heated up a coin as Chouhi smacked the pig awake. "This is the last time you attack me out of the blue Ryoga." Reaching down he placed the coin on a specific part of the other man's back and Ryoga yelped at the heat coming out of his comatose state before turning to look at his enemy with growing horror. "Just like Akane and my old man Ryoga, you've abused your strength and skill, dishonoring the Code. Now you ain't got that strength anymore. Try livin' life like a normal person, like the people you've endangered in yer crazy attacks on me, 'cause that's all you'll ever be from now on. And I'll warn ya now Ryoga, this was the soft option. If ya endanger more lives the next time ya find me by attackin' me out of the blue, I'll kill you."

Ranma glared down at his former rival eyes cold before he moved off to join the group from Seito and they all walked off leaving Ryoga behind them. After a moments shocked silence the pig found his voice and began to shout after them. "Ranma you dishonorable cur you can't do this to me! Damn it Ranma, get back here and take this moxibustion point off me! Ranma, I'm warning you! Ranma!"

Ranma and the others walked on ignoring his cries. "See what I told ya about my life? A crazy person showing up was a daily thing in Nerima. Though normally I faced 'em all by myself, even if I wasn't their actual target."

Kan'u winced as she held a hand to her side. "Well if it means so much to you Ma-chan you can face the next crazy that comes along."

Ranma nodded, "You got it."

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The rest of the trip to the temple went smoothly, thankfully and they arrived to find Ryofu and Chinkyu still in attendance.

Ryofu sized Ranma up as he led Kan'u Unchou inside. The champion of Seito was holding her stomach and wincing occasionally, but Ryofu barely spared her a glance all her attention on the pig tailed warrior.

Ryofu was the best warrior in the Kanto region. That wasn't boasting or arrogance, it was cold hard fact. She was stronger, more skilled and faster than anyone else. Only one or two fighters could even come close to match her level of skill. Yet for all that, she wouldn't want to take on the man in front of her. There was something about him that made her pause, something that screamed there was more under the surface that could not be seen. What little of his aura she could see with her admittedly limited ki sight was tightly controlled, more so than any other aura she had ever seen.

Ryuubi, once more taking the spokeswoman role bowed slightly to Ryofu in greeting as Chouhi moved to a protective spot to her right. "Welcome to our home Ryofu-san. As you can see we had a bit of an incident on our way home, but please be welcome. I'm sorry as to the circumstances that brought you here, but if you wait a moment we will get down to business soon."

Ryofu nodded her head, smirking slightly at the somehow out of place politeness, but remained silent for now motioning Chinkyu to do the same as she continued to watch Ranma carefully. *He truly is a most appetizing dish.*

Ranma walked Kan'u onto the temple porch and had her sit down as Chou'un went to fetch the first aid kit, a necessity in any fighter's home. "I'm all right Ma-chan I've had worse injuries before."

Ranma scoffed, then grinned lopsidedly at her, setting the heart of nearly every girl there to racing as he very gently poked her in the side. Kan'u gasped and growled at him as she buckled a little. "Just cause yer tough don't mean you don't need help Kan-chan, give and take remember? Now let's get those gloves off of ya." Ranma suited action to word and soon Kan'u's red fighting gloves were off her hands. Once they were Kan'u stared in shock.

Her hands were a mass of black and blue marks, almost disgustingly purple, much worse than she had thought. "See, told ya. Since he took the Bakusai Tenketsu trainin' hitting Ryoga without first toughening up yer hands is a recipe for disaster even with gloves like yours on. Remind me sometime to tell ya how I toughened up my hands ta match, you'll get a kick out of it." Kan'u nodded in agreement, still staring bemused down at her battered hands.

Chou'un came back then with the first aid kit and Ranma bandaged up Kan'u's hands before leaving hurriedly as Ryuubi and Chou'un proceeded to take Kan'u's shirt off to bandage her ribs. Their giggles followed him out and Ryofu grinned a predator's grin. *So innocent, he's got to be a virgin. I can't remember the last time I broke in a virgin. This could be fun.*

Ranma came back after they finished, dragging their still comatose prisoner behind him. *I might've hit that pressure point a little too hard last night. Feh, whatever.*

The others had arranged themselves around the dining table with Ryuubi and her advisors at one end and Ryofu and Chinkyu at the other. Ranma took a seat in the middle next to Chou'un and propped Kaku up across from him between Chinkyu and Chouhi. If the two girls kicked the prisoner under the table a time or two no one else bothered to notice.

Ryuubi started the proceedings, deciding to keep things on a formal footing for now. "I think it would be best if Ranma relate to you what occurred last night from his perspective Ryofu-san before we move on to what to do with Kaku."

Ryofu nodded her cerulean hair bobbing. *Work now, stalk prey later.*

Ranma nodded his head, only the tightening around his eyes giving away the fact that he was still distressed about what had happened last night and what he had been forced to do. He gave a concise account of what had happened from the time he spotted Chinkyu being dragged into the van up until his rescue of her.

As he finished, Ryofu's attitude had switched from lusty to all business. She ignored the actual fight for now, the technique he used might be of interest later, but it wasn't as if she couldn't have done the same thing herself. "Not that I'm complaining but why were you in the area anyway? Were you spying on us, and how did you keep from being seen?"

Ranma shrugged. "I've been tryin' to get a handle on all the weird ki signatures in the area and was there doing the same. I wasn't spyin' really, if by that ya mean lookin' fer information, just tryin' to make my own assessment of the fighters around here." Ryofu nodded slowly, though why he was doing that and why he was in the area at all was still a mystery. A mystery that would not be solved today judging by the stubborn look on the pigtailed fighters face. "As to how I stay unseen" he paused as every fighter there leaned forward anxious to hear his reply and maybe get him to teach them if they could. "Now that" he said bringing a finger up to his lips "is a secret!"

His audience all facefaulted save Chouhi who merely groaned. "I'd have never pegged you as a Zellos fan Ranma. What next, you get some of your attacks from DBZ or something?"

"Nah nothing like that, but I did like Slayers and I've been dying to use that line since I first heard it." He said grinning.

Ryofu irritably pushed herself off the ground where she had planted herself and decided to drop that line of inquiry for now. "Can you remember if any of them were wearing school uniforms or anything to show their loyalties and if so how many?"

Ranma thought back, trying to get past his horror at what he had done to remember what he saw before he attacked. "Um a few of them were wearing school pants still, and I think I saw..." He trailed off as he pictured the scene in his mind again. "I think I saw some from all the schools around here including" his eyes moved sideways to Ryuubi "two who were maybe from Seito."

Kan'u and Chou'un both tensed as they turned to look at their leader who leaned back and thought through the attendance list for the day. "Hayato Miokawa and Yuji Arisawa missed today."

Kan'u and Chou'un both relaxed as Ryuubi continued. "Trust me no one is going to miss either of those bastards. One had a court date coming up on rape charges brought forward by his own sister, and the other was reviled by the student population for beating his last girlfriend nearly to death. Again, charges were made and he already had a court order forcing him to stay at least fifty feet from her at all times. We've been debating on punishing them ourselves after the police station was attacked and knowing how reluctant the police would be to press forward with their punishments."

Ryofu nodded. "Every school has 'fighters' like that. I would guess Ranma here," she winked at him "just took out the worst of them, the ones who had organized themselves at least. You're certain this bitch didn't mention anything about Totaku or the Emperor knowing what her plan was?"

Ranma nodded. "Positive, like I said she thought ya were getting' to have too much influence over this Tokkie guy and wanted to take you down a peg."

After this the discussion turned to what an appropriate punishment would be for Kaku's actions, with all the girls taking part, even the gentle Ryuubi getting into it as they described what they could do to her.

With the focus off Ranma for the moment he took the opportunity to surreptitiously study Ryofu's aura up close. The weirdness in her aura was much more apparent up close than from a distance, especially without the Umi-sen-ken getting in the way. What he saw was a lot of power, almost as much as Herb had when they fought, but none of the

control Kan'u or Chou'un had in their auras. It was also dominated by a color he had never seen before. He had seen red (anger), dark green (jealousy) and yellow (arrogance) as well as his own blue/white (confidence and pure ki) in the past but never this weird light pink before.

What was even odder was that she had dark spots in the aura. Usually dark spots in an aura indicated an illness or weakness of some kind, but the way these fluctuated and switched places and moved around they looked much more like some kind of strange curse, but Ranma really didn't know what to make of it. What was worse the pink color seemed to be almost artificial, and was strangely brighter directly around the dark spots, as if the dark spots were creating the color. *I really need to get in touch with Dr. Oden.*

It was at this point that Ranma realized she had caught him staring and blushed. Ryofu smiled seductively at Ranma leaning forward to show as much cleavage as she could, which given the looseness of her outfit was quite a lot. "Like what you see Ranma?"

Ranma shook his head quickly, eyes darting to Kan'u and Chou'un who were watching in equal parts amusement and concern. "It ain't that, its' yer aura. Did anyone ever curse you or somethin'? Yer aura looks strangely sick for some reason, with some stuff in it I ain't ever seen before."

Ryofu smirked and pulled back, certain he was prevaricating so as not to get in trouble with Kan'u or Chou'un. *There's no way he can be so skilled with ki sight to see my illness with it. Still I've got his subconscious interest at least, that will do for now and hopefully when next we meet he'll be receptive to my advances.* "No I don't think so. In any case, I think it is time to wake the bitch up and be done with it."

Kaku woke up to find herself surrounded not only by the girl she had attempted to get gang raped, but also the boy who saved Chinkyu, Ryofu Hosen, and two of the top fighters of Seito Private school. That this was a very bad situation for her to be in was not lost on her, and her agile mind began to prepare her defense, first and foremost thinking of ways to put the blame on the Emperor to save her skin. Loyalty and ambition was one thing, staying alive was another matter entirely. She could deal with the sheer terror she had felt last night later.

Kaku never got the chance however, as Ranma reached for her back with a heat charged coin and placed it on a specific spot on her back. She shrieked in surprise, but the heat was pulled away before she could do anything more. "Well that's my punishment over with." said Ranma quietly to Kanu. "It ain't the moxibustion point I been usin' but I think it'll definitely fit her crime. The rest of ya can figure out what you want ta do with her but I don't want to be a part of it." So saying Ranma walked away.

Kan'u looked at the glasses girl thoughtfully with her head cocked to one side for a moment before deciding to follow her boyfriend out of the room.

Ryuubi stood there for a moment. All the joking and jesting aside, she really did not feel comfortable standing over another human being as judge, jury and executioner. Despite the apparent authority she wielded as the reincarnation of Liu Bei this kind of thing was just beyond the pale to her, she'd much rather be reading.

She looked over at the Ryofu and said "I think that Ranma's punishment, whatever it was is good enough for our group. After all, the perpetrators of the actual attack all died last night. I know that you don't think it is, but I would ask that you let her live and that she is not completely crippled. Other than that you may take her and do with her as you wish. Just make certain that whatever you do doesn't cause trouble for my faction."

Ryofu nodded and replied, "You have my word." So saying she and Chinkyu dragged Kaku to her feet. She barely had time to scream before she was in the air being carried away by Ryofu and Chinkyu.

As the two jumped away, Ryofu decided she would hand over the girl with glasses to the Emperor to see what he would do about her usurpation of authority, and if it wasn't enough, then she would take her own revenge. She also had something else to research. Ranma might not have said anything she could hear, but she had seen the coin he held glowing briefly. Maybe whatever it was had something to do with the strange weakness seen in the fighters that had escaped arrest from Bunshu's disastrous ambush attempt.

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After their guests left, Kanu looked at Ranma with her head on one side. "What was that moxibustion point you used Ranma? You said that it wasn't the weakness moxibustion point."

Ranma blushed and stammered under their gazes as he answered. "U-Um, well it's er, well, ya know how when ya, ya know finish? Um, like yesterday" he gulped and Kan'u and Chou'un both blushed and grinned at the memory while Ryuubi and Chouhi looked on mystified. "Um well, er she, um, that moxibustion point'll, um, make her unable to."

Kan'u and Chou'un both blinked, then their jaws dropped, their faces showing a battle between laughter and horror. "Are you saying that whatever happens she won't be able to orgasm, to cum?" Chou'un asked.

Ranma nodded as Ryuubi blushed and looked shocked while Chouhi simply looked shocked. "Yeah, I uh, learned it reading through a scroll from my school's old grandmaster. It had a lot of stuff that was just y'know perverted, but I figured this was a time ta use it. Let the punishment fit the crime and all." They all stared at his crimson face for a moment before bursting out into laughter.

After recovering from her laughing fit Kan'u smirked and changed the subject. "Were you really checking out Ryofu's aura rather than her body Ranma?" She said it jokingly knowing full well the amount of problems he had with showing interest in women.

Chou'un joined in, coming up on his other side. "She is known as one of the most beautiful women around here and very promiscuous too."

Ranma looked at them and made certain they were joking before answering. "Yeah her aura was way more interestin' to me than her body. I mean she's pretty and all but way too..... er... slutty?" When no smacks were forthcoming for use of that word he went on "But her aura was something else. I was serious it looks like she's got one, maybe two curses on her. I'm gonna write a doctor friend of mine about it and about the dragon auras. There's some kind of connection there, and I want ta know what it is."

"Until then" he went on, reaching into his pocket fold-space and pulling out a large scroll "I want ya both to study this. It's a scroll on auras and readin' 'em as well as using them in a fight. I got this from a group of monks in Tibet when a returned some other scrolls my old man had stolen and helped them drive off some bandits in the area." *And worked for them as a veritable slave throughout the winter but whatever it wasn't the worst thing to ever happen to me after all.* "Fer some reason none of ya fighters around here use ki sight anywhere near the level it can be, and I think it'll give ya a big time edge in a fight if ya can."

Chou'un took the scroll eagerly and Kan'u nodded remembering how in their first bout he had seen the buildup of her life force and been able to prepare for her attack. "We'll start looking over this tonight, Ranma. Are you going to quiz us on it or something to make certain we understand it?"

Ranma nodded a trifle grimly. "Yep, I will. The sooner more people can see the weird auras around here the better. And I want ta give ya both as much weapons ta use as I can."

Kan'u and Chou'un spent the next few minutes kissing Ranma into a daze for that comment before reluctantly letting him leave. He had a date with some sacred beads to keep, and the more he destroyed the more order and law could start regaining some ground around here. He also had a report to give to the police commissioner.

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Ranma spent the remainder of that day on school work and then analyzing and destroying the beads he had collected the night before, then taking a long hot shower and trying to scald away the memories of what each bead had tried to show him. None of them were as bad as Hanno's because Ranma had learned how to partially block the visions, but they were still bad and dealing with them thirty at a time was even harder. He didn't even try the beads he'd gotten from the crazy bastard, the bald guy and his friend.

The discussion with the police commissioner had gone... okay. Not great but okay. The government was happy with what he had done so far, and the sharp drop in fighting and other crimes in the last four days was a blessing, but the incident at the warehouse had soured their attitude considerably. Given the circumstances they had approved Ranma's actions, but warned him to try and keep things calm for a time.

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*Somewhere that defied that description, some-when that did not change to allow the measurement that is time, a consciousness stirred. It had been diminished, it was less than it was. For the first time in thousands of years something was occurring that it did not intend, something that diminished it in small but increasingly noticeable ways. An outside force was interfering with its game of vengeance. The source would have to be identified and stopped, before it was diminished further.*

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The next day at school Ranma met up with Kan'u at the school entrance only to find his girlfriend in a bit of a state for some reason. When he asked her what was wrong she merely grabbed his arm and started pulling him behind her.

The crowd of students around them had mixed reactions seeing such an open display of affection by Kan'u towards

the new hunk Ranma. The girls bemoaned the loss of the hunk but none of them were stupid enough to want to bother Kan'u or Chou'un in their relationships with him. The boys reacted much more harshly to the rumor that he was dating both Kan'u and Chou'un by being equally jealous and irritated. Both of those beauties had scorned any and all advances towards them, and here this new guy came along and swept both of them off their feet? Life just wasn't fair sometimes.

For his part Ranma ignored the students reactions to his personal life as he always had before, and at this moment was trying not to react to Kan'u's breasts being wrapped around his arm as she dragged him along.

Kan'u halted their progress right outside the principal office. Opening the door just wide enough for them to get an eye into the crack she motioned Ranma to look inside. Ranma did so and saw the girl he had saved in the hospital standing in front of the principal's desk. Ryuubi was over to one side, standing a little ways behind the principal with Chou'un holding a folder behind her like a secretary.

Kan'u whispered in his ear, causing him to shiver and Kan'u to smirk for a moment. "Later for that." She said, causing Ranma to shiver again and her smirk to widen before getting back to business "is that the girl that you saved in the hospital?"

Ranma nodded. "Yeah, she here asking for more help? I said she could find me here if she needed it." Kan'u looked at him and fought back a groan. *He really doesn't know what he does to women. If he had even a hint how he attracts us he'd just be idiotic or a playboy rather than sweet and naïve. I guess this is just something I'll have to put up with* she thought. Inwardly she shrugged, thinking it was well worth it. She opened the door muttering out of the side of her mouth "we'll just have to find out why she's here won't we?"

Ryomou turned slightly to see Kan'u walk in with Ranma behind her. Her eyes narrowed as she tried to fight back the memories of the last time she had seen these two together in the park. Her dreams that night had been very sweet indeed...

The principal gestured for Ryuubi to step forward and Ryuubi asked "what is one of the Nanyo Academy's Big Four doing here at Seito?"

Without a flourish or warning the Ryomou pulled a pack of papers out of her bookbag and handed it over to the principal. "I'm transferring" she said calmly. Ryuubi and her friends looked at one another in shock as Ranma looked on confused.

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After the principal filed the paperwork and formally welcomed Ryomou to the school Ryuubi led her and the others down to the student council suite, where she gestured Ryomou into a seat at the end of the council table. She took her seat at the front with Kan'u on one side and Chou'un and Chouhi on the other. Ranma remained standing, leaning against the wall. "I'm sure you know why we are so surprised by this Ryomou-san, so why don't we cut to the chase and you can explain why you want to transfer here."

Ranma spoke up from his place by the wall. "'Scuse me, but I must be missin' somethin' here. Why's it such a big deal that she's transferring?"

Ryomou spoke up sounding amused as she looked at him with her one visible eye. "You really aren't a destiny bound warrior are you? If you were you would already know the answer to that question. Since the beginning of this strange destiny we're all laboring under, not a single student in the entire Kanto region has transferred from one school to another. It simply isn't done."

Ryuubi nodded. "That's right, we all formed into our factions as our destiny dictated, so a student transferring would be seen as a switch of allegiance from one faction to another, and thus if the fighter is a high level would see a shift the balance of power."

"And she's a high level fighter," Ranma stated nodding his head as finally understood what the problem was. Everyone looked at him in surprise and he shrugged, grinning at Chou'un and Kan'u, who really should not have been surprised. "Ki-sight, remember? You're a B or low A rank fighter right?" Ryomou nodded, not surprised given his comments to her in her hospital room that he could tell her rank.

"Which brings us back to why you have decided to transfer here?" Seeing Ranma open his mouth Ryuubi answered his question before he could speak. "It's an honest question Ranma. I know that to you the idea of mindlessly following our destinies is bizarre but the idea of not doing so rarely occurs to any of us in a big way. This is a big thing and thus we have a right to know."

Ranma frowned but nodded reluctantly. For some reason he was feeling a little protective of the new girl, though she obviously didn't need much in the way of protection. "Okay, I can see that, I just thought her former friend tryin' ta kill her was enough."

Ryomou spoke again deciding that was as good an introduction as she would get. "That was only a part of it actually. The problem began earlier this year. How much do you know about Nanyo Academy?"

Ranma snorted and looked at the others. "Not a lot, I know that Hakufu chick and Kokin go there. The police rated it as the third worst school for problem fighters though, behind Rakuyo and Yoshuu. I figured that was 'cause of the crazy bastard that attacked ya." *Whose bead I haven't researched yet, I really need ta do that...*

Ryomou looked at the others filing that police bit into her mind as Ryuubi spoke up. "The leader of the school was supposedly a boy named Enjutsu Ranma-san, but he has not been seen for months. His orders were relayed through one of the academy's Big Four, the name given to the school's four best fighters, named Saji Genpou. As it was known that the original Enjutsu was a paranoid, there were few questions about his reincarnation staying in hiding. Saji later falsified Imperial orders and was killed for it by Ryofu-san three days ago, around the time you first arrived in fact."

Ryomou nodded. "We found out that Saji had been manipulating the school for months. There's evidence that he may have killed Enjutsu and given out all the orders since himself. He also sent both me and Kannei against the Shou Haou, in an attempt to wake up her dragon a week ago."

"Are you certain about that!?" Ranma's voice came out like a whip crack, and everyone looked at him in shock as the normally laid back warrior leaned forward aggressively, blue eyes flashing with energy as they locked on Ryomou.

Ryomou flushed, slightly turned on by this show of power. "Y-yes, he practically admitted it to Gakushu, another member of the Big Four. He first sent Kannei, but I took him out, and then when my own phone showed the order I attacked Hakufu."

Ranma snorted. "And that's why ya were in the hospital." He stated flatly. "I don't know why, but the dragon in that chick is way closer to the surface and way deadlier feelin' than even yours Ryuubi-san. It's like a huge bomb that **wants** ta go off. Why the hells did he want ta wake it up?"

"T-that I don't know," Ryomou answered, getting control of her hormones quickly. "I only know he kept trying. You're right, I was beaten down by the dragon in Hakufu, but it didn't stay in control of her. Her cousin Kokin somehow got her to regain control. But Saji falsified an imperial order to send several execution teams after her. Only one found her though, and apparently that was the one you ran into with Hanno and Taishiji." Ranma nodded as everyone else looked at him, remembering what he had done to Hanno. "And the attack on me in the hospital was apparently another attempt. Hakufu had visited me just an hour before Kannei showed up. They barely missed one another, and with the numbers he had they would have woken up the dragon in her again."

(Well that was what she thought anyway. What really happened was the Emperor, showing a flair for irony, decided to take out Ryomou, who was known as one of Saji's strongest supporters, using the same code that Saji had used to falsify his own imperial orders, thus making it appear as if it was Saji's own fault. Ryomou would never realize that the final act of manipulation that at last showed her how Saji felt about her wasn't in fact from Saji. In any event the actions it spawned would lead her down a road she had never even contemplated, a road leading her to happiness and a new life.)

Ryomou paused looking out a window in the far wall. "I had a bit of a crush on Saji you know. He was handsome and I thought he was strong, and he flirted with me all the time." She snorted. "Of course he flirted with every girl he met, and bedded as many as he could. I knew he was a man-whore but I thought at some point he would change. To find out that he was manipulating the entire school, manipulating me and willing to sacrifice me to meet his ends was a shock."

Ranma lost his dangerous look and moved forward to place a hand on her shoulder. "I know what it's like ta see yer crush in a new light. It took me a lot longer though to give up on it than you, so let me tell ya yer lucky ya were able to so quick."

Ryomou flushed even darker under his touch, the memories of what he could do with those hands from yesterday flashing through her mind. "T-thank you, but his manipulation was only one reason I want to transfer. The other is Totaku, and he controls my school because of Enjutsu's orders, or perhaps Saji's, there's no way to tell. I also have begun to question other ideas that I once took for granted, such as our fates or the entire 'destiny' thing. Don't get me wrong, I love to fight it excites me and gets my blood pumping." Everyone in the room save Ryuubi nodded, they

certainly understood that. "But the question why has just been reverberating in my head ever since I got my ass kicked by Hakufu's dragon."

She snorted at their looks of surprise, her one visible eye winking at them in an odd moment of humor. "Oh don't look at me like that. One moment she's a rank amateur and I'm winning handily, the next I'm the one being kicked around like a white belt. It was more than that, her entire character changed. One moment she's an utter ditz" Ranma, Kan'u and Chou'un both nodded, that was the Hakufu they knew "the next she's a ravaging killing machine, like Kannei except far more skilled and powerful. I would have died for certain if not for her cousin Kokin."

"And yer own dragon." Ranma stated. Ryomou looked at him in shock and he reached out to gently touch her eye patch. "This thing's an interestin' idea to inhibit it, but I can see the connection between it and the 'dragon' inside of ya. I couldn't see it when I saw ya in the hospital but now it's pretty damn clear with yer ki back to normal. I'd like ta meet whoever thought this seal up though, it's a great idea."

Ryomou blushed again under his touch and Kan'u's lips twitched. *It definitely seems that there was something more than self-interest that had Ryomou coming here. And she is cute. I wouldn't mind 'experimenting' a bit with her, much like Chou'un-chan, though Chou'un-chan hasn't indicated she's ready for that just yet. Still I do have one objection to this...*

As these thoughts went through the tan warriors mind Ryomou answered Ranma's statement. "Y-yes I suppose that's true. But that and the attack on me, the one Saji ordered and the things that have occurred since Totaku became the Emperor all added up. So here I am." She shrugged.

Ranma nodded and moved back to where he had been standing, and Kan'u leaned forward. "And does your new disdain for destiny extend to myself and how you were supposed to kill me?" Ranma stiffened behind her, but then relaxed. It wasn't like **he** believed in this shit after all.

Ryomou looked at Kan'u for a moment, eye lighting up in eagerness before dimming. "I'd love to fight you, but as it stands I don't think I would have a chance at beating you, let alone killing you. My own lack of skill has been shown to me very plainly the past few days."

Kan'u nodded. "Tomorrow at lunch in the dojo then, if you are amenable?" Ryomou nodded and Kan'u leaned back satisfied. *Fighting her in a controlled environment will allow me to see if being the reincarnation of who she was in the past really will give her an advantage over me and prove once and for all whether or not there is something to our destinies.*

Ryuubi was well satisfied with the answers she got for now, and nodded at Chouhi. "Well, that about answers my questions, welcome to Seito. Chouhi-san, could you show Ryomou-san where her homeroom is?" The younger girl nodded and the two left. She turned to the others, not showing a hint of the ditzzy, bookish girl she usually was. "We should all get going to but please keep an eye on our newest ally for a few days. I don't doubt anything she said, but I want to make certain."

Kan'u smirked looking sideways at Ranma as Chou'un giggled replying for them. "I don't think that will be a problem. It's always easier to watch someone when you know what they're after." She and Kan'u laughed as Ranma just stood there looking confused.

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Ryomou met with Kan'u and the others at the dojo dressed in her usual combat outfit, a maid's uniform in blue and white. The reaction she got from the others though quickly made it clear that she would have to find a new outfit as soon as possible.

"So do you practice some sort of martial arts housekeeping or something?" Ranma asked as soon as she walked in.

"Excuse me?" Ryomou blinked as Kan'u snickered behind her hand, standing in her usual outfit of a tight school uniform baring her midriff and red combat gloves. Thankfully her injuries from fighting Ryoga had all healed, even the rib. While she may not heal as fast as Ranma her ki-enhanced healing speed was still adequate to the injuries he had taken.

"Well, your outfit y'know," Ranma shrugged. "I figured you must practice some kind of maid-type martial arts. Somethin' like hidden weapons in household cleaning tools or somethin'."

"What sort of idiot would come up with something like that?" Ryomou scowled half in curiosity and half certain he was making fun of her and vowing to make him pay for it at the earliest opportunity.

Ranma waved his hands peacefully to ward off the glare he was getting from the blue haired girl. "Hey, I've seen weirder styles, like Martial Arts Tea Ceremony, Martial Arts Dining, and Martial Arts Calligraphy."

"Martial Arts Tea Ceremony?" Ryomou asked in confusion.

"Martial Arts Dining?" Chouhi asked, wondering why the image of a frog's giant mouth and tongue came to mind.

"Martial Arts Calligraphy?" Kan'u wondered. "You haven't mentioned that one yet in your stories Ma-chan."

"No, from what I have heard Ryomou-san practices some kind of Cosplay S&M Martial Arts," Chou'un said in a deadpan voice, only a small smirk giving away the fact she was making a joke.

Ranma blushed but also nodded. "That'd match the style I saw her use to take down that Kannei guy in the hospital."

Ryomou shivered at the memory of thinking Kannei might look at her like that for a moment before growling, "I don't practice Cosplay S&M Martial Arts, or Martial Arts Housekeeping. It's just my fighting outfit, okay? If everyone thinks about it like that I'll figure out something else later. Can we just get on with this now?"

Kan'u nodded and the others backed away. The two women stood there for a moment sizing one another up then Ryomou screamed out a battle cry as she leapt into the air, descending on Kan'u with her fist drawn back.

Kan'u deftly side-stepped the attack, causing Ryomou to miss but she immediately continued her assault, launching kicks and punches one after another in an intricate dance of violence.

At first Kan'u was positive this first rushing attack was a faint intended to convince her Ryomou was slower than she really was, but as she caught a glimpse of the shorter girl's face she realized that Ryomou was serious. *I can't be that much faster than her, can I?* Then she realized. *I had to push my body well beyond its limits to keep up with Ranma's female form, so now everything else seems slower in comparison.*

Realizing this she decided to take the offensive and end this match before Ryomou could figure out how badly she was outclassed. She wanted to win she didn't want to humiliate the other girl. Her first palm strike sliced through her opponent's defense and hit the short-haired girl in the diaphragm throwing her backward several feet and Kan'u followed up quickly, palm strikes and knife hand chops mixed in, forcing the now off balance Ryomou back and further back as she desperately blocked and dodged.

Ryomou became so focused on her opponent's hands she never even saw the round house kick that crashed into her head before she was airborne from the impact. She hit the floor of the dojo shaking her head groggily and looked up from where she lay, eye wide in disbelief. *The difference in skill level can't be that bad, it can't be!*

She jumped to her feet and charged forward again, her visible eye blazing as she tried again and again to tag her opponent. But after sparring with Ranma-chan Ryomou looked as if she was moving in molasses to Kan'u's eyes. She dodged everything and gave back several hard shots in return, bruising Ryomou and forcing her to retreat again.

Rather than follow up Kan'u stopped and moved back. "I think the winner is obvious. Why don't we stop here?" Inwardly she was elated. *History really doesn't matter after all!* Deep inside her she felt something as if a thread that had controlled her, connecting her to this unwanted destiny was no longer there, and she smiled.

Ryomou for her part shook her head angrily. *She can't be that much better than me, she just can't!* An idea came to her, popping up into her mind as if summoned there by that thought, or perhaps planted there, but at the moment she did not question it. With a plan in mind she charged forward a third time.

Kan'u thought to end this quickly and moved to meet her, throwing out a swift punch, but to her surprise Ryomou was able to dodge it. Suddenly, Ryomou grabbed Kan'u's outstretched arm and flipped herself around until she had Kan'u in a classic Judo arm lock, Kan'u's wrist held to her chest, Kan'u's upper arm between her thighs, and her legs over Kan'u's chest with her feet about to be hooked under her other arm to finish the submission hold.

Kan'u however suddenly pushed as much of her ki as she could into her one free arm, heightening its speed in the way Ranma had shown her with his Katchu Tenshin Amaguirken. With it she was able to avoid the final part of the hold and she grabbed Ryomou's legs, forcing them apart and throwing the other girl off her.

Ryomou gasped in shock as her final trick, the trick that should have given her certain victory failed and Kan'u pressed in fast, placing a knee onto Ryomou's chest one hand raised above her in a fist and the other holding the shorter girl's hands over her head pressed into the ground. "1800 years ago, Ryomou Shimei killed Kan'u Unchou," Kan'u said, "so if I killed you right now, do you think that would change history?"

Ryomou looked up at her with her visible eye for a moment, before she started to laugh. It wasn't a crazy laugh or a haughty laugh or even very shaky. It was a laugh of freedom, a young woman finding that her destiny was no longer set in stone, but controlled by her own hands at last. In the back of her mind she almost heard a wailing sound but it was covered quickly by her own laughter. "I-I think that history has already changed. I wonder what we can all make of our destinies now?"

Kan'u smiled joining in her merriment and helping the shorter girl to her feet, hugging her for a moment while Ranma and the others came forward to congratulate Kan'u on her win and help Ryomou to the nurse's office.

Ryomou looked at Ranma slyly. Her secondary goal met, she was now free to move on to her primary objective. "By the way," she said in a deceptively normal tone of voice "Since I've transferred I was wondering if I could come live with you Ranma. After all, my home is in Nanyo's territory and that puts me in danger every time I go home." Ranma blushed and stammered and she went in for the kill, using a face she had never tried to use before, the deadly puppy-dog-eyes (eye in this case) maneuver. "And you did say I could come to you for help...." She trailed off with just the right amount of hopefulness in her voice and she could see him caving quickly.

Unfortunately her assault was interrupted by Chou'un. Kan'u, with one arm still around Ryomou's waist was too busy giggling at the situation to be any help. "Can you cook Ryomou-san?" Ryomou nodded distractedly, trying to keep her puppy dog eye attack on target, but it was not to be. "Well then you can move in with us at the temple. We have more than enough room after all, and you can pay rent by cooking breakfast and dinner."

Ryomou was about to protest when Kan'u whispered in her ear, causing her to shiver. The closeness of the other girl, plus the way she had been utterly dominated in that fight by the taller girl was affecting her badly, bringing out her submissive side. "Don't worry about it, go slowly or you'll scare him away, and none of us would like that. Besides, you should really talk to Chou'un-san and me before you start flirting with our boyfriend hmm?" Ryomou nodded reluctantly to both Kan'u and Chou'un and Ranma sighed in relief, not knowing what was being said but thankful that this new factor wouldn't add anything to his already complicated life.

Despite all his changes, Ranma was still ridiculously blind to certain things, and women in general was one of them.

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The next two days passed peacefully but busily for those at Seito Private School. Most of the fighters in the Kanto area were in a state of shock over the sharp decline in their numbers of the past few days and this caused a lull in the low key battles between the factions that had become everyday occurrences. The lower-ranked fighters were terrified by what had occurred, while the more powerful fighters were simply cautious. The number of strong fighters that had been taken out, while not including any of the strongest fighters, was still a respectable amount. This new fighter had proven to be skilled, unpredictable and what was worse could turn invisible as well. The report of thirty fighters made up of all the schools dying in what was being reported by the news as a gang war gone bad caused them all to pause, but because it included most of those who had been at the forefront of the abuse and rapine rather than that of actual combat their passing went unremarked.

Ranma and the others had not heard back from Ryofu Hosen about the punishment meted out onto the glasses girl, but they had all decided to leave that one alone. At this point it was really none of their affair what happened. However Ranma had been able to write down his notes to send to Dr. Oden. He even got Chouhi, who was surprisingly good at drawing, to draw up a diagram according to his specifications to send along with them.

Meanwhile Ryuubi and her followers put her own plan into motion to protect the school and the surrounding territory. First, Ryuubi hacked into the computer system of every building that had its own security camera on the front or back. This allowed someone to, once she set up enough computer screens by raiding the schools computer room, to have a person there watch anything that occurred in front of those buildings.

The next thing that she had her followers do was to set up video cameras at strategic positions in their territory. These cameras watched the approaches towards both the school and the Temple which formed the center of their territory as well as a few other prominent spots. The only area left uncovered was the park because she knew that planting video cameras there would be too obvious.

Unfortunately for Kan'u and Chou'un this cut into their Ranma-Time. With schoolwork added on, they did not have time to train during the week as much as they wanted to or spend as much time with him. This was made readily apparent by the fact that Ranma always informed them of his own training times at night. Unfortunately, his apartment complex did not have an enclosed area for them to practice in, and Ryuubi had nixed the idea of the one that was off duty meeting him in the park to practice at night. She didn't want a competition to start up between Kan'u and Chou'un as to who would get to spend time practicing with Ranma and who would be stuck protecting her. That would simply cause ill feelings on all sides. Both Kan'u and Chou'un agreed, but were still irritated.

On the other hand, they still had their Ranma-Time at school. Both girls became very adept at ambushing Ranma and pulling him into empty classrooms or utility closets in order to make-out with him. Each session ended with the girl walking away in a daze with a wide smirk on their faces and left him hot and bothered. After the first two days of this treatment Ranma began to turn the tables on them and began to do the same thing to them, much to everyone's enjoyment.

Kan'u and Ranma also talked and just spent time together getting to know one another more. It was this aspect of the relationship that Ranma, surprising himself, was having the most fun with. Kissing and making out were all good, but simply being hugged or snuggled and relating the problems you had with your father, some nightmares from your childhood, your dreams for the future and problems of the past were something that he would never get used to.

For their part, Kan'u and Chou'un greatly enjoyed having a willing ear to their own problems and pasts. Kan'u told Ranma about the problems that she ran into during training to receive the sacred bead of her clan, and even had told him about her own failed relationships in the past. They all started out well, but at one point or another the boy in question always wanted to push the envelope or became scared of her greater physical prowess and tried to control her in other ways to make up for it.

Kan'u also related the most embarrassing story from her past, one that had been bothering her for a while. When Ryuubi's dragon had awakened shortly after their meeting, she had almost completely destroyed Kan'u's weapon, the Seryuutou. To repair it Kan'u had to go to a specific blacksmith, one who still forged weapons in the old style. This unfortunately was a problem as the smith in question was a rather perverted middle aged man. She would never have gone along with anything too outrageous, but what she ended up doing was still embarrassing. She ended up acting as a pinup model for his weapon collection, letting the old man take pictures of her in various outfits with weapons he had made. It was embarrassing, demeaning, and one of her worst memories.

Ranma had listened to her without commenting then described two of his own adventures, when he had to pose as a girl to get the wishing sword away from Kuno and the 'French Frog Debacle' (Chardin) as well as the nightmares both incidents gave him. He told her that things could always be worse, but to not compromise her sense of self for a short term gain. While on the surface it may look necessary in the long term there were always other solutions, something he wished he had learned much earlier. Kan'u nodded thoughtfully, and promised to take Ranma with her to beat up the smith as soon as they could get away, then spent a few minutes just cuddling.

Chou'un on the other hand, had been in one very serious relationship and was in fact not a virgin, but that relationship had ended amicably. She had no emotional scars from her past relationships, but she did have some from her family. Like Ranma had thought her family practiced both swordsmanship and a special style of ninjutsu. In this style emotional and self-control were the two primary tenants and as a child she was often punished for showing emotion. However, with Ranma giving her back the scrolls his father had stolen from the school, her own standing in the school had skyrocketed beyond even that of its present master.

Ranma's reply to her was to tell her about the cat-fist. From this one story she got the message that things could always be worse. At least her family had cared for her, even if they didn't show it the normal way. Chou'un had nodded thoughtfully then initiated a very long make out session to take their minds off her problems.

While on the surface Chou'un was all right with the relationship and the way it was going, she was not so sanguine about the future. Ranma and Kan'u had become close very quickly and had already started to think of plans for after they graduated from high school, such as where they would go and what they would do as a couple. Chou'un on the other hand had only said that she wanted to travel the world on a whim as she was interested in historical sites. It really wasn't something she wanted to make a life out of like the other two, who seemed to think they could. She in fact wanted to go into politics. Still, for now the relationship where it was and where it was heading was both good for her and very, very fun for all involved.

Ryomou had been welcomed into Seito with only a hint of ill feeling. She and Ranma sparred during her second lunch at the school and she found herself incapacitated via pressure points in short order, her speed no match for his. This had only strengthened her desire to be with him, and she sometimes hovered around the edges of the trio. Sometimes when Ranma and one or other of his girlfriends was making out she would appear and watch them obviously enjoying it and sometimes even acting as a look out.

Ranma really didn't know what to make of it. He didn't click as much with Ryomou as with Kan'u, but that was more her somewhat tsundere personality than the fact they didn't have anything in common. In fact the way her parents had treated her, which she was very open about though never mentioned the reasons for it, reminded Ranma of his own parents in a way. Not as abusive as Genma or as distant as Nodoka but the similarities were there. The two connected on cooking, fighting and training, the three things that up to this point had dominated Ranma's life.

It was only her flirting with him and making her interest in him plain that bothered him. The girls on the other hand were intrigued by the possibilities. Ryomou was after all attractive, and so long as they got along with her sharing Ranma with another girl wouldn't be much of a stretch. The fact that Ryomou was also a bit of a submissive was interesting to Kan'u, who was the most sexually inquisitive of the three. Ranma was simply going to follow whoever wanted to do anything, while Chou'un already knew her own preferences.

The next problematic incident occurred on Thursday and rather than directly involving Ranma it was someone from Kan'u's past showing up.

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Ranma, Ryomou and Kan'u were leaving the school together to head to the park for a training session (Chou'un was guarding Ryuubi today) when they were interrupted by a shout from near the gate. "Kan'u-chan!"

Kan'u looked over and groaned, prompting Ryomou and Ranma to take a look. They saw a young man a little older than them looking at them, with broad shoulders, wavy hair, and a handsome face. He stood there looking strangely arrogant in some indefinable way, in a good suit and tie combination with a sports car behind him.

Ranma and Ryomou turned back to look at their friends face and both smirked at her pained expression. "Let me guess, old boyfriend, rival turned love interest or unwanted suitor?" Ranma asked while next to him Ryomou smirked wider.

"His names Asato Komiya and he's an ex-boyfriend," Kan'u ground out between clenched teeth. "Who apparently can't take a hint."

The trio stood where they were as the man sauntered toward them and Ryomou frowned. "How long ago was this?"

"Half a year now. I dumped him a few months before I met Ryuubi-sama for the first time."

The man had reached them by then and spoke in a happy tone, arms outstretched. "Kan'u-chan, how are you doing these days? Have you reconsidered my offer? I'd still love to take you away from all this."

Kan'u stood there arms crossed beneath her breasts as she glared at him. "No I haven't, what the hell are you even doing here anyway?"

Asato's smile slipped a little but he regained it quickly. "Well as you know I wanted to go into teaching, and I'm here for my field experience. I'm going to be the assistant Literature professor for freshman and sophomore years. And you know you really should give up all this fighting, it won't get you anywhere in today's world."

Kan'u growled under her throat and Ryomou frowned but it was strangely Ranma who answered. "Exactly what's it ta ya if she likes to fight anyway pal, she dumped you remember. That means ya don' have a say in what she does, or did ya miss that memo?"

Asato scowled at the coarse boy before him. "And who are you to tell me what I can or can't do boy?"

"Names Ranma Saotome, and I'm Kan-chan's boyfriend." Ranma said looking at Kan'u and smiling happily, which was returned.

Asato's scowl deepened. "And you think you're worthy of a beauty like her, an uncouth, uneducated little boy like you? I can offer her a future where she'd be safe and secure and not have to work a day in her life. I can take her away from this destiny thing her family brainwashed her into believing and set her up in a life where she'll never have to fight again."

Ranma frowned but Ryomou answered before him and Kan'u, who was still standing there apparently too angry to speak. "And has it ever occurred to you that she might not want to be secure or safe, that she might like fighting?"

Asato smiled at her condescendingly. "I realize that the idea may seem strange to you, you've probably been brainwashed too, but no one sane really likes to fight. It's because I love her that I want to get her away from all that."

"Now I call bullshit on that." Ranma stated simply, moving forward to place himself between Kan'u and Asato, more to protect the asshole from her wrath than anything else. "I'm new to this love thing but I know ya can't make decisions like that fer the other person. You can't pick and choose what part of her personality or lifestyle ya want to keep and get rid of the rest. Ya have to love the whole package. I ain't saying that fighting is all that matters to Kan-chan but her love of fighting and love of the Art is a major part of her, and if ya can't accept that, then ya don't love her. Trying to force her into some kind of perfect image means ya ain't in touch with the reality that is Kan'u Unchou."

Kan'u moved around him, nodding. "I agree. What you've never understood Asato is I never wanted to be some kind of bird in a cage, I want to make my own way in the world as I see fit. That's why I dumped you in the first place, you tried to control me, to change who I am to fit the mold you made. I refused to put up with it then, and I refuse to put up with you now. Stay away from me Asato, you won't like the consequences if you don't." And with that she jumped away to land on a nearby roof, with Ryomou and Ranma following swiftly after her.

Kan'u turned to Ranma. "Screw practicing Ma-chan for what you said back there you're going to get the make-out session of a life time!" Ranma gulped audibly and Ryomou laughed as she followed the pair.

Behind them they left Asato fuming in the schoolyard.

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Chou'un bit back a groan of irritation as the doorbell to Ranma's apartment rang. With Kan'u guarding Ryuubi it had been her nights to have some alone time with Ranma, and she didn't want it to be interrupted. The man could kiss like no one's business, and she had just talked him into removing her uniform top, his hands kneading her breasts when the noise of the doorbell hit them.

"If that's Ryomou-san I think I'm going to have **words** with her." Chou'un said grimly, as she tried to rearrange her hair back into its normal controlled wave and find where she had tossed her shirt. *Oh, there it is, hanging from the ceiling light. My, I think I'm a little too high strung these days. I really do need to take the edge off.*

The reason she thought it might be Ryomou was that the blue haired girl had taken to coming over to Ranma's apartment at irregular intervals, sometimes walking in or interrupting Ranma and his girlfriends, though never for long of course as she liked to watch, and neither Kan'u nor Chou'un minded. Her reason was her desire to renovate the interior of Ranma's apartment, and strangely she was pretty good at it.

Ryomou had been appalled by the fact he had only a table, a bed and kitchen appliances in his apartment, and when Ranma had told them how much money he was making she had immediately gone out and found several pieces of furniture for his room. One of which was a big comfy couch that both Kan'u and Chou'un loved (especially when they were making out with Ranma on it). She had even found a few tasteful wall hangings that brightened the apartment, as well as a bedside lamp that looked like a paper lantern.

But her watching did tend to make Ranma nervous, so it was not something Chou'un wanted to put up with today.

Ranma bit back a groan himself and got up to answer the doorbell rearranging himself surreptitiously in his pants. The girls had vetoed wearing his little helper and having to walk around with a semi hard-on all the time from their make-out sessions was beginning to be a trial. Also some of the looks he got during class from the other girls and even some of the female teachers were beginning to worry him...

He opened the door to a very unwelcome shock. His mother stood there garbed in a traditional kimono as she was the last time he saw her, though thankfully without her katana over her shoulder.

Mother and son stood there for a moment, looking at each other. For her part, Nokoka was shocked at the change her son had gone through in little under a year. He stood taller, his eyes seemed to be much calmer and much happier. That is until he caught sight of her which sent a twang of sadness through her. His eyes hardened noticeably upon looking at her and the sudden stiffness of his manner made her want to cringe inside. The fact that she knew she deserved the attitude from him did nothing to mitigate the pain.

"How did you find me here mother?" He said coldly.

Inside the apartment Chou'un stiffened at hearing that address and stopped her attempts to make yourself look more presentable moving to the entrance way to see what was going on.

The sight of a beautiful silver haired girl over her son's shoulder made Nodoka want to whip out her victory fans, but she controlled herself and asked politely "May I come in to speak with you, my son?"

"Ranma" he said coldly. "You gave up the right to call me son when you let that fat oaf of a husband carry me off on a fourteen year training trip. But you may come in anyway." As she walked in Ranma asked again "Now, how did you find me and am I going to have any of the other crazies after me? I've already seen Ryoga, but there's no way he can tell anyone where I am."

Nodoka shook her head. "I have a private investigator on retainer who I had looking periodically for your name on any property registry across the country. It was only luck that he found you. I honestly don't think that you will see any of

the crew from Nerima ever again."

Ranma nodded coldly. "That's precisely the way I want it" he said gesturing for her to sit down on a dining room table that Chou'un pulled over to be in front of the single sofa.

As she sat Nodoka took the opportunity to examine the girl who was apparently living with her son. She was beautiful, with elegant silver hair, a decent bust size, and the build of a trained martial artist underneath a rather old-fashioned and straight laced school uniform. The uniform however did not hide the fact that she might've interrupted something. The girl's hair was a little mussed and sticking out in places and her face which was probably normally stoic was now almost frozen in an attempt to recover herself, though her cheeks were still flushed.

"Are you going to introduce me to your friend my so- Ranma?" She said halting her mode of address as his glare intensified.

Ranma nodded "Chou'un this is my mother Nodoka, Nodoka, this is Chou'un one of my girlfriends." That last part came out much more stiffly than the first, as he was still unused to addressing the girls as such, though the reality was one he had embraced wholeheartedly.

Again Nodoka had to stop herself from going into her victory dance, but she knew she had to tread lightly here. If she wanted any chance of reconciliation with her son she had to control herself. "Nice to meet you Ms. I wonder however if I could have a moment of Ranma's time alone?"

Ranma shrugged "whatever you have to say you can say in front of her."

Nodoka nodded, not happy but willing to go along with it. She paused for a moment gathering her thoughts as the two watched her. "Ranma" she said slowly, calmly, over "Over the past few months I have been thinking about what happened in Nerima when you left. I cannot find anything wrong with the way you handled your father and Happosai, not after I researched what occurred during the training trip Genma took you on, or what that old man was getting away with. But as for the rest of it, I cannot understand why you did what you did. I realize I haven't been much of a mother to you but I am your mother and I think I deserve an explanation for why you did what you did and I came here to find out if your actions were honorable ones."

Ranma's eyes narrowed, but it was Chou'un who spoke up. "How dare you!?" she spat, her normal self control in abeyance as she opened her draconic eyes to glare at the woman. "You sit there and ask that Ranma explain his actions to you, to you the parent that was never there, the parent that held a seppuku contract over his head every time she showed up, demanding he conform to your ever changing ideas of manliness! Well I must say you are at least consistent, always demanding never giving!"

Nodoka flinched at the scorn in the younger woman's voice but shot back angrily. "You're right I never helped raise him, I never was there for him, but I still love him, he is still my son, and all I am asking is what a mother should ask! I don't know where to begin, so I must look at what he did and start from there."

Ranma's eyes narrowed for a moment, but his voice was calm as he answered. "What precisely do you have a question about Nodoka-san. Perhaps if you explain what action of mine you have a problem with, I can give you the background info to explain it to you."

Nodoka flinched at his mode of address but nodded, it was a starting point at least. "I can understand why you wanted to leave Nerima and try to start over elsewhere, but what I don't understand is what you did to Nabiki and Akane specifically. I realize that whatever was between you and Akane died, but why did you not just leave, it seems rather cruel."

"Oh you mean the weakness moxibustion technique I used on her. Well I felt that was a fair punishment for a bully" he said, smirking though there wasn't any humor in it. "She abused her strength every day, smashing me around like I was her personal punching bag, her property" he spat the word. "to do whatever she wanted with."

"Do you know what she did on my 18th birthday?" Ranma asked whimsically. "After she pounded me for not eating the sludge she called breakfast she nearly killed two elementary students who I was helping, two little girls who got caught up in a fight between me and Mousse. I was protecting them and she heard a girl's voice screaming and smashed me a good one in the back without even seeing what was going on first. If I hadn't been able to twist my body around they would have been crushed when I was hit into a building. As it was they were knocked out and had some broken bones to deal with. That was the last draw for me where she was concerned."

Nodoka nodded slowly, though inwardly she was fuming. She knew that Akane had hit Ranma for the slightest

reason, but to actually threaten other people? And hitting him every day? "And Nabiki? She can't get into a college now, none of them will take her."

"Again I hit her where it hurt. She always thought she was more intelligent than the rest of us, and she would never get caught. Well now everyone knows what she did to get that money she always had. Child pornography, extortion, racketeering, taking protection money, if I had been able to swing some more evidence I would have had her in jail. As it is simply airing her dirty laundry was barely enough to make up for the shit she put me through. Though I'll admit I didn't hate her like I hated Akane."

"I see. Given what you have said I concede that you dealt with the Tendo's honorably." The next part was hard for her to say, but the fact she had to was even harder for her to bear. "I-I also realize why you never contacted me. While my actions toward you were never that of a mother, it was my inactions that truly harmed you. I-I cannot change that, but I can make amends. I want you to be a part of my life Ranma, and vice versa. I want to have you call me mother and really mean it. Wh-whatever you want me to do I will do to make amends."

Ranma stood there thinking hard. While this offer would have had him welcoming her back even a month ago, if not with open arms that at least with an open frame of mind, his time with Kan'u, Chou'un and even Ryomou to a certain extent had taught him what a real relationship based on affection and love was like. Looking back on it, even when he/she was acting as a girl, and even after Nodoka learned of the curse his mother had never really shown that sort of support to him, she said the words, but never actually acted the part. So he said softly "I'm happy that you are willing to admit that you have made mistakes in the past, but I honestly can't say that I can see us as a family again."

Nodoka twitched but remained silent as Ranma continued. "I may be able to look past the fact that my father tricked you into letting him take me, I may even look past the fact that you didn't know anything about what was occurring on the training trip. What I can't look past is the fact that once you learned of the curse and of the other problems that Genma had caused that you did not help me in trying to solve them."

"Not only that" he went on inexorably "you added problems to the ones that already there. As a girl you wanted me to be a girl, something that I hate. Not that there's anything wrong with girls." He hastily added looking at Chou'un "or that I'm no longer uncomfortable in that body. But dressing up in uber-girly clothing and acting like a proper young lady is not something I ever wanna do. That and the fact that you still held that contract over my head and went on and on about manly this and that mean that makes me leery of letting you close. I'm not saying it won't ever happen." He added quickly, seeing Nodoka almost in tears, "but I can't say it will happen or happen soon."

Nodoka nodded, taking a moment to get control of herself again before she replied. "As I said I've learned through independent means what occurred to you on that training trip and if I knew of any of it while it was going on my husband would have been behind bars, and you back home with me as soon as I could arrange it. As for the contract I don't honestly know why I continue to hold that over your head. I-I suppose I wanted some measure of control over you, this stranger who was my son, but it was the wrong way to go about it and I realize that now. Would you be against contacting me or my contacting you occasionally just to talk? I think that the more we talk the closer to reconciliation we can get."

Ranma shrugged. "I'll think about it. You know where to find me, though I wouldn't recommend coming around here. There's a lot going on around here that I wouldn't want you involved in. And if any of the others from my past show up," he said coldly, "I will hold you responsible."

Nodoka nodded and allowed herself to be escorted out of the house by Chou'un who volunteered to walk her down to the entrance of the apartment complex. Once outside Chou'un turned to Nodoka and said in a very cold voice. "Ranma may be forgiving but you'll find both myself and Kan'u are not. Now he has girlfriends now who will stick up for him and we cannot forgive you for letting that farce of a life continue in Nerima once you arrived. Tread very carefully here Nodoka-san because if you do harm him in any way we will end you."

With that the silver haired swordswoman left the older redhead in shock and returned to find Ranma still sitting on the couch and brooding. Deciding that this simply would not do she pushed him back against the back of the sofa and sat down on his lap kissing him hard on the lips.

After a moment he began to respond and the kiss deepened, tongues dueling in his mouth. She pulled back, scrapping her tongue along the roof of his mouth before breaking the kiss. She bunched her fists in his shirt raising it to show his abs and kissing her way down his body. "Forget her for now Ranma, live in the here and now, isn't it sweet? Can you feel what I'm doing to you, what I want to do?"

Ranma groaned but reached down and pulled his shirt over his head before reaching down and dragging her back up to resume the kiss.

She didn't let that go on for long though before changing their positions, pushing him to the side and backward to lay down on the sofa. Again she made her way down his body, kissing every inch as she moved down to his pants.

Ranma again interrupted her, pulling her back up, and trying to unbutton her blouse with fumbling fingers.

Chou'un impatiently pushed his hands away and ripped her shirt open, buttons flying everywhere as she swiftly removed her bra and grabbed his hands placing them on her breasts.

This wasn't the first time that Ranma had felt up one of his girlfriends, but it was the first time it happened with her shirt off. He gulped, taking in the expanse of perfect white skin, her pink nipples and large aureole, which covered a little over three inches of her lovely C-size breasts. They looked strangely delicious and Ranma leaned forward licking and biting at her breasts before capturing one of her nipples in his mouth and sucking.

Chou'un groaned, feeling her panties slick with her juices. Ranma was using his ki sense, and while he started out with only enthusiasm, within minutes he was playing her body like a violin. Deciding to regain the initiative she reached behind her into his pants and pulled out his cock.

She looked back and gasped, though this time it wasn't because Ranma had begun to flick her nipple with his tongue, though that did help. This was the first time she had actually seen his dick, and its size amazed her. *He is certainly aptly named, gods he's huge!* She just had to have a taste...

Pushing Ranma's head away from her breasts gently, she turned around. Ranma tried to stop her but Chou'un only whispered in a voice overflowing with lust "Don't worry Ranma, it'll feel good I promise."

Now sitting on Ranma's chest she leaned down and brought her tongue out to lick at the head, tasting some of his pre-cum. She swallowed licking her lips at the taste. It was almost nutty, tart yet tasty and she leaned down again. With one hand on his shaft and the other cupping his large balls she tried to fit his head into her mouth, but it was so wide she could only manage the first inch.

Ranma had lost it completely now, lust was in the driver's seat and wasn't letting go despite the hammering of his indoctrination on the window and the worry of what Kan'u might think of his going this far with Chou'un first. All he could think about was returning the favor and he grabbed her hips and pulled her legs to either side, sliding her body up his until her crotch was right above his mouth.

He sniffed, taking in the sharp smell of her arousal before sticking his tongue out and running it up and down her by now nearly transparent white panties, licking and sucking at her drenched clit.

Pulling her panties to one side he quickly began licking directly from Chou'un's dripping pink petals with his tongue and sampling her nectar, a treat he quickly decided was among the tastiest he ever tasted. At the back of his now occupied mind doing the same to Kan'u went straight to the top of his to-do list.

Much like in every other physical aspect of their relationship he was a bit clumsy at first, but he used his ki senses to watch for sparks of pleasure in her ki when he hit the right spots and quickly had her squirming and whimpering. Ranma grabbed Chou'un's thighs holding her in place as he continued his erotic torture of her.

Moments later Chou'un couldn't hold it any longer and she sat up mouth open wide and screaming as she came. "AAHHHHHH, so good Ranma! MORE Ranma more!"

As her first crest peaked she dived back down determined to bring him the same pleasure, body quaking as Ranma went back to licking her slit, this time using his fingers as well, thrusting two deep into her hungry snatch.

She licked and slurped and tried almost desperately to fit more of his cockhead into her mouth, but still could only manage an inch, and she began to work her hands up and down furiously on his shaft.

As fast a learner as Ranma was, he was still inexperienced when it came to his own threshold for pleasure, and within fifteen minutes (and two more orgasms for Chou'un) Ranma groaned. "Chou-chan I'm gonna"

Chou'un removed her mouth from his cock, kissing and licking the head as she moaned. "Cum for me Ranma, cum for me!"

Ranma groaned a final time and let go. Semen erupted from his cock in long, thick spurts, some hitting her face, some shooting past her face only to come back down and splash into her hair, others hit her chin and ran down her neck to cover her breasts in his thick potent seed. After he was done she was almost completely covered breasts to forehead in cum. If anyone had been there to see her they would have thought that she was the main event at a

bukkake party.

One final orgasm hit Chou'un as Ranma plunged a third finger into her, tweaking her clit as he shot off his last spurt, and she collapsed on top of him, moaning and breathing heavily.

Ranma pushed her legs together on onside and used them as a pillow for a moment catching his breath from the rush he had just received.

After a few moments though they looked up to see Ryomou and Kan'u both standing there holding several bags of groceries, and behind them through the open door they could see Chouhi and Ryuubi looking around the edge of the doorway.

Kan'u smirked as the two lovers finally noticed their presence. "Well, I do hope to get a play by play later, but why don't you two go clean up for now and then you can join us for dinner."

She and Ryomou ended up having to help the two into the apartment's bathroom and took great delight in cleaning both of them off from their exertions. All in all, despite the interruption from Nodoka everyone, even Ryomou and Kan'u were satisfied with the way the day went.

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As she rode the train on the first leg of her journey home Nodoka shivered, suddenly knowing that her son had just been very manly indeed.

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Ranma got the chance to even the scale the very next day. Asato had only been there a day and already he was making problems for Ranma and Kan'u. He had taken to stalking Kan'u whenever she wasn't in class, not obviously but constantly being around. The fact that Asato's stalking had blocked all attempts to find Ranma for some make-out time was just icing on the cake. A single morning of this, plus tests in math and chemistry was enough and Kan'u decided to hide in the student council room for lunch rather than go out into the courtyard just to get some peace.

She tensed as the door opened but relaxed as Ranma poked his head in. Catching sight of her he smiled, walked over to her after locking the door behind him and gave her a hug.

Kan'u sighed happily. This was an aspect of their relationship that she enjoyed immensely. Ranma, once you broke down the walls of his multiple defense mechanisms, was an extremely affectionate person, who seemed to just know somehow whenever Kan'u or Chou'un simply needed a hug. "Thank you Ranma, I really needed that. Asato has been following me around every chance he can today, and putting up with him as well as having two tests in my worst subjects has put me on edge."

Ranma sat next to her, opening his overlarge bento stack and handing her a pair of chopsticks. The two began what had become one of their daily rituals, battling for the contents of his lunch. Chou'un often joined in, as did Ryomou, though she also brought food to add to the communal lunch. Oftentimes if they ate outside a crowd would develop to watch the conflict, though it was all in good fun. Kan'u and the others never went away hungry after all, and she could already feel that her reflexes and hand speed were better than they had been.

"It ain't the fact that he's been followin' you that's botherin' ya, it's the fact ya don't know how to get rid of him." Ranma said insightfully. Kan'u nodded ruefully and he went on. "Trust me, I know. Having Kodachi follow me around trying to poison or stun me in an attempt ta date me wasn't fun, but I didn't know how to get rid of her without seriously hurting her, which like now is something ya can't do."

Kan'u smirked as she wrested a piece of fish from the box. "I suppose so, though the idea of physically pounding on him until he gets the hint is already looking very good. I don't know if I'm going to be able to control myself for the rest of the time he's here."

Ranma smiled and closed the now empty bento box, stuffing it back into his fold-space pocket. "Ya don't mean that Kan-chan, he's a wimp not a warrior and ya ain't the type ta bully someone. That's just the tension from him and yer tests talkin'. If ya want I can give ya a massage to take some of the tension out of ya."

Kan'u smirked, kicking off her slippers and wriggling her toes in their stockings. "Well, why didn't you say so Ma-chan, get on with it."

Ranma grinned, moving to sit on the floor in front of her legs, taking one of them in his hands and running his fingers gently along the back of her calf, eliciting a whimper from Kan'u. He loved Kan'u's legs, well he loved her entire body

really, but while her uniform covered up her upper body her skirt did nothing to hide her legs, and just seeing them sometimes got Ranma hot and bothered. As his fingers moved up to her foot he caught out of the corner of his eye a glimpse of her underwear and a sudden thought occurred to him. Gulping he turned to look at Kan'u face. "Um, y'know I could also, um, do the um, the same thing I did t-to Chou'un last night, y'know, that is if you want me to, I mean, I ain't pushing or anythin', just if ya want me too."

Kan'u looked at him with her head cocked on one side, her eyes half-lidded with growing lust. She smiled at his blushing attempts to speak, though inside she was doing cartwheels of joy. She had wanted to try Ranma's tongue since Chou'un had given her a brief description of how good it was last night, and she praised her ancestors that this chance had come along so soon. "Say what you want clearly Ranma," she commanded huskily, eyes locked on his, "say it."

Ranma gulped, blushing heavily but as had always been the case met the challenge head on. Leaning in he captured her lips for a moment before pulling back, staring into her eyes and trying to impart the love and appreciation he had for her with just his eyes. "I want to go down on you Kan-chan. I want to make you scream my name!"

Kan'u's eyes glazed over entirely at the raw desire in his voice as she moaned, one hand flipping her skirt up, the other grabbing his pig tail and tugging on it. "Well then Ma-chan what are you waiting for?"

Without further ado Ranma dove down, lifting her skirt and pushing her legs apart so that he could sit facing her where she sat on the edge of her seat. He started slowly, touching and licking around the edge of her panties, touching her slit with a single finger through them. After a few minutes of this as her panties showed a distinct wet spot he could feel her hands in his hair becoming more demanding and he slowly moved her panties to one side.

He took a moment to look at the prize before him, not having had the chance to actually look at Chou'un's last night. Under her panties her skin was the same color as the rest of her, showing that rather than simply being tanned, her skin was naturally bronze. Her slit was a light pink color, and glistened with dew from her arousal. She had her pubic hair cut in the shape of a small dark purple triangle, and it looked soft to the touch.

Wonderingly he reached out and ran a hand over it, marveling aloud. "Your hairs so soft Kan-chan, and it's so pretty, like a flower. I never thought that description was actually true." Kan'u moaned again, the appreciation in his voice and his gentle touch pushing her arousal along, and Ranma noticed as the petals of her flower moistened further.

Using his ki sight he knew just where she wanted to be touched, and he started along the edges, taking his time and driving her insane. Working under a time limit as they were he couldn't give her the number of orgasms he gave Chou'un, but he was determined to make this count. After ten minutes of this he finally thrust his tongue as deep as it could go into her slit while tweaking her clit between his thumbs.

Kan'u came with a scream that, had the council chamber not been soundproofed, would have told the entire school what they were doing. It was a few minutes before she could even open her eyes, and her body was still being wracked by aftershocks as Kan'u came down from a high she had never before experienced, putting even their experiment in the park to shame. She gasped out, "that was fantastic Ma-chan thank you."

Ranma grinned, rearranging himself in his pants as he as he helped her to her feet, "my pleasure. I love the tastes of you girls, so sweet yet so strong, it's great."

Kan'u giggled then frowned, pulling her panties up and fixing her skirt. "I'm sorry I can't try to return the favor Ma-chan. We just don't have the time."

The bell to signal the end of the lunch period rang, emphasizing her point and Ranma shook his head. "No problem Kan-chan. I don't mind really. Ya needed this a lot more than I did today."

Kan'u nodded, and the two walked out the door, though Kan'u felt a little unsteady on her feet. "Thank you Ma-chan, and you're right, I'm feeling much better than I was. Although" she added slyly, "I never did scream your name you know."

Ranma blushed then grinned lopsidedly at her and it was all Kan'u could do to not kiss him right there in the center of the hall. "That just gives me something to shoot for next time Kan-chan."

Kan'u nearly moaned aloud at the thought, but managed to contain herself. "I-I look forward to it, see you after school Ranma." The two parted company and went to their respective classes.

Ryomou, who had been transferred into Kan'u's class based on her test scores, looked up as Kan'u came in. It only

took one glance to tell the blue haired warrior what had happened and her response was immediate: "You lucky bitch!"

Kan'u blushed but walked toward her seat in a determinately normal stride even as some of the other girls and a few boys looked at her and began to talk among themselves excitedly. As she passed Ryomou's seat she paused and whispered. "Be a good girl and maybe I'll convince Ranma to let you join us next time." Ryomou stiffened and looked back at Kan'u as she walked on, eye filled with sudden hope.

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end chapter. And that is how I deal with Ryoga, not bringing him in as a love interest for Ukitsu like some had thought. So we see that the physical side of the relationship is going well for all but not the emotional side for Chou'un, who doesn't feel as strong a connection with Ranma that Kan'u does. I also have plans for Ryomou's inner dragon, but they won't be apparent for a while. While she is interested in Ranma she doesn't know him well enough just yet to really confide in him, and he still has no idea what to do about the dragon souls yet.

## **\*Chapter 7\*: Chapter 7**

I don't own the Fighters or the martial artist.

And here is the next installment of Destiny vs Chaos. Look at the title to see what the chapter is mostly about. There is a lemon at the end of the chapter which is marked, but it will be the last fully described lime for a while, there will be a slight lime in the next chapter then that will be it for three or four chapters. The characters are teenagers and have entered their relationships like gun busters, but they want it to last and sometimes they go too fast so they will be slowing down.

Realize this is fanfiction and I will not only be changing the Ikki touden timeline but the actual history of the sacred bead around quite a bit. I hope everyone likes where I'm taking this story.

Want to give a shout out once again to the anime Adventure thread Fate of the Sacred Bead and it's author Iridium Heart and the other anime adventure thread Ikkitouden 1/2 started by Iridium Heart and continued by foesjoe for a while for giving me the inspiration for this story.

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### **Chapter 7 Questions answered do not always indicate a solution found**

Saturday afternoon found Ranma, Ryomou, Kan'u and Chou'un together at the park to train. Ryomou had been looking forward to this, as it was going to be her first time training with Ranma. The others were looking forward to another full day of training as well, even Ranma because he had thought up ways to reproduce Kan'u's explosive palm as well as thinking of ways to do the same attack with his feet.

Ryuubi and Chouhi had come along as well, Ryuubi to be with her friends (and protected by her bodyguards) and Chouhi to join in on some of the exercises. Ranma set her up with a few speed exercises and a few beginner-level katas from the Anything Goes School.

He started Ryomou off with the same, but she swiftly showed aptitude for the land based aspect of the school and within an hour he moved her on to the more advanced katas of that skill, the ones that heightened strength, speed and precision, as well as being the most adaptable to other styles, such as her own submission and grappling based techniques. As he moved on to talk with Chou'un and Kan'u who were sparring against one another, Ryomou stopped him. "Are we going to spar after I get done this? I think I learn more from sparring than merely doing katas." And of course it gave her a chance to get close to Ranma's body with her grappling arts...

Ranma nodded, not able to hear her thoughts and said "Sure, if ya do kata all day today we can spar tomorrow." Ryomou scowled at the idea of waiting but nodded agreement and he moved away to watch Kan'u and Chou'un spar.

The two had become better in several perceptible ways. They were both able to use more ki sight now, and were able to predict one another's movement as they sparred. They were both a little stronger both in body and in their ki. Chou'un had learned her school's ki attacks, though had not yet used them in a spar, and Kan'u was now able to build up her explosive palm attack far more quickly than she had when she fought Ranma.

Lastly, they were both faster than they had been. Chou'un was now faster than his male form and Kan'u had in a week mastered the Katchu Tenshin Amaguriken without needing to use fire or chestnuts. She couldn't use it for very long, but she surprised Chou'un with it as he watched, her Seryuutou blurring as she stabbed with it seven hundred times in the space of a minutes. Chou'un's back hit a tree and she watched slitted eyes wide as Kan'u's Guan Dao chipped away at the wood around her body, making a distinct outline of her form.

Ranma clapped his hands ending the match and walking over to hug Kan'u fiercely. "Wow Kan-chan that was great."

Chou'un nodded as she got up off the ground. "Indeed Kan'u-san, that was very good. But you realize of course that I will get you back." She smirked. "I have a few ki attacks I am just dying to try."

Kan'u nodded, gasping a little from the physical exertion of the speed enhancement, but her pool of ki hadn't been diminished by the expenditure from the technique, and she was still ready to go. "Certainly, I'm ready whenever you are however I believe that I get to fight Ranma first." That was the way they had decided to make their rotation. If someone lost, they sat out the next fight, and the winner went on to fight the one who had just rested.

However Kan'u and Ranma were interrupted by a bellow from behind them near the park's entrance.

"Saotome!" shouted a voice, causing Ranma to twitch. But when he looked instead of seeing someone from Nerima he saw someone else standing there, wearing a long hooded cloak that obscured its features.

Chou'un and Kan'u, thinking this was someone from Nerima, raised their weapons angrily, and Ryomou and the other prepared themselves as well. Ranma however thought he recognized the voice and waved down his friends as he answered. "Yo. I didn't expect you to come in person."

The figure seemed to snort and then gestured to a nearby rooftop. "We must talk alone," and with that he jumped away.

Ranma shrugged and moved to follow, but Kan'u stopped him with a hand on his arm. "Ranma who is that and what is he doing here?"

Ranma touched her hand and grinned. "I'll introduce you all to him later if he stays in the area; he's one of the people I contacted about the visions and the magatama. I gotta go and see what he has to say, but I promise I'll share what I learn with ya later."

Chou'un nodded, looking up in at the sky as she noticed that it was beginning to cloud over. "All right Ranma, how about we all meet your apartment later tonight. It looks like it's going to rain, anyway."

Ranma looked up, pouted at the clouds (adorably so to Kan'u and the others) and nodded. "Okay, sure, I'll meet you there. See ya later." He kissed Kan'u on the cheek touched Chou'un on the shoulder and then jumped away following the figure in the robe.

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Ranma followed the hooded figure over several rooftops until they came on one that had an awning on it. The two ducked under the awning and the cloaked figure stopped. Ranma paused a few feet away as the cloaked figure turned. After a second a wiry hand twitched up, pulling back his hood to reveal the newcomers features.

A hard aquiline face was revealed dominated by slitted golden hued eyes framed by white hair around the edges deepening to blue as it moved back from his face. He had lost the long light pink ponytail and blue bangs that he had the last time they had seen each other and seemed more in control of himself as well, possibly due to not being stuck in his cursed body. "You're looking good lizard-boy." Ranma smirked.

Prince Herb, descendent of transformed dragons and son of the emperor of the Musk dynasty, looked back at his old foe and took a moment deciding how to reply. Ranma looked... different in many ways. Rather than being dominated in equal parts by ego, blind self-confidence and an underlying anger, his aura was calm, confident without much arrogance, he was in control of his emotions. The ki control was still there as well, more developed but not quite enough to hide the strength of his core from Herb's eyes, but it was the strength of that core that surprised him. The last time they had met Ranma's aura had been decent sized for a human, yet now it was monstrous. *Possibly as an aftereffect of fighting the reborn demi-god Saffron*, the prince mused. But it was his eyes that had changed the most. They were calm, deep, and watchful, with a hint of sadness that had not been there before. *The marital artist has become a warrior*. Despite his own skills and near bottomless ki Herb decided he would not like to fight this new Ranma that had replaced the skilled yet somehow tortured boy that he had fought before.

Prince Herb decided to ignore Ranma's weak jibe for now and responded with his own statement. "You really irritated the Amazons immensely, you know," he said. "When Shampoo and Cologne came back half the council wanted to send a war party to after you and bring back your head. The other half of course shot that idea out of the water. The fact that Matriarch Cologne wanted nothing to do with you anymore was a real turning point despite Shampoo's demands that she at least be sent back after you. Her injuries however, seemed to imply that going after you again would be bad for her health and possibly the health of their tribe. So it was vetoed."

Ranma stared back surprised. "I didn't think that yer people could follow what happened in Amazon territory like that." To solve his problems with Shampoo and the Amazons he had first made peace with Cologne, who had learned to respect him after his battle to the death with Saffron. After the wedding fiasco they had found a loophole in the laws of their tribe and Ranma in his female body challenged Shampoo for the hand of his male body. Despite being severely over-matched Shampoo refused to give up and Ranma was forced to nearly cripple her before she yielded. That was one of the hardest things Ranma had ever done, he hadn't loved shampoo but she had been a friend, yet she refused to give up and he desperately wanted to be free of everything tying him down in Nerima. After the battle Cologne declared the kisses of Death and Marriage null and void. Not even waiting for Shampoo to heal the three Amazons left Japan quickly.

"We don't normally, but we do have spies and after word reached us that a stranger from the land of the rising sun killed Saffron, we decided to activate most of them. Imagine our surprise when we realize that the Amazons are in decline. Shampoo is the best of our generation among them, and she is barely equal to one of our warriors and none of her peers are any real threat. We won't push it for now," he grinned suddenly "but after Cologne dies we might well be able to conquer the entire region, both Amazons and Phoenix people. That would be glorious!"

Ranma snorted, "well whatever, I don't care one way or the other for the Amazons or the Phoenix tribe. If ya want ta make war on them go to town, I don't care. I wouldn't say the same if they were all like Cologne of course but she seems to be in a minority. All the other Amazons that showed up from time to time were much more like Shampoo than her, controlling bitches that think their laws are all that matters and everyone else're worthless. I didn't think that most of the time but the more time Shampoo was around the more how she saw was obvious."

"Indeed," said Herb and then abruptly changed the subject. "Your letter to me threw the court of the Musk dynasty into an uproar like I've never seen before, even when I came home with my curse." The last was said a little bitterly, but not much, he had after all learned why the news was so incredible before he was sent back to Japan. "You see, this isn't the first time we've heard of this so-called Destiny of the Sacred Bead. We had thought it died down or was destroyed millennia ago. My father sent me to discuss with you what we know of it, and what your plans dealing with it are."

Ranma shrugged, "my plans goin' forward are to end it" he said bluntly. "I've destroyed something like forty low ranked beads, and I've got four mid-level beads I need to study and destroy. What I need ta know is what the hell those dragon auras that are that some of them, the leaders of the 'factions' and some of the others have inside of them, how they tie into everything else and how ta get rid of them. My idea so far is just to wait until I destroy all the other beads, then figure out a way ta drag the dragon out of them and beat the living shit out of it."

Herb barked a laugh. "That is one way to do it, I suppose. All right Ranma I'm here to give you as much information about this as I can, but I need two things in return."

A year and a half ago, Ranma would've agreed to whatever this was before even hearing about what the other person wanted, but Ranma was much more cautious nowadays. Instead of agreeing immediately, he asked "and what do you need?"

Herb paused momentarily, and then sat down on a radiator set into the roof before answering. "Do you remember that I'd gone to the cursed springs to familiarize myself with the female form because I was going to be married?" Ranma nodded and Herb went on. "Since then I'm afraid the girl I was supposed to marry has pulled out of the engagement. But I am a prince, and I need to be married soon to secure the line of succession. That means I need a wife before I turn 21 in two months, or else my cousin who is already married and with a child on the way will be named my father's heir."

Ranma growled, hands tightening into fists. "If you're thinking of asking me ..."

Herb shook his head quickly. "No, that would just be wrong. After all," he said with a smirk on his face "in that relationship exactly which one of us would be wearing the pants?"

Ranma gawked at him for a moment and then burst out into laughter. The other aqua-transsexual looked at him and burst into laughter himself. To anyone else the joke wouldn't have been that funny but given their curse, it took on a whole new meaning. After the two recovered from their fit of laughter, he went on "what I do need your help with is finding a wife. I remember some of the formidable females that were after you in Nerima and I thought that perhaps you could help."

Ranma tugged at his ponytail thoughtfully. "Well 'round here you'll find a lot of girls that are pretty and strong at least, but what exactly are ya looking for?"

Herb blinked in surprise. He had never actually been asked that question before. What was he looking for in a potential mate? *After all*, he thought sardonically *the female form doesn't exactly hold any mysteries to me anymore so beauty is not the lone requirement*. "Well" he said slowly, "she should be intelligent and well read, she should be quick on her mental feet, strong in the martial arts, and if she had an interest in economics, farming or something useful like that it would be a plus. Beauty too would be necessary. After all, you cannot have an ugly queen."

Ranma continued to scratch his ponytail thoughtfully. "Well, that actually does narrow it down some, though how much help I can be I don't know. But okay, I guess I can help ya figure something out. Maybe set ya up on some dates or something. Heh.." He grinned suddenly. "Maybe ya should go back to Nerima and talk ta Nbaiki Tendo, the middle Tendo girl."

"NO." Herb said flatly. "When I met with Matriarch Cologne in my search for the ladle she warned me of that female's abilities and her tendencies. No, there are some things a businesswoman or man can do that a king cannot. She would make an excellent spy master if you could trust her, but not a queen."

"Huh." Ranma said looking at the other man in surprise. "You have thought about this whole ruling thing a bit haven't you? So what was the second thing you wanted?"

"There is more to being a king than simply being born in the right family Saotome, at least if you want to be a good one. As for my second requirement..." Now Herb looked distinctly uncomfortable. "I, you change into a female as well, and you must know some things about that form. I-I, recently, when I change into my female form, which I haven't ever done willingly, I'm, my, I start to bleed down there" he flushed.

Ranma looked at him with dawning horror. "Aren't there any girls that you can ask about this?"

"You mean it's something normal?!" The other aqua-transsexual gasped, "I thought it was something wrong with me! What the hell?!"

Ranma groaned, putting his head in his hands. "Look I'll try to explain that tonight okay, I'll show you where I live and you can stop by. I'll agree to help you with that too." *Unless one of the girl's agrees to do it instead for the sake 'o my sanity*, Ranma thought hopefully. *I'm not above begging, not fer somethin' like this.* "Now give me the information I want damn it!"

Herb nodded relieved and went on much more seriously. "All right, here is the information we have. What these people call the Destiny of the Sacred Bead we call the Curse of the Fell Dragon. It has nothing to do with destiny. It has nothing to do with anything. The histories they call the romance of the three kingdoms is correct as far as the outcome goes. What they don't remember is that their three-way civil war was interrupted by a ravaging dragon, which came close to torching the entire lowland kingdom. All three armies had to come together to help defeat it but in the last second that dragon cursed the armies and their leaders. Their bloodlines were cursed to keep fighting forever, fighting each other in a never ending bloodlust of slaughter. Not 'until' anything, not 'if' anything just never ending blood, the same battles, the same mistakes, the same deaths over and over. The dragon put its own soul into it and that is where the dragon aspects that you have seen come from. Each of those aspects represents part of the originals. I should say they will closely match up each to an aspect of the dragon's personality."

"I can show you the records of what occurred, though it's an ancient Chinese. The ancestors of these people didn't think anything of it at the time after all it didn't have any impact there and then, but the curse has held true ever since. We thought it ended 500 years ago, when the last time of the cycle occurred in China, we never thought it had migrated to Japan."

"What're the aspects of a dragon's personality? Ranma asked. "Other than the obvious of course. Ya know, aggression, avarice, and arrogance" Ranma grinned as the other boy growled at him.

"Enough of that. But you do have a point, one of them will obviously be aggression or bloodlust, the other one may be laziness, or similar, dragons are habitually lazy. And as much as it pains me one will probably be ego. In terms of their powers, I would suspect they will all be based to a greater or lesser extent around fire and air, the two elements dragons are most closely attuned with."

"What about the other dragon splinters, Chou'un, one of my friends said that you can somehow be infected by a dragon shard if you're near an awakened dragon soul long enough?"

"She's quite correct. Make no mistake, these Dragon aspects do not have will or the ability to think. They simply react, they only have instincts and a hatred for all mankind because that is what the dragon felt on his death. It was slain by humans, a race that it viewed as we would think of cockroaches. Imagine the hate it must feel. The dragon souls are indeed like an infection. A splinter of an awakened soul will become embedded in anyone close enough to the bearer friend or foe."

"Well shit. So if I called them out or fight an awakened dragon and kick its ass, which I know is gonna to be harder than I make it sound," Ranma said before Herb could interrupt, "will that do anything, or will it just force the dragon back inside the boy/girl/whatever?"

Herb cocked his head amusedly. "Only you would use the phrase 'girl/boy/whatever' and actually mean it. I'm not even going to ask what would fall under the 'whatever' category. But while you would weaken the dragon inside of them, making the person's hold over their bodies much more solid, it would not solve the problem. You need something to contain the shard, to suck out the dragon soul once it has been beaten and is too exhausted to resist. I

have a spell scroll that can do the job." Where his father got the scroll from was a question but, the older man had looked so grim when he gave the scroll to Herb that he hadn't even thought of asking. "But we'll need to find a mystic who can actually empower it for us. None of the shamans of my people could create it as it requires quite a lot of power."

"Well great, could I do it if I followed your directions or something?"

"No," Herb said bluntly. "Mystical power is different from ki or I could do it myself. We will need to find someone who can create for us. I have a few names that my father gave me, but whether or not these people are still alive and will help us is up in the air."

"Well okay" Ranma said slowly, then stopped "wait, what do you mean 'we'?"

"My father ordered me to stay and help. You see Ranma the dragon that caused this nightmare was a relative of the dragon that began the Musk dynasty. And we always clean up after family." Herb's grim visage matched his face, and Ranma could tell he meant it.

"One last question," Ranma said as he they left the cover of the roof's awning, only to find it still raining. Both aqua-transsexuals growled irritably but Ranma-chan went on uninterrupted, "the dragon shards in other people, what about them?"

"Those are much simpler to deal with. They will not renew themselves, and can be overwhelmed by the aura and will of the individual. Or if defeated while in control of the person they are a part of they may disperse entirely. Or you could simply kill the person. Dragon shards that are not part of the original three are not renewed, and will not carry over into the next generation. If the shard stays, then the next generation will have a greater chance of being infected again, but that is all."

Ranma nodded thoughtfully as the two now female marital artists continued to hop from roof to roof in the rain. *Huh, I wonder if that's why Ryomou has one?*

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Unfortunately because they were both in female form when they arrived at his apartment Herb refused to be put off and demanded an explanation for her bleeding. Thus Ranma was unable to put it off until his girlfriends showed up. The shrieks of rage that followed this explanation went on for some time.

As they had agreed that night the Seito quartet and Ryomou, Ranma and Herb met at his apartment. Once they arrived Ranma introduced Herb and gave a bit of background to the Musk dynasty before letting Herb tell them what he had already told Ranma.

The news Herb shared with the other women was shocking to say the least. They'd been taught all their lives that their destiny meant something more, that they were destined for more, and that the winner of each cycle of combat would go on to great things. To learn that instead it just meant that they were locked in endless warfare without any real goal or recourse shook them to the core.

Ryomou was the first to recover. "We should probably get some kind of confirmation. Not that I'm denying the prince's word, but another source of information would be good." Herb simply nodded. In their position he would have wanted another source of intelligence as well.

Ranma looked at Kan'u with his head on one side and she looked back at him for a moment before reaching up to one year and taking off her sacred bead. It glimmered golden in her light bronze hand as she held it out. As the others looked at her she said "Ranma's been telling me about these visions he gets when he looks into a bead, and the fact that he's been reluctant to look at the higher level beads he's collected. Perhaps if he analyzes a bead that is from someone more honorable, or at least belongs to a more honorable person he'll be able to find out something more."

Herb looked interested. Ranma had told him about his ability to analyze the beads on their way to his apartment but while Herb had a huge reservoir, larger even than Ryuubi's, his control was nowhere close to being able to let him do something like that.

Chou'un cocked her head on one side, pulling her eyes from Herb whose angular features and slitted eyes intrigued her, nodded thoughtfully. Ryuubi, who of all of them was the most shocked by the knowledge of where she got her dragon shard from, looked on interestedly.

Ranma started to play with his pigtail embarrassed but said stoutly. "That's not what I told ya Kan-chan." He looked at

the others. "I said I was scared" he said bluntly. "These things influence people in ways I don't understand. The less powerful ones, they influence people by giving them visions of what they want and skills and abilities to get it."

"What if the more powerful ones offer the same kind of visions, only way more powerfully? And look at who I got them from. I don't want anything from those people in my head, the low rankers were bad enough! But I need to be able to analyze them before I'm able to destroy them. I tried to destroy a bead without analyzing it first, the one I got from that crazy bastard I saved Ryomou from but it didn't work. You actually have to break the spell or whatever on the bead before destroying it."

"Which," Kan'u said calmly, taking one of Ranma's hands and putting her bead onto his palm. "is yet another reason why you should see what a friendlier bead is able to tell you. I will say that I don't think that my clan's bead has ever truly tried to influence me. It's made my connection to my weapon easier, but I don't think it's ever influenced my actions other than perhaps searching for Ryuubi. I certainly have never desired anything of the sort that the other beads in your collection have."

"And" Ryuubi said thoughtfully, "If the images are clearer from the beads of more powerful fighters, they can give us an idea of how the curse does what it does. Or at least a way to convince the other holders of the sacred destiny that there is a chance can be broken, or that the outcome is something we don't want to happen." Ryuubi had been trying all week to open communications with the other faction in an attempt to sound them out about letting Ranma try to end the cycle of conflict, but all they had heard was that he was there because the government wanted him to try and control them.

The still independent school Gogun high had responded that they would listen after the tournament, which was the only positive response her missives received.

Sousou of Kyosho Academy and Toutaku of Rakuyo had both reacted with scorn and rage to the very idea, though neither wanted to push things with the tournament right around the corner. Nanyo Academy had no firm leader any longer, and thus no one she could communicate with. She had tried to send a message to the last of the Big Four, but was not willing to send a person there for fear that that person would be ambushed. Nanyo Academy after all, was on the other side of the region, with the emperors other territories between Seito and it. And while his hold on Nanyo had weakened, Toutaku still controlled the other schools with an iron grip. Indeed Ryofu Hosen had recently put down Youshu Academy's insurrection by brutally defeating its new leader and nearly every other fighter it had.

As everyone was in agreement that this was a good idea, Ranma nodded reluctantly and put the bead onto the table in front of him. After a moment's gathering his energy he reached out, touched the bead with a finger and-

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*He was suddenly somewhere else. Startled he looked around, and found himself in an elegant pagoda. What was surprising was the fact that the entire image was sharp, almost lifelike in detail, not distant misty or disjointed at all like the visions he had seen with the weaker beads. Its sides were etched with lions and tigers into the dark lacquered woodwork, and the garden he could see surrounding it seemed to embody the essence of Feng Shui.*

*A voice speaking archaic Chinese from the other end of the pagoda brought his attention back from where it had been on the garden. "Welcome Hun Luan. It has been long indeed since I've seen another human. Won't you have some tea?"*

*The man in front of Ranma was a Chinese gentleman of indeterminate age. He could've been old, he could have been young, with his weather beaten face it was impossible to tell. Calloused, strong looking hands rested around a simple porcelain cup on top of a small circular table set into the pagoda's floor. He had wide shoulders and a long fu-man-chu mustache and a long magnificent beard neatly trimmed in the Chinese fashion drooping down below the tabletop. His clothing was elegant, with the motif of stormy clouds on green silk with silver trim.*

*All in all the man gave off a feeling of elegance, control and power. It was obvious he had been a warrior at one time, but whether or not he still was, was up in the air. Ranma himself was not going to comment. After all, he knew little old garden gnomes who could fight harder than most normal people.*

*He moved forward cautiously and the gentleman indicated a chair on the other side of the table. "Won't you have a seat?" Ranma, still tensed as a spring sat down across from him.*

*The man fell silent as he poured another cup of tea and handed it to Ranma. Ranma cautiously took a sip, and found it to be very good jasmine tea. He took another sip and looked across at the man marshaling his thoughts.*

*"I got to say" he said finally, "that this is not what I expected to see."*

"My gardens? Well, I cannot comment on that, after all I needed something to do during my ... incarceration here." the man said. "But I have not introduced myself yet, I apologize. My name is Guan Yu, a general in the service of Liu Bei of Shu Han. I welcome you Hun Luan, for you are the first person I have seen in nearly a 1000 years."

"Does that mean you can't see the descendents that wear your bead? And why are you calling me that?" Ranma asked, having finally translated that odd phrase. "Not that chaos doesn't fit me or anything."

"Alas, no, it does not work that way. I am able to influence them a bit, but not communicate. I can instill a flair with certain attacks, a certain amount of knowledge regarding tactics and strategy though any true leader knows there is always more to learn, and the ability to quickly befriend the descendents of my leader and sworn brothers Zhao Yun and Ziang Fei but that is all. The power of my descendents is all from their own hard work. I imagine it will vary greatly from person to person, but as I was one of the ones closest to the dragon, my control of our connection is less than would otherwise be the case, though in return I was not hit with the other negative effects the dragon put in its spell."

"And I call you Hun Luan because that is what you are. Chaos can mean change both good or ill opportunity and danger mixed. You have been to the cursed springs, I can see it in your aura, which gives those who go there both the opportunity to become something they never would otherwise, and feel the danger in it. And you have instigated change, something that has never happened before in the cycle. Chaos and change, you're very being here means both those things. Now tell me, why are you here?"

Ranma shrugged, sipping his tea and began to describe what he had been doing since entering the Kanto region.

The old man took his explanation calmly beyond a sharp glance of interest when he mentioned wanting to end the cycle of violence, looking at him through extremely intelligent, sharp black eyes that seemed to stare right through Ranma soaking everything about him in. "I see. That answers some questions about something I have noticed recently, though of course time here is complete conjecture. But besides this mission from your government" here he gave Ranma a look of stern approval, after all he was a staunch Legalist when alive, "you have fallen for my descendent as well."

Ranma blushed heavily and Guan Yu chuckled. "From what little I can sense through our connection she has fallen for you as well, despite her own tendencies towards both genders." He coughed delicately. "Such a thing was not unknown in my time though it would certainly not have ever been talked about openly. Still, you came here for answers. And I am fortunately able to provide them. It is a long tale so you may as well make yourself comfortable."

Ranma nodded and leaned back in his chair sipping the tea absentmindedly.

"My tale begins right on the eve of the campaign against the northern warlord Cao Cao. We were preparing our supply line, fall back forts and naval bastions along the route our army would take heading north. As this was going on, reports came to us about a dragon ravaging the western countryside. This was not a normal dragon you understand, not one of the beautiful lords of the sky, the descendents of TianLong known for their wisdom, or the children of Yinglong, givers of rain. This was a **monster** from the mountains of the northwest, and he was deadly. Entire towns were wiped out, their cattle eaten, men, women and children eviscerated or burned alive."

"By the time a responding army could arrive in the area it was gone. With no clues as to where to find it we gave up the chase and turned our attentions back to our human enemies. A month later as we started our march north to meet Cao Cao's army news reached us that his own territory had been hit as well, and then a week later the Imperial capital was nearly burned to the ground. Two days after that the Tiger of the West was attacked, his army nearly destroyed in its tents."

"We all realized then that we were all in peril from this dragon, an enemy that did not care for conquest, politics or nations, only destruction. Emissaries went out and it was agreed between the three warlords that they would join forces. The strongest of us, would lead our armies against this foe."

"It took us weeks to track it down and even longer to figure out a way to keep it from simply flying away. That problem was solved by a large group of Tao priests who could construct a large magical web that the dragon could not break out of.

"Finally we were at last able to track the dragon to its lair, and there our armies marched against it." Guan Yu sighed sadly, eyes losing focus for a moment as his mind dwelled on the remembered horror. "It became a slaughter the likes of which I have never seen before or since. Our armies thousands strong, against a single Dragon, we should have won handily. As the day went on it was clear that our numbers were merely annoying it. The dragon could not fly away but it could fly inside the net and did so, using our own numbers against us so that our stronger fighters could never come close to it. We lost thousands in a few hours of combat."

"Finally, our generals decided to pull our main armies back and send forth small elite groups led by our generals themselves, and this worked much better much to our own later regret. We faced the dragon with fifty strong, mostly elite scouts to find it, and some generals with elite shock troops to kill it. The other generals sent similarly sized forces. Thus we were able to at last end the beast. A few of us died, but I feel they were the lucky ones, for they were not around to be caught in the curse that dragon placed upon us all."

The man snorted with panache, his beard bristling momentarily. "Imagine my surprise when the dragons enraged death curse was real rather than the bravado of a dying enemy. I died and woke up in a void with the dragon's harsh laughter ringing in my head. It took me many years to understand that I was able to control the area around me, thus this place."

"And what was the curse?" said Ranma leaning forward excitedly.

"The dragon cursed the lines of all of us who were there cursed our descendents to fight and die in an endless cycle of our own lifetimes, of our Civil War. It took me many years to learn that there was more to the curse than that. It is both subtle and powerful. For one it pushes our descendents to act as we would in many ways, yet not our minds. Do you honestly believe we were so egotistic to want to relieve our wars beginning to end, including our mistakes, our failures and defeats? No, the curse magnifies our worst aspects, the darkness in each of our souls. I have no idea what kind of influence the other beads give but I know that no descendent has successfully changed or even questioned their destiny. The curse effects how they think by itself, not just through the magatama. It just seems if one person has enough will to challenge it the others are strengthened to overcome him or her and the cycle continues. But that is only part of what I have discovered, I wanted to know if there was any point to the curse other than revenge on the dragons killers. After I built this place I found out."

He stood and moved out into the garden, motioning Ranma to follow him. Ranma did so, the story and information having disarmed his initial reserve. The two stood looking toward one of the walls of the garden, then with a wave of his hand Guan Yu made the wall disappear. Ranma looked and blanched in horror.

Beyond the garden was an expanse of mist, chaotic miasma. Yet Ranma could see a huge ball of violent red and black roiling energies, and even from this far away Ranma could feel the... the **evil** radiating from it, Ranma couldn't think of another word to describe it, the feeling was like having your soul dipped in acid while your skin was flayed and cockroaches danced over your insides. Ranma clenched his fists automatically, but a gentle yet immovable grip on his shoulder stopped him from doing anything.

"It took me many more years to pierce the veil to see that, of course it was much weaker back then" Guan Yu said in an almost conversational tone of voice. "That is the soul of the dragon which it poured into the spell it cast, and it has gotten stronger with every cycle that has passed. It will continue until the blood and power feed it enough to remake the dragon's soul entirely. You see with every lifetime the shards in our generals become stronger, the carriers of its soul becoming stronger, and then one day a child will be born that has the blood line of all three shards and the dragon's soul and mind will be remade. A berserk god will walk the earth, and I don't know if anything in your day and age, with science rather than magic, will be able to stop it."

Ranma stared at him horrified as Guan Yu went on inexorably, in a voice of iron, his hand now gripping Ranma's shoulders as he stared into the younger man's eyes face implacable. "You have changed this Hun Luan. I have noticed a slight loss in its power recently. You are changing things, and you must finish the job, **you** must stop the cycle before that occurs. I charge you **personally** with this."

Guan Yu stepped back, letting his hands fall. "Now I believe our time together is over young one. When you see my descendent of her that I love her and that she has made me proud to be her ancestor, and that I approve of you. Farewell Hun Luan and may your power be enough."

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Suddenly Ranma was back in his apartment again, staring around at the worried faces of his friends and allies.

"You've been out for more than an hour "said Ryuubi looking very concerned. "Are you all right?"

Ranma gulped down a proffered glass of water from Chou'un and looked at Kan'u grinning, who was holding his hand looking worried. "Your ancestor approves of us, is that better or worse than getting' yer dad's approval?" he asked jokingly.

Over the next 20 minutes Ranma explained what had occurred during his vision, as well as how Guan Yu viewed the problem differently from what Herb had been able to tell them, which surprised and worried the dragon prince considerably. Still, the story only differed in the details, not how to actually solve the problem. This meant that the

idea of trying to find some kind of container for the dragon soul pieces was still a necessity.

"I will search out the mystic's that may be able to help us do this." Said Herb, "As I said my family thinks of this as a family affair and I need to be involved in solving it."

Chou'un thought for a moment then spoke. "My family may have some connections that can help us find the mystics we need" she said, looking pensive. "I'll leave to search them out tomorrow, but remember we do have the tournament coming up soon. I realize we've already all stepped up our training, but the other holders of the dragon soul splinters will almost certainly be among the contenders, as well as one or two who have false shards in them. So we should probably have this ready to go before then. That only gives us a week to prepare."

Ryuubi nodded as well. "I'll try to use my computer skills to see if I can find anything about these mystics, but I don't hold out much hope. Unless they're in the Federal Department of Paranormal Activity I won't know where to look."

"Maybe you could try the Yellow Pages," Ranma said jokingly. "They're always good for a laugh if nothing else."

For some reason despite the severity of the problem Guan Yu related to him he was in a very good mood. Having the ancient spirit of her ancestors say that he and Kan'u were good for one another had really bolstered his spirits for some reason. It was odd because if someone in the real world had told him that they made a good couple he'd become defensive, as had often happened with his ex-fiancée Akane. But this way it was good to have that confirmation. Then too knowing that Kan'u's personality was entirely her own and not that of her ancestor or in any way manipulated by her ancestor was fantastic.

Kan'u at the others chuckled. As it was getting late the others decided to leave for the night. Seeing the look on Kan'u's face, Chou'un volunteered to show Prince Herb around the area before walking him back to the hotel he was staying at.

Then too she was feeling a little interested in the prince. She could admit to herself at this point that her initial attraction to Ranma was caused by the strange effect he had on Kan'u. She also knew that in that relationship she had been sort of stuck playing second fiddle. Not that Ranma didn't show her attention or didn't go out of his way to make her feel special, but he and Kan'u became so close so quickly that it left her behind the curve.

With Prince Herb on the other hand she got some of the same things that attracted her to Ranma i.e. intelligence, strength in the martial arts and a person who had both male and female bodies and was attractive in said. She was also able to get her feet under the table so to speak and stake her claim. And if they found themselves compatible, perhaps something more than just a year-long relationship, which was what her relationship with Ranma was almost certainly going to be when she thought about it, could come from it.

Herb himself was similarly interested in Chou'un, her obvious intelligence, self-control, dry humor and beauty attracted him. Her draconic eyes were also extremely... interesting. Thinking this an excellent time to see if what he felt was actually attraction he agreed.

Ryomou volunteered to go with Ryuubi and the younger girl back to the temple, adding both a new guard to Ryuubi and someone who could cook them dinner. From their perspective it was a win-win.

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### **Limeish lemon starts here:**

As soon as the door closed behind the last of his guests, Ranma felt his back slam into the wall as Kan'u lunged at him, kissing him hungrily. He responded just as fervently hands going straight to her rear and lifting her up so that her legs left the floor and wrapped around his midriff. Tongues dueled as their bodies moved against one another. Kan'u lifted his shirt over his head and threw it to the ground to join her already discarded blouse before reaching back to undo her bra clasp and letting it drop as Ranma nibbled and sucked at her neck.

Kan'u reluctantly moved away from Ranma grabbing his hand and pulling him further into his apartment straight to his bed, where he was pushed down and found Kan'u in his lap. Somehow between the entrance to his apartment and his room, she had managed to shuck off her panties and stood now only clad in her stockings.

Ranma gulped, gazing up at the beauty in front of him. Kan'u's dark purple hair cascaded freely down her back, her light blue eyes glimmering with desire. Her tan skin shone with life and seemed to glimmer in the light of his bedside lamp. Her large d cup breasts, toned and taut like the rest of her were perfectly formed and perky, topped with small dark nipples standing out on the lighter tan of her breasts, proving once again that was her natural color and not caused by the sun.

In some way this moment was different from yesterday, more deliberate rather than a spur of the moment decision, and the importance of it somehow touched Ranma profoundly. He raised his hands but stopped, looking into Kan'u's eyes until she nodded, smiling gently at the adoration and appreciation in his eyes, which did more for her ego than a thousand victories.

Trembling he reached out and took both of her breasts in his hands kneading them gently as his mouth found her nipple. Kan'u moaned lustily as Ranma once again used his ki sight to figure out just how to touch her to get the most out of it. He stopped after a moment as he began to regain some of his lost self-control and looked at her. "Are you certain that we're going slow enough, I mean, I ain't, this is so new to me and..."

Kan'u nodded hastily. "Yes I am. Hearing that you and I were not part of the so-called destiny, that we are together because **we** want to be just sort of took away a final issue for me. I want this badly. We're not going to go all the way this time around," she said looking at his worried face. "I want to wait on that for something special down the road, but I think we can go a little further than we did and have been doing since the Park."

She leaned down kissing him slowly on the lips and then moving to his ear, whispering, "I want to feel you cum again" she moaned huskily, "I want to see it again and I want you to see me, all of me as I do the same."

Ranma paused again staring into Kan'u's eyes making certain this was really what she wanted before hugging her tightly and pulling her down to lay next to him, their lips meeting and tongues snaking around one another in her mouth. His hands went back to her breasts touching, pinching and groping until she pulled back from their kiss with a long low moan and pulled his head down to her chest. Obediently Ranma licked and nipped at one of her nipples before taking it into his mouth.

Kan'u leaned back and simply reveled in his gentle attentions for several minutes. There was no rush this time, no desire to end quickly despite how heated they had begun, and she intended to take her time.

Fifteen minutes later, after Ranma had switched nipples a few times he began to work his way down her body, kissing and licking at her magnificent abs. "My Kan-chan, so hot, so tasty," he licked at her belly button, then around at her abs "so strong."

Kan'u moaned even harder. Ranma's hand reached her pubes, and he began to run his fingers over the soft purple hairs. Kan'u's back arched at the gentle touch and Ranma took the chance to fondle her rear at the same time as his tongue made its final descent. Kan'u didn't take long to cum after that, but this orgasm was somehow softer, less sharp but just as fulfilling as the ones he had given her previously.

After a few minutes spent gasping and recovering she pushed Ranma off her and to the side before dragging him up into another lip lock. She gently maneuvered him onto his back and took a position over him. Kan'u pulled back from the kiss and Ranma gazed up at her, her long hair falling all around her face encircling his own head with its color, shadowing his face in purple.

Kan'u took a moment to meet his eyes, and he smiled up at her. "I love you Kan'u." He spoke the words without any hesitation this time, knowing the emotions within him for what they were at long last, knowing that she was her own person and he found her totally desirable in body and spirit.

Kan'u smiled, knowing the same thing and leaned down again this time moving to kiss and nip at his neck. "I love you too Ranma." She paused at the juncture of his neck and shoulder for a moment, biting and sucking hard there, leaving a mark that everyone else would see, marking him as **hers**.

She moved down his body, pushing him back down every time he tried to move and smacking his hands away whenever they tried to change her trajectory. Kan'u kissed and nipped at his hard chest, moving her tongue over his rock hard abs, luxuriating as they twitched and rippled as he reacted to her touch. Her hands moved further south, pushing his boxers down to reveal his hard shaft. She moaned low in her throat seeing it already standing at attention, the tip already coated with a bit of pre-cum. Kan'u leaned down, mouth open, but as this was the first blowjob she had ever given, she could only get a few inches of his large member into her mouth.

Judging by Ranma's groans he thoroughly enjoyed it though. She had to again smack his hands away from her rear and back as she began, Ranma wanting to move her into a 69 position so that he could return the favor. Unfortunately she was feeling far too sensitive after her own orgasm a few minutes ago to let him. She sat up, still licking at his shaft but moving her body to the side so that she was kneeling next to his body and her body was out of his reach.

Ranma tried to sit up and get at her, but Kan'u smacked him on the chest, shaking her head and mumbling around

his cockhead for a moment. Ranma fell back with a gasp, the vibrations from her mouth around him sapping his strength. After a moment she pulled her head away with a pop, licking her lips. *He tastes so good!* "Ranma I'm feeling a little too sensitive to want you touching me right now. Just sit back and enjoy my love."

Ranma nodded weakly and she dove back down, licking and stroking with her hands and he moaned, groaning and raising his hips to get more of her attention. After a minute or two she smiled as she felt Ranma's hands in her hair, massaging her scalp and tangling his fingers in her long tresses. After another five minutes or so those hands became a little more insistent. "Kan-chan, I'm gonna, I-I!"

Kan'u slurped at the side of his dick like it was a popsicle, moving up and down the sides. "Cum for me Ranma I want it, I want to taste it!" And with that her mouth engulfed his cockhead again, mumbling words around it that Ranma couldn't make out, but which were "Cum love, Cum!" Even without hearing it Ranma followed her demand and came, his hips rising off the bed as he shot off.

Kan'u gasped in shock as the first shot hit the back of her throat before filling her mouth entirely. She was barely able to swallow before the next shot came, then another in quick succession as through her hands she felt the skin of his cock pull back and shoot upward with each shot, reminding her once more of an artillery cannon. She finally had to pull her mouth off his head to avoid drowning and the last three shots hit her face, neck and hair with enough force to almost sting her skin. When it was over her face was completely covered in gobs of cum.

She tried to clear it away from her eyes but Ranma didn't let this continue and was gone from the bed and back with a wet cloth before she could even notice, which he used to gently clear off the rest of the cum. As it was cleared from her eyes she began to help him by licking her shoulders and using her fingers to bring more gobs of cum to her mouth. "You taste sooo good Ranma," she moaned. "All the girls say guys taste horrible, but not you. I wonder why?"

"Clean living I guess Kan-chan" Ranma smirked, ignoring his still hard shaft as it bounced around while he cleaned her off with the cloth. He finished clearing her neck and chest and chased a random trail that streaked down her side. As soon as the cloth touched her side though, Kan'u shied away with a strange little gurgle.

Ranma stopped and smiled mischievously at her. "Are you ticklish Kan-chan?" She shook her head, long hair flying as she tried to deny this accusation to no avail. The cloth dropped to the bed and Ranma dove on her fingers twitching for her sides and a wide smile on his face.

Kan'u moved away shrieking but tried to counterattack. The cleanup fell by the way side as the two marital artists engaged in a no holds barred tickle war. Giggles and chuckles abounded as hands flew at near Amaguriken speeds for supposed weak spots.

The battle continued until Kan'u fell back, one of Ranma's hands pinning both her wrists above her head with him pinning her down by sitting on her hips. She tried to wriggle out of it but failed and then tried to throw Ranma off with her legs but only succeeded in bumping his body up to sit on her stomach. Abruptly she realized what kind of position she was in and looked down between her breasts to see Ranma's still hard cock resting on her abs just below her breasts. She looked up, wiping her mussed sweaty strands of hair out of eyes with her upper arm as she looked up at Ranma's flushed, blushing face as he too realized what position he was in.

She wriggled her wrists and Ranma let them go. A part of her wished he hadn't, that he could be a bit more aggressive, but a far larger part was happy being able to control this aspect of their relationship as she did. Maybe later they could experiment, but not now. Now, she reached forward, gently stroking his shaft with her hands where it lay. It twitched and she giggled breathily. "You're still so hard Ranma, so big and hard. Why don't you tell me what you want to do now? You're the one on top after all." She giggled again, jiggling her breasts invitingly.

Ranma twitched, his eyes going from her face, which had a sexy yet teasing smirk on it underneath her sweaty hair, and her breasts, which glistened with sweat and looked wholly inviting. "Um, I want, that is I, y'know..." He ran out of words and just moved his hips a little, thrusting his cock into the bottom of her cleavage a little in lieu of words.

Kan'u smirk widened. "It's called a titty-fuck Ranma. Go on, I want it too." She brought her hands up to the sides of her breasts, pushing them together invitingly, and Ranma moved his body forward with a groan as his cock pushed into her cleavage. Kan'u moaned, leaning forward and licking at his head as it popped out of the top and hit her chin. She ran her tongue over it and into the tiny opening at the center of his head, gurgling with pleasure as more pre-cum came out to reward her efforts.

Ranma groaned, the pressure Kan'u's breasts put on his cock felt incredible. Her licks and kisses to the head was just icing on the cake. Concentrating he was able to lean back and turn his upper body enough to bring his hands down to touch her crotch. Finding her still dripping, the tickling having done nothing to dampen her arousal, he plunged his

middle finger directly into her slit, and was rewarded with her bucking underneath him, moaning in encouragement. "Oh gods, Ma-chan, yes gods!"

Ranma pulled himself back a little mentally to activate his ki sight again, and began to touch just the way she wanted to be touched, adding a second finger into her snatch at the precise moment she was going to ask, and then, as she began to buck even more the pleasure peaking he tweaked her clit with the index finger and thumb of his other hand. She gasped and screamed "Raaannnnmmmmaaaa!" as she came all over his hand actually squirting as she peaked.

As she came down from her high she noticed that Ranma's thrusts were becoming more erratic and she squeezed her hands on her breasts even harder making him twitch as he gasped. "Kan'u I'm gonna"

Kan'u practically hissed "Cum for me Ranma, cum!" And again all he could do was helplessly obey. Eight gobs of cum shot out landing in her hair, on her face, breasts and even splattering onto the backstop above her head. She moaned throatily as she scooped up some of his cum and licked it off her fingers. "Gods Ranma, you're addictive!"

Ranma grinned as he brought his own fingers up to his lips. "I told ya the same thing about you yesterday. MMM, best sauce ever!" he joked. He began to turn his body but Kan'u swiftly flipped him off her.

She pushed him flat again so that she was sitting on top of him, her legs to either side of his as she capture his still hard shaft between her thighs. "uh-uh Ranma my turn now."

Ranma though panicked a little, "Um, I th-thought ya said we wouldn't be goin' that far. I-I mean I don't have any uh rubbers or anything."

Kan'u giggled as she started to rock her hips, knowing this was going to be the last peak she would be able to get up to for a bit, she was becoming far too sensitive to continue playing. "Thank you for thinking of that Ranma but don't worry Ranma, this is just a way to let us feel what it may be like a little, we won't be going all the way. But I want our last time tonight to be a little" her voice broke off into a high moan as his cock rubbed right against her clit from top to bottom. "oh, god, that's so good, I want this one to be special."

Ranma grunted, the feeling of her tight thighs and wet slit rubbing against him completely overwhelming him. "Oh gods, that feels so good Kan-chan!" He raised his hands kneading her breasts, and trying to raise his upper body to capture one of her nipples with his lips but Kan'u pushed him back down before grabbing his shoulders to support herself.

"J-just lay there Ma-chan, look at this." Her chin pointed between them where his cock was rising up from between her thighs and to her navel. "Look at how big you are" she moaned "Look at how deep you'll go into me when we make love!"

Ranma did look and moaned in turn, but his eyes were drawn to her face and breasts heaving as she humped against him, tweaking her nipples with his fingers and kneading her breasts avidly. "You're so beautiful Kan-chan, you're like a, like a goddess, I love you!"

Kan'u went faster, her peak coming swiftly after her previous two. Her arms gave out and she fell forward, pressing her upper body against his and Ranma swiftly capitalized capturing her lips with his as she continued to move her hips against him. Not a minute later the two moaned into one another's mouths as they came simultaneously.

**end lemon**

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Kan'u broke off the kiss and buried her face into Ranma's neck, breathing heavily and slowly sliding off him. "That was the most amazing thing I have ever, ever felt Ma-chan, just amazing."

Ranma smiled, as he reached for her only to have her playfully slap his hands away. "None of that, I'm exhausted. You wore me out Ma-chan." Ranma nodded and moved away to get another cloth but Kan'u grabbed his arm, and snuggled in. "Oh no, after sex comes cuddle time Ma-chan. We can clean up later if we want to." Ranma shrugged at that, putting a gentle arm over her shoulders as she went on. "That is, if I can stay here with you tonight?"

"I wouldn't mind if ya stayed all the time." Ranma blurted, then paused, stunned. "Did, did I just say that?"

Kan'u giggled. "Yes you did lover, but no, I don't think we can do that just yet. Not until after this whole destiny mess is solved at least. Until then I'm not willing to let the others protect Ryuubi all the time. In fact I'll be on duty all day tomorrow to make up for this."

Ranma pouted and she giggled, before yawning. "Right now though, I want to take a bit of a nap." She looked across and saw it was only eight, but she felt exhausted. "Or maybe just call it a night."

Ranma looked over too and nodded again. "Okay Kan-chan, but ya have ta let me go if ya want the bed."

"Oh no Ma-chan, you're not going anywhere. I want you right here to cuddle! Besides I trust you not to do anything I don't want you to." She snuggled further into his side, wincing a little as her sensitive nipples slid across the muscles in his side.

Ranma took one look at her stubborn face then shrugged, knowing a losing battle when he saw it. Not moving the arm around her shoulder he reached out with his free arm and turned off the light. "Goodnight Kan-chan. See ya in the morning. I love ya."

Kan'u's voice was a bare whisper next to him as she whispered "I love you too Ranma, goodnight."

**end chapter.**

## \*Chapter 8\*: Chapter 8

I don't own the aquatranssexual or boobie tousen.

I have read a few complaints about how quickly Chou'un switched from Ranma to Herb. I have to say two things: one, these characters are teenagers, incredibly dangerous, and powerful teenagers, but teenagers nonetheless. Teenagers routinely charge into relationships and later regret them or at least the speed, hence the conversation between Kan'u and Ranma in this chapter. Teenagers routinely change opinions or interests in short amounts of time, and I made certain to explain that Chou'un really didn't feel as emotional a connection to Ranma as Kan'u did.

Kan'u and Ranma both wear their feelings on their sleeves and their connection built from the physical to the emotional, with Chou'un she never made it past the physical. Chou'un is much more emotionally reserved, putting her behind the curve. More, she and Herb will not be getting together that quickly. Will they talk, yes, will they have an understanding, yes, but Herb isn't comfortable around females enough to really flirt or do anything physical with her for a while.

Another review said that for being bisexual Kan'u hasn't done much with Ranma-chan. That's not her fault, that is Ranma's. As much as he has gotten used to his female form, he is not comfortable receiving affection in it. Besides he might be getting rid of it soon. Wait, I wasn't supposed to say that, ignore the man behind the curtain...

Want to give a shout out to Vandenz, who has continued to read and give great reviews, as well as pointing out typos to me. I'll be going back and correcting those tonight and reposting the chapters in question.

Final chapter before the tournament, some lime stuff with Ryomou, and a bit more about her joining Kan'u and Ranma, and basically foreshadowing her place in the relationship. Herb and Chou'un are also starting their search for mystics. I wanted to make certain I didn't make the mistake I had previously in the mucking up the geography. Turns out Kanto isn't a school district like I thought, but a geographic region. Unfortunately I honestly don't think I could go back and change that because of how it would effect how much information the Ikki fighters had about Ranma and Nerima before he showed up. What he can do must be a surprise in many ways, though that will end in the tournament, after which no one will be underestimating him.

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### Chapter 8 relative calm before the storm

Kan'u woke up the next morning after the best night's sleep she had in years to the sound of someone preparing breakfast. Blearily opening one eye she looked at the alarm clock set on to the bed stand next to Ranma's bed. The time read 8:30, and she groaned. *It's Sunday*, she thought to herself. *People are supposed to sleep in on Sunday. Especially when they spent 2 1/2 hours making out and practically having sex with their girlfriend last night! Here I am ready to sleep for another six hours and he is not only up and about but cheerful and energetic! I thought men were supposed to be the ones to nod off and be exhausted from sex, not the other way around!*

That thought went away as she heard Ranma answer the phone. She heard his side of the conversation quite clearly and shook her head at how chipper he sounded. "Oh, hey Chou'un-chan, what's up?" Pause.

"That was quick. How many did you find?" Longer pause.

"Well if you think that's best." Ranma sounded a little dubious there, but thankful too. "I just didn't think that you'd be able to find that many that fast." Short pause.

"Don't worry about it, if it takes a few days it takes a few days. Having something to help with the dragon souls is way more important than havin' you around for the tournament, me Kan-chan Chouhi and Ryomou-chan are more than enough to see us through." Another pause, this time longer.

Then his voice became worried on top of sounding querulous. "Well if Herb is helping with this you won't have any problems with money or anythin' dangerous, but I wouldn't trust him that much. It's not that he's untrustworthy I guess, he's just got a real temper issue."

After the other person spoke for a time, Ranma seemed to calm down, and his voice was back to normal as he replied. "Well I just had plans to spar with Ryomou the rest of the day, we're gonna meet up around 11:30." A very short pause. "Sure I'll make sure she gets home fine first, duh. Though ya know she can take care of herself."

Kan'u groaned at the thought of Chou'un making fun of her like that, as if she was little child that needed to be walked

home. *Still*, she thought as she looked down at her naked body still covered with the remnants of their fun last night, *a bath before I leave is most certainly a good idea*. This idea of not cleaning up had been something she wanted to try, but was definitely not something she was going to let happen again. She thought it would make her feel deliciously **dirty**, but now that everything had dried she just felt sticky and yucky. *Live and learn I suppose*.

Her musings were interrupted as the door to the apartments bedroom opened and Ranma walked in carrying a plate of breakfast. It was a simple breakfast, just rice some salmon, and miso soup, but at the sight of it her stomach gurgled hungrily and she realized that she was really quite hungry.

Ranma smiled as she sees saw that she was awake and came over, placing the plate of food beside the bed, leaning over to kiss her. "How are you feeling Kan-chan?"

Kan'u shrugged apologetically. "Good, though unfortunately not up for more playtime Ma-chan," said smirking a little as his eyes widened as he blushed and stammered, obviously the idea of more fun time hadn't occurred to him. "My sensitive parts are a little too sore from last night for more fun."

Ranma nodded. "I already had my bath so ya can have yours and take yer time if ya want. Sorry I don't know any massage points that'll help, I mean some of them will, but they've got some side effects." Here he blushed again and Kan'u determined to ask him about those side effects some other time. She wasn't certain just yet how she felt about the former grandmaster of her lover's martial arts school being a world-class pervert, but the knowledge Ranma had learned from his books had come in handy once already so she would withhold judgment. "What time do you need to be back at the temple?"

Kan'u shrugged throwing offer musings and finishing off the miso soup. "What time do they want me there? And what are their plans for the day?"

"Chou'un and Herb are leaving after breakfast to go and hunt up some of the names on his list of mystics. Ryuubi was able to find a few that actually had addresses, and a few were listed under the FDPA as livin' in certain areas. I think they should be very, very worried that she can hack them so easily," he reflected.

Kan'u giggled, "That is one of her many talents. She wants to be a writer after this is all over, she wants to write children's books, did you know that? Maybe if we can actually end this stupid destiny of ours once and for all she'll be free to pursue that dream."

Ranma nodded. "Yep, and you're gonna be free to pursue yours as an explorer and world traveler right?" Kan'u smiled and nodded at him again, knowing that he had the same dream. It was one of the things that had attracted them to each other.

"Still," she mused, "Chou'un and Herb, huh? Did you notice the looks that they were giving each other last night?"

"What looks, remember I was in that vision from yer bead most 'o last night."

"I think Chou'un may be interested in Herb, though I don't know for certain, and I know she'll tell us before she does anything with him." She watched him as she chewed the last of the salmon and was surprised that he seemed to take this in stride.

He noticed her confusion and chuckled. "I've been thinking for a while that there was a kinda wall between her and me emotions-wise, y'know. I mean, you and I talk about important stuff, share ideas, snuggle and just, y'know, hang out. Chou'un-san and I almost never had a serious talk without you around, and most of the time we were talking about stuff alone it'd end up in us makin' out after only a few minutes. Don't get me wrong it was great, but... but to me the other stuff was even better."

"And what do you think of Ryomou's chasing after you?" she asked teasingly and he flushed.

He answered back however asking "What do you think of it?"

"I am intrigued and rather aroused actually." Kan'u answered bluntly and honestly. "Chou'un may be willing to experiment, but I've always thought that she was a one man/woman girl. Ryomou on the other hand is almost as, inquisitive shall we say, as I am and attractive. Now answer my question," she said, staring at him with her light blue eyes holding his darker ones.

"A mix between weirded out and interest frankly." He answered, replying to her candor and being honest in return. "She's not too violent but she gives the impression that she really would hit me if I did something wrong, and that reminds me a little too much o' some of my past issues from Nerima fer my liking. On the other hand, we do kind o'

click, not as much as you and I do," he said looking at Kan'u and smiling "but a lot more than I did with Chou'un at first. Ryomou is sort of like a straight man in a comedy act, she's so dry and matter of fact sometimes but once you get to know her she's got a great sense of humor, she'll just shoot jabs and make sarcastic remarks about everyone. It's fun to listen to y'know."

She nodded, looking at him happily and putting the now empty tray next to her on the bed. "Good because I've grown to like her as well. I think we would make a good quartet or trio if Chou'un does end up leaving us. Now, while I am guarding Ryuubi all day you are going to be training and sparring with Ryomou, correct?"

Ranma nodded. "Yep, that's the plan."

"Good" Kan'u said and got up out of bed, standing there naked. She paused, enjoying the way he looked at her torn between blushing embarrassment, sexual desire, simple appreciation and the need to control himself. The thought struck her that she had sort of roused a volcano here, and being the only object of that desire may wear her out for anything else. *Oh but what a way to go...*

Kan'u walked into the bathroom, leaving the door open so she could continue their conversation. "When you spar with Ryomou Ranma, at some point I want you to go all out."

Ranma cocked his head. "Are ya sure that's a good idea? I don't want her to resent me or anythin' and if I go all out I'll overpower her pretty easily."

"Oh yes, I'm very sure Ma-chan. You see Ryomou is a sexual submissive." Even from within the confines of the bathroom she could almost feel his confusion and went on to relieve said confusion quickly. "She wants to be dominated Ranma, she wants to submit herself a little to another person. For a woman like her, knowing that the other person has power over her is a major turn on, I noticed it after our spar when she joined the school. So when you spar" She added, looking around the doorway at him, her purple hair flopping to one side and her aquamarine eyes glittering with humor over a smirk that widened at his crimson face, "make it good."

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After that rather disconcerting conversation, Ranma dropped Kan'u off at the temple and then went to meditate on a rooftop near the park where he and Ryomou were going to meet. She was still working on her weekend homework when he and Kan'u arrived, and she wanted to finish it up before they started to spar. He had to get his mind around the whole relationship thing that had been occurring lately, and he hadn't really been able to sit down and think about it yet.

*That I love Kan'u isn't a question anymore, he thought to himself as he meditated. She's bright funny, intelligent, a great listener. We just click on many levels, our dreams for the future are pretty much the same, and how we view the Art is pretty much the same as well. And she understands me, my fears, my worries, all my insecurities, 'cause she shares some of them, and has shared her own with me.*

*I've always been a little more... hesitant I guess with Chou'un, and that's my fault. Maybe if I had met her at the same time I met Kan'u, we would've developed the same level of rapport as I did with Kan'u, but we didn't. She's made no bones about the fact she is physically attracted me, but like I told Kan'u not so much emotional, we've only shared a few things, and never really talked about the future just the two of us. So her leaving isn't much of an issue, I'll be a little sad, but as long as she's happy I'll get over it. Though if they get together and he hurts her, Herb is gonna wish he'd never been born!*

*And now we come to Ryomou he thought sardonically as he could feel her aura coming closer slowly. I like her too. She's brave, feisty, intelligent, strong, strong-minded which is even more important, a surprisingly good listener, and has gone through a lot of the same issues and problems with her family that I went through with my old man, though she hasn't yet told me the reason why her family treated her like that. I like her too, and I guess with Kan'u's permission to y'know invite her in I don't have to feel guilty about it but I still kind of do? I guess the problem is that I don't know what would've happened if the girls back in my old district were willing to share. That alone seems to solve a lot of problems, but would I have been happy that way?*

*And then it hit him. The girls back home weren't looking at me as a person to be in a relationship with, they were all looking at me as a problem solver or property! You don't have to share property, it's yours! Akane thought of me as property, she could abuse me as often as she wanted ta cause I wasn't a person to her, just a thing her daddy gave her. Ukyo thought of me as a prize, a way to get back the girlhood she threw away searching for me and my old man. My own thoughts never mattered, my own emotions, and dreams for the future never mattered, only hers. And Shampoo... well she might have really had feelings for me, but she never took me or my dreams or emotions into account.*

*But these girls are interested in me, Ranma the person not me, Ranma the prize.* He opened his eyes at that revelation and whispered. "Wow." That just completely blew his mind. He looks down from where he was perched on the edge of the rooftop to see Ryomou waving up at him, and indicating he should come down. He nodded, with a bit of newfound confidence. *And if they both look at me that way, and if Chou'un is obviously okay with moving on from our relationship, then maybe I really should take the initiative here and bring Ryomou in.*

The first half of training went well. Ryomou, though a little amused by how often Ranma was blushing as he looked at her, went through the katas she had learned the day before performing each of them flawlessly.

Ranma then walked her through some of the same speed enhancing exercises he had taught Chou'un and Kan'u, which she took to like a duck to water, though it would be several days until she started to see results. Next he walked her through some exercises to learn ki sight, a few exercises intended to build ki control and how to create a fold-space pocket, areas that in his eyes were a must for any martial artist. He was actually surprised at the speed Ryomou learned the fold-space technique as after a few hours she had it down pat. While she couldn't create a large space yet, she could still enlarge any given pocket by at least a factor of three. Enlarging it further would just take pumping in more ki into the bubble now that the space was created, which would have to wait until she had more control. Ryomou actually had a slightly larger core than Kan'u, but not nearly the control the descendant of Guan Yu had.

After a brief break for a late lunch, Ranma looked up at the sky and noticed that the sky was looking overcast. "It looks like it's gonna rain, so let's move ourselves somewhere else. You know any abandoned factories or anythin' like that around here?"

Ryomou thought for a bit then nodded. "I think I do. Let's go." And without another word she jumped up and led the way over the rooftops.

Ranma shrugged and followed her, blushing as her short maid skirt, which she hadn't replaced yet, occasionally flipped up, showing white lace panties underneath. He blushed further when she looked back and noticed he was looking. She merely smiled and moved a hand back to flip her skirt up further, causing him to nearly stumble mid-leap. He recovered as she jumped away laughing.

After about ten minutes of roof hopping Ryomou paused and pointed in front of them. "Here we are." Ahead of them Ranma could see a construction wall around a abandoned building that looked like some kind of gym. Idly he wondered why there were always so many abandoned buildings around, but outwardly he nodded. "Looks good, let's get in there before it starts ta rain."

Ryomou nodded and the two leapt over the wall and went into the building. Inside the building still looked decent, with only a few areas looking damaged or in need of repair. Much like Ranma thought it was a gym, laid out like a gymnastics gym, with some ratty pads on the ground, a jumping horse, and a few sets of bars and hoops spread around.

Ranma looked around and nodded approvingly. The two moved into the center of the gym facing one another and ready to start on sparring. Ranma first laid down a few ground rules. "Alright, since we're gonna be doing this for a while, I figure each match should be a little different. So first were gonna just gonna stand in place and trade blows, not power but speed and accuracy. Then we'll move on to hand to hand full out and then just kicks. Do ya have any ki attacks?"

Ryomou nodded. "I have a few power strikes if that's what you mean, as well as two ranged attacks I've recently thought up." One part of her, the warrior half that was always striving to better itself, was excited. This idea of working on different areas of combat would be very interesting and would provide certain results. The woman part of her, the part that wanted to see how far she could push Ranma with her grappling skills, getting their sweaty bodies close and keeping them that way, was not so happy.

"Great, so that'll be the fourth match. After that we'll switch to all go without ki attacks or special maneuvers, then all out with everythin', okay?"

Ryomou nodded. That last bit suited her just fine.

The first match began, and Ryomou swiftly found out that she couldn't match Ranma in pure speed. His hands were too fast, even without reinforcing that speed with ki, and she could barely see them let alone match them. After a few minutes however, her eyes began to adjust and she began to tag his hands just enough to change their trajectory.

This went on for about fifteen minutes until Ranma stepped back, signaling the end of the first match. "Speed kills" he

stated simply, gesturing at Ryomou. She looked down and gasped. Ranma had sneakily daubed his fingers with a bit of red paint, so that every time he tagged her, a bit of red paint marked the place he hit. Her front, neck chest arms, everything had small red paint marks.

Ryomou looked up and glared at him. "You better pray this stuff comes out Ranma or else."

Ranma gulped, and she smirked. Realizing it was a joke he sagged in relief before smirking at her. "Completely missed the point there y'know? The point is you can never have enough speed. I want ya ta add some speed exercises to your daily regimen at least until you can do the Amaguriken. It don't matter how much strength ya got if ya don't have enough speed ta hit yer opponent, then ya lose. So from here on I'm gonna go just a little faster than you can right now, and push ya a bit okay?"

Ryomou nodded and the second match began.

Ryomou again was barely able to keep up with his speed. Ranma jumped and danced around her and she tried to keep up only to fail spectacularly. After only five minutes this time Ranma stepped back. "Okay, yer footwork's great, but ya need to work on yer overall speed a **lot**. Yer plenty strong, the few times I let ya tag me I felt it, but again, speeds the thing." Ranma just could not understand why none of the Fighters he'd met so far realized speed was more important than strength in martial arts fights. Not one of them had enough speed in his opinion, though Kan'u and the rest of his friends were getting better quickly.

Ryomou nodded and the two moved back to the center before beginning their third match. She was beginning to be a little irritated at how badly she was doing so far, and ached to do something to change that cool, blasé attitude of his.

Now the two exchanged kicks rather than punches, and here she was able to make up some ground. She was a little more flexible than Ranma and thus able to dodge better, and while he was still faster, he telegraphed his kicks just enough for her to counter or dodge. She was also sneakier, and landed a few toe stomps and low kicks in this match. After about a half hour Ranma backed off. "Okay, I ain't gonna make any comments about that match, ya did good, and yer tricky which is a plus. Now let's see yer ki attacks."

Ryomou nodded, concentrating and then shot forward with a loud "Kiyahh!" with a low jab that segued in to an elbow thrust.

Ranma blocked the punch but not the follow up elbow jab which was the real power shot, and it went home into his stomach. Ranma gasped as the force of the jab impacted his stomach and crashed backwards. Much to Ryomou's surprise however Ranma got up, tearing off his now ruined shirt but otherwise unharmed. He grinned at her expression and explained. "If you got ki-sight, you can see the buildup in yer opponent's energy and prepare for it."

Mystery explained he shot forward like a bullet out of a gun and before Ryomou could even raise her arms she felt a blow land on her stomach "tiger punch!"

Ryomou's body left the ground and shot backwards, blasting through the far wall and into what had once been a locker room. It still had some of its furnishings, a few lockers and benches, but that was of no interest to Ryomou as she hit the outer wall hard enough to crack the concrete. When she slid down the wall, she felt a draft around her middle and looked down to see that the stomach area of her maid outfit had not survived the blow, shredding and exposing her taut bare tummy and the lower part of her bra.

Ranma, who had jumped through the hole her body had made, noticed the same thing and turned away blushing. Before he could offer to let her take a break and put another shirt on she was off the ground and charging. A quick power kick caught him napping and it was Ranma's turn to become airborne.

While Ryomou didn't have a high end devastating ki attack like Kan'u's explosive palm technique, what she did was to overload one body part or another strengthening it. The effect was the same as taking five of Ryoga's hits all at once. Ranma was smacked sideways and crashed into the lockers on one side of the room, bending them entirely out of shape.

He pushed himself up but this time Ryomou wasn't about to let up. She charged in and her ki powered haymakers began to land before he could get to his feet. Unfortunately for her Ranma had the edge on her in ki manipulation and showed this in as unequivocal a manner as possible by redirecting her attack with one ki charged arm and raising his other palm to right before her stomach. "Moko Takabashi!" A cerulean disk of power slammed into her and threw her backwards to land back into the gym area.

Ranma kept his distance (and his attention, getting in close when her maid outfit was falling apart was too distracting)

and began to fire off what he thought of as mini moko's, small baseball sized spheres of ki that stung but didn't do a lot of damage. Ryomou dodged this way and that in an attempt to avoid them for a bit as she powered up one of her two ranged attacks.

Ranma noticed her aura changing, almost reaching out like one of his own techniques did, but differently, and wondered what she was going to try, but when she shouted "shadow Kick!" The effect still took him by surprise.

What came at him was just a mass of dark energy that looked much like a kick and that hit like one too, doubling him over as it slammed into his midriff. With a shout Ryomou closed the distance again, determined to bring the fight to Ranma and use her grappling skills to best effect.

Ranma however was only stunned by the kick, not really injured. Suddenly Ryomou found herself on her back, both arms pulled up behind her back and held by one hand with Ranma sitting on her and his other fist slamming down beside her head glowing blue with ki. She watched wide-eyed as he pulled it out of the hole in the floor his fist made before resting his hand between her shoulders. "Match over." He said behind her, and she could only gulp and nod.

He held her there for a moment to drive his point's home as he spoke. "I gotta admit yer shadow kick is damn good, ya need to work on building up to it faster and maybe having more than one of 'em hit at a time. Ya need to work on enhancing the speed with which ya can power yer blows, they're way too slow. If ya ain't fast enough in hand to hand things like this happen." And he tapped her shoulder blades with his free hand, still holding her arms behind her.

For her part, Ryomou was shocked at how badly she had lost. Even with the ground she had regained in their kicking match Ranma had completely overwhelmed her so far. She knew he was good from their short spar a few days ago but this good? He was monstrously strong, and it was turning her on like nothing she'd ever felt. That and the position she was in right now...

Experimentally she tried to shift underneath him, not incidentally rubbing her rear up against his pants where he sat on her back with his legs on either side. He flinched but she didn't take advantage of it, she wasn't trying to get away, not really, and after a moment she felt him unwillingly respond to her. "It would appear as if I'm completely at your mercy." She said huskily, her voice a bare shadow of its normal controlled tone.

Behind her Ranma was looking down in panic, his fear of situations like this warring with what Kan'u had said and the knowledge that Ryomou did in fact like him and might like this. After a few seconds this newer and surprisingly more powerful aspect of his mind won out and he began to grind his now semi-hard dick against her rear in turn, letting it flop between her magnificent ass checks. They were only separated by his pants and her panties, as her maid skirt, already short and partially destroyed, had ridden up to her waist from her earlier gyrations. "Yeah," he husked licking dry lips as he looked down at her. "Unless ya get stronger, someone could take advantage of a position like this pretty easily."

Underneath him Ryomou bit her lip to keep from moaning as she thrust backward as much as she could from her pinned position. She could feel herself getting wet, and if that was his cock she felt against her ass...

"So are you ready to admit defeat?" he asked her. It came out half in jest and half throatily, a voice that admitted without saying it that he was enjoying what they were doing.

Admit defeat? Hell, she was ready to have his children...and yet...her warrior pride wouldn't allow her to just surrender. So with regret she shook her head. "No I think I want to go on to our full on spar now. I'm not ready just yet to concede."

Ranma nodded and jumped off her quickly, half relieved and half strangely disappointed, an emotion that was mirrored in Ryomou as she stood up, rubbing at her shoulders to get some of the stiffness out. Without another word the two moved back to the center of the gym and took up their stances facing one another.

Ryomou made a concerted effort to clear her mind of her hormones and concentrate on the match, and after a few she was successful. Looking across at Ranma she saw that he had been able to do the same thing and she nodded, then rushed forward.

This time she mixed in kicks, punches, chops, grabs, lunges and randomly a ki enhanced blow, but Ranma bent like a willow around all of them, coming back with stinging hits to her sides and bare stomach, never her face or legs, the better to keep focused.

She in turn pulled out every trick she knew but none of them worked for long. She even tried to power up her shadow kick more quickly and hit him with it at half strength but he dodged it easily and returned with a stinging shot to her

abs.

She tried to concentrate on his lower body, trying to take out his legs to reduce his maneuverability, but he took to the air, using her own strikes as momentum to stay in the air, hitting back at her upper body with a few stinging slaps.

She tried to grapple with him going for holds and throws but failed as his style suddenly switched to defense, and it was her who was thrown. She landed and looked up in time to see him still in the air coming down with a foot raised for an axe kick.

Ryomou took this one chance to turn the tide in her favor and whipped out her last ki attack, one she had in fact thought up herself only a few days ago by seeing it in a show on a TV in a store. It wasn't much, but used in the right circumstances it could turn the tide of battle in her favor. She raised her hands and smacked them together shouting "Radiant Flare!" From her hands burst a bright blinding light, which hit Ranma full in the face blinding him and causing him to fall out of the air with a cry of pain.

As he landed on his feet automatically Ryomou capitalized on his distraction, closing the distance and placing him into a submission hold. After a few second she had Ranma in a choke hold, one leg over his shoulder, the other under his opposite arm, and locked together behind his back while using her arms to pull his head down. It was all over now. There was no way he could get out of this.

Amazingly, Ranma remained standing, though Ryomou threw her weight back in an effort to bring him to the floor. Ranma stood firm, but Ryomou knew she had won. "It's all over, the blood stream from your arteries is cut off, causing all the muscles in your body to relax." She went into her normal spiel automatically, not even realizing what she was saying only knowing she was a little turned on by having Ranma in her power, though nowhere near the amount she had felt the other way around. "Doesn't it feel good? This is ecstasy, right? Oooo, feels so good!"

"You...tell...me," Ranma replied, his voice strained with effort. Ranma raised his arm up and drove it between Ryomou's crotch and his own body, forcing her thighs apart until Ryomou's legs fell down until they locked around his chest. Ryomou had a stunned look on her face, but she didn't release her hold. Instead she used her grip on his pigtail and her arm around his throat to pull his face into the bare flesh of her belly in an effort to suffocate him, ignoring the feel of his breath on her stomach and the flutter this caused her lower down.

Ranma wasn't having it though. His hands found their way to her armpits and he dug his thumbs into the vulnerable nerve clusters there. Ryomou screamed as neural fire raced down her arms. She tried to maintain the hold through the pain, but it sapped the strength of her arms too rapidly. Ryomou was forced to release her hold on him and she tumbled back out of his reach. Ranma added to her humiliation by simply pushing her a little and then stood back waiting.

Now with her best moves proven to be insufficient Ryomou became desperate. And much like in her match with Kan'u she let that sway her actions. She charged forward and began throwing a flurry of punches and kicks, but again Ranma just dodged them easily and she became more and more flustered.

Then it happened; Ryomou launched a roundhouse kick that was in the air just a second too long. He ducked under it and suddenly, Ranma was behind her and she felt his arm slide around her throat while his other hand grabbed a handful of hair, pulling her head back, putting her into a classic choke hold. She felt the steel-hard, corded muscles of his arm tighten around her throat, cutting off the blood supply to her brain in a complete reversal of what she had tried to do to him a few minutes ago.

Ryomou struggled, pushing and pulling on the arm locked around her throat, but she might as well have tried to budge a steel bar. She attempted to drive her elbows back into Ranma's ribs, but he just ignored her efforts without so much as a grunt of acknowledgement; she'd have gotten more results from elbowing a stone pillar. Attempts to stomp down on his instep proved futile as well; he was too fast. The effects of the choke hold began to manifest and her struggles slowed.

Acting again on Kan'u's information and the previous little session they had he spoke to her. "Does it feel good?" he asked in a soft, tender voice, deliberately running his tongue out and over one of her ears. "Is it everything you imagined? Ya can't fight it. Ya don't even want to. It feels too good."

Ryomou moaned as his warm breath and tongue caressed her ear as he spoke sending shivers of pleasure up and down her spine as Ranma went on, somehow realizing what to say as he did. "Can ya see the darkness edging in around your vision? It's so warm and comforting. It'll be so easy to just give in and let it take ya. There's no shame in this. It's an honorable defeat." A shudder ran through Ryomou's body, causing her to moan again...a long pleasure-filled moan. "That's it," he encouraged. "Can you feel your muscles relaxing? Isn't it nice? Embrace the darkness," he

urged her soothingly.

Just as she was about to give in and pass out Ranma abruptly released the hold, reaching down with one hand into her soaked panties and jabbing two fingers straight into her dripping slit as the other went around her stomach roughly pulling her body back against his. Ryomou came with a wail as her juices squirted out of her in her excitement. Her entire body tensed as she wailed and thrashed, the juices running down her legs.

After a moment she collapsed back against his chest. When she had enough energy to lift her head she looked up at him and he smiled down at her gently, but with more than a hint of nervousness. "Er, did ya like that? Only from yer reactions before and from what Kan'u said I thought ya might."

Ryomou shook her head wonderingly. *He gives me a world shattering orgasm and then asks me if I liked it?* "I more than liked it Ranma, I loved it, it was precisely what I wanted. You said something about Kan'u though?"

Ranma chuckled as he gently lifted her still boneless body and moved over to one of the least rotten benches along the gym's wall. "Yeah she somehow figured out you'd like this kind of thing. I never would've, but when she basically slapped me in the face with it and you reacted like ya did after our last spar and the stuff ya said after getting me in yer submission grip, well I decided ta try it." He leaned in sucking at her neck gently and making a mark there much like Kan'u had made on him the night before. He found he kind of liked being in charge like this, at least a little. Not that he was going to push it or anything but seeing Ryomou cum that hard had been really hot.

Ryomou determined to thank Kan'u profusely at a later date, but right now she merely nodded, curling up in Ranma's lap happily. "Well it was magnificent. I take it this means you two have decided I can join your relationship?"

Ranma nodded. "Yep, I like ya, Kan'u likes ya, and Chou'un likes ya so if she stays with us you're welcome to join." Ryomou nodded, having noticed the looks Chou'un was giving Herb the night before and Ranma continued. "After all" he joked puffing out his chest and raising his chin haughtily. "I'm more than enough man to take care of all of ya."

Of course karma could not let such an opening pass. The window behind where the two were sitting suddenly blew in, letting the rain that had begun to fall splash inside and soak Ranma.

Ranma-chan rolled her eyes as Ryomou looked at her, now resting her head against the other girl's bare breasts rather than his hard chest. "Why me?"

Ryomou looked at her for a moment before she burst out in laughter, then leaned in to capture the other girl's lips.

Ranma-chan stiffened, but eventually began to return the chaste kiss, though she was surprised how strangely alike yet different the sensation was from one form to another. After a moment Ryomou pulled back and looked into the shorter girl's eyes. "Just remember I fell for you Ranma, not just you in your male body but the whole package. Never forget that."

Ranma-chan looked at her for a long second, before she nodded silently. She had gotten just the same reassurance from Kan'u whose liking of both her forms he had known before they even became a couple, and Chou'un had shown no revulsion of his female form either. Ranma-chan pulled the other girl into a tight hug, reflecting how lucky she was that the government had sent him here, where s/he was accepted and loved.

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Lunchtime found Chou'un and Herb on a train towards Tokyo, where their three first targets were. It would take them a few hours to get there, but after that it would be a simple matter to get to the addresses listed. These first three targets weren't their best shots for finding a living mystic, but they were the easiest to reach. They could also hit up several others in the city via bus, and be done more than half the list in a day.

It'd been Chou'un and Ryuubi who had thought this plan up, and planned out the itinerary for the trip, but Herb had insisted on going along, as it was his spell scroll that was going to be copied, and he had more than enough money to pay their way.

Now he looked over at Chou'un and was once again intrigued by her features. Though for some reason when they were around other people she kept her eyes closed, hiding those glorious draconic eyes from view. "Why do you keep your eyes closed?"

Chou'un smiled. Often this was the first question someone asked her, those who did not automatically assume she was blind at least, and their response to her eyes had become a sort of litmus test for her dealings with them. "Two reasons. One, most people look at them afraid or suspiciously at the very least, and two it allows me to use my other

senses at a heightened level."

"Bah" he scoffed, "let them stare. It just shows that you have an attribute of a far superior species. And if strangers are afraid, what of it? Their opinion should not matter to you at all."

"Ranma said much the same thing, well other than the superior species thing" she mused and chuckled as he stiffened. "Does that bother you so much, to be compared to him?"

Herb forced himself to relax. "Being compared to any normal human's a bit of an irritant yes, but I suppose Ranma is far from normal." He said in a deadpan tone. Chou'un laughed and with the ice effectively broken the conversation continued.

Herb told her of the Musk people, how they were descendents of warriors who had bathed in Jusenkyou in order to gain the strength of wild animals such as tigers, bears and other species. How his line was descended of a dragon taking on the shape of a human woman and mating with a human male. And of his own dreams for the future, where their people would be more powerful, and the role of women brought to a more modern standard, as such a thing would make the Musk stronger.

Their nearest neighbors were powerful examples of what could happen if they didn't change. Both the Amazons and the Phoenix refused to change, and were in decline. The amazons, with their strict adherence to the supremacy of their laws over all others had alienated both their neighbors and the Chinese government. While it didn't want to invest the resources necessary to bring them to heel, all trade with the lowlands had been cut off recently. The Amazons were also losing members with every generation, as men who could left their oppressive rule, and even some women who thought them archaic. The phoenix tribe, whose territory was even deeper into the mountains than the Musk or Amazons were even worse off. Not only were their birthrates a bare fraction of normal humans, their lands were not up to feeding even their present population without trade with their neighbors, and their arrogance and contempt for anything on the ground made that trade hazardous and costly.

If the Musk did not want to join them in decline they had to change, and Herb was determined to force that change through. He wanted to forge stronger ties with the lowlands to bring in modern technology while keeping their traditional strengths and laws and then conquer the region, giving his people some room to expand into without coming into direct competition with the communist government.

She in turn told him of the sacred destiny from her perspective and her supposed role in it, her dream to become a diplomat, and the problem she had with English. She could speak Mandarin, Vietnamese, Mongolian, and Korean, but she had a lot of trouble speaking any of the European languages and unfortunately, English had become the lingua franca of diplomats everywhere.

Herb however disagreed and said that he knew of no one in his territory or the surrounding mountains that could speak English save the Amazon elder Lotion, and that English was only the lingua franca because of the power of the United States and it would decline in use as America declined. He pointed to several economic facts that showed this decline was already occurring and that China and India were stepping up to fill the breach. (his opinion people)

If Ranma had been listening this would have had him looking at Herb as if he was possessed. The idea of Herb, haughty and insular master of the Dragon Fist martial arts having a discussion about world economics of all things would've stunned him and made him think he was in the twilight zone.

This conversation continued for hours. As they neared their destination the two stood up with a much greater respect for one another than they had before. Not only was Chou'un intelligent, but she was also stubborn, quick on her feet, and well read. She in turn was impressed with Herb, there was actually a mind behind that haughty expression, and her opinion of him had skyrocketed. His plans for the future were also interesting, and she thought that maybe, just maybe the two of them might have something going on.

Their search for the mystics, however, did not go as well as their conversation. The first two mystics on their list turned up to be dead from old age. The last one was blind, and unfortunately Herb had not thought to bring along a spell scroll translated into Braille. That one however was helpful as he was able to tell them that two of the others on the list were already dead as well. Apparently a feud had begun between their families, and both of them had died before the feud ended.

That left only two names on Herb's list that he had received from his father. Alas Ryuubi had been unable to find addresses to go with them, only areas in which to look for them. Once again they had to ride a train though this time it took far longer, nearly six hours and cost much more, nearly 22,000 yen, for their targets were on Kyushu Island in the Oita region. The train got into Fukuoka, the islands main transportation city, that afternoon, leaving them with half

a day to get from the city to their next stop, Yufuin in the Oika region. They bought a three day pass costing another 14,000 yen for the pair and made their way by train from Fukuoka to Yufuin.

Once there, they began to ask around for direction to the mystic's house. The local's strange accent/dialect made them nearly incomprehensible to Herb, but Chou'un was able to follow it enough to get by and they kept searching for a few hours. It was nearly dusk when they finally found a person who was able to direct them up a nearby river and to a nearby waterfall where the master had made his home. Herb led the way up the river and soon enough the two were at the house of the mystical master.

His house was done up in the same style as the Temple where Chou'un lived, though much smaller. It was an old-fashioned Japanese house with wood and rice paper panels, inside a small fortified wall. There were no modern accessories or accoutrements to see, no electricity lines or telephone poles lead up here. The master apparently had decided that such a thing would be in the way of his calling.

"Hello the house." Chou'un called out politely and within moments, a young girl of about eight or nine answered the door. Chou'un smiled at her gently, not wanting to scare her off. "We have come to meet with master Harumoto, is he in?"

The girl nodded, opened the door and admitted the two before closing it behind them. She bade them follow her with gestures and the two fell in behind her as she moved into the small house. Inside they found a simple three room house, a kitchen, what was probably a bedroom behind another door and a main room. In the main room on a set of cushions sat in wrinkled man.

If Ranma was there he would have shivered at how much he looked like Happosai. Short, he stood only about a foot and a half tall with a wizened raisin like body, weather beaten features and a small mustache but despite his apparent age he radiated a sort of boundless energy. His clothing while rumpled looked well cared for at least, but the eyes in that old face were lively and had a wicked gleam to them. A small pipe completed the image. The resemblance was so uncanny it would have only taken a single shout of 'hotcha' to initiate Ranma's flight or fight protocols.

As it was Herb felt a shiver up his spine looking at him. He had never met the perverted grandmaster of Anything Goes, but he had heard of his exploits and infamy from his father, who had run into him in his youth at some point (that his father never talked about what happened between them was a mystery that Herb was never certain he wanted to solve).

The old man cackled doing nothing to dispel the image his looks had cast over one of his guests, "Well to what do I owe the pleasure of two such fine looking young ladies coming to see me?"

Herb growled at being called a lady but then looked down in shock. Somehow she had gotten wet without even noticing it, and she looked up just in time to see the old man place a now empty bucket behind him.

"Did you think you are the first person suffering from a Jusenkyou spring curse to come to me for help? I'll tell you the same thing I've told all of them: the cursed springs are too powerful and far too chaotic to unravel and never relinquish those they touch. I'll not mess with them or even try. It would cost me my life."

"Oh, at your age that doesn't sound expensive, and do that to me again and I'll show you the anger of a dragon!" Herb said sharply. He sighed and reached into his pocket to bring out a flask of heated water.

The little girl came back carrying a tray that had three sets of tea on it and she set it between the two supplicants and her master. Chou'un thanked her warmly reaching out to pat her on the head and the girl blushed but rubbed her head against the older girl's hand for a moment before bowing herself out. Chou'un took up the thread of conversation before Herb or Harumoto could antagonize one another further. "We have not come seeking aid for my compatriot's curse honored one, but in ending a curse that is far darker and more dangerous than the curse of Jusenkyou." She went on to tell the master what she and the others had found out from Ranma's visions, as well as their own desire to end the curse of the magatama they were toiling under. At a nod from her Herb brought out the spell scroll and showed it to the master who looked at it keenly for a moment.

After a moment's assessment he raised a hand and the young girl appeared again moving forward to take the scroll from Herb's hands and moving over to place it in her Master's. Harumoto unrolled it again and placed it on the ground, placing little flat circular pieces of volcano rock on each corner to hold it in place. After that he traced the lines of the spell scroll with one finger muttering under his breath. It took him fifteen minutes to work his way through the scroll, checking and rechecking the spell words and matching them to what the two wanted the spell to do. Herb and Chou'un sat silently with varying degrees of patience throughout his perusal.

At last Harumoto looked up at them. "Yes, this may be able to contain the soul shards as you describe, though I would never have thought of the combinations of some of these symbols. So what you're asking is for me to reproduce these scroll shards and to empower them correct?"

Herb and Chou'un both nodded. "We would like at least three, possibly four scrolls if you can make them."

The master nodded and leaned back, stroking his wispy mustache thoughtfully. "I can do one, possibly two, though it will be time consuming, at least two, maybe three days to get all the parts right and double check them. And it will cost you oh my yes it will cost you quite a lot of money. My services don't come cheap and I have expensive tastes."

At that word Herb shivered again, once more reminded of the perverted master of Anything Goes as Harumoto went on. "But for any more than two you'll have to wait. These will take a lot of power out of me, and it'll be at least a month before I'm able to do one more let alone two. I would recommend if you're trying to solve this that you go with the two I give you and find something else to contain the last one. I can give you the address of one of my colleagues. He's not the best, and his work won't be as permanent as mine, but it will last long enough to, say, dump the container into the ocean. Besides, the faster you get rid of the soul shards as you describe the better. They may be able to break the spell and escape if given enough time."

Chou'un and Herb moved back to discuss their options and reluctantly agreed to go along with this suggestion. It wasn't perfect, but if they truly wanted to end the curse it might be the only way.

They returned and Herb began to haggle with Harumoto over the price only to be interrupted by Chou'un who took over the negotiations smoothly and worked the old man down to a price far lower than what Herb could've gotten. Once more Herb looked at her and the gleam of interest was in his eyes.

The old man finally nodded and reached out to clasp forearms with Chou'un to signal their agreement. The two I can make right away should be done in two maybe three days," he said. "Come back then or you can wait here. I won't be sending them through the mail regardless, and I will want to be paid for each as I finish them. "

Chou'un and Herb looked at one another before Chou'un got out her cell phone and went outside to call her friends. After a moment she came back and said that they would wait for the spell scrolls here. Even though the tournament was supposed to begin this coming Thursday, they would have enough time to get back for the second round. "Do you have room for us here or should we go back to town?" Chou'un asked Harumoto.

Herb however interrupted hastily before the old man could reply. "I think we should head back to town. I've become used to modern conveniences and no offense but modern food as well." He said nodding apologetically to the little girl, who blushed and bowed in reply as he turned to the old man where his eyes narrowed suspiciously.

Chou'un nodded and the two left. Behind them the little girl watched them leave with a sad expression on her face before turning to go back inside.

Harumoto sighed. *I had so hoped to use those peepholes I installed in the onsen. Why is it none of my female visitors ever take me up on the offer to stay? It's not like I've ever been caught, I'm just an old man who wants to enjoy a few simple pleasures. Someone out there is obviously sabotaging me!*

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Kan'u was waiting outside the school grounds Monday to see how it went yesterday between Ryomou and Ranma and was surprised when Ryomou walked up to her and without any preamble said "Thank you" then hugged her tightly before moving away to stand next to her.

Still Kan'u took it in stride and leaned forward conspiratorially. "So how did it go? I wasn't certain Ma-chan would follow my advice on how to bring you into the fold as it were."

Ryomou stood face flushed a little as she remembered then leaned in and whispered into Kan'u's ear. "It was incredible. Everything I wanted it to be and just enough. It was, wow just wow. He beat me in our spars, then tortured me with flirting and then made one of my all time fantasies come true all in one day." She leaned back and her tone turned sardonic as she went on. "It makes me wonder what the hell he's going to do for an encore."

Kan'u nodded happily. "Yes Ma-chan's like that a lot of the time. I think his use of ki sight should be illegal, it allows him to read our bodies far too well." The two young women leaned back against the school's outer wall, their talk turning to the upcoming tournament as they waited for their boyfriend to show up. "Are you going to participate and if so are you alright with fighting your former school if you have to?" Chou'un called last night and may not make it back in time to participate in the first or maybe even second rounds."

Ryomou frowned in thought and then shrugged. "Yes I'm going to participate, and yes I'm alright with fighting my old school. It's not like I had any real friends there anymore. With my crush on Saji over and him supposedly dead and my one real friend crippled a few months ago and no longer attending school, I really don't have any ties to them any longer. I wouldn't mind facing Gakushu or Kokin, though I think my fighting Hakufu again would be a bad idea." And not only because she had been somewhat friendly with the other girl before transferring, the odds of the dragon in the girl waking up was far too high for her to be comfortable.

Kan'u nodded thoughtfully then smiled as she spotted Ranma jumping down from a nearby building, though she was puzzled to see him in his female form. Before she could greet him Ryomou grabbed her shoulder whispering in her ear. "Remember that he doesn't want his curse to become common knowledge. In this form he's Ranko, not Ranma."

Kan'u smacked her forehead. She had forgotten that, Ranma had mentioned not wanting to deal with any of the rumors or harassment in school he had faced in Nerima a few days ago. Yet to her, Ranma's body mattered not at all, he was still Ma-chan, so remembering that other people didn't see it that way was sometimes difficult. So she waited until 'Ranma-chan' was close to greet her, then spoke loud enough for the passing students to hear her. "Ranko-chan, how are you, and where's your brother?"

Ranma-chan smiled a little irritably as she gave both girls friendly hugs as she answered at the same volume. "Oh he has a bit of a family issue to take care of. As head of the family those kinds of things tend to pop up, but since he can't miss any school days I volunteered to cover for him." The passing students all nodded as that made sense to them. The guys were thankful as this gave them another source of ridiculously hot eye candy to look at rather than the fighter they had all come to be a little scared of, while the girls merely sighed. Ranma being head of his house just added to his allure but Kan'u and Chou'un had him so firmly sown up it wasn't even funny.

Ranma-chan looked around then leaned in close. "I noticed I was having my monthly attack when I transformed yesterday, so I decided to get it over with before the tournament starts. If I get changed into my female form while that's goin' on in the middle of a fight it could get ugly." Both Kan'u and Ryomou nodded sympathetically. They both knew to avoid fighting when it was their time of the month too.

The trio walked through the gates as the first bell rang to signal the start of homeroom. As they entered the main building Ryomou asked in an undertone, "By the way, I've been wondering for a while what happens if you get splashed with both hot and cold water at once."

Ranma-chan shivered in remembered agony. "It's one of the two most painful things I've ever had to go through, and that is sayin' something. It happened once when that bitch Akane splashed me and Shampoo when the Amazon surprised me in the bath. It was like my... what's the name of those small things that everything is made from?"

"Molecules," Kan'u supplied helpfully.

"Yeah, molecules were being ripped in two directions at once, not wanting to be one thing or the other, my body trying to change into my girl form and remain a guy at the same time, and both were fighting one another. After we recovered I had to stop Shampoo from killing Akane, though lookin' back I probably should have just let her do it, would've saved me a lot of problems later."

Kan'u put an arm around the shorter girls shoulders giving them a friendly squeeze as both she and Ryomou decided not to ever let that happen to Ranma again if they could prevent it. "Well look at it this way Ranma, if you hadn't had so much trouble in Nerima you might never have met us."

Ranma-chan smiled back shyly as Ryomou nodded affirmatively. After that the trio broke up the girls going to their homeroom while Ranma-chan made her way morosely to hers alone.

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While her first class went well, Ranma-chan ran into trouble immediately after it. "Hey babe, you want us to show you around the school for a bit? We can show you a great time y'know."

Ranma-chan stared blankly at the three boys surrounding her desk, low level fighters whose asses he had kicked on his first day, and sighed. She had been worried something like this would happen, and decided to put forth her position in unequivocal terms. She stood up abruptly and whistled, getting the attention of every student in still in the classroom. "Okay, I'm only gonna say this once so listen up. These three guys hit on me and I ain't interested, not just in them but in any guy because" she paused to take a breath before continuing "I am a raging bull dyke lesbian who would rather cut off a man's testicles, stuff them in his mouth and roast him over a fire than let any man touch me."

It was the normal happy tone she used as she said this that scared her listeners the most, so when she went on, they

listened. "I am nearly as good a fighter as my brother and I will not hesitate to make that image a reality if someone decides to get fresh with me. You have been warned pass it on and have a nice day." Ranma-chan strode out with a happy smile on her face, leaving behind her several girls staring after her in shock torn between amusement and awe and several boys who were frozen in place with terror.

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Ranma-chan didn't have any further problem until she met up with Kan'u and Ryomou for lunch. Ryuubi was quizzing Chouhi for a math test the younger girl had later today, so with Chou'un still missing it was just the three of them today.

She found Kan'u and their blue-haired companion already sitting down around what had become 'their' tree, with the lunch Ryomou had made for the temple dwellers already out and open. She sat down next to Kan'u and opened her own lunch, adding it to the other bento as Kan'u smirked at her. "A raging bull dyke lesbian Ma-chan? We heard about that little outburst you had this morning."

Ranma-chan grunted irritably. "Hhmp, just wanted to make my point as clearly as possible. I've had enough of jerks hitting on me thanks." She was about to start their regular speed eating match when Kan'u held up a hand.

"Hold on Ranko, I think you need a bit of a handicap."

"Huh? Why?"

Ryomou growled. "She means your female form is way faster than your male form so you have an unfair advantage. I can barely keep up with you when you're in your male body, how do you think I'm going to keep up with you in your female form?"

Kan'u nodded. "Exactly. I think you need to give us a bit of an advantage, and if we beat you in this form I think you need to pay a penalty."

Ranma-chan looked at her suspiciously. "Ok I'll only fight ya with one hand. But what do ya mean a penalty?"

Kan'u shrugged, making certain to keep her voice as normal sounding as possible. No sense scaring her target off after all. "Oh just something you do if we win."

Ranma-chan shrugged. It wasn't like she was liable to lose after all. Kan'u may be a little faster than his male form but in this form she was at least twice as fast as his birth body. Her stomach growled and she nodded, "Alright whatever, let's go I'm getting hungry." She didn't see the sly glances his two girlfriends shared before they too tucked in.

For the first few minutes of their food match, Ranma-chan's belief in her superior speed was well founded. However her concentration was broken as she looked up to complement Ryomou on her food and saw her crossing her legs flashing a bit of nearly see through black lace panties.

She gawked and her hand faltered for a bit and Kan'u took advantage, stealing several bites before the redhead could recover. Ranma-chan shook her head and refocused on the match, and again her speed was such that she could both feed herself and stop Kan'u and Ryomou from taking more food.

However when she looked up to gloat about how she was winning he saw Kan'u leaning forward, showing an inordinate amount of cleavage. She froze again, remembering their night together. This time when she turned back to the bentos on the ground she was dismayed to see Ryomou lifting the last piece of food to her lips. She tried desperately to pick the piece out of Ryomou's chopsticks but Kan'u was able to grab his chopsticks with her own to stop the redhead.

Ranma-chan pouted at the blue haired warrior as she rather smugly chewed the last bit of bento. "I believe we win" Kan'u said, smirking and winking at Ryomou who nodded.

Ranma-chan's expression changed to chagrin as she stared at them. "You tricked me, you distracted me deliberately!"

Ryomou nodded. "Yes we did, after all there's no rule against it." She smirked "Now, about your penalty, I think you should sing us a song. I've heard Chou'un-san and Kan'u-san saying you are a really good singer, but I haven't heard you."

Ranma-chan looked around wildly, noting that there were several groups of students scattered around. "B-but I, there's, I mean I don't, in front of so many people?" she asked nearly panicking.

"Ranma, you don't have anything to be worried about" Kan'u said soothingly. "Your voice is wonderful, and everyone will enjoy hearing it." This was part of her campaign to get Ranma more comfortable with his female body. Hopefully once he was, they could experiment a little.

"B-but, i, theres' no background music?" Ranma-chan said, grasping at straws.

Ryomou reached into her fold-space pocket and pulled out an iPod and then a small speaker. "Any other objections?" She said smirking playfully yet also encouragingly.

Ranma-chan groaned. "Alright, b-but it's gotta be a song I already know."

Ryomou and Kan'u bent over her iPod looking through the songs she had on it. Of the three of them Ryomou was the only one who was really into music, but the others had come to like a few of the songs she introduced them to, especially some of the American rock songs. Neither of them were into the pop, girl or boy band songs. Kan'u looked up after a moment. "How about Firework, will that do?"

Ranma-chan groaned again, she knew that song very well and had sung it before, so her last objection had fallen. "Alright but you two owe me. I don't care about the penalty thing you two cheated and you owe me."

Kan'u and Ryomou smirked leaning forward in tandem to show off their cleavage as Ryomou replied "I'm certain we can think of a way to repay you somehow."

"N-none of that," Ranma-chan muttered. "I, uh k'now I'm not exactly comfortable with that in this body. I mean, kissin' is all okay I guess, just nothing else okay. Not in this body. And I think I wanna slow that kinda thing down anyway. I mean I ain't unhappy with anythin' we've done, but it's all so fast and too new ta me. I mean, taking the initiative like I did yesterday with Ryomou, on top of gettin' into it with you the night before Kan'u, that kinda thing is just I mean...." She trailed off looking miserable.

Kan'u nodded. "I understand Ranma, I really do, a few days of just kissing is fine by me."

Ranma-chan nodded. "I, yeah, I mean..." She trailed off looking at them both, gathering her thoughts. "I, this whole relationship thing is so new to me, sometimes it feels like I'm barely treading water somehow. All my life it's been about control, control of self, control of the body, control of my ki and then control of my emotions only showing what everyone expected ta see, and control of y'know body reactions." She blushed as Kan'u smirked remembering Ranma's little protector but continued. "It's, it's just when we're together, I... when I'm with ya that control goes out the window. That scares me, it scares me a lot. Especially what happened when I was with ya this weekend, and you too Ryo-chan." Ryomou blushed and seemed to lose her voice for a moment at the nickname.

Kan'u nodded. "I can understand that, and speaking for myself, it scares me how fast we've gone. I'm no wall flower Ranma, no sheltered little virgin girl, but going from first meeting to third base in a little under two weeks is something I would never have done with anyone else. We've gone further in a week and a half than I've gone with any of my previous boyfriends, one of whom I went out with for a year! So slowing down is fine by me. We're in no rush."

Ranma nodded thankfully and Ryomou shrugged. "For me I'm more experienced than either of you, though I will admit to still 'technically' being a virgin. But I will follow your lead in this. You satisfied one of my most powerful fantasies in our first time together Ranma, so wherever you lead is fine by me." Ranma-chan nodded again blushing and Ryomou continued, smirking now. "But I think you've put off singing enough for now, so get your beautiful booty up and start singing."

Ranma-chan groaned but complied. She stood up, and as Ryomou began the song, she began to sing along. The song, which had already been translated into Japanese began and her voice rang out, causing everyone in the vicinity to turn to her in surprise.

As she hit the end of the first refrain Ranma-chan's eyes closed and she got into the song, forgetting her surroundings. As the chorus ended she began to dance, moving her body to the music, spinning gyrating and twisting, not realizing how sexy she looked just then. With each chorus she sped up her dancing.

The song wasn't yet over when her reverie was interrupted by a most unwelcome voice interrupting her. "Cease this unseemly display at once!" Ranma-chan blinked, lowering one leg she had raised in a spin and opened her eyes to see Asato striding toward them. She looked around and remembered where she was but too late.

Ryomou sat there mesmerized by the redhead's voice and her dance while Kan'u, who had been blushing and watching her with love in her eyes, quickly got control of herself before turning to glare at the unwanted intruder.

Around them several boys gulped and smacked their cheeks to gain control of themselves before the scary redhead could see them, while the girls who had been outside were openly blushing and inwardly questioning their sexual preferences (most of them, the few who weren't decided to ask the vivacious redhead out as soon as they could get her away from her brother's girlfriend and Ryomou).

Asato glowered down at Ranma-chan. "Well, it's obvious to see that you're that oaf Ranma's sister. Detention for that unseemly and licentious dance and for that caterwauling you called singing."

Ranma-chan glared right back at the idiot. "Hell no. This is a lunch period and we're outside so we can sing if we want to."

Asato reached out and grabbed the impudent redhead's arm and prepared to drag her off. "We'll see what the principal saaaa" Suddenly he found himself in the air flipped end over end and then slamming back first into the ground.

He looked up and saw a hammer stomp coming down aimed directly at his privates. Intense fear gripped him for a moment before a welcome voice interrupted his upcoming neutering. "Ranko stop! That's enough. I don't think you need to neuter him just because he touched your arm and is an asshole."

Asato looked up to see Kan'u, his Kan'u with her arms around the shorter redhead pulling her away. "I" he gulped. "I knew you loved me Kan'u-chan. Why else would you save me from this barbarian?"

Kan'u growled and it was Ryomou and Ranma-chan's turn to hold the taller girl back. "The only reason I saved you is because I don't want Ranko-chan to get herself kicked out of school. I didn't do it for you, and I have never loved you retard. I never even mouthed the words when we were going out!"

Asato got to his feet, confident smirk back in place now that the threat physical assault had been removed. "You didn't have to say it, I know you're shy. And as for your present boy friend, what can he give you that I can't? Face it I'm a far better prospect."

Kan'u's growl increased in volume and Ranma-chan skidded through the grass as the taller girl tried to force her way past the redhead. "I don't look at prospects you idiot and as to what he can give me, how about a little understanding!" She suddenly stopped trying to plow Ranma-chan under and smirked as she straightened up. The shorter girl sighed and backed off as behind Kan'u Ryomou did the same, though they both kept a wary eye on her. "How about a little quiz Asato? You claim to love me, so that should mean you know what I like and don't like right?" Asato nodded of course he knew her likes and dislikes. "So what would be my ideal date?"

The would-be teacher smirked. "Well, obviously I would take you to an expensive restaurant, I remember you like Italian, and then a movie, a romance of course, or perhaps if we were going all out a play or opera. Then a ride around town and then some cocktails at an upscale bar before I take you back home."

"I hate alcohol," Kan'u said bluntly, her one visible eye narrowing in distaste, "It tastes awful and dulls the senses. As for the rest of what you said, that basically sounded like the classic clichéd date and it shows next to no knowledge about me. Congratulations, you've flunked this test. Let's see how the representative of your rival does shall we?" Kan'u turned to Ranma-chan who blinked in surprise. "Ranko, what kind of date would your brother take me on?"

Ranma-chan thought for a minute then answered surprisingly strongly. "Well I think first off he'd either start the date with a spar or maybe go downtown and find some yaks for you two ta smack around and hit up for cash. It's always fun ta see their faces when they realize they're getting rolled instead a' the alternative." Ryomou and Kan'u both smirked at that idea. Yakuza thought they were the toughest bastards out there, but to a martial artist of C or even D rank in Kanto they were only a threat in large numbers and with guns. It was why regular crime had gone down dramatically when the Fighters moved in. To someone as skilled as Kan'u or Ranma they would be little threat even with guns, save at range, just enough to get the blood pumping.

"Um then I guess we could use the cash ta go to an amusement park or something. I ain't ever been to one, neither has my brother. Or maybe buy a movie to watch at home. Ya said once ya like Jackie Chan stuff, comedy and action flicks so that'd be another idea. Um, as fer food, he'd probably just cook for ya. Some Lasagna and fried rice, 'cause ya said those are yer favorites so that'd be what he'd cook. Ya could eat and watch the movie and talk, 'cause ya can't do that in the movie theater." She grinned. "That way ya can make fun of the movie, and that's sometimes the best part."

Kan'u chuckled as Asato glared. "That really does sound like fun. I definitely think we should do that, maybe as a group thing." Ranma-chan and Ryomou both nodded, the blue-haired warrior thought that kind of date sounded fun

too.

Kan'u glared at Asato. "You don't know me, you never knew me even when we were going out. You think of me as this beautiful flower, but I am a warrior by choice as well as by training and you will never understand me."

Asato tried to speak and Kan'u raised a hand and slapped him lightly for her, but enough to put him on his rear easily. He looked up at her in shock and growing fear. He had never been manhandled like this before, and to have it done to him by two girls, one of whom was the girl he was interested in was frightening.

"Go away," Kan'u said scornfully. "Leave this school, transfer to some other place to get your experience, because you will never get what you want from me." She turned without another word and led the way back inside the school without another word.

And that was the last time they saw Asato. For some reason, this little bit of violence was enough to finally get the idea that Kan'u was not interested in him across. When Ranma and Kan'u found this out the next day, there was much rejoicing and until the tournament began their lives were peaceful. This of course should have warned at least Ranma that something big was coming.

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end chapter

Okay, so I realize the grappling part of the fight between Ryomou and Ranma was horrible, but review and tell me what you all think of the rest of it. If someone can give me some tips to make that section better I'll definitely look into it. Next chapter will almost be entirely all action, start off slow and build up. Unfortunately it will also be my last chapter before going to one chapter a week updates.

## **\*Chapter 9\*: Chapter 9**

I don't own the fighting boobies (take that however you will) nor Ranma 1/2

Strap in people, the tournament has begun. Some of you may be irritated by how the fights turn out, but they are that way they are for a reason, and this is truly where the story will begin to diverge further from both the stories that inspired me to write my own and the original Ikki Tousen. After all, if half of the amine characters no longer have their power, then the story changes right?

In other news, I took down the poll because I had to put up a new poll for my Lion of Light story. The winner, by two votes including my own 9 votes (one for every chapter posted), was continuing on to another anime. Sorry guys, but it's my story and I want to play with Ranma and the trio of girls (no I won't tell you who the third girl is) he will have from this story in other anime. Besides the idea of going from one anime to another as a trouble shooter is really interesting.

Unfortunately this story will only be updating on Wednesday from now on. This is the last chapter I'm really even partially happy with, though I have the next two outlined/halfway written. Wednesdays are a solid date however, and I mean to finish this story in four more chapters, maybe five.

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### **Chapter 9 tournaments are supposed to have rules aren't they?**

The morning before the tournament began Ranma made a report into the police Commissioner, who had been after him to report more often since the massacre in the warehouse, so Ranma called at around nine in the morning to explain what they had found out about the curse, as well as what they were planning to do going forward.

The police commissioner had already been informed of Herb's presence, and had been wondering what the foreign national was doing in the area and why Ranma had called him in, but even he hadn't been prepared for what he learned. Despite his knowledge of curses, almost immortal martial artists and monsters, the police Commissioner was still more than a little skeptical about the story that Ranma laid out for him, not just the fact the curse-driven destiny the Fighters believed in was real, but the reason it was created bothered him a lot. Why did no one else find out about this, and why did all the Fighters believe they were destined to gain some kind if they could win the war they were reenacting if no one ever had? Ranma had no answer to the first but explained that the second part was part of the curse. It wasn't just giving the Fighters power and then using their blood to power itself, it actually blocked their ability to think of ways to escape their 'destiny'.

The police commissioner sat there silent for a moment then decided to let the martial artist continue his work. Despite his reservations about how it had been accomplished, the whole region was so quiet in terms of crime that it was like a ghost town. Despite Ranma's various predations, there were still more than fifty low-grade fighters under Toutaku and more in the neutral camps, but they had all been remarkably quiet since the massacre. Because of his actions, Ranma seemed to have stuck a little image of himself into each of their brains that was warning them not to act out.

This stuff about the Dragon soul coming back to life and becoming some kind of unstoppable monster though, that he wasn't certain about. He shook it off for now to concentrate on more immediate issues. "So, what about this tournament that starts today? Are you going to be participating, and if so what should we expect?"

On the other end of the line, Ranma shrugged. "Don't know, depends on what kind of fighters show up and how the fights go. The first day should be relatively normal, after that it's just the luck of the draw."

The police Commissioner wasn't happy about that, but if they wanted this mess they would have to put up with the solution, and that unfortunately meant giving Ranma his head. "All right," he said slowly, "just try to keep the collateral damage to a minimum, okay?"

Ranma shrugged uncomfortably. "I can't make any promises. I'll keep the damage down if I can but that's really something you need to get both me and my opponents agreement on doncha think? With that he hung up. In his office the police commissioner felt a shiver go down his spine.

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On the same day that Ranma reported into the police commissioner and the tournament began Herb was looking out a hotel window in Yufuin at the rain laden sky pondering both his long term and short term future. While he and Chou'un had talked quite a lot, it wasn't really enough to make them very close. That was actually to the good in

Herb's view, he was all for taking anything to do with females slowly. Then too, in politics and ruling emotions and attachments often got in the way, so you had to guard both zealously.

There was an emotional reserve and control to Chou'un that appealed to him. Not only that but despite her lack of interest in economics she was a hard haggler and showed strong diplomatic skills. She was also interesting on a personal level, even if they had yet to open up to one another emotionally. Still he wondered where they would go from here.

In terms of solving the curse, the first soul extractor spell tag would be ready for the second phase of the tournament. If they hurried, and his instincts with Ranma told him that doing so was a smart idea, they could be back in time to see the second round. He just hoped that was all they needed to do.

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Chou'un too was pondering and had decided that she wanted to take a chance on this Dragon Prince. She'd realized a few days ago that she and Ranma were simply not compatible emotionally. Ranma was outgoing, combative, adventuresome and very much a wandering sort of personality. His dream for the future showed this when he had stated that he wanted to travel the world. Chou'un was much more much less emotional and had no interest in traveling overmuch simply for the sake of travelling. She wanted a set home life as well, whereas Ranma's home from his earliest days had been the road.

More looking back on it, it was how strongly Kan'u had reacted to him, as well as his strength and good looks that attracted Chou'un to him. Seemed a little shallow but it was true. Now looking back on it, she felt that she had done a disservice to them and possibly might've pushed them further than both were comfortable with at the time, all in the interest of competition. Looking back on it she felt that there had always been a sort of reserve to her own actions on an emotional level, and the reason why she was pushing the physical so much was to have a claim on Ranma that Kanu could not or would not equal. Ranma's generosity had foiled that thought, but looking back on it, it was obvious. She didn't think that that would do their relationship any damage in the long run but it was a sign that her place in that relationship wasn't necessarily for the best of any of them.

With Herb, while she wouldn't have the physical aspect of the relationship for a good long while and she didn't want the emotional aspect she had the intellectual. Herb was her equal in intelligence and interest, whereas Ranma was interested only in traveling, food and fighting in pretty much reverse order of importance. That might've been enough for Kan'u as she shared those interests but it was not enough for Chou'un. And while Ranma was a good listener and she had enjoyed having someone to listen to her history with her family that really wasn't enough to build a long-term relationship on.

More, she'd come to the conclusion these past few nights away from Ranma and Kan'u that she had lied to both herself and to them when she said she was fine with sharing. She didn't mind other girls watching but she really didn't want to join in with. It was just turn off.

*Still, she mused to herself with a little smile, girls are allowed to change the minds. I'm sure Ranma won't be that sad, especially with Ryomou in the wings.*

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Back in Kanto many of the lower tier Fighters, all of whom had been utterly terrified and demoralized by the events of the past few weeks, felt their spirits rise when nothing untoward occurred as the first matches got underway. These matches, though every school but the ruling Rakuyo was required to participate in the first round, were merely to get the less powerful schools out of the way quickly so that the main players could hammer it out later.

It was a shock to all that Nanyo Academy found itself counted among the bit players rather than a contender. With the sudden defection of Ryomou following on the heels of Saji's death and Kannei's mysterious weakness, the school was now a practical non-entity, despite having Hakufu the Shou Haou attending classes there. Both she and Kokin had joined with Gakushu and would be entering the tournament. Unfortunately for them they were paired with the powerhouse Seito High in this first round.

The first round of the tournament would only be fought by Ranma, Chouhi and Ryomou, as Kan'u had decided that leaving Ryuubi unguarded even during the tournament was a bad idea. Ranma agreed, but would only be fighting Hakufu if they met up this first day. Chouhi and Ryomou had reluctantly agreed to that. They knew that as it stood the two of them were the two weakest fighters Seito had, so it stood to reason that they be the ones to clear the riffraff. Ryomou didn't particularly like acknowledging that, but it was true.

The area chosen for the first round was an underground parking area in a zone not claimed by either school yet despite arriving early for the match, Ranma and Ryomou weren't really concerned with the first round of the

tournament. Indeed, the thirty minutes leading up to when the first match was supposed to start was spent with Ryomou in Ranma's lap as he leaned against a concrete pillar spiritedly attempting to remove his tonsils with her tongue. Not that he had any real objections to this.

Ryomou was determined to make up for lost time with Ranma, and took every opportunity to jump him. But Ranma had not relinquished his control of her, nor had Kan'u. They controlled her and forced her to match the slow pace they set, and all she could do was follow along. Mind you, this had its own rewards as well. Simply cuddling was something she had never done with any of her boyfriends before, all they had wanted to do was make out at the least, and she had been happy with that. Yet now she found herself emotionally entangled with someone, not just physically, and it was a whole new world to her.

Then too, Ranma had developed something she secretly dubbed the 'Voice'. It was a voice of command, and Ryomou found she could not disobey it. When he told her to stop she stopped, and when, as last night he told her to bend over, and stand still as Ranma, with Kan'u calling directions, felt up her ass through her skirt, she enjoyed it, the voice and his attentions feeding her submissive side very well indeed. Kan'u had taken to the role of mistress very easily, and Ryomou even enjoyed that, though to a lesser extent. Their own make out sessions tended to be incredibly erotic, both for the two girls and for Ranma who had a front row seat to the action.

Ranma's kisses were just as nice though, so it was with quite a bit of irritation that she tried to disengage from Ranma when she heard the voice of one of her former schoolmates shouting "Ryomou-chan!"

The emphasis should have been on try however because the moment she began to remove her lips from his, Ranma's arms, which had been loosely around her tightened. Her eyes which had been closed snapped open as one of those hands went up to tangle in her short blue hair, locking her in place while the other hand tightened around her waist.

Seeing their friend making out so intensely with someone they had never met before the new arrivals, Hakufu, Kokin and Gakushu froze. Kokin merely blushed turning away while Hakufu looked on with a strange expression on her face, almost as if she wasn't certain what she was seeing, and Gakushu, who had known of Ryomou's long time crush on Saji just stood there not understanding how or why Ryomou could have switched her affections to this newcomer. In this the effect of the magatama and the curse showed, as he could literally not understand the change of loyalties this act showed. The others had the same problem, though for different reasons.

A full minute later Ranma released his grip on her and Ryomou pulled back eyes smoldering. "Not that I'm complaining but what brought that on?"

Ranma chuckled nervously, reaching back to tug at his pigtail. "Well I figured you and Kan'u like it when I take the initiative, just wanted ta, y'know, show ya that I'm in charge, not just when you two let me be. You like?"

Ryomou moaned. "Oh yes Ranma, I most definitely liked." That was another aspect of their relationship that she really enjoyed. If pushed by Kan'u or Ryomou Ranma could play the part of a Dom, but he was also very laid back normally, and always made certain that she had been okay with anything directly after the fact. He had done it every time they made out and he took the lead and it was very comforting to know that he cared about her so much rather than just taking what he wanted, though that would be fine sometimes too... The fact he was slowly opening up and becoming more controlling with her without Kan'u around to give him the ok was great too.

Seeing that the two were done Hakufu regained enough of her limited brain capacity to continue what she had been shouting about earlier. "There you are Ryomou where have you been! We heard you changed schools! Why'd you do that? And what's up with your clothes, where's your combat maid uniform?" Again, much like Gakushu, she couldn't even think of doing something that worked against their destiny that much. She turned to Ranma and finally recognized him now that Ryomou wasn't performing CPR on him (only in her head folks, it's an odd place) "and you, you owe me a match today!" She shouted.

While she did this Gakushu took in Ryomou's change of appearance. Instead of her customary maid outfit, she wore a light blue skirt of plain cotton down to her ankles with slits on the side of her hips. It was tied tight around her waist by a white sash then came up in two straps over her shoulders, leaving her shoulders bare otherwise. He shook his head, realizing that more had changed in Ryomou than even changing schools could account for if her taste in clothing had changed that much.

As Gakushu was taking in Ryomou's changes Ranma shook his head and sighed. *Why do they always find me, why? Still, the gangs all here so we might as well get started.* He turned to look at the referee, who came from some kind of neutral school in the area. Ranma really didn't understand what that was all about, but whatever. "I guess the first match is going to be me against her. Are there any rules to this thing?"

The referee was astonished that somebody was actually asking him something, most of the time the fighters just ignored the referees until it came time to say that yes the one still standing was indeed the winner. Well, until the time came to carry away the bodies, living or otherwise. "Well," he stammered, "there's not supposed to be any killing, but other than that everything is fair game."

Ranma nodded and turned to watch Hakufu who had grabbed onto Ryomou's arm and was shaking her. "Come on Ryomou-chan, why not? Come back to us. I know you changed schools to be with your new boyfriend but come on, we're going to be the ones to win this tournament, don't you want to help us do it?"

Ryomou groaned as she tried to shake the other girl off her. Chouhi, who had been leaning against a nearby tree and ignoring the couple as they made out, rolled her eyes. "It wasn't because of Ranma that I transferred schools Hakufu, it was because of a lot of things, so no there is no chance of my transferring back even if I could."

Ranma smirked as he moved to the center of the makeshift ring. "And as for being the ones to win the tournament, why don't ya see if ya can get past me before ya grow a big head huh?"

Gakushu raised a hand to stop Hakufu from immediately going for Ranma. "Wait, don't enter this fight emotionally Hakufu. He's good, very good so I want you to keep cool and keep **control** got it?"

Hakufu nodded impatiently before she batted aside his arm and shot forward, trying to land a few hits even before the referee had officially begun the match. Ranma simply dodged around them with an almost bored air, staring at the referee all the while until the referee raised his hands and began the match officially.

As soon as that was done, Ranma's hand snaked out and grabbed Hakufu's wrist in an aikido throw that had her slamming into the ground back first.

He leapt back to avoid a swift low kick and one of his eyebrows rose in surprise. The girl had become a lot better since the last time they met. He'd estimate that her skill level right now was almost up to Shampoo's, though her speed was nowhere near the Amazon's.

*Why do the fighters around here think strength is all that matters?* Ranma thought sardonically as he dodged another kick and then a three punch combo. *Strength doesn't matter if you don't have the speed to hit your opponent, it's frakking basic!*

He fell back into an aikido stance and once again threw Hakufu through the air, this time to land chest first.

"OW," she whined rubbing at her chest and then pulling her blouse open to look inside to see if she bruised and not coincidentally at all causing Kokin a nosebleed and Ranma to look away blushing even as he rolled his eyes. "That hurts."

Ryomou groaned and raised a hand to cover her face. "Well it is a fight" said Chouhi, as if she was speaking to an utter idiot. "The whole point is to hurt your opponent you know."

Ranma simply stood there falling back into an aikido stance as he waited for Hakufu to get up. She did so, still muttering about her chest and rubbing it occasionally and then she came forward in a flash, faster than she had been previously, even faster than Shampoo could have and trying to land a high kick. Unfortunately for the Shao Haou, she was still nowhere near fast enough to keep up with Ranma. He ducked under the kick, assisted it along its trajectory, then lifted her other leg and flipped her in midair before hitting her with a palm strike to her back into the ground.

He backed off again and this time Hakufu was very slow to get up. Now she wasn't just rubbing her chest anymore, she was rubbing her back as well.

Watching from the sidelines Gakushu shook his head sadly. It looked as if this round was no contest. Unless Hakufu's inner dragon woke up, which was not something he wanted to see, she stood no chance against the pigtailed warrior Ryomou had called Ranma. In point of fact, he didn't think that all three of them combined could beat him if the rumors associated with that name were true.

The match continued interminably with Hakufu being thrown around like a sack of wheat and never once landing a hit on Ranma. Nearly all her damage was self inflicted though, as Ranma refrained from hitting her or causing a lot of injuries in an effort to make certain her inner dragon didn't wake up. He knew that at some point he would be facing an awakened dragon shard, but he really didn't want to face what he considered the worst. Hakufu in terutrn was frustrated. Her ki reading ability just couldn't break through Ranma's control of his energy giving her no way to know what he was going to do, and she had never faced someone who used a soft style like this. Finally, she collapsed in

exhaustion and Ranma stood back.

The girl's endurance had surprised him, the fight lasting at least three hours longer than it would have the last time he had seen her (forty minutes max in his mind). But in the end there had still been no real chance she could have won, their skill levels were too different. "You're pretty good, a lot better than the last time I saw ya." He said leaning down to drag her upright as the referee signaled the end of the match. "You just got to work on your speed more. That's been a problem with everyone I've met 'round here so don't take it personally." Hakufu groaned a little, too sore to really answer, but realizing that he was trying to encourage her she nodded along.

Ranma helped Hakufu out of the ring, and then left himself, swiftly pocketing her jade magatama. He really needed to analyze one of the 'Three Great Rulers' beads, and this way he could separate it from its wearer just in case something else happened. That match was enough of an irritant for one day and he didn't feel like fighting the others, none of whom would be a match for him either.

Angry at how Hakufu had been humiliated Kokin moved forward automatically, but realizing that this new fighter was well out of his league he stopped before he said something that would probably get him smacked around like Ranma had done to Taishiji when they first met. Unfortunately, he also knew the same thing about at least one of the other contestants that Seito had sent Ryomou was well out of his league. He cheered inside as Chouhi strode forward, while Ryomou pulled Ranma back down to where he had been sitting against a column and snuggled into his side.

As soon as the bell rang Kokin fell into a stance, and moved forward to try to take the offensive, meeting Chouhi's own charge halfway between their starting positions. He was surprised however by her overall speed, and she got in three sharp punches to his abdomen before he could disengage. Here his overall lack of experience showed and he looked down at his stomach for a second as he rubbed at the sore spots. Chouhi followed up immediately, and a spinning heel kick that he didn't even see thundered in, slamming into his temple and putting him out like a light.

Gakushu groaned aloud from where he was standing next to the exhausted form of Hakufu. His school really wasn't putting up much of a fight here. *I've obviously relied on their training by themselves too much. As soon as we get back I'll start training with them. That was a bloody rookie mistake and Kokin should've known better even if he is a C grade Fighter. Wait, when was the last time he fought someone other than that altercation with Hanno? Damn, does he only get strong when he's protecting Hakufu? Hakufu on the other hand has improved but as Ranma said relies far too heavily on her strength rather than speed and skill, well that and her ability to read an opponent, yet it obviously failed her this time. So it's now down to just me. I can't win here, but winning at least one match will be enough to make this merely a loss rather than a rout.*

As he was thinking this, Chouhi left the ring, looking down as her own stomach grumbled hungrily. "I'm hungry, any chance we can get out of here now?"

The referee shook his head. "I'm sorry but every fighter from one school must be beaten for the match to end."

Chouhi pouted as Ryomou stood up and moved to take her place in the ring, which caused Chouhi to grin. "Ryomou, remember that the faster you get done, the faster you can get back to making out with Ranma." *And the faster I can go get something to eat. I'm starving.*

Ryomou nodded decisively looking at Ranma with a different kind of hunger in her eyes before entering the ring, causing Ranma to blush again.

Gakushu strode forward confidently. Ryomou may have bested him once, but that was when he had been weakened by Hakufu's punch. They were both two of the Big Four, and their skill set was on par before she had left, and he had been training diligently ever since his defeat.

Ryomou however, didn't give him time to show off his new training, instead rocketing in with a snap kick and then following up with five punch combo that Gakushu barely blocked. *So fast, how the hell did her speed increase so much in little under a week?!* Seeing an opening he tried to grapple with her, pin her in place so he could use his superior strength, but she fell back, surprising him yet again with her speed.

Ryomou concentrated for a moment as Gakushu decided to charge in an attempt to pin her against the wall. When her shadow on the ground intersected with his between them Ryomou shouted "shadow kick!" What came out was not just one like when she had sparred with Ranma this past weekend, but three kicks slamming into Gakushu's chest, shoulder and head, throwing the bigger man backwards in a flurry of blood as his nose broke under the impact.

He shook his head groggily but before he could recover Ryomou was behind him and for the second time he felt her signature submission hold locking into place. Gakushu tried to struggle, tried to get away, but with blood in his eyes,

off balance and reeling from the previous hits, he wasn't able to get enough leverage to get out of her hold. *How, how the hell did her skill increase so much, how....*

Within a minute, he succumbed and fell unconscious. Ryomou disengaged the hold grabbing Gakushu as he slumped to the ground and carried him over to her former schoolmates. Even as the now awake Kokin watched in awe Ryomou dumped him in front of them and walked back to take her place on Ranma's lap for some serious necking.

Ranma smirked and brought his arms around her returning the kiss and Chouhi giggled beside them as the referee signaled the end of the round. After a few minutes of necking they stood up and joined the now impatient Chouhi. As they did Ranma reached down swiftly next to Gakushu, palming both his bead to add to his growing collection. That done, all three victorious fighters moved off leaving the parking area. Once outside they jumped away over the rooftops to the temple where Ranma and Ryomou planned to cook dinner for everyone.

Kokin stared after them for a moment before looking around at his defeated comrades and groaning. They had thought they could win this tournament, but they never really had a chance. With a sigh he reached down and lifted his cousin onto his back as the referee did the same to Gakushu. His final job as referee was to help the wounded get back to their territory safe, and it was also how the refs made some spending money, well that and selling the story of the first round fights to anyone who wanted to hear about them. Kokin led the way, wondering inwardly what his aunt was going to say about all this.

Later that day the second match ended much the same way, with Kyosho handling their enemies easily.

So ended the first round of the tournament, not with a bang but a whimper. The bangs would come in the next round, and they would bring all their friends.

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Goei was absolutely furious when she heard the news. She had gone to see Kakoton, a young man who she was interested in (and most decidedly not for his brain) fight because she thought that her daughter would be able to easily get past the preliminary rounds. Instead, not only had she lost, but their entire school had lost three out of three, and thus been disqualified from the tournament.

She had been training Hakufu diligently for the past week and a half to get her ready for this time, but it looked as if this new fighter was determined to block her attempts to let her get experience at every turn. Not only had he blocked Hakufu from gaining valuable experience fighting Taishiji but had insulted her skill, made a fool of her and then beaten her in the tournament apparently with ease. Hakufu didn't see it that way, having taken her defeat in stride and planning to get stronger, but Goei did.

She had heard some rumors that he was here to stop the fighting, but she scoffed at the very idea. He was outside the destiny, and there was no way a person outside the destiny could change it in any way. Only a fighter of the caliber of those involved could face off against an awakened dragon with any hope of victory. They would fight and fight until one person would someday win the prize promised them.

She thought with her daughter not only holding a dragon spirit would give her a chance to beat her destiny and maybe win the prize, but it looked as if, without relying on the dragon, that her daughter just wasn't strong enough. She needed to gain control of the spirit within her, not let it control her.

Goei resolved right then and there to double her daughter's training as well as the punishment. She would whip her into shape if it was the last thing she did.

In her room and feigning sleep Hakufu shivered. She just knew that her aunt was going to punish her in some new and sadistic fashion tomorrow. *It's a good thing I didn't tell her I lost my bead* she thought. *Who knows what she would've done to me then?* Within in her something stirred slightly, before falling back to normal as she fell asleep.

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The Emperor was irritated as well, though not for the same reasons as Goei. He slowly sliced the back of his forearm with a knife, letting the pain calm him down and help him think, even managing to put a smile on his face despite the news. Seito was becoming far too powerful, and this new fighter gave them an unknown edge that had already proven to be deadly for every Fighter that went up against him. The fact that the Shao Haou had lost to this Ranma, and her inner dragon not awakened in the fight, was a bad sign. Somehow Ranma had figured out that it was extreme damage, fear or danger that awoke the dragons inside their physical containers, and adopted a fighting style where his opponent defeated herself. This unknown variable and the strength of Seito forced him to reevaluate his future actions.

Toutaku had initially planned to withdraw from the tournament, not putting much stock in the prize and thinking that he could hold onto his power as emperor without it and thus fight his destiny. But his troops had been reduced badly lately, and his standing with his most powerful fighter Ryofu, who wanted them to participate, was so bad that he could not afford to let it get any worse.

While he had punished Kaku, Ryofu had initially wanted to kill her. Toutaku had been against this, because he still needed the girl's advice, and he enjoyed her body as well. He did however disfigure her by cutting open her forehead in a wide arc so that it looked as if someone had tried to lobotomize her. That and the punishment this Ranma character had given Kaku had been enough for Toutaku. Even now the memory of her frustrated, horrified face as she desperately tried to cum as he pounded into her brought a sadistic smile to his lips. In Ryofu's eye it hadn't been enough, and she had been distancing herself and Chinkyu from him ever since.

So it looked as if he was going to have to fight to regain some of the respect they had lost, but that didn't mean he was going to play fair. He could still rig the tournament so that he and his school would only face the winner of the second round between Kyoshu and Seito. That way his two strongest enemies would weaken each other, and he could move in and clean up afterwards.

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Toutaku was not the only one irritated by the way things were going. Saji the self-styled master manipulator was irritated as well, not least of which because his plan to influence Ryofu into killing Toutaku was failing miserably, with her stopping by occasionally, too busy to really stay for long. With the loss of so many low ranked fighters and several mid ranged fighters everyone else in Toutaku's forces were forced to pick up the slack in their patrols and other tasks. And even when Ryofu did stop by, they did nothing more than talk and check on his wounds, which was irritating beyond words to a man who was used to having sex whenever he could get it.

(Unbeknownst to Saji, Ryofu's cold shoulder was actually purposeful as she was no longer interested in him. Having met Ranma, a powerful fighter but who was naïve in the ways of sex and lust, her interest in Saji the county bicycle had withered despite their past association. Moreover she felt she could mold Ranma to be the kind of lover/man she liked, whereas he was too set in his ways to change.)

Saji knew most of the things that happened in Rakuyo's territory through conversations with Ryofu, and had heard from her about the massacre that occurred when Kaku had tried to move against Chinkyu. Though he hid it from her at the time this terrified him, as he knew for a fact there were only two, possibly three fighters in the entire region that could have done something like that and not one of them could've done it as easily as it was reported that this new fighter did. Ranma was messing up his plans and here the master manipulator was unable to do anything about it. Saji now had only a few eyes and ears left to tell him what was going on, and he was slowly going crazy through lack of information.

Ryofu, happy that Toutaku had agreed to enter the tournament stopped by to relay the results of the first round of the tournament to him and Saji decided it was time to leave. Hiding and being able to manipulate things from behind the scenes was one thing, hiding and being completely cut off from the outside world was another. *I have to get a handle on this new fighter and quickly. He may be weakening most everyone around us, but he's not doing anything about the dragon souls, and that means in the long term, nothing he does will matter except getting in my way in my quest to get control of them. I have to get control of him or find some way to fight him. After all, he thought sardonically, everyone has a weakness. I just have to find his and use it to get him to stop screwing everything up!*

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The next day Ranma and Kan'u were not surprised to find out that Chou'un wasn't back yet before their next match was set to begin at midday. Still, it really didn't matter for the tournament in any way. Ryomou had proven a capable fill in, and the three of them plus Chouhi could make short work of every other school except for Rakuyo and Kyoshu. Ryuubi was happy at their strong start. "Maybe we can get through this round too. After all, it's random who we meet, maybe we won't meet the stronger school until the final round!"

Ranma of course did not agree with this line of thought. "Don't believe that for a minute Ryuubi-chan. Somethin's gonna happen. That's the way my life works, Murphy's Law meet Ranma's Law. Everything that can go wrong will go wrong in the most spectacular way possible to **me!** It's like an unwritten law of nature."

Ryuubi, Ryomou and Chouhi looked at him in disbelief but Kan'u nodded thoughtfully. "You know, I actually believe you Ma-chan. Given what you had to put up with in Nerima and the way trouble seems to have found you since your arrival, I can definitely agree that you are marked by an unlucky star. Perhaps you're being cursed by someone because of the crap your father pulled off on your training trip?"

Ranma looked at her head cocked to one side as they arrived at the empty parking lot designated for their second

fight, and sure enough their opponents were wearing the uniforms of Kyosho Academy. "Y'know that's a definite possibility. I'll have ta look inta that idea later."

Using his aura sight, he looked at the fighters in front of him and assessed their abilities. "Two high ranked fighters, two mid range," he muttered, "and one dragon shard." He turned to Kan'u and said with a grin, blue eyes shining with eagerness. "I get the one with the dragon shard!"

Kan'u nodded stoically, though inside she was very worried. She knew how good a fighter Ranma was, but he had yet to meet one of the Three Great Rulers controlled by their dragon shard, and frankly their power and sheer killing aura was just on another plane entirely. "Very well, I will fight one of the others."

One of their opponents, a man with a deeper tan than Kan'u and wearing a hat barely covering his spiky hair and surprisingly a full school uniform scoffed as he took in the representatives from Seito. "Is this what they have to put against us? Man, only sending one A rank, one B once C and," He trailed off as he stared hard at Ranma, "I don't know you, one unknown against us, are they taking us seriously here?"

As the other Fighter was talking, Kan'u and her group were sizing up their opponents in turn. Kan'u knew these as the Three Pillared God's of Kyosho as well as Sousou himself and his friend Kakoton. To say that the information she had on their school entirely and these fighters in particular was spotty and contradictory was an understatement. Sousou, was tall and bulky for a high schooler, though not as much as Gakushu, with a weathered face and lazy eyes. He was known as a B ranked fighter, so is personal skills was much better than Ryuubi's, but there were documented reports of his losing control of his Dragon at least three time in his life, whereas Ryuubi had only lost control of her Dragon one, so the level of danger he represent was up in the air.

Sousou was known as a decent leader, one who valued strength in his allies and troops, but also as one who was willing to use dishonorable tactics outside of the set tournaments like this one. One such rumor told of him having an assassin, who he had used a few times against his enemies. He was also fiercely protective of his territory, and refused to ally himself with the Emperor or to even listen to the government's wish to end the destiny/curse when Ryuubi tried to contact him. Whether or not this was because he believed in what they were supposed to be fighting for or simple pride, was something Kan'u wasn't prepared to speculate upon. What was certain however, was that he had one of the three main Dragon shards inside him and that would make him a very terrible foe if awakened.

The man who was so irritated by the fact there were only four of them was known as Kakoton, a low B rank Fighter. Known for skill in most of the basic forms of combat he was also well known to be diligent in picking up or repairing an area after a fight. There was also a rumor going around that he had had a run in with Hakufu and her cousin, which ended in him becoming friends with them which might be why those two and what must've been the younger girl's aunt were over leaning against one of the buildings around the lot. *It's odd*, Kan'u thought *Why do I think that having more bystanders for this fight was probably not a good sign.*

Next to him were the Three Pillared Gods, Koumei, Bunken and Shungai. All three were dressed as their intel said, in monks robes, and all three were carrying Khakkhara, the traditional Buddhist monks staff. Koumei and Shoungai were even bald like monks and their faces looked alike, though one was tall and wide in the shoulders and one was thin and wiry. The last of the trio was a girl, with an attractive face in Kan'u's opinion, with short hair much like Chouhi cut to right above her ears. All three were high B ranked Fighters.

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As Kan'u and the others evaluated the Kyosho fighters, Sousou was evaluating them in turn. *So that's the fighter that killed all those low-level fighters in the warehouse a few weeks ago, along with Kaku doing whatever he did to Kaku.* Sousou mused, staring across at Ranma. The rumors of something wrong with the bespectacled strategist had spread quickly, and Sousou wondered if that was because Toutaku wanted it to.

He had been angered at the time as that attack had taken out five of his own fighters as well as disfiguring Kaku, who historically speaking as the descendent of Jia Xu was destined to join his faction. That was until the news spread about why it had happened, and who the five fighters were. Not one of them was someone he was going to miss. Nor was Sousou really a huge proponent of the destiny. Oh he was prideful enough to believe they had to handle it themselves, but he didn't believe everything would always happen as history dictated.

One of his friends, Kakuha, was very angry about it as she had at one point been his girlfriend. Yet even that anger turned to a new source when news that Kaku's disfigurement had been Toutaku's punishment for trying to turn Ryofu away from him. Sousou wasn't certain what the full story was but he really didn't care at this point. The problem was that the new fighter was an unknown, and he was forced to bring his most powerful fighters (well the most powerful he wanted anyone to know about) to the tournament. He just hoped it was worth the bother.

Ranma seemed to feel his eyes on him and he turned to give the descendant of Cao Cao a challenging look. Sousou scoffed, closed his eyes and leaned back against the tree, resuming his nap.

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Kanu looked at her friends, a small smile on her face. "I'll go first to start us off. And you" she waved a gloved hand at Ranma "will only be fighting Sousou. That way will allow you to take him by surprise and be rested."

Ranma pouted, and tried to use the dreaded Puppy dog eye attack and she laughed. He stopped, grinned and shrugged agreement. "You're the one who's a descendant of a general so we'll go with that. Besides," he added grimly, eyes straying to Sousou, "I get the feeling I'm gonna need every edge I can get." The man's ki personal ki was near his own level, and the second ki source inside him was just as large as Ryuubi's or Hakufu's. If that source woke up what would be a tough but winnable fight was going to go south quickly.

Ryoumou and Chouhi both nodded agreement, and they and Ranma moved away to stand by Ryuubi.

Kakoton looked at his fellow who all waved him forward. He shrugged and moved to take his place across from Kan'u.

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To the side the referee nodded to a camera crew that was there to record the second round. The other fight of this round had already been decided earlier in the day, with the Emperor and his faction winning handily. That would mean that the winner of this fight would fight Rakuyo for the prize. An announcer, also chosen from a traditionally neutral school like the referees began to speak. "And the second match of the day is about to commence here ladies and gentlemen, in one corner Kan'u Unchou, the champion of Seito high school. Seito did not compete last year due to injuries to Kan'u and some of this faction's key Fighters, but they're all healed up now and have two newcomers to their lineup that have helped Seito take this tournament by storm. And in the other corner Kakoton of Kyosho a B ranked fighter, he's known as the Repair Man for his tendency to repair battlegrounds after fights. Kyosho traditionally does very well in the tournament, and has come close both times since the War of the Sacred Bead began again. Will this be their year to win it all?"

The referee looked at the two fighters and raised a hand "Fighters ready, start!"

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Kakoton jumped back attempting to get some distance and hopefully start to wear his opponent out without wearing himself out for later matches. This thought was literally knocked out of Kakoton's head by Kan'u's foot whistling in to smash his temple faster than he could get his guard up. He staggered backward and shook his head to clear it just in time to block another incoming kick. Pain shot up his arm from the force of the impact but he managed to throw a counter punch with his other arm.

Kan'u leaned to the side and lashed out with lightning speed, grabbing Kakoton's wrist, blasting him with a brutal kick to the kidneys and another to the back of his head before releasing his wrist. Kakoton staggered forward and fell on his hands and knees as his ears rang from the headshot.

Goei, who had come to watch this match to both watch Kakoton and to scout out this new fighter who had beaten Hakufu yesterday, shouted out encouragement from the sidelines. "Come on, Ton-chan! Get up! Get up and kick her little ass!"

From their side of the bridge which was being used as a ring Koumei shook his head "Man, Kakoton is getting his ass kicked. Is the difference between a B rank like him and an A rank like Unchou that large?"

"What did you expect?" Bunken shrugged. "She's Kan'u Unchou. She's way out of Kakoton's league. One of us will have to take her own."

Kan'u stood a short distance away with her hand on her hip as she waited to see if the boy could get up. She wasn't disappointed when Kakoton struggled to his feet. "Okay, that's it," he growled. "No more mister nice guy. Time to introduce you to some basic ass-whooping!" While outwardly he was still putting on a brave front inside Kakoton was thinking furiously. If he had any chance of winning this, he had to find some kind of weakness to exploit.

As soon as he was on his feet, Kakoton attacked, throwing kicks and punches trying to keep Kan'u on the defensive, trying to analyze her style and movements. Soon he had her in position parallel to a parked car, with one arm still extended out along it and toward him in an answering jab. Jumping to the side he brought his leg down in a viscously swift axe kick intending to break her arm at the elbow.

Kan'u however had been holding back on her speed and as soon as he was committed exploded into motion, brought her left leg around slamming a ki-boosted kick into Kakoton's face. Kakoton's nose exploded in a mass of gore from the impact and he went flying into the concrete wall of a nearby building, smashing a large crater in it. His body bounced out of the crater and landed on the ground on his face.

"Ouch," Shugai winced. "That was damn brutal, he never stood a chance, and what was up with that speed at the end there?"

"Told ya Kakoton was screwed," Koumei mentioned.

Everyone waited to see if Kakoton would get up, but it appeared the boy was out cold.

"It's over," Kan'u announced, looking at the ref.

The ref nodded. "Seito wins that first match by knock out!" he called out.

Koumei looked over at Shugai. "I guess you're up dude."

"I guess so," Shugai smirked, then frowned slightly when instead of moving forward to match him Kan'u stepped back, letting Ryomou take her place on the bridge. *So I'll have to fight a fresh fighter, damn, I was hoping they were idiots who'd let one fighter keep going as long as possible. Ah well.*

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This battle started off slower than the previous one as Ryomou's opponents did not underestimate her, keeping his distance through the judicious use of his staff and making certain that Ryomou couldn't grab it out of his hands. He seemed well aware that her skills were mainly based on grappling, and was certainly not going to let her close in and use her techniques on him. While his staff was busy making black and blue marks all over Ryomou's body, however, she simply took it and waited until their shadows touched. With a cry of "shadow kick!" just like yesterday three kicks made of shadow came out of the other fighters own shadow.

Her target with the technique wasn't Shumei but his staff, sending it spinning out of his grip. For just an instant, the other fighter was astonished at this new technique. But he kept his cool even as Ryomou closed.

Shumei was slightly stronger than she was, but her speed was incredible given the knowledge of her fighting ability that he had previously. He winced as a hard right pounded into his shoulder and he turned with the blow, avoiding the follow on grab and trying to sweep Ryomou's legs out from under her. *It looks as if our strategist was well off the mark he thought sardonically and in the long-term that makes me happy, I've never trusted her for some reason, but right now it's giving me one hell of a headache.* As he thought this he dodged another grab for his uninjured shoulder only to run straight into a palm strike that nailed his jaw.

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"Man he's getting hammered" muttered Bunshen, "that'll be two in a row we've lost." She looked at her fellow pillar for a moment and said. "I'll go next." Koumei nodded agreement, though this really wasn't looking good for them. They could match the other side's skill and strength, but not their speed, which for some reason was way better than their reports suggested. *I'm going to have to be careful, regardless of who I face.*

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Back in the fight Ryomou had tried to follow up her palm strike with another attempt to grapple but Shumei again barely dodged, kicking her hard in the stomach and sending her flying back for a moment. In the space this afforded him he tried to get to his staff, but his progress was halted by Ryomou suddenly pulling a rope out of hidden weapon space and tossing it like a lasso, catching one arm and pulling him off balance.

Before he could regain his feet Ryomou was on him, locking in her submission hold around his neck and both arms. The man went down with her underneath him, but with her locked around his neck it was only a matter of time before his world faded to black.

As soon as Shumei stopped moving, Ryomou let up on her grip and got to her feet panting slightly. *That wasn't nearly as satisfying as Ranma, but it was fun.* As she stepped away from her opponent and the referee declared her the winner she heard a call from where the spectators were standing.

"Mou-chan!" Hakufu cried out, waving her arm wildly at the other girl. "Over here!"

Ryomou grimaced, waving half-heartedly at the cheerful ditz. It was kind of hard to dislikes someone that naively

friendly, like kicking a puppy. On the other hand the name she suddenly heard belonged to someone who was very easy for her to hate.

"Saji!" Kokin exclaimed behind her. "What the hell man, you're supposed to be dead!"

"Oh hey it's the bra salesman!" Hakufu's voice replied, even as Ryomou turned toward them, face hard.

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"Rumors of my death were extremely exaggerated," Saji said smiling slyly, keeping one eye on the whole reason he had chanced coming out in the open like this as the pigtailed fighter gave some last minute advice to Chouhi before her match. Honestly if he had even one spy left that he could trust and that could give him an accurate report about this Ranma fellow he'd never come within a mile of him. Yet none of his remaining spies were Fighters, so were useless for this. The only one who might come up with something was a worker in the local government offices who had a friend in the FDPA who had said he'd heard of Ranma before. *On the other hand, after so long in isolation doing this myself does have some great bonuses*, he thought lecherously.

"And who is this lovely lady?" he asked, eyeing Goei.

"This is Aunt Goei, Hakufu's mom" Kokin introduced. "Auntie, This is Saji Ganpo, one of Nanyo's Big Four fighters, but seriously Saji what have you been up to?"

"Oh nothing much, had to leave the area for a bit, a family matter that's all Saji answered vaguely, as he slid up behind Kan'u and began reaching for her rear. "And who's this lovely lady?"

"Touch me and die," Kan'u informed him icily, turning swiftly, surprising Saji by pulling her Seryuutou out of **somewhere** and placing the blade of the guan do against his neck.

"Don't be like that," Saji said, trying to look injured and refusing at the Green Dragon Blade's sudden appearance to show his shock even as a sweatdrop appeared and began to run down the back of his neck. "I wasn't trying to do anything."

"There is only one man allowed to touch me," Kan'u replied, keeping her guan do between them, barely repressing a shudder of revulsion at the idea of Saji touching her. Who knew where his hands had been! "And you are nothing like him. Take that however you will."

"Well, he must be impressive to have captured the interest of Kan'u Unchou," Saji smirked, trying to feel her out for information but he backed away as Ryomou came over, her eyes glittering dangerously.

"Saji, you're still alive, what a fucking pity!" She snarled moving to stand next to Kan'u, her turquoise eyes locked on him like gun sights. "On the other hand that means I can kill you myself!"

Saji gulped. There went his plan to use her crush on him to get her to spy on her new ally for him. Whatever happened to get her to leave Nanyo obviously had involved something about him. "Now wait a minute Ryomou. I've been out of action for a while so whatever you think I did I didn't do it." Somehow he just knew Toutaku was responsible for this somehow.

Ryomou's glare if anything hardened further and she growled. "Oh, like you didn't know about passing your own orders off as coming from Enjutsu's? How long was he dead before you started speaking with his voice huh? You disgust me!"

She made to lunge forward but Kan'u surprisingly came to his rescue as Ranma finished speaking to Chouhi and made his way over to them, her voice sharp and pulling Ryomou back. "Remember all the violence at the tournament must be in the sanctioned matches not on the sidelines or after!"

Ranma came up behind them with his lopsided grin, he was having fun as the fights so far had been great and his own was coming up quickly, gaining a blush from both Ryomou and Kan'u as he put his arms around their waists, pulling them into exuberant hugs. "Hey, gals, the next match is gonna start. Chouhi would feel bad if you two don't watch. What's up?" He spared a single glance at the

Saji's eyes widened at the familiar way the three were acting around each other and he couldn't stop himself from speaking if his life depending on it. Even he'd never... "Wait, wait what's this? are you, you're all together, as in together, you two with him?!"

Kan'u smirked and nuzzled into Ranma's neck, knowing that it would irritate Saji no end to see someone else doing

what he and every other pervert in the world dreamed about. Ryomou did the same on his other side smirking maliciously. Ranma however was still unused to public displays of affection, and his blush was one of monstrous proportions even as he answered. "Well, I think that's their choices yeah? I don't know what I did ta attract them, but I'm gonna try and make Kan'u and Ryomou happy."

Saji glared at the other man as he tried to downplay achieving the ultimate male fantasy. "You, I declare you my rival! No way will I allow someone to achieve a threesome before me!"

Ryomou smirked, her earlier anger gone as she realized how truly pathetic Saji was. "Just give up now Saji, you can't beat Ranma in any way, as a man or as a fighter. Ranma, may I introduce Saji, the idiot who tried to awaken Hakufu's inner dragon."

Ranma's eyes narrowed and before Saji could even blink Ranma's arms had left their position around Ryomou and Kan'u's waists and now held the larger and broader Saji in the air as if he weighed nothing. "So this is the fucking idiot huh? You and I are gonna have a long talk fucktard."

Saji gulped. As good a Fighter as he was the idea of facing Ranma one on one was never in the plan, not until he had the dragon shards under his control at any rate. "Hey, wait a minute, remember there's no combat allowed at a tournament outside the matches, right?" He appealed to Kan'u.

Kan'u placed a gentle yet inexorable hand on Ranma's arm, forcing him to lower the loathsome manslut to the ground. "he's right Ranma, besides you'll get as much combat as you can when you face Sousou."

Ranma scowled by let the other man go. "When this competition is over don't try to fucking run away man, or else."

Saji gulped but nodded and stepped back, moving over to stand by Goei and Hakufu, who along with Kokin was looking on with interest, wondering what that was all about. Luckily for Saji none of them listened to rumors or were connected to the schools information network, so he was at least able to stay with them. *I'm beginning to have second thoughts about being here. Hopefully that pigtailed asshole will get his ass kicked and that'll keep Ryomou and Kan'u from chasing after me. Still, he thought philosophically, to win all one must gamble sometimes.*

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As Ranma and his girlfriends turned their attention back to the fight Chouhi and Bunken began to exchange blows. Bunken's Khakkhara gave her a range advantage, but Chouhi had regularly sparred with Kan'u and was used to fighting an opponent with a longer reach. She was calm, deflecting the khakkhara's butt end with her hands and trying to strike back with her leg.

*Ranma said that to wait until she overextended then target either the staff or her hands, now I just need to hold on. She winced as a thrust nearly caught her chin, impacting along her temple. Though that's easier said than done.*

Unfortunately for Chouhi, Bunken was able to adjust to her speed having seen how fast the other warriors from Seito were in their first two fights. She never let up, pushing and smacking the younger girl around as she nimbly twisted and ducked or jumped over her return shots.

When the moment came, Chouhi took it swiftly. Bunken had gotten her off balance with a swipe of her Khakkhara and followed it up with a thrust which the younger girl dodged, but before Bunken could recover from the lunge Chouhi lashed out with a sift two punch combo nailing and breaking the khakkhara in two.

Before she could follow up however Bunken closed the distance with the remaining foot of her weapon, hammering two shots into the younger girl's stomach. The girl doubled over yet struck backsmashing her fists into her opponent's left kneecap. Even as her leg gave out under her Bunken hammered her temple first with a palm strike and then brought her makeshift club up and around in a roundhouse, catching the younger girl on her other temple laying Chouhi out. The brown haired girl flew to the side, unconscious before she hit the ground.

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On the sideline Ranma winced. "Damn, didn't think that gal would be able ta react that quickly. Still Chouhi did great, I'd guess her ranks a B now." Indeed CHouhi could never have fought a B-rank like Bunken so well as little as a month ago. Now she may have Isot, but the other girl was obviously not up to continuing, the way she was clutching the knee CHouhi had smashed.

Kan'u moved over and picked up her adopted imouto, carrying her body gently to the side and placing her down next to Ryuubi who immediately got out a medical kit and began to patch the comatose girl up, dabbling at her black and blue marks and the large gash Bunken's makeshift club had made on the side of her face. Hopefully it wouldn't scar.

She joined the others, almost glaring in her anger. "I'm going next."

Ryomou nodded, understanding how close she was to Chouhi. Ranma frowned though, stepping in front of Kan'u. "Take a moment to calm down Kan-chan, you don't wanna go into a fight angry. Not against someone like these guys, they're way too calm and adaptable."

Kan'u glared at him for a moment then closed her eyes and breathed in a few times. "When she opened her aquamarine eyes were calm and focused. She smirked, grabbing Ranma by his shirt and pulling him into a deep kiss. His pigtail stuck straight out as if it been electrified as her tongue entered his mouth. A moment later she released her grip and his mouth making a audible pop as their mouths came apart, their tongues momentarily visible, with a trail of saliva connecting them. She smirked at his shocked and blushing face. "For thanks and for luck." With that said she turned and moved forward. It took Ryomou pulling on his pigtail to bring to earth and he twitched occasionally even as the fight began.

Inside the ring waiting Koumei had watched this with growing irritation and jealousy. After all, what red blooded male wouldn't have looked at that without feeling jealous, Kan'u was fucking hot! For a moment he decided to aim for her clothing, just to see more of her body. That thought faded when Kanu pulled out her guan do from somewhere. *Where the fuck was she hiding that thing!* He hadn't seen her use it on Saji on the sidelines and his confidence in his victory dwindled.

It disappeared entirely when the referee blew the whistle to start the match and suddenly he was on the defensive. *Holy shit is she fast!*

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Kanu was in no mood to let her other fighter even think he had a chance, and went into the fight with her newest move, a speed move based off Ranma's Katchu Tenshin Amaguriken. "Green Fang Thousand Slashes!" Koumei was barely able to block her slashes, and he began to suffer small but painful cuts on his sides and arms. But his khakkhara was taking the worst of it. Despite the top being covered with metal the rest of the staff was wood, and just could not stand up to the slashing attacks from his opponent's guan do.

On the sidelines Sousou was becoming deeply concerned. Having been roused from his nap when a barely walking Kakoton had brought a nearly crippled Bunken back to their sidelines, he had stayed awake to watch this match. He hadn't wanted to fight in this tournament and had hoped that Kakoton and the three Pillared Gods would have been able to deal with it on their own, that was why he'd brought them all along after all. He had accidentally let his inner demon out too often already, he didn't want to go through that again. For a moment he contemplated forfeiting the match, but his best friends' battered bodies and their exhausted faces and decided he couldn't do that. More his pride wouldn't allow it. He may not put much stock in the whole desinty crap, but he was the leader of his faction, and he needed to step up. He winced as Kan'u began her final attack, having utterly owned Koumei the entire match. *His ancestors was supposed to be equal to Guan Yu, but it looks like this time around there's no contest. How the hell did they all get so fast? Shumei said it was their speed that was the biggest problem and look at that speed technigue Kan'u is using.* For a moment his avaricious side came out, and he felt a deep burning hunger to own the one who had such skill. However Kan'u was about to show him and the rest of the Fighters that speed wasn't the only difference in her arsenal.

Koumei's staff finally gave up, falling apart under Kanu's continued assault. Koumei jumped backwards, giving him space to work with, and inadvertently falling into a trap Kan'u had planned from the very beginning. With a great shout she brought her guan do's blade down to impact the concrete in front of her, "Cresecnt Blade's Earth Roar!" Unlike the electrical based attack she had used on Ryoga, this attack was a shockwave that carried across the ground in a giant wall of debris and blue/green ki expanding as it went forward from the point her blade impacted the ground.

Koumei barely had a second to gawk at the sheer size of the oncoming attack, and no way to dodge it. The attack barreled into him and kept going carrying him to slam with bonebreaking force into and through a car on the other side of the makeshift arena. He did not get up.

Sousou snarled at seeing another friend go down but he forced his anger away for now. He and Shumei moved over to check on Koumei, and was relieved he was still breathing. He had cuts and gashes all over the front of his body, and his monks robe had been shredded, but other than that and possibly a concussion from when he went through the car he was going to be all right. As soon as he was certain his friend was going to be fine, Sousou turned and walked over to the referee. All desire to throw the match was gone from his mind, now he wanted to pay Seito back for what they had done to his friends, starting with pounding this fighter from outside into the ground.

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Ranma sighed happily, a fierce smirk on his face. "Finally my turn. No offense, but watching isn't nearly as much fun

as doing."

Kan'u smirked. "in so many ways Ma-chan." She watched as her joke sailed over her boyfriend's head and her smirk turned into a worried smile. "Be careful alright? I know this is really why you're here, but fighting an awakened Ruler is on a whole other level. Come back safe please."

Ranma smiled back at her cupping her face and looking at Ryomou who had nodded fervent agreement as Kan'u spoke. "I'll try my best, that's all I can say. Love you two." With that he turned and entered the cordoned off arena. And as he did his anticipation grew. Come what may this was going to be one hell of a fight, and that was what he lived for, to challenge himself against the best. "Lets rock!"

The referee looked between the silently simmering Sousou and the energetic and eager Ranma and gulped. "Match 3, Seito versus Kyosho. Begin!" the referee announced then got the hell out of the way.

Sousou immediately charged forward through a series of kicks and punches at his opponent, Ranma dodged and leaned out of the way of most of them until one kick sailed by his head, then he ducked under, slamming a series of his Amiguriken punches into the taller boy's stomach and thigh.

Sousou grimaced at the impact but ignored it to swiftly bring up his other leg into a hard knee shot that caught Ranma before he could move back. The knee shot blasted into Ranma's gut and knocked him into the air above where they had been standing.

Yet the air was as much a home to Ranma's and his style as the ground. Ranma swiftly righted himself in the air, catching and using Sousou's next punch to stay in the air, using it like a bar to lift his legs and kick Sousou right in the face, sending the ruler of the Wei faction reeling for a moment before he came back even faster and harder.

Ranma matched this jump in speed and skill then exceeded it. Sousou was able to shrug off any ten punches from him, but a hundred per shot at Amiguriken speeds was something else. His fists were hitting so hard and so fast it sounded like a submachine gun going off.

Catching this on the chin and chest sent Sousou reeling, and he was completely unprepared for Ranma's version of Kan'u's Explosive Palm that hit him next. "Tiger Punch!"

The world exploded for Sousou and he clenched his teeth as he felt his feet leave the ground and his body fly through the air to slam into the side of a building on the other end of the parking lot.

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"Holy shit," Muttered the newscaster, "That was Sousou of Kyosho he just sent flying who the fuck is this guy!" Saji was wondering the same thing, and began to surreptitiously move back out of the crowd. *If Sousou's dragon awakens I don't want to be anywhere nearby, and if it doesn't I don't near that pigtailed outsider. Time to show the better part of valor.*

Around him the other Fighters and bystanders were watching with expressions that ran the gamut from awe, to shock and then to worry. Ryuubi felt something stir inside, and she clamped down on it fiercely, moving back from the fight and forcing herself to stay calm, it wasn't easy but she did it.

Kan'u had followed her, and after a moment sucked in her breath as she felt something stirring from where Sousou was buried under rubble. Things were about to get very bloody.

All around the chosen ring area those sensitive to it began backing away. The murderous intent was flooding out of the hole in the wall, washing over their senses like a tsunami. Ryomou gasped, as her inner dragon splintered and she put a hand up over her eye patch grimacing as she followed her friends.

Ranma ignored everyone else's reactions and merely bared his teeth, the killing intent coming from his opponent was nothing compared to what he had felt when communing with Guan Yu and seeing the dragon's soul, and this was what he was here to do. Come what may he'd face it head on.

He set himself as Sousou barreled out of the rubble straight towards him, his entire body covered with a ki based fire aura, far faster than he had been moving previously, faster even than Ranma could move. As Sousou closed he leapt into the air hammering him in the head several times with sharp hammer blows as he was in the air, but Sousou shook it off and slammed a flaming fist into Ranma's chest throwing him backwards to land hard on the concrete.

Ranma shook his head to shake off the impact, and the other fighter was on him before he could move. Ranma

dodged, swayed and slapped his hands away returning stinging blows in return. The flames themselves didn't hurt him much as the Phoenix pill he had taken from Cologne had made him almost immune to flames. They still hurt, but nowhere near enough to incapacitate him.

Somehow the enraged berserker in front of him realized this and raged even further, his aura becoming more flame-like in appearance and moving even faster, leg flashing out in a kick that Ranma couldn't dodge in time. Ranma was barely able to move with the kick but he couldn't deaden the force of the blow and he slammed into a wall thirty feet behind him.

Ranma looked out of the crater his body had made at the flaming figure charging him once more and snarled and then began to clamp down on his emotions. "All right you bastard, you want to play that game here we go! Soul of Ice perfect version!" he said coldly. Almost immediately he felt his emotions finish shutting down, and **cold** fill him. Afterwards, they would come back, but right now they were a mere hindrance.

The onlookers looked on in shock as Ranma began to radiate a battle aura that was as cold as his opponents was hot, almost as if his battle aura was made out of liquid nitrogen. The air between the two fighters began to boil and simmer from the warring temperature fronts.

Sousou charged in trying to hammer Ranma down, but Ranma dodged his first punch took his second hit on his chest and returned thirty Amiguriken speed punches and ten kicks to Sousou, which lifted him into the air. Ranma followed up swiftly jumping up above him and hammering him with several hard shots using the force of his own hits. He stayed in the air, using Sousou's response to stay there, flummoxing his enemies greater strength with his maneuverability.

The wild Sousou snarled and screeched in pain with each hit, and the onlookers could see that his flame aura died down a little as if Ranma's ice aura was overcoming it. But each shot only did this for a bare second before the aura of flame returned.

Kan'u in the onlookers look on in shock as the reporter there to cover this part of the turn event gabbled into his microphone, deciding to give the fight a voiceover for the first time that day, more to get his own feelings out about what he was seeing than anything else. "I-I don't understand what we're seeing here, Sousou has given into his inner dragon and is fighting this new fighter Ranma, but Ranma isn't giving back an inch! How is this possible? Where the hell did this mysterious fighter come from?"

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Around the nation several people were watching this program, for various reasons. One shorthaired girl in Nerima was watching this, and sighed sadly as she again had to push her anger down at seeing a look into a world she was no longer a part of. She had moved on, but the wounds, self-inflicted for the most part, were still there. If pushed, she would have said losing her strength was the only thing that would have broken her out of her rut, but it was hard, so hard sometimes to be honest even with herself.

Another shorthaired haired girl sat next to her, and a wailing man sat on the far side bemoaning the fact that his dishonorable son-in-law was somewhere else when he should've been here making reparations and fixing what he did to Akane, who ignored her father with the ease of long practice. Nabiki looked at her family for a second then back to where Ranma was fighting and shook her head. *I got off lightly. At least I'm still alive and eventually people will forget what I did and I'll be able to move on. Looking at him like this, he could've killed us all.* She thought it almost wonderingly, wondering deep down if she would have been as kind if she had been the one with that kind of power. *He could've killed us all and none of us would've been able to stop him. Oh yes, I got off lightly indeed.*

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The police commissioner was also watching in horror as buildings were smashed and the lot the fight started in demolished as the two fighters just continued to pound on one another neither retreating. *IS this what Ranma was talking about, a bererk dragon soul?* That was just as frightening as Ranma himself, the idea of two human beings able to take this much punishment and deal out this much damage terrified him. *My God in heaven, he thought, what have we done here? What have we unleashed?* The idea that this could have been just a prelude of a future disaster if the government hadn't called in Ranma and the 'dragon' brought itself back would occur to him later that night. The nightmares this thought awakened in him kept him up for many nights following the tournament's second round.

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This was pretty much the same train of thought that occurred to agents of the Federal Department of Paranormal Activities. The reports of the fight in China against Saffron had reached them of course, but they hadn't really given it much thought. The fact that the mountain had been destroyed was not in question, but there were many ways that

could've happened naturally and not involved a fight of this magnitude. Now they looked on and realize that everything they had heard about that incident was true.

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One mother watched torn between pride and worry for her son. Pride that he was such a magnificent fighter, able to stand against this monstrous foe. Worry because she had just attempted to enter his life once more and did not want to see him leave her again.

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Two other fighters looked on in awe watching on a TV screen set into the ceiling while riding the train back to Kanto. Herb was astonished at how well Ranma was fighting, and frankly a little concerned with how effective that soul of ice technique was. It almost completely negated his opponent's flame attacks, and if it could do that to them it would do the same to him if they ever fought. Chou'un looked on worried for her boyfriend and slightly in awe of the fight itself. She had known Ranma was good but this good?

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Back at the fight Ranma coldly analyzed his assault on his opponent and realized that even with the soul of ice and the below freezing temperature of his punches the flame aura of his opponent was negating most of his attack and the return blows were beginning to matter. He was also losing ki at a far faster pace than his opponent, and had less to begin with. *If I don't do something quick he's going to just overwhelm me, well all right, change of tactics!*

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The onlookers had had to move back and then back again as the fight escalated but Kan'u was still within range to see Ranma's change of tactics. Rather than being on the attack he had fallen completely back on the defensive and she wondered why. Her still limited ki sight, though it had become much better under Ranma's tutelage, showed her that he was nowhere near collapse yet. His reservoir was draining a faster than his opponents, but Ranma must have realized the same thing and she wondered what her lover was going to do.

Ryomou however was the one who spotted what was really going on. "Why do you suppose he's moving in a spiral pattern?" she mused as the two watched from a nearby rooftop, hopefully far enough away that they wouldn't be caught up in the escalating battle.

Kan'u turned to look at her with a questioning glance. "A spiral, what do you mean?"

Ryomou shrugged "He's moving in a spiral, he's keeping Sousou attacking him from the front and he's moving the fight in a spiral."

Kan'u thought for a minute, trying to remember what style or attack Ranma had that dealt with spirals and when she remembered she visibly paled. "I think" she said slowly, calmly, as she brought out her Seryuutou and smashed into the doorway leading into the building whose roof they were standing on. Once in the doorway she shoved Seryuutou into the side of the inside wall, as if it was a protective bar. "I think we should buckle down. I think things are going to get a little hairy here. I really, really think we should find some way to tie us down somehow. This is going to get very bad!"

Ryomou looked at her and took in her frightened expression and swiftly agreed, bringing out her always present handcuffs, tying them together and trying both of them to her *guan do*. Ryuubi and the now awake Chouhi were hustled inside, and tied down as well despite their protests.

Kan'u looked across at the other schools fighters on a nearby roof as well as Goei and shouted "Get something to hold onto! Something's going to happen soon!"

Shumei, the only fighter still fit enough to fight, shouted back "What's going to happen soon!?"

Kan'u shouted back. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you! Just tie yourselves down!"

The fighters all looked at one another then looked back at her scared, clearly frightened face, visible even from two roofs over and nodded to one another. Within minutes they were all tied down, along with Hakufu's aunt and the referee. The reporter, seeing what was happening retreated into a doorway.

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Back in the fight Ranma nodded grimly as Sousou attacked again jumping in with a high kick followed by several punches while still in the air. "Hiryu Shoten Ha!" he yelled coldly, punching up a single fist to meet one of the punches coming down from his opponent.

When the punch connected a huge gust of wind came up from the point of impact, ripping the other fighter into the air and suddenly creating a monstrous hurricane which appeared around him and sucked higher, whirling him around in its depths. The debris came up as well, in fact everything that hadn't been bolted down and some things that had been bolted down in the parking lot and around it were sucked into that swirling vortex.

Kan'u and the others looked on in horror from where they clutched at the Seryuutou where it was set into the wall, as the giant hurricane appeared in the city, ripping shredding and tearing at the buildings surrounding the fight, appalled at the amount of damage being done. The fighters from Kyoshu, who were equally bunkered down were also horrified, both by the damage and the fact that their leader and friend was somewhere in that roiling mass of wind.

Ranma however was not about to let up on his opponent. He jumped away from the hurricane landing nearby and cupped his hands, concentrating for a nearly a full minute before bringing them forward sharply. This sent several wind cutter claws into the hurricane, where they would be taken up by the hurricane and moved around randomly. Nowhere near as dangerous as the Cat Fist claws, they wouldn't cut through any object, but they would impact and cause quite a bit of damage. Ranma had come up with them while searching for a way to make the cat fist less deadly, and it had worked, though it took so much concentration it was nearly useless in a real fight.

As the wind around them died down with the hurricane moving off slightly Kan'u managed to unlatch the cuffs tying her to her guan do, then dragged herself to the edge of the roof and shout down and Ranma over the tumult of the wind. "How long is the hurricane going to last?!" she shouted.

Ranma looked up at her still in the grip of the soul of ice and shrugged. "I don't know. It may last as long as his flame aura does, its fed by how heated the other fighter is, anger, rage or actual heat all work."

Almost on the heel of these words the hurricane began to die out and the Fighters looked up to see Sousou still in the air body flopping around out of control, his flame aura gone. Ranma looked on coldly as Sousou fell from fifteen stories in the air, impacting the ground hard enough to shake it and to plant him at least seven feet into the concrete. He looked up at the referee who was just now looking over the edge of the building he had been standing on and said coldly. "I think I won, don't you?"

The referee was about to shakily agree when Sousou pulled himself out of the whole. His clothes were tattered he was bleeding from several cuts on his arms, legs and body, and his reservoir was nearly drained, but he was still gripped in his dragon soul's berserk fury and would not relent.

Ranma shook his head coming out of the soul of ice and gasping as his emotions came back, along with the pain of his own wounds which had also been kept at a distance by the technique. "All right you bastard, I've had just about enough of this!" He strode forward and the berserk fighter pushed off the ground to meet him snarling, but Ranma batted his attacks aside as if they were nothing, his body fueled with the entirety of his remaining reservoir and slammed three punches straight into Sousou's face, breaking his nose and smashing it flat and blackening one of his eyes.

The berserker reeled almost collapsing and Ranma slammed a hard knee up into his chest raising him up to meet another strong punch to the side of his face that blackened his other eye. Sousou reeled again but he didn't fall and tried to come back.

Ranma was having none of it brushing aside his attacks again and again as if they were flies and hammering the fighter with strong punches. "This is ain't you know" he said almost conversationally as Sousou nearly collapsed again. "It's that freaking dragon thing inside of you. No matter how good this thing can fight, it ain't you. You're just a tool for it, the thing that cursed yer ancestors 'cause it was a fucking sore loser, and you're going to continue to be a tool for it until you fight out of this!" The berserker roared again and Ranma kicked him in the stomach and followed up with a sharp roundhouse kick to the temple, which finally sent the other fighter to the ground. The berserker tried to rise, but Ranma stomped on his head, growling "stay down!"

Behind him he could hear his friends coming down from the rooftops where they had taken shelter during the fight, as well as two new arrivals arriving just in the nick of time.

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Herb ran up behind him, he and Chou'un had sprinted the entire way from the train station jumping over rooftops and moving cars to get here in time. Swiftly he brought out the spell scroll and slapped it onto the back of the downed fighter. "Activate!" Herb shouted. The scroll glowed bright yellow and started to suck the dragon essence out of him.

Sousou tried to turn trying to get what was on his back off, but to no avail. With one last roar the dragon spirit was sucked out of him and without that power fueling him, Sousou's injuries took their toll immediately and he collapsed

boneless to the ground.

His followers, who had been making their way cautiously forward once the hurricane let up glared at the newcomer. What did you do to him?" Shumei exclaimed.

Herb merely glanced at him, his draconic features fully on display and the wannabe monk swiftly shut up. There was just something about this new guy that scared the living shit out of him and he hadn't even fought! HE was so scared he didn't even try to read him. "I just solved one third of our problem" Herb said as he removed the scroll from his target. "The dragon shard your friend here had is no more. This purify seal has removed it."

Goei stared at him aghast. "That-that can't be possible! There's no way something outside the destiny can affect something in it! We have to win through ourselves!" She exclaimed.

"You weren't doing a good job of it." Ranma growled coming out of his battle high and assessing his injuries. Besides innumerable burned patches he had at least three broken ribs, a broken collarbone, his head was still ringing, and he may have shattered his right forearm as well, and his ki was barely enough to keep him upright. His hands and feet were bleeding and burned too, so much that he was being very careful in not actually looking at them lest he lose his lunch, and he had several cuts and gashes on his face.

He was, in a word, not in the mood for any of this shit. "You guys don't operate in a vacuum. When you fight, you don't just hurt each other, the hospital and the morgue are full of people that have been caught up in these fights of yours! I ain't gonna stand here and listen to how you don't want to answer to anythin' else!" He turned back to Herb "So is the soul thing going to just stay in there are you going to just destroy it?"

Herb shrugged and with a twitch of his hands ripped the piece of paper apart. A low mournful wail echoed through the area but that was all. The soul had been so weakened in its fight with Ranma that it could no longer sustain itself outside of its chosen vessel. The spell had sucked it out of that vessel and without that strength, the shard could do nothing but die.

As the referee declared Ranma the victor in a shaky tone of voice he turned to Kan'u and his friends and grinned as he put a weak arm around her shoulders, trying not to show any weakness. "Well," he said. "Who's up for some food? I'm starving." They looked at him as if he was mad then Kan'u started to chuckle. Chuckling gave way quickly to full-blown laughter, and everyone around them looked at the two as if they were insane.

On a nearby rooftop Ryofu had watched everything wide-eyed and aroused beyond belief at how powerful Ranma was. *I just simply have to have him. Screw everything else, everyone else!* Ranma just called to her and that call must be answered. Even if, the thought struck her as she saw Kan'u put a gentle arm around Ranma's waist, she had to go through his present lover.

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In his stronghold the Emperor Toutaku smashed the TV to pieces as the fight ended, snarling in mixed rage and terror. Something had to be done about this new fighter something had to stop him. "I will not die!" He shouted suddenly into the empty room, cutting his hands on the wreckage of the tv, shudereing as the pleasure of the pain went through him, calming him down. "I will find a way to beat this destiny of mine!"

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Saji had left as soon as the hurricane appeared, his thought process heads nearly stopping in shock and horror. He decided there and then to give up this whole idea of using the inner Dragon, it wouldn't work. *Ranma's just too damn good, I desperately need to find some way to neutralize him. If I can't the only way forward will be to somehow get the two remaining dragon souls merged into me, with two of them at least I should be able to overpower him and then I won't have to rely on anyone else to conquer.*

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*Somewhere that could not fit that description, some when that did not change to mark the passage of time, a being screamed in agony as a fourth of its power disappeared suddenly. It had been diminished! One of its main tethers had died! This had never occurred before! Something must be done! Some plan must be made. Slowly so slowly the instincts that had served it for so long and the desire for continuance battled. Desire won out and slowly, so slowly, intellect was roused where instinct alone had been before. It would have to take an active role, even though it's time was not yet here. If it didn't it was in danger of dying forever. This new threat was too potent for it to leave it to random chance.*

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end chapter

So what do you guys think? Review as usual and tell me yeah?

## **\*Chapter 10\*: Chapter 10**

Ranma isn't mine, if he was he would've married Kasumi within a month of moving in. Nor do I own Ikki Touden, because Hakufu is considered a main character rather than the fan service mascot, which is really all she's good for in comparison to some of the other characters.

I have to apologize to everyone who read the last chapter. Going over it I found so many spelling and typing mistakes it wasn't even funny. Still I went back and solved as many as I could find, so it should read better when I repost it later tonight. If anyone spots any more tell me and I'll go back and correct them. Oh and I know Nodoka comes off as a bit clichéd, but hell it's a funny cliché to play with.

If anyone knows the name of Ryofu's guan do, please tell me, the only name I could find was Sky Piercer. The fights in this chapter aren't nearly as well done as in the last. I wanted to make a point about how weak Ryofu was at this point because of her illness, which will be important in the next chapter.

This story will still be updated once a week and should be finished by the first week of August at this rate.

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### **Chapter 10 Rock Paper artillery shot**

The first interested party to appear at Ranma's room at the hospital was the police Commissioner demanding to talk to him. Unfortunately the man in question had literally collapsed as soon as they were out of sight of the Kyosho fighters. Kan'u and Ryomou had barely been able to catch him before he hit the ground.

The numerous serious wounds and injuries Ranma sustained, especially the third degree burns on his hands, would have crippled a normal person. Herb, who had the most knowledge of ki and using it to accelerate the body's natural healing, estimated that Ranma would be out of action for at least two weeks. The hospital staff was astonished at how fast he was healing, and were simply housing him and using an IV tube to feed his body nutrients as it healed itself.

When Kan'u informed him that Ranma was still out and the nature of his injuries, the man grumbled but decided to talk to her instead. After receiving a short summary of what had occurred he decided that yes, this plan was still viable still going forward. This decision was almost certainly based on the evidence of the dragon soul and its fire aura around Sousou, an image that was stuck in his brain and promising sleepless nights.

"But we can't," he said, rubbing at his eyes wearily, "have any more battles that cause this much collateral damage. The amount of damage caused and the money needed to repair it is climbing with every report coming in. The FDPA is going nuts trying to find all the videos from this event and adding enough special effects to make the entire fight look bogus. Luckily people just aren't ready in this day and age to accept that the supernatural exists. But we can't have another fight like that."

Kan'u shrugged unapologetically. The fight from her perspective was truly magnificent, and she was only sad she wasn't yet at that level of skill or power herself. As long as nobody died, and the fight had occurred in an area empty of people just in case, then the collateral damage didn't concern her nearly as much as the injuries sustained by her boyfriend. "The last round of the tournament has been postponed, at least for a few days at least to let the furor this fight kicked up fade. After that who knows."

The number of days was meant to let the furor from the last fight blow over, but also take advantage of the fact that Ranma would not be healed enough to take part. It showed once more that the Emperor, despite being a sadist and a masochist, still had a working tactical brain. She wondered what he would be doing in the meantime, as his forces, despite their losses were still much larger than Seito's. She was also careful not to tell the police commissioner that Herb had already decided to stand in for Ranma.

Sousou and his forces were no doubt going to be licking their wounds for quite a while, and she wondered if Sousou would remain in control of his faction without the dragon soul in him or without his sacred bead, which Ryomou had grabbed before they left the parking lot, knowing that Ranma would want to do something permanent to it later.

The police commissioner sighed. "Is that the best you can give me?" He asked plaintively. "Not even an empty promise or two, just 'well it won't happen again for a little while'?"

Kan'u shrugged. "I won't promise to stop something completely out of my control."

The police commissioner did not find this thought comforting and headed back to his office to talk with his superiors in

a very worried frame of mind.

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Next to arrive was one very worried mother. Nodoka insisted on seeing her son, and Kan'u allowed her in. She was much more forgiving than Chou'un, and realized that deep down Ranma had spoke more out of hurt from an open wound than any real desire to not have his mother in his life. That didn't mean they would reconcile, just that the chance was there if Ranma could admit it and Nodoka change enough to see the fine man her son had become rather than measure him against her own twisted impression of manliness.

Nodoka looked down at her son lying there and seeming to barely breath, with several medical devices hooked up to him, only a few of which she recognized. She then looked up at Kan'u Unchou, apparently the second of three (and at that thought she had to stop herself from whipping out her victory fans) girls interested in her son and easily the most exotic looking. Her body was in excellent shape from what Nodoka could tell, with nice powerful hips perfect for childbirth and large breasts that would have no trouble producing milk. *She looks like she could give me lots of grandchildren*, Nodoka thought giddily, but had to again repress expressing that thought.

Kan'u answered wondering why she suddenly felt a spark of arousal and fear. "Prince Herb says he'll be fine eventually, his body is healing itself far faster than modern medicine could. Ranma will be up on his feet in as little as two weeks." She reached down, gently pushing back a strand of Ranma's hair which lay unbound around his head, not even realizing how her face changed as she looked down at him. "How long it will take him to regain consciousness is up in the air.

Nodoka nodded, smiling happily at the love she saw on the younger woman's face. "I see. Would it be alright if I stay with him for a time?"

Kan'u smiled. "Yes, it will be fine by us at any rate, you'll have to clear it with the hospital staff first of course." In point of fact with the return of Chou'un she and Ryomou were on permanent guard duty up here with Ranma and Ryuubi was downstairs guarded by Chou'un and watching over the injured Chouhi. Herb was with them too, though he was probably going to go back to the Chinese embassy soon to make a report to his father and the Chinese ambassador. As the Emperor of the Musk had hinted at a willingness to send an entire company of Musk warriors if need be to help end the dragon curse, and Lime and Mint were rather typical of such, this was no small thing.

Nodoka nodded, determined not to leave her son again until she had patched things up with him. She had nearly lost him twice now when she wasn't there to let Ranma out of her sight now.

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The Emperor was wondering what he was going to be doing about Ranma, the numerous cuts and the euphoria of the pain helping him to think through the rising rage and bloodlust that he had felt ever since Sousou lost. He couldn't back out now; he would have to face Saito in the tournament but hopefully not this Ranma person who had so completely defeated Sousou. Without Ranma, maybe he had a chance of winning and thus retaining his position and possession of the Gyokuji. If he could retain his position and not die at the hands of the descendant of Lu Bu then he could defeat his destiny. It never even occurred to him to agree to help Ranma in his quest to end the cycle of the sacred destiny/curse as that would've made him appear subservient to the government. More he wouldn't have agreed to anything that put off fighting now, he had too much rage inside. His small dragon shard, while nowhere near a full portion of the soul was enough to exacerbate and focus his anger and fury. He would fight to live and to serve the dragon whose curse was upon them all. But that didn't mean he couldn't take some thought to the future...

Ryofu found herself looking forward to the next round of the tournament as well. Without Ranma there she would naturally face off with the next strongest fighter Seito had, that meant Kan'u. She could arrange an accident for the dark skinned Fighter, and thus leave the way open to Ranma, after all despite her skill Chou'un was no real threat. It was a decidedly Amazon attitude towards obstacles that Ranma of course would never have gone along with, but to Ryofu it made sense. She didn't even waste a second to think about Saji, who at that very moment was hiding himself among the civilian population, wondering where the hell everything had gone wrong and cursing the object of her lust as hard as he could. He would just have to hope that his contacts with the government came through for him with some kind of weakness he could use against Ranma.

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Sousou's camp was in turmoil as Kan'u had supposed. It wasn't so much that Sousou very publicly lost his inner dragon spirit, but because he had lost it all. The plans of Chutatsu Shibai, the strategist of Wei, had never even considered the fact that a fully awakened dragon shard could be beaten. Oh, she wasn't blind to the cost it must've taken out of the other fighter, she could see the injuries from the video and she had no doubt that was only bravado that keep kept him on his feet in front of his enemies. She could respect that even as her plans to rule Wei from

behind the scenes went down in ashes around her ears.

Chutatsu pushed some of her spiky pink hair out of her face as she contemplated what she should do now, staring down at the tattoos on her hands. With Sousou and his best and most loyal fighters out of action she could take control of Wei openly either in his name 'until the Ruler recovers' or in her own name. With Teni, bless her psychotic soul, and the other Fighters like Kakuka more loyal to her than to Sousou she could do it and make it stick, but the question was would that help her plans going forward. Much like Saji she wanted to make use of the dragon shards as an unstoppable force to take over the world. She was not blind however, and could see that if there were martial artists out there that could match an awakened Ruler, then that plan was untenable unless she could somehow gather them all together...

Her thoughts were interrupted as the door to her office, which should have been a teacher's, but she had taken it over when she moved in, banged open and Myosai Kakouen charged in, her normal cool composure gone. "What's this I hear about Sousou being defeated!? There's no way Emperor Sousou can be defeated by anyone, they must have used a dirty trick or something! What the fuck is going on?!" She exclaimed.

Myosai was a tall woman, with a athletic build that favored a long white dress slit high up its side, and always wore fingerless fighting gloves. Her most striking feature, besides her overall beauty was the long black hair that fell straight down to her pert rear. She was an extremely skilled fighter, skill wise she may even be better than most A Rank fighters, though that had yet to be proven. She was Sousou's assassin, and incredibly loyal to him for saving her life several years ago. She wouldn't even take orders from anyone else under normal circumstances. On the other hand, none of the current situation was normal, and Chutatsu smirked inwardly. "I believe" she said slowly, looking at the taller woman, "that Sousou has a job for you."

After the long haired girl left, Chutatsu looked over to her closest ally. "Gather up all the Fighters you can convince to work with us, it's time to cut our losses in Wei and move on to someplace else. We'll wait for the next round of the tournament to start before we strike."

Kakuha nodded seriously, not showing any remorse about leaving his 'friends' behind. His only real loyalties were to Chutatsu, who he felt could further his own interest (wealth and safety) best, and Kaku, his on again off again girlfriend. Now all he wanted was to survive and get a shot at the Fighter that had set Kaku up for her punishment from the Emperor. Anything that let him take a shot at Ranma while he was in a weakened state was fine by him.

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Hakufu, Goei and Kokin were all appalled by the fight they had witnessed, though Hakufu was strangely energetic and antsy afterwards. Something inside of her was welling up and she didn't know what to do with it. She decided to go on a trip for a little while into the mountains behind her house, the better to control herself. Something in that fight had called something inside of her and she didn't like it.

Goei on the other hand, started to look at life a little differently. What she had seen was so far out of her belief in what she had assumed was an inviolable destiny that it made her question all of her previously held opinions. If someone outside the sacred destiny could be that strong what did that say about the destiny itself? She resolved to find out what this Ranma was doing in the area and she called Kokin and his friend Gakushu over to discuss things. Both of these fighters were ecstatic that this had happened. Recently, since Ryomou's defection the ice cream loving warrior had begun to question whether or not his destiny, or any of their destinies, was set in stone. In fact, this questioning, had begun when Ranma had removed his seed from him and destroyed it later that night. To Ranma's surprise his destruction of the mid level Fighters in his collection didn't have actual personality inside them, just imagery and twisting powerful desires like the lower level beads. Gakushu was not for the first time thinking somewhat clearly, and he knew that he had to change though how and what was still in question.

When Goei was informed about what Ranma was doing in the area she began to giggle and then laugh out loud. She said something about asking for a government bailout and then broke down into giggles again. Kokin and Gakushu just stared at her, not recognizing the reference.

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That night Myosai made her way into the hospital via the roof, intent on completing the job Chutatsu had passed on to her from Sousou. She would normally have questioned why Sousou couldn't pass on the orders himself, but since it dealt with killing the man who had so badly beaten Sousou she decided to go with it.

Despite her bright white dress, Myosai was an expert at stealth, and she made her way through the hospital without alerting anyone to her presence. Unlike Nanyo they hadn't bribed someone on the staff to turn off the cameras to the target floor, the staff member responsible for doing so had been found out and fired with cause already. Kyosho's own contact on the hospital staff had simply passed on Ranma's room number, so she knew precisely where she was

going. She only had one moment of concern as a nurse on night patrol came up the elevator, but she ducked into the staircase just in time. Myosai then made her way down the staircase to the fifth floor.

She opened the door to that level and looked out. The lights on this level were on, unlike the levels above, and she cursed inwardly before moving forward as stealthily as she could with the lights on, moving from door to door and avoiding the two cameras she could spot. She was able to get to Ranma's door without triggering any alarm, but when she went inside she found herself face to face with Chou'un.

Chou'un had the most advanced ki sense among the Seito girls, even better than Herb who had indeed left late that afternoon to check in at the Chinese embassy. She had replaced Kan'u who had taken her place guarding Ryuubi and the still out of it Chouhi, and had felt Myosai the moment she reached the fifth floor.

No words were exchanged as Myosai dived into the attack, her hands suddenly filled with her signature jade shot, a personal weapon she had created herself with a sharp jade tip atop a long silk wrapped chain. She could use this weapon with consummate skill even in an enclosed space, something she showed now by whipping it in a complicated figure eight to block Chou'un's blade as it came toward in a lightning fast lai strike.

Chou'un recovered swiftly, and the two began to dance around one another, neither hindered by the small space they found themselves fighting in. Chou'un's draconic eyes were open and hard as she stared at the assassin, and Myosai was similarly focused on her opponent. Chou'un's sword was unable to cut through her enemy's weapon but neither was Myosai able to hit her enemy's pressure points.

She fell back out of the room to give her some more fighting room, and Chou'un followed up almost whispering "Wind strike!" A small wave of air left her sword and nicked Myosai's dress, slicing the side of it as she moved out of the way. Another shot was blocked and she went on the attack, trying to pin Chou'un in the doorway.

Chou'un let her blade be caught by her enemy's rope, but then lashed out with a kick, sending Myosai backward and allowing her to clear the doorway before they clashed again. The sound of their battle spread through the hallway, the sound of clang, swish and swoosh echoing along the hospital walls. The cameras Myosai had been so careful to avoid caught

Myosai was finally able to get through Chou'un's defense, tagging a pressure point in her left arm. Chou'un barely even noticed, as her style was based on one-handed swordsmanship, and she was right handed. In return she slashed more of her opponent's skirt off. Now it was hanging from her from by a slim margin, though her body still hadn't been tagged.

The fight continued, neither speaking as they exchanged blows until Kan'u alerted by the alarm came out of the stairwell, Seryuutou already out and swinging.

Myosai realized that she was now at a severe disadvantage and decided to retreat for now. She reached into her blouse with a free hand and pulled out a small smoke grenade, which she threw on the ground between her and Kan'u. Kanu fell back, coughing as the smoke hit her and Myosai turned, smashing through a window and out into the night air. Chou'un moved to the window to stare out into the night as Myosai landed on a nearby rooftop, to glare back at them. Kan'u joined her there, staring out at the assassin. "Well, that was certainly interesting she was quite attractive, for an assassin. Was she any good?"

Chou'un nodded, her draconic eye becoming mere slits as she lost sight of her opponent in the darkness. "Oh yes, very good. I think she is going to be a problem in the future."

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"I failed!" Myosai cursed as she stomped into Chutatsu's office once again. "I was winning against one of his guards, that silver haired bitch Chou'un, but then Kan'u showed up and I had to retreat!" Her clothes were in tatters and she had a few small gashes and one or two bruises, but she still seemed in fighting condition. Kakuka looked at her body appreciatively for a moment then turned away before she could notice.

Chutatsu, sitting calmly in her wheelchair took her outburst in stride. "I honestly didn't expect our first attempt would work but don't worry he won't be well enough to participate in the tournament and you can strike then when the other strong fighters are busy with fighting the Rakuyo's faction's champions."

"Can I see Lord Sousou before then?" Myosai asked.

Chutatsu shook her head. "Sorry, no one's seeing him until he's well enough to at least speak, even I don't know where he is." That much unfortunately was true. Without the dragon shard in him the ruler was a liability to her future

plans, and one she would've preferred to silence in such a way as to point the finger at one of the other faction, but he, the Three Pillared Gods as well as Kakoton had never returned to the school following the fight against Seito, nor did they ever show up at the hospital where Ranma was being treated (that would have been really awkward). Chutatsu had a suspicion of where he was, but if they were all together and where she thought they were it would be next to impossible to arrange an accident, she would have to attack openly and if even one of the Pillared Gods was in fighting form, then that would be a costly maneuver in many ways.

She could leak the information to Toutaku, and let him deal with Sousou, but she had a sneaking suspicion that Toutaku was going to be a little too busy dealing with his own concerns. And arranging that would take away time better spent getting her and those Fighters loyal to her away before the other factions sensed their weakness and finished them off.

Myosai wasn't happy to hear this but shrugged it off. "All right. I'll try again during the tournament. Until then give me everything you have about this Ranma and the other Seito fighters. I want to study them before trying again." *That silver haired bitch was a little too good for my liking.* She thought rather disgruntled that their fight had been interrupted. *Still, who knows, I might have a second try at Chou'un and then we'll see who the better fighter is.*

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When he reported in, the police commissioner found that his superiors were split on how to respond to the fight. Some were terrified and wanted to make Ranma disappear, shall we say, as a visible danger to the nation, others wanted to find some way to control him, either to turn him into a weapon or to weaken him down to a manageable level. But when the police commissioner finished telling them that the fight against the Sousou and his inner dragon might have been only a preview of what could have been much worse later on, with the berserk dragon revived, that silenced most of them.

Thankfully, in terms of the video of the fight, most people, as had been previously stated were unprepared to deal with supernatural. Those who were however, had already been in contact with Japanese government asking what the hell was going on. The Catholic Church especially took the view that possession was their purview and wanted to be involved from now on. The Japanese government however, had shot that down quickly as they already have enough help at hand. Thankfully the other governments of the world were much more select in what they believed, and only China was prepared to believe the evidence that had already made its way onto the internet. Their ambassador had already been informed of the events, and informed them that Herb would stay and help for the duration of the conflict, until they were certain this dragon berserker would never be able to revive and the curse was gone for good. This actually helped convinced the skeptics in the government about the veracity of the information the police commissioner had passed on, and they decided to start giving more aid to Ranma and his allies.

Thus, when seal master Harumoto opened his door the next day he found five government officials there with a large suitcase full of money and two tickets round trip for him and his attendant to Kyoto and the key to a penthouse suite in one of the best hotels in the area. He would remain on call there and work on his seals there until the problem was solved, just in case they needed his advice. Another expert that Ranma had talked about contacting, Dr. Oden up in a town on the Kitami Range in Hokkaido was given the same treatment a few days later, which was how long it took the government to find his address and get some men there from Sapporo. Dr. Oden was known to never willingly leave his town, but he had already been debating doing so after reading the notes Ranma sent him. When he learned of the luxurious traveling arrangements the government was prepared to provide for him, it helped him make up his mind. The old man had never lived in the lap of luxury and he found the idea appealing.

More the police commissioner was given the go-ahead to start rounding up any Fighter from the Wei faction and any other weakened faction that had broken any laws recently who they hadn't been able to go after before, and was given the go-ahead to use the SWAT and any other resources he needed to do it. With most of Wei's more powerful fighters out of the way, down injured or simply out of the fight, they would be able to round up several dozen, separate them from their beads and hand those over to Ranma to be destroyed. Unfortunately this large a raid would take two days to prepare and when they moved in they would find a surprise. Most of the fighters had already left the school to head for an undisclosed location, leaving behind those fighters most loyal to. It seemed the strategist Chutatsu had abandoned Wei to its fate. Not that Sousou was in any condition to care one way or the other about his faction, he had still hadn't come out of the coma Ranma put him in.

Still that was the only hiccup to the massive number of raids, and Nanban, Nanyu, Yoshuu Private School, and Yoshuu Academy were hit. Gakushuu didn't fight the police when they came for the lower ranked fighters of his school, something that Kokin went along with. Without Taishiji, who Ryofu had crippled weeks earlier in response to his attempted revolt against Toutaku, Yoshuu Academy fell without any difficulties. All these raids went off without a problem, though half of this was because Toutaku had pulled in as many Fighters as he could to reinforce his position around Rakuyo. Gogun and Seito were left alone for now. Gogun's leader Ukitsu had actually contacted the

government after the fight between Sousou and Ranma, and told them she was willing to work with them so long as she could get an introduction to Ranma. The end result was that when Ranma eventually woke up five days later, he would find a small pile of magatama to analyze and destroy next to his bed.

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Ukitzu sighed as she popped the last sweet dango into her mouth, staring out the window of the café she was sitting in. Things had been going so strangely lately, she really didn't know what to think of everything that had occurred since Ranma had appeared in the area. Everything was just so, so, chaotic now! Before she knew what would she was supposed to do, she was supposed to help but Hakufu out from the sidelines until the girl became strong enough to be a challenge for her and then defeat the big breasted ditz and her inner Dragon. This was what she was supposed to do, both according to her destiny and to her master, but lately it seemed as if other events had taken over everything in the region.

It all came down to Ranma and the amount of chaos that his very presence spread. And the fight Ranma had with the ruler of Wei was just amazing! She had tried to record it as it aired, but she couldn't figure out the controls to her DVD player in time to catch it all, and the copies she found on the internet had been changed to look fake, an obvious change to her Fighter's eyes. She had never seen a fight like that before, it was a truly awesome spectacle of martial arts might.

As she guzzled her tea, the thought occurred to her once again that she and Ranma would make a fantastic match, but Ukitzu forcefully reminded herself that Ranma was already with Kan'u and Chou'un. There were rumors going around that another girl had joined them, but the fact was she wasn't into sharing and was as straight as an arrow. Unlike Kanu, who not only accepted but was happy with Ranma's curse, to her it was a major turnoff. That and the fact that she wasn't a poacher made it highly unlikely that any relationship between her and Ranma could ever occur. Kan'u certainly wasn't going to leave him anytime soon if ever, and the other girls seem to be happy to share with one another so...

Her thoughts were interrupted as she spotted someone with black hair and a pigtail walking by outside window of the tea shop she was sitting in. She jumped out of her seat and ran outside only to stop a little confused. From what Ukitzu had seen Ranma always seemed to dress in silk pants and shirt, but the young man in front of her was dressed in army fatigue pants and a muscle T-shirt. On his back was a huge backpack. He was actually pretty good-looking, built along the same lines as Ranma was himself, not hugely muscled but built for speed and endurance much like a swimmer or martial artist.

Ukitzu looked up at the boy and noticed that he had been checking her out at the same time as she had been doing the same to him and she blushed a little. "Sorry, she said, "I thought you were someone else."

The boy smirked a little. "Really" he said, "who do you think I look like?"

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For the fighters of Seito the next few days passed relatively quickly, and with no further attempts on Ranma's life. The composition of the rest of the district had been completely changed however. With most of the Fighters of B rank and below out of circulation for various reasons the civilian populations began to act more normally. Shops began to stay open after nightfall again, people, especially women and girls began to move around singly rather than in large groups, and a cautious feeling of optimism was in the air. The construction workers got to work on the various demolished areas (some of them reported seeing a lone martial artist helping them out in various areas, but this was unconfirmed) and the police began to patrol the streets in normal sized teams once again. They were tense, but a lot of progress had been made. Whether or not this progress would continue or be overturned would be decided in the fight between Rakuyo and Seito.

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The area designated for the final battle was inside an old abandoned warehouse whose roof had caved in some years prior. The area was clear of all refuse the area having been used by several of the factions on and off for sparring practices and other training exercises. Herb, Ryuubi and the others from Seito were there first, and waited patiently for Toutaku and his party to arrive. When they did, Herb took a moment to study the so-called Emperor, and he was not impressed.

The boy was tall, taller than Herb, and built along the same lines as he was, with wavy blonde hair and dark, almost manic eyes. He didn't have nearly the presence of Sousou, and the most peculiar thing about him was the many, many bandages that were everywhere on his body. Little bandages, as if someone had cut him a little, then patched him up and did it again over and over. It was his eyes, however, that told Herb all he wanted to know about Toutaku. Here was a mad dog, the man who had plunged the entire region into anarchy without remorse in the name of his

own power and rule, and Herb determined to put him down.

Toutaku's first words as he, Ryofu, Chinkyu and another fighter named Kousei came up to them in the center of the arena proved this theory right. "My my" Toutaku smirked as he looked at Ryuubi, "Aren't you a pretty one. After we win I might just have to keep you for myself. At least until you're a little too damaged for me to have more fun with."

There was something very definably foul in his words and glance, and Ryuubi flushed first with shame and fear then with rising anger as Toutaku continue to gaze lustfully at her. Her inner dragon rose up inside her, almost physically forcing her to charge forward and erase this little shit from the universe, but she swiftly shook off the thought looking a little quizzical at the completely foreign thought. She wasn't a trained warrior, why did she want to be the one to fight Toutaku? A sudden burning headache appeared behind her eyes and she shook her head. But before she could do anything else the pain disappeared.

Kan'u had stepped forward as these words had left Toutaku's mouth, glaring across at him. "Perhaps you should wait until you win to make such threat." She growled out.

Herb nodded stiffly. "Indeed, such words are beneath one who claims to be in Emperor, let alone a man." Ryomou nodded emphatically.

Emperor smirked at them then looked back at Kan'u. "You have a nasty little mouth Kan'u Unchou, after this is over, I might have to plug it with something."

Kanu made to jump forward but Herb grabbed her shoulder before she could. "I believe," he said to the referee "that we are all here we might as well begin."

The referee nodded and Chinkyu stepped forward, looking a little apologetic at Toutaku's words. Honestly, she really wasn't certain why she and Ryofu-sama were still with Rakuyo, but they had come to fat to back out now.

Ryomou as agreed stepped forward to meet her. She would take out both of the weaker fighters, allowing Herb to concentrate on Toutaku as he wanted to and Kan'u to concentrate on Ryofu.

As soon as the referee signaled the match to begin Chinkyu shot forward, determined to perform well and impressed her Ryofu-sama. Ryomou met the charge calmly smacking aside the younger woman's hands and grabbing her head forcing it down and slamming her knee up into her forehead. The Brown haired girl shook her head but charged forward again and sending out several fast, sharp punches and kicks.

Ryomou grunted as one shot got through to her upper arm, but other than that Chinkyu wasn't having a very easy time of it, taking three shots for every one she landed. Mindful of what had occurred to the younger girl earlier and not wanting to give her any flashbacks Ryomou refrained from using her regular submission techniques, but that didn't mean that she couldn't grapple with the girl at all.

One instant Chinkyu had overextended her kick, the other Ryomou had her leg in her grip twisted, pulled and slammed her enemy's body down onto the ground, still retaining her hold on the leg. Ryomou sat down on the other girl's back, pulling back on the leg like she had seen one of those American wrestlers do on that silly made-up wrestling show. The wrestling may have been fake, but the move was a good one, and the younger girl was forced to tap out or break her own leg to get free. With a look of agony over at Ryofu, who simply smiled and nodded, she tapped out.

Ryomou stood up, dusted her hands off and motioned to Kousei to come forward.

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Chou'un calmly waited outside the door to Ranma's hospital room. After the first assassination attempt Ranma had been moved up into the top floor, which was then emptied of other patients. Ryuubi knew that someone else would come along to try and assassinate him again, and so decided to create a battlefield that would be easier to defend. Chou'un had immediately volunteered to guard Ranma, partly because she wanted a rematch with Myosai, who she knew was going to try again.

About 30 min. after the tournament's last round was due to begin Myosai made an appearance just as predicted. Chou'un slowly stood up, sliding her sword out of its sheath. "I knew you would come," she said calmly. "I am ready for you. I believe we have unfinished business to settle."

Myosai looked from Chou'un to the door behind her and then back again, conflicted. On the one hand, she knew that killing Ranma was more important than fighting Chou'un, it was her mission after all. On the other hand she could do

that after she and Chou'un fought, and she didn't like not knowing who was better between them any more than the other girl did.

She brought out her weapon and began to twirl it around her, the silk covered chain making a whooming noise in the air. At some unspoken signal they both charged forward. Myosai brought her rope around trying to entangle Chou'un's legs, but Chou'un leapt up above the rope bringing her sword around in a slash that would've cut Myosai in two had she not dodged. Myosai brought up a rope again catching Chou'un on the chin with the jade tip of it, but Chou'un brought her sword down in a stab that nicked her arm.

Myosai catapulted away from Chou'un swinging her rope around in a wide arc, but Chou'un merely used her sword to block it then grabbed the rope and twirled with it bringing Myosai closer again to cut at her side again. Myosai dodged as much as she could getting only nicked by the tip of the sword and responded with a heart punch to the side of the head that sent Chou'un reeling away. Chou'un responded to this by kicking out as she moved back catching Myosai in the chest and sending her backwards.

Both brought up their weapons again clashing and coming around one another. The rope made an adequate defense against Chou'un sword, but this close she couldn't entangle Chou'un with it and still have enough length left to attack her. Chou'un kept the fight close knowing that at medium range she was at a disadvantage, even with her long-range attacks. Myosai was simply too good to expect those attacks to work on her if she had any room at all to dodge with.

The stalemate continued with the two battling it out there in the hospital corridor until a faint sound from one of the doors brought their attention to a shorthaired girl with odd cross shaped markings under her eyes poking her head out of the empty room.

The Imperial assassin cursed inwardly. Their information on the room Ranma was in was wrong as well as not mention his window had bars, and she had been forced to scale around the building until she could find a window that didn't have bars on it. She wished not for the first time that she had some kind of distant weapon because if she did she could have simply broken the glass and shot Ranma through it. To make matters worse that old woman sitting with her target had seen her, and hefted her sword as if she knew how to use it.

If she could just get into the room though, her poisoned knives could deal with the woman easily enough, but she just wasn't good enough at throwing the things while maintaining her position on the wall. If she could get her feet on solid ground she could knife throw with the best of them, but not while she was clinging to the side of the building and having to punch through a window at the same time.

She had barely opened the door to the corridor before a Jade shot took her in the side of the face smashing her into lala land.

Behind the two combatants the door to Ranma's room open and Nodoka stuck her head out. Seeing the woman who had been so ill mannered as to attempt to assault her son via the window lying insensible on the ground, she nodded pleasantly at the two fighters. "I'll just let you too young ladies get back to whatever you are doing" she said pleasantly. While she didn't consider herself that much of a warrior, she was of the samurai caste and knew better than to butt in on someone else's fight. With a click the door closed and the two fighters looked at one another shrugged and then at some unspoken signal began fighting again.

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Outside the hospital the bowmistress Teni cursed as she tried another position and found that just as she had thought she couldn't quite find an angle that she could use to fire an arrow at Ranma from. She was an archer by trade and had no close in skills, so the bow and arrow was it. If she couldn't find an angle to shoot from she was next to useless here. Still, at least she could observe Myosai's attempt and report back to her Maria-sama about it.

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Back on the tenth floor the fight had continued with neither fighter being able to get the upper hand. Chou'un was having a harder time of it than her opponent, as Myosai had hit upon the idea of bouncing her jade shot off the walls, and while the shots from the blunt jade shot weren't particularly dangerous separately, they were debilitating. In return Myosai had let her defense down a time or two and had several slashes on her arms and legs to show for it. Once again her dress was in tatters, as was the school uniform of her opponent.

Chou'un sensed another shot coming in from behind her and rather than gritting her teeth and bearing it or turning to use her sword to defend against it she undid her sheath from her side and using it with one hand smacked it back to catch the recoiling rope. The rope coiled around it and she spun bringing her sword up and around in slash she shouted. "Wind slash!" Her ki attack was able to slice through the chain of her enemy, and she let her sheath tumble to the ground, holding the jade shot and about 3 feet of length of the rope.

This left Myosai with only 4 feet of length to play with, and no dangerous point at the end. Myosai had responded to this by several hard Palm strikes to Chou'un's chest and a few pressure points strikes, locking up the other woman's side and arm as she turned, but even without that she knew that with Chou'un still possessing her sword she was now overmatched. She backed up worriedly as Chou'un completed her turn back, still twirling the rope in front of her as a defense wondering how the hell she was going to even the odds now.

Chou'un on the other hand backed off. "Might I ask the question?" she asked politely.

Myosai struck by the polite tone of voice in this circumstance responded automatically "yes of course" she said before she could stop herself.

"I believe you work for Sousou of the Wei faction, but what I would like to know is why you are doing this? He didn't strike me as a particularly sore loser, and for all the reports about him confirmed that he didn't really believe in this destiny malarkey."

"Did you just say malarkey?" Myosai asked deadpan. Chou'un waved her word off, blushing slightly. Myosai ignored that and answered her question, seeing no harm in it. "As to your question Chutatsu Shibai told me."

For a moment there she was wondering why about that statement bothered her, Chou'un however put it into words. "And Shibai would never do anything that your Ruler didn't want her to?"

Myosai look blank for a moment as that thought percolated in her head then she blanched. Chou'un nodded "yes I thought that might be the case. Have you even talked to your Emperor, he woke up yesterday you know."

"How do you know that?" Myosai asked suspiciously twirling her rope menacingly.

Choukou Kyocho got in contact with us as soon as he woke up. He wanted to know more about what we were doing the end the curse on us all." This was true, Sousou had been very interested, once he woke u,p to realize that he was no longer plagued by feelings of rage, possessiveness or avaricious greed to control everyone around him. His childhood friend Kakoton and all the others with him didn't have such remarkably change in their attitude, but he realized that he was missing his bead as well as his hinner dragon spirit and connected the dots.

Myosai looked at her and then away "I'll-I'll go see what he wants. If he really doesn't want me to assassinate Ranma that we won't have to fight again. But don't think it'll be easy if we will."

Chou'un shook her head, smiling slightly, "I wouldn't dream of thinking such a thing." *My bruises aren't likely to let me forget. I think I cracked a rib at some point in this fight, and I don't even know how many bruises I have, let alone what she did to my side and arm to make me lose all feeling in them.* She thought to herself. Myosai was simply very, very good, and it was only chance and the inspiration to use her sheath that allowed her to end this fight. Well, that and the fact that Myosai was devoted to Sousou and not his faction. Myosai nodded and ran off.

Chou'un turned and entered Ranma's room, wincing slightly as she walked. Nodoka took one look at her and motioned her to a seat by the door. "Sit," she ordered "and strip, let's see what wounds you have." Chou'un looked at the other woman. At first she had been angry with Kan'u about how easy she had agreed to allow his mother to stay, after all she was not the most forgiving of people. But in the end she realized maybe that Kan'u, as in so much else, was closer to Ranma than she was and went along with things. She didn't expect to be mothered herself however, and she sighed as she obeyed the motherly look of concern as she removed what remained of her school.

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In comparison to the first fight Ryomou put down Kousei swiftly. Not really wanting to drag it out and having no reason to take it easy on him like she had with Chinkyu, within minutes of entering the ring Kousei found himself locked into her submission hold and falling unconscious swiftly. Ryomou let up as the ref declared her the inner and barely had time to move to stand next to Ryuubi and Herb before Ryofu strode forward eagerly. Kanu grimly moved forward opposite her.

No one said a word as Ryofu and Kan'u squared off in the ring, staring one another down, fingering their respective weapons. Kan'u smiled slightly. "I've been hoping for a match against you." She mused, "With all the training I've been get undergoing, I want to see how well I would stack up against the best fighter in the region."

Ryofu smiled grimly "well you're about to get your wish, but how about we put a little wager, something to make it more interesting?"

Kan'u smirked "and what would you want that I have to give?"

"Ranma," Ryofu answered promptly, "I want him."

Kan'u's smile faded. "He's not a thing you can fight for Ryofu, he's a person with his own feelings and desires you're going to have to work to get his attention if you want to be with him so much. And if you do you want him you're going to have to share him because I'm not giving him up."

Ryofu shrugged, "Ah well it was worth a try." And then without any warning in her stance or eyes she lunged forward with her ji, a spear with twin crescent shaped blades at its tip, a magnificent weapon named Houtengenki, and the fight began. Kan'u was able to lock at first lunch and preposterous swiftly, their blades clanging together.

Clang, clang, clang was all that was heard for a few minutes as the two tested one another's defenses and styles. Ryofu style wasn't very precise, but what she did have was speed and strength in spades. She also had massive ki reserve and ki attacks, and used them often as shown in the next second when she lashed out with her free fist, firing a beam of ki at her opponent.

Kan'u dodged the first to almost run into another but she got underneath it and fired back with her Crescent Blade's Earth Roar

Ryofu however simply jumped over it and responded with her own ki attack again. She nearly caught Kan'u square in the chest, Kan'u was able to dodge at the last second, but her skirt was shredded by the blast as it went by.

Kan'u however, ignored this and continued to fight, slicing open Ryofu shirt as she came down, the other girl fast enough to dodge being opened up crotch to tits but not quite fast enough to dodge all of the blow.

The fight continued likes this for a while, both of them using their weapons hands, ki, hands and feet to great effect, but not able to land any telling or knockout blows.

As the fight wore on Kan'u began to feel weak, nowhere near as weak as she could have been without the prior training with Ranma, but her endurance still wasn't as good as her boyfriends.

Ryofu too was feeling it, and this was exacerbated by her illness. An hour and a half after the fight began she was hit with a wave of dizziness and stumbled her guan do falling from the correct guard position for just an instant.

Kan'u capitalized instantly. She used her own weapon to smack the weapon out of Ryofu's hand and with a shout of "Explosive Palm!" slammed her palm into Ryofu's chest blowing the other girl away and back into a wall.

Ryofu, unlike her opponents from the second round, was able to shrug this off and get back up and fight again, but her illness once more drove her back down to the ground and before she could move Kan'u had her spear point at her throat. Ryofu glared up at her and brought her hands together too fast for her to see, grabbing the spearhead and wrenching it up and away from her throat as she stood up, but Kan'u ignored the assault on her weapon and kicked Ryofu strongly in her already damaged stomach.

Ryofu took that shot and still holding onto Kan'u's weapon kicked out again, catching Kan'u on the leg. Kan'u winced and nearly fell to the ground as well but brought her spear around butt first and slammed it into the side of her enemy's head. This sent the other woman sailing away, unfortunately toward her ji. Ryofu grabbed Houtengeki up and charged back in as Kan'u went to one knee.

A heavy overhand strike was met by Kan'u raising Seryoutuo in a crosswise position to block the blow and the two stood there straining against one another. Just as Ryofu was about to break the deadlock she felt another wave of dizziness and she cursed as she fell back from the deadlock allowing Kan'u to regain her feet. She brought her ji around intersecting Kan'u's left arm, but Kan'u moved with the below only receiving a large slash that went from her shoulder down to her elbow rather than bisecting the arm entirely.

Kan'u responded by slashing her guan do forward and catching Ryofu in the side, though Ryofu had dodged enough to only be caught in the side rather than bisected. Even that wasn't a killing blow however as it looked far worse than it really was, it was bad, but ignorable.

Ryofu was willing and able to continue the fight until another wave of dizziness hit her. Her body was working overtime trying to keep her in fighting condition despite her wounds and this had exacerbated her illness to the point where it now overcame her. With a final yell she lunged forward, trying desperately to spear her enemy in turn, but Kan'u dodged and Ryofu went stumbling on for a few more step's then collapsed comatose to the ground.

Kan'u breathed a sigh of relief as her opponent fell then, with one hand staunching the blood from her own wound, walked over and checked the other woman's pulse. It was weak but there and she sighed in relief. Then she took the

other warrior's magatama and with the referee's help picked her up and carried her over to the sidelines.

Toutaku strode forward certain of his victory now. Ryomou was near nowhere near good enough to face him, and Ryofu had weakened Kanu enough to where she wouldn't be much of a match either. "So," he said smirking evilly over at Ryuubi, "are you going to be the one fighting me? I'm certain I have some grappling techniques I could use," he mused to himself.

Ryuubi once again felt a sudden and terrible rage and desire to kill this pompous little twit, but Herb strode forward before she could move. "I will be your opponent" he said firmly, glaring through draconic eyes at the sadistic bastard across from him.

"Oh?" drawled Toutaku, "I wasn't aware that the tournament allowed ringers. If you're not part of their faction or go to their school I'm afraid you're disqualified" he said gleefully.

Herb's glare if anything became harder at this. "And thus you prove yourself unfit to rule" he intoned darkly, "Rulers aren't supposed to change the rules like that to protect themselves. We are supposed to stand tall and proud not skulk or hide. You are a coward Toutaku unfit to bear the name Emperor, unfit to even be the descendents of that fat scum that she was your ancestor."

Toutaku growled low in his throat, his dragon sliver fueling his rage and overcoming his desire to back out of this fight and retain his position.. "Are you challenging me?"

Herb laughed "Why, I thought that was obvious."

Toutaku snarled and charged his enemy, his fists flaming with scarlet ki. Herb met his charge, battering his attacks aside with a speed and precision that brought a gasp from Kan'u and the other onlookers. Herb would normally have moved around and taken to the air, but he was trying to not only defeat but humiliate this pstule that called himself a ruler, so he simply stood there taking everything Toutaku could throw at him, not allowing even a single hit to his person. Not even Ranma could have done so well, but then again he would never have stood still in a fight. Toutaku became more and more incensed and began to use more and more ki in his attacks. Finally he lept back and smashed out with a ki attack that was the size of his own body.

Herb still stood there, and met the attack with his own "Ryu Sei Hisho!" This attack somehow bounced multiple small balls of ki off the ground and into the oncoming attack. This made a huge explosion appear between them and Toutaku began to laugh, thinking he had at last destroyed that irritating face that looked at him with such contempt and scorn.

As the flame explosion dissipated everyone could see that Herb was gone. "Is that all you can do with the soul of a dragon fueling you?"

The voice came from above them, and everyone there craned their necks to look, gasping at what they saw.

Herb was standing in midair, seemingly flying in place. It was a trick only those of the dragon clan could do, using their ki to fly like the phoenix clan. They couldn't keep it up indefinitely, but in this case that wasn't needed.

Below him Toutaku looked up at him with his mouth open in surprise. Inside him, his rage and fury disappeared for the first time in days, gone as if they never were as he felt true terror for the first time since he had been given his family's bead.

Herb looked down on him with the eyes of an executioner, without pity or remorse. After all this was the man who was singlehandedly responsible for the upsurge in violence in the region, for over a dozen rapes and deaths, and now he would pay in like coin. "Here," Herb said in an almost soft tone of voice "let me show you what real ki attacks look like." He concentrated for a moment, concentrating ki into his hands then slashing them forward. "Hito Ryu-Zan Ha!" Two blades of chi sped forward faster than Toutaku could move, impacting his body and going on to slice further into the asphalt behind him.

For a moment Toutaku couldn't feel anything, and began to wonder what the attack was supposed to do. Then he tried to lift an arm, only for the arm to fall to the ground, sliced straight through with an ease as to make the sharpest scalpel seem dull in comparison. He looked up again at Herb and his torso began to slide of his legs. His last thought was that his fate had been different, but the end was still the same.

As Toutaku's body fell to the ground in pieces Herb simply smiled grimly. He landed lightly on the ground, reached down next to the smoking body and pulled off Toutaku's sacred bead. The bead had been chipped and cracked in the

explosion as well, but it was still whole, and he now knew that you had to fight the spirit within and overcome it and had suggestions before it could be destroyed. Still he said to himself, as the others looked at him with more than a little fear. "This was a better outcome than I expected." Indeed, Toutaku hadn't put up nearly as hard a fight as he should have and he wondered why that was.

On the sidelines Ryuubi once again had to fight down an irrational spurt of rage and bloodlust, but with Kan'u and her friends around her she was able to do so. She shook her head, and when she opened her eyes she saw them all looking at her in concern. She smiled slightly, not wanting to worry them. "Just a mild headache. Is it over?"

Kan'u nodded, not taking her eyes of Ryuubi. "Yes, this fight was rather anti-climatic in comparison to the last round."

Ryomou shrugged from where she was directing the referee to help them prepare Ryofu and Chinkyu to be taken to the hospital. "Remember its not over until all the beads are destroyed and the dragon shards vanished. Little slivers like Toutaku's, *And mine*, she thought to herself, can be banished through defeats and death like this one, but the main two remaining anchors will need to be exorcised. Indeed, she had absorbed her own shard during the days after she lost to Kan'u in their sparring match after she joined Seito. It was almost as if the loss, which was the opposite of what her destiny dictated would occur, had weakened its hold on her, allowing her to absorb its power like Chou'un had done with hers months previously.

Kan'u nodded seriously, wondering what would go wrong when they were ready to attempt that final exorcism. She had no idea how bad it would be.

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*On a plane that wasn't, in a place that had no physical representation, the new intelligence aroused wondered why this was happening now, when it had been so close to achieving its resurrection. Another one or two iterations of the so-called destiny that it's pawns were continually enacting would've given it enough power to release itself. The actions of whatever was weakening it had set it back centuries, and if it continued it might well finish the job the humans had done to it a millennia ago. This could not be allowed, it would have its revenge. It began to strengthen its connection and control to the two main anchors it had remaining, and two of the more powerful secondary anchors that were weak willed. It would take some time to turn the two main anchors, they were strong willed and would fight their purpose, but the others could be made stronger, better, more susceptible for now. And if its anchors were completely unsuitable, then it would transfer their power to other pawns. And then it would face this foe with all its power and defeat it, after which it could leash its pawns minds and hearts once again.*

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Later that night, Ryuubi decided to have Ranma and the other injured people moved into their temple home, which was much more easily defended and at the center of their territory rather than near the center of the region like the hospital. In this she imitated Sousou, though he had never actually entered the hospital, being whisked away by his friend Kakoton and Bunken along with the others to a safe house Kyocho, who kidnapped a doctor to come and look after the patients and stay with them for a while. The doctor had been returned yesterday, none the worse for wear for his experience. As soon as the group walked into the temple they were greeted by young high-pitched voice squealing happily. "Ryuubi-sama!"

Ryuubi barely had time to blink before she was hit in the chest by a small light blue haired missile. "Koumei-chan!" she exclaimed "You're back!"

Koumei Shokatsuryo looked up at her adoringly, her aquamarine hair bobbing in tis twin tails "Hai, I came back as soon as I could when I saw the reports about the tournament. Koumei, the strategist of Seito, had been called away from the region by a family emergency. Her parents had been in a car accident and couldn't take care of themselves until their legs healed. Being their only child it had fallen to her to take care of them, a chore that she had despised from day one and was well rid of now. She in fact would have remained with them for at least another week if she hadn't seen the tournament fight on the internet. When she saw that, she knew she had to come back right away and it still took her a few days to figure out some other term of care for parents. "Now, would someone pelase explain to me what the heck as been going on while I've been away?"

It took hours to explain things to her, and when she heard of the curse and the real outcome their following the destiny would allow to occur, she immediately removed her magatama from her ear and placed it on the table in front of her then backed away. She may be sly, cunning, and a damn good strategist, but she was also an individual who valued the freedom of thought, the very idea of being controlled was anathema to her. She decided riht then and there to just go along with things, the better to make certain she wasn't being influenced by the curse or her magatama. She looked on concerned however as Ryuubi tok several pain killers, wondering what was bothering her.

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The first things Ranma saw when he woke up from his comatose state was his mother and Kan'u by his bedside on one side and Ryomou on the other. Ryomou had been looking at him as he weakly opened his eyes (healing the burns he'd sustained had taken way more out of him than healing normal wounds). "He's awake" she whispered, reaching across him to shake Nodoka and Kan'u awake from their vigil. As Kanu straightened up Ranma could see a large bandage on the upper arm furthest away from him, and mentally frowned, wondering what he had missed. He worked his mouth for a moment, trying to get the dead skunk feeling out before he spoke. "H-How long have I been out?"

"You've been out for five days." Kan'u answered then smiled gently as Ranma's eyes slid from her to his mother sitting beside her. "Nodoka-san has been here nearly the entire time." And rather irritated about missing the assassin that first night. She had gone home to grab a change of clothes and missed the action entirely.

Ranma turned his head a little to look at his mother. "Mama, I... sorry, it's j-just with all the crap and the contract and how you reacted when ya f-found out about the curse and Genma and..."

Nodoka smiled sadly. "I think you were completely justified in turning me away Ranma, it was a natural response. But if you think I'm leaving before we reconcile then think again!"

Ranma smirked with a little bit of his usual energy. "Heh, as long as ya don't spout out with that 'manly' stuff again, I think that'd be nice." As Nodoka laughed Kan'u motioned to Ryomou and the two left, leaving mother and son alone to talk.

Ranma and his mother talked for nearly half an hour, and Nodoka left satisfied with the progress the two had made. About five minutes after Nodoka left Kan'u and Ryomou came back in.

Kan'u smiled. "Did you two have a nice talk?" Ranma nodded, and Kan'u nodded back then frowned. "But I am very displeased with you Ranma." Ranma looked at Kan'u quizzically. "I don't like it when you're hurt like this, and after I specifically asked you to be careful. So I decided we're going to torture you a bit."

She grinned at him and he looked at her a little warily, "torture how exactly?"

"Ryomou" Kan'u commanded, as her hands rose to the top of her school uniform, "Strip." Her own for version of The Voice lashed out and Ryomou's submissive side came out, and she hopped to obey. Soon both girls stood there, barely covered in silk chemise rather than their normal fighting attire. Kan'u's was pale white in color, while Ryomou's was black. She also was wearing a garter belt, and a choker, which Ranma hadn't noticed before. Kan'u wasn't wearing anything but the chemise, except for the socks from her school uniform. If it was any other male, they might have died from blood loss at the sight, but not Ranma. He only gaped, blushed and then tried to close his eyes, but something inside of him wouldn't let him.

Seeing this both girls giggled in delight. Kan'u knelt on the bed right next to Ranma's legs on one side and directed Ryomou to do so on the other side. As soon as they were situated she dragged Ryomou into a fierce lip lock. Their breasts pressed together in front of Ranma's astonished eyes. Kan'u broke the kiss, sticking out her tongue and made Ryomou suck on it like it was a certain male body part. This continued for 5 minutes and the two girls made a lot of noise grinding against one another in front of Ranma who was staring, wondering what the torture was he tried to lift a hand and nearly howled in agony when burns on his hand acted up at the movement.

Kan'u broke off from Ryomou's mouth and looked at her boyfriend smirking wickedly. "That's your punishment Ranma. Until you're completely healed you can look all you want but you can't touch and there'll be no relief for you either."

She started nibbling and suckling and Ryomou's neck her hand kneading the other girl's breasts as Ryomou's own hands fondled Kan'u's rear. Kan'u began to play with Ryomou's nipples through her chemise and then decided to move it to the side to play with them without the covering in the way. Ryomou responded by slipping her hands down underneath Kan'u's own chemise, gripping her rear with both hands. They began to kiss again, deeply, tongues out and twirling around one another. This went on for several minutes, with both girls enjoying themselves so much they forgot to look over at Ranma and make certain he was still watching.

Unfortunately for part of Kanu's purpose in doing this (the other part was she just really wanted to make out with Ryomou of course) Ranma had simply closed his eyes and began to meditate. Kan'u twitched her eyes over to her boyfriend and frowned as she noticed this. *I should have known Ranma would have more willpower than that, of course he would simply not look. Still, it's not like I haven't other ways to torture him.* She reluctantly disengaged from Ryomou who panted for a moment, arousal evident in every inch of her body, but she obeyed Kan'u's wordless order. They stood up and began to get dressed, with Kan'u smirking once more. "By the way Ranma, you missed the last

round of the tournament."

Ranma's eyes shot open, and he didn't even notice his girlfriends' state of undress this time. "Wh-what, no way!"

"Kan'u smiled. "Oh yes, in fact Herb took your place for the battle and fought Toutaku Toutaku."

Ranma reflected that Herb was a good choice to replace him. While Kan'u had gotten a lot better, and she had the ki and ki control to fight almost as well as he could she still didn't quite have the endurance or the speed, but Herb did. Herb in fact could match him in speed, judging from the one spar they had before the girls came over that first night. More, he had an even larger ki reserve than any one of the Dragon shards, not by much, but he did have slightly more. He was in fact probably one of only two or three people on Earth who could out endurance one of the Dragon shard. It wouldn't be a pleasant experience, but he could do it. But... but.... "But I wanted to fight that fucktard Toutaku," Ranma whined. *I've been looking forward to breaking that asshole's face in for weeks!*

Kan'u giggled. "Yep, and the fight was rather anticlimactic the former emperor was no match for the dragon prince. And I fought Ryofu myself."

Ranma whimpered. "Ryofu too?" Damn it, what good fighters did that leave, well that he wanted to fight anyway?

"Should I give you a play by play?" Ranma shook his head quickly, he really didn't want to hear how good the fights were, that was just wrong. "I think you do" Kan'u said wickedly. Ranma tried to turn to somehow cover his ears but couldn't move enough to do so. "First went Ryomou and Chinkyu, that fight began with..." Ranma groaned aloud in agony. Some things were far worse than mere physical torture. Ryomou looked up from pulling on her shoes and smirked wryly. She had certainly fallen in love with a very odd young man, being more bothered about missing a fight and being teased about it than their sexual teasing from earlier. Still he wouldn't be Ranma if he was any other way.

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The next morning, Ranma came out of his room under his own power despite Kan'u and the others protesting. His hands were still not usable, the burns healing slowly far more slowly than any of his other injuries, but his feet at least were usable, and despite the pain the burns on his feet caused he was adamant about not using a wheelchair. He sat down at the table for breakfast looking across at the small newcomer quizzically. "Who's the anime fan?" he said. Kanu looked at him quizzically and he replied "What, isn't she dressed like Sasmi from that Tenchi Muyo show?" Koumei glared and was about to blow up at him when the doorbell rang.

Kanu went to answer the door and found an old man, tall, rail thin and with a handlebar mustache standing there. Before she could ask him what his business was there he said. "I understand that a Ranma Saotome is staying here? He sent me a letter a few days ago that I think we need to talk about. I'm Dr. Oden."

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Chapter end

As usual review and tell me what you think. The next update for this story will be on Thursday next week.

## **\*Chapter 11\*: Chapter 11**

I don't own Ranma or Ikki tousen.

It's technically Thursday right?

Ok, now we are getting closer and closer to the end game, and the third harem girl is revealed! If anyone even guessed ad who she is I'll be really surprised, because I have never seen anything like this attempted before. Oh and depending on how you look at it the chapter will end with a bit of a cliffhanger or a natural break point. Sorry guys, I hate them just as much as all of you, but it just happened that way.

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### **Chapter 11 When you look into the beyond, it's not supposed to say hi**

Hakufu fell to her knees, gasping for breath. The training her mother (who had followed her into the woods behind their house to drag her back) had been forcing her to do was hard, but she could feel it doing her skills a world of good. Already she was faster than she had been and maybe even a little stronger. When next she fought Ranma the outcome would be different. Ranma was too good for her to really think she had a chance just yet, but she could get there in time. She was certain of it!

It was the thought of Ranma that triggered it, a wave of anger, rage and bloodlust that she had never felt before, not even when Ryomou had tried to wake her inner dragon had she felt something like this. Her eyes went red her hands, clenched into claws and she stumbled to her knees, trying desperately to fight the feeling back but she was swiftly overwhelmed. The image of Ranma seared through her brain as a target, a target that must be killed, killed, killed, killed, ki...

"Hakufu," said a voice behind her, "it's nearly dinner time, Aunt Goei says that you need to wash up before coming to the table."

It was as if a switch had been thrown, the anger suddenly evaporated as if it had never been, and she nearly fell down from the shock of it. She turned to look over her shoulder and saw her cousin standing there looking bewildered and worried. "Are you all right Hakufu?"

Hakufu, get to her feet though she may have been was in that ditz. "Er I-I think so." She said shakily. For some reason she didn't want to talk about what that might have been, and tried to deflect Kokin's interest. "I'm just a little tired, I just think I need to get away for a few days or something." She didn't say that she needed to get away from her mother, that was a given.

"Maybe you should cut back on the training", Kokin said slowly. For a moment there he could've sworn she had fallen into her berserker dragon shard. Now it looked as if that was just his imagination.

Hakufu stretched explosively, not incidentally causing her cousin to get a nosebleed from the way it threw her breasts out. They jiggled nicely as she stamped her feet "well whatever, you said dinner was ready right. Let's go!" she shouted happily, seemingly back to her normal ditz self, grabbing his hand and pulling along. The incident was thus forgotten, but it was a sign of things to come.

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Dr. Oden had once been one of Dr. Tofu's teachers, though he hadn't kept in contact with him for long. An irascible old gentleman he was tall, thin, almost emaciated in appearance, with a pure white handlebar mustache he kept pristine with two neat twirls at the end and intelligent gray eyes set in a weathered face. He never left his little town in the Kitami range of Hokkaido, where he lived with his daughter and son-in-law and had a small practice that served the town and the surrounding area. Still, if there was one thing that could drag him out of his shell, it was medical curiosities, and boy had Ranma found a medical curiosity. Well that and the sheer amount of money the government had paid him and the luxury of the trip and his accommodations for this job.

Still for now he put aside his curiosity to look over his patient/student/source of amusement. When he spoke his voice was a surprisingly strong tenor for one so physically frail. "Hmm, I didn't teach you to control how you heal yourself via your ki just so you could go around and find even tougher fights." He waved a hand that glowed light green for a moment over Ranma where he sat at the kitchen table, and his front grew. "Whatever did you do to your hands? Though I see why you haven't rooted your ki to them, those ribs and that lung was more of a concern of course."

Ranma shrugged uncomfortably as the foreign ki of the doctor tickled him a little. "Yeah, well if ya want ta party ya got to pay the price y'know."

"An answer from a young man with a young body," the doctor responded drolly. "Is there anyone else here who wants a medical opinion before we get to the reason I am here?"

Kan'u looked at him quizzically. "You can't speed up Ranma's healing somehow?"

"Of course I could, but I won't. I don't heal people just to let them go out and injure themselves again. Let Ranma heal himself as fast as he can under his own power. He should only be bedridden three more days at this point anyway."

Ranma scowled and Koumei smirked, liking the old man already. "Alright, what exactly are you here for then doc? 'cause if it's just ta poke fun at me, gotta tell ya, there's who can do that."

"You sent me the description of a rather interesting puzzle. The aura you saw of this Ryofu? That is why I am here; to see if your description was accurate or you have become incompetent in readings auras since I last saw you."

"Oh well, thanks fer the vote of confidence doc." Ranma looked around at the others who were giggling at the way Dr. Oden was twitting him. "Yeah yeah, Kan-chan you said you had taken her to the hospital right, is she still there?"

Kan'u shook her head. "We moved her in hear when we moved you. We didn't want her to be left alone, she was after all a escape risk. Chinkyu has been staying with her, but she hasn't woken up since fainting in our match." Kan'u was more than a little irritated about that frankly. Chinkyu had told her, rather smugly actually, that Ryofu had a debilitating illness of some kind that had been steadily sapping her strength for months now. Which meant Kan'u hadn't really beaten her during their match, that struck her warriors pride rather severely.

Dr. Oden nodded. "Well could I see her?" Kan'u nodded and led the way down the hall, with Ranma following them grimacing as his still burned feet took his weight. Ryofu and Chinkyu had been placed in one of the two guest rooms in the temple, while Ranma joined Kan'u in her room along with Ryomou, who also shared her bed. The fact that the two of them had been having fun with this was a given.

Dr. Oden walked into the room, and didn't even bother introducing himself to the young girl sitting by the bed, moving over and immediately beginning his diagnosis. Chinkyu made to stop the rude old man as his hands began to glow green, but Ranma quickly told her who he was and what he had been doing.

Dr. Oden closed his eyes in an effort to concentrate on what he was feeling, and after a moment shook his head bemusedly. "I've read about this of course, but I've only ever heard of one other case like this, and certainly never when it involved a single body and some kind of possession. "What we have here is a disease based in her aura that has begun to infect her body." He opened his eyes, and continued to analyze his new patient. "Ranma, do you remember telling me about how that erstwhile student of mine acted around, Kasumi, I believe you said her name was?"

From where he was sitting in a chair by the door Ranma nodded. "I remember Doc you said it was some kind of aura incompatibility right, like being around something you're allergic to or something."

"Exactly," the doctor replied not bothering to look away from where he was now studying Ryofu's head through his ki sight. She had some brain damage there, much like someone who had received a concussion, he was quite familiar with it (even before he met Ranma, which allowed him to perfect his technique)and so it was easy to heal. "What we have here is the end result of a lifelong affliction of complete ki incompatibility. I believe what we are seeing is the energy of this one," he indicated Ryofu's body, "is rejecting the energy of the soul in that, that I understand is supposed to merge with her or something," he nodded toward the magatama that Chinkyu was holding. He made no move to send a ki pulse into it, if the soul inside was at all aggressive he was not exactly suited to combat. "Every time she calls on her ki it affects her more."

"So is it killing her on purpose or what?" Chinkyu asked, looking anxious, nervously pawing at her own bead.

"That Ranma will have to be the one to figure out. I'm not about to delve into any of these magatama. What you are doing Ranma when you destroy these beads is actually fighting the spirit behind them. Other than that she does have a genetic malady, but that is easily treated, no it was the energy allergy that was slowly killing her."

"So how do we care for her" Chinkyu asked hopelessly. She had known her friend was sick but dying? Ryofu was always so strong and now she looked so frail lying there it was almost enough to make her cry.

"Well, you'd have to remove the ancient spirit," Dr. Oden mood mused, "either destroy it or remove its influence."

"I hate to say this" said Ryuubi contemplatively "but we may want to think about trying somehow to control it. Thanks to our contacts with the government and with Herb and the Chinese embassy, I've been looking at the histories of the fight, and this is the first time a descendent of Ryofu was this week. They were never loyal," she said, ignoring the way Chinkyu was glaring at her, "but they were always excellent fighters. In fact, the descendents of Lu Bu are among the few fighters that can take on a Ruler," and she glanced at where Herb and Ranma stood and sat respectively, "which is something we might need even with your help."

Frankly, the idea of the dragon spirit in her waking up again frightened the hell out of her. It had only woken up once and even then only for a few minutes and it had been enough to nearly kill Kan'u. Regardless of whether or not that was because of the surprise of the attack, that feeling of no longer being in control of her own body scared Ryuubi a lot. Anything they could do to even the odds and get yet another strong fighter on their side was something they had to look into. After all there were still powerful fighters around despite the fact that Toutaku and Sousou weren't part of the fight anymore. The assassins sent after Ranma two nights ago was proof of that.

Ranma shook his head. "No, if she needs help then I'm honor bound to give it to her. From what I understand Ryofu may be really violent, but she was never sadistic or evil. Hell even Sousou didn't strike me as that bad, a lot arrogant and a little violent, but not that bad. The beads ain't supposed ta harm their wearer, though what they do varies from magatama to magatama." Kan'u's hadn't influenced her that much at all, but the beads of the crazy bastard from Nanyo and the other B-Ranked beads he had investigated had given them a lot of their skills. What they did with that skill was still up to them, though the most of the magatama did seem to go to people who were cut from the same cloth as their ancestor. That and the fact none of them really questioned what they were doing was a big reason why the 'destiny' had continued to exist for so long. Ryofu sighed but nodded, inwardly glad she had been overturned. Koumei scowled a little, but went on with it for now. She still hadn't come to terms with the nature of the cruse really, and had consciously taken a step back from her former position as strategist.

Kan'u nodded, though she was more than a little worried about how this would affect Ryofu's crush on **her** boyfriend. "Ranma's right, if we can help her we need to do it, though not," she glared at him a little, "until you are 100% percent. If you really do need to fight the spirit every time you analyze a magatama you'll need your ki back up to its normal level." Ranma nodded reluctant agreement, and with that the meeting broke up. Dr Oden left and the others all went to their own rooms to prepare for bed.

Chinkyu was left alone with her friend. After the sound of footsteps receded, she leaned over and chastely pressed her lips against her friend's cheek. "We'll get through this Ryofu-sama, I promise. Just don't leave me please I couldn't go on if you left me." She shook for a little as she tried to hold back her tears then leaned back sighing before standing up to get ready to head to bed.

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The next morning Koumei still hadn't forgiven Ranma for his anime fan remark, and spent half the meal glaring across the table at him. Ranma of course took this in stride in his own fashion, asking her where Ryo-ohki was, and if he could have a ride on the spaceship when it came to get her, or why wasn't she the one doing the cooking. With every comment Koumei's normal cool façade cracked further until she was ready to reach across the table and stab him with a chopstick.

In fact, she would have done so had Kan'u not taken the time to remove all the utensils from around her after she started shaking in her seat. "Ranma" she said slowly, is there a reason that you're bothering my young friend here?"

Ranma shrugged. "She's an easy target, besides it she's the one that called me an uncouth barbarian when I came out of the bathroom this morning."

"Take it as a compliment then," Kan'u said simply. "All societies need barbarians at the gates. They help protect the society from the barbarians outside said gates."

Ranma grinned at her and she chuckled. "I take it you're not going to try to go to school today?"

"Nah, I still can't walk too well, though my feet are better than they were last night. I think most of my injuries are done healing except for the burns, they take a lto of time and energy to heal. The doc was right, I should be back to normal in three days or so."

Kan'u nodded, then gave him a deep kiss (causing Koumei to pretend to puke behind her, she **really** didn't like Ranma) before leaving to get her things for school.

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Before leaving for school Chou'un decided to bit the bullet and went to talk to Ranma. She knocked on his door and when he said to come in, she walked in and took a seat by the bed, where Ranma was once again laying down, rather unhappy at how little energy he had. "Ranma," she said slowly. "I'd like to talk to you about, about our relationship."

Ranma looked at her for a second then smirked. "I've kind of seen the this coming Chou'un" he said "though, I think you could find someone better than Herb, I gotta admit he's a good guy, well if you take away his anger issues." Ranma knew he of all people couldn't call anyone else out about their ego, so he left that part of Herb's personality alone.

Chou'un breathed out with relief, happy knowing that he wasn't going to be taking their breaking up hard. She hadn't thought he would, not with Kan'u there and Ryomou in the wings, but still. "So you're okay with us breaking up?" she asked.

Ranma shrugged, looking a little uncomfortable. "I gotta say I," he then paused for a second, "I don't know if I'd ever really gave you as much of a chance as I did Kan'u. It just seemed ta me as if there was, you know as if there was this wall between us. I mean one second we'd be having a serious conversation, and then the next we'd be making out. I just sort of seemed as if, you know, you wanted me for my body."

Chou'un giggled at that. "That's a common complaint among women you know," she said archly. "But you're right, there was a bit of that in our relationship, though I don't open up emotionally as quickly as you in time you. You wear your emotions on your sleeves Ranma and that's fine for you but that's not how I was raised or trained. And did you have any objection t using you for your body?" she said, smirking wickedly.

Ranma blushed a little. "Well, I wouldn't have gone nearly as fast as we did I think, anyway, but other than that no. You are gorgeous Chou'un, and any guy in his right mind who was with you for any reason should thank his lucky stars. And maybe make try an' make a few more." He looked at her seriously for a moment. "You do know that if Herb hurts you in any way I'm going to hurt him right?"

Chou'un shrugged. "He and I aren't even really together just yet, oh the interest is there, and I'll be seeing what I can do to foster it, but we'll be taking things much slower than you and I took things. As you said part of why I was pushing the physical aspect was that it was basically all I was interested in with you, sorry but that's just the way it is. You're a great listener too, but we really don't have much in common other than martial arts." Ranma shrugged again having guessed that much, as she smirked. "Of course that might make it difficult for me in some ways, but a bit of five finger action always helps." She watched as the joke went straight over Ranma's head and sighed, getting up. "Anyway that's all I wanted to say to you."

Ranma nodded "How goes the search for that strategist that pulled out of Wei, Shibai right? The one you said might continue to cause trouble? What about the search for that fucktard Saji?"

"Not well. Chou'un replied sadly. "Even with the police helping, we've only been able to round up about ten more fighters or so in the past day. That leaves roughly a quarter of the fighters from Wei and about half the numbers for Rakuyo still unaccounted for, plus Shibai, Saji and Hakufu. Hakufu at least is still around, her mother and cousin seemed to know where she is, so that's good. We didn't actually talk to her about getting her help in finishing the curse, but Ryomou says she'll probably go along with it. Ukitzu has been a great help, though I've heard a rumor that says she has a new boyfriend that looks like you." Ranma twitched at that, wondering if it was copycat Ken or Ryu Kumon. Ryu looked a little like him, though only superficially, but he was a good enough fighter to interest someone as skilled as Ukitzu was supposed to be, though he hadn't met her yet. Copycat Ken could impersonate him pretty well, but he doubted that he could fool a Fighter of B-Rank or above. "She knew where a lot of the hideouts were, and we'll be raiding them in the next few days, but you won't be able to take part." She smirked at his crestfallen expression. Of all the men she had known only Ranma would look so irritated about being waited on hand and foot by his girlfriend(s) when he could be fighting. Realizing the time, she stood up. "I have to get to school, I'll see you later." She said and left.

Not an hour after Chou'un left Herb made an appearance in Ranma's room. Not even deigning to knock you simply strode in and stood by the bed. "So," he said "three or four more days until you're up and about?"

Ranma looked up from where he had been making origami out of his homework sheet, and nodded smirking a little. "That's what the doc says, and I'm not about to argue with him. He says I'll be able to at least start destroying low rank beads as soon as tomorrow though." Ranma had in fact spent an hour that morning badgering Dr. Oden via phone about that, and the old man had finally given in. "But that's not really what you're in here to say are you. If It's about Chou'un, she was already in here and we officially broke up so you're clear to go in that area." Ranma's eyes hardened noticeably. "But if you hurt her I'm going to make me a new dragon-skin belt wakarimas?"

Herb nearly rose to the challenge but decided to respond verbally instead. "Would that be for your girl form or for your male form? Because if it's for your girl form shouldn't it be a bra rather than a belt?"

Ranma laughed "Heh, good one."

Herb went on seriously, "there is nothing really between Chou'un and I just yet, but it is good to know that there is nothing impeding the creation of such. I have two other reasons I wanted to talk to you. First, I'm going to go over to the seal master tomorrow, do you have any questions, you want to ask him?"

Ranma thought for a moment then shook his head. "Don't think so, I might want him on hand for when I start destroying magatama, I want to see what his spiritual sense can tell him rather than our ki sense, but other than that nothing."

Herb nodded. "The other part is to pass on a message from China's government. They have told me to tell you that they are formally barring you from reentering the country. They want to keep that low key, but they have declared you persona-non grata, they don't want any more of their mountains destroyed. The video of your fight with Sousou was enough to make them realize the stories of your fight with Saffron were true. I understand a few other countries are considering following the same policy."

Ranma looked at him suspiciously. "Was that a joke or are you actually serious, 'cause you know, it wasn't all me, either in the video or with the mountain thing. And if we're talkin' about mountains you had a hand in destroyin' one too k'know."

"Ah, but I wasn't so foolish as to be seen doing it, there were no witnesses to our fight."

Ranma looked a little nonplussed and Herb smirked at him then turned away. "Hey, come back here, were ya serious or not? Herb, come on man. Herb?"

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For the sixth day in a row Sousou woke up and was able to think clearly beyond the immediate needs of his position, something he yet again rejoiced in. No more did he have feelings of anger inside of him feelings of desire to possess or control other people. No longer did he feel as if he wanted to sleep all the time, nor did he have any desire to rule or lead. For him the decision to no longer follow the curse (he had been informed of the curse when he contacted Ryuubi after waking up) of the bead was a simple one, as without the power of the dragon shard and his magatama now physically removed from his presence, it's hold on him was almost completely gone. He no longer knew precisely what he wanted to do going forward, but he also knew he had time to decide. His friends too, were dealing with having their eyes open to the future and its possibilities for the first time.

The so-called three Pillared Gods were all right about it, their defeat at the hands of Seito, including those that historically speaking they should have won against, helped them fight off the curses influence. All three of them had also lost their beads in the fight, without them and without his own inner dragon shard around to boost the power of the cruse they were having a much easier time of thinking beyond their set destinies. Indeed,, both of the men decided if they got out of this whole destiny/curse thing to actually enter become Buddhist monks, Rather than simply where the clothes of them.

Bunken wasn't nearly so certain what she wanted to do, though she did know that being a nun or something similar was not in the cards. Perhaps she could be a policewoman, she remembered wanting to be one when she was younger, before her family had passed on her magatama to her and suddenly everything became so clear and focused.

Kakoton had the easiest time of it of them all. He had always been able to think beyond their so called destiny, and had long ago decided he wanted to be an architect. It was why he was known to fix up places after fights he was involved in. Indeed, he had hardly been convalescing for more than a day before he went out to help repair the area damaged in their fight against Seito.

Banchou wasn't having so easy a time of it, and Sousou looked over at her as she bustled around the room. While he had woken up before Ranma, he was actually far more battered than the other fighter, and had none of his healing ability, so he was still bedridden. It would be at least a month before he was fit to move around again, mostly due to his internal injuries and a cracked femur. Banchou however had been happy to take him and the others in when Kakoton and Shugai had appeared at her door.

Banchou was a friend of his, and had been one nearly as long as Kakoton. They had shared a lot over the years, but for some reason he had never really looked at her as a... well a girl really. That was almost to contemplate now, as

she was bent over picking up the tray of food by Komei's bed, her pert rear sticking out towards where Sousou lay. Sousou almost blushed at the view, which was something he would never have found himself doing as little as a week ago. He had never thought of Banchou as female, because he hadn't had to secure her loyalty by thinking about her in terms like that, she was already loyal to him. She still was, but it turned out that her loyalty was a personal one to him as a friend rather than the Ruler of Wei, her magatama had only given her some of her skills, and her loyalty to him came totally from her.

Myosai was another one whose loyalty was to Sousou rather than given to him as the descendent of Cao-Cao. While she may be the descendant of Xiahou Yuan it was because Sousou had saved her life that she was loyal not because of the destiny. Her bead had never influenced her much, save possibly in some of her skills. She was having a harder time of it now, wanting to strike back against Shubai for using her and betraying Sousou, but he had told her to stay put for now. He had also noticed the looks she was giving him, and wondered how he could have missed her infatuation with him before.

Still, now was the time to think and watch, maybe plan a little. With his injuries Sousou knew he was well out of the fight for now. All he could do was make certain those loyal to him were kept out of it as well.

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This was a scene being played out all around the Kanto, as the fighters who hadn't yet been rounded up by the police found themselves in one of two camps. One camp was still fully under the control of the curse of the Dragon, feeling its irrational anger and violent bursts, forcing them to fight on. For others, especially those who had been close to Sousou or the other medium-sized anchors like Toutaku when they went down the fight was much easier, many of them were wondering what the hell they had been doing all this time, and not a few of them were wondering if they had somehow been mind controlled. These few were much closer to the truth than they realized, but would still be astonished when the whole truth came out, which it would soon.

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Shibai looked over angrily at Saji from her makeshift desk in an old abandoned warehouse "Is this all the troops you were able to bring?" She had been hoping for more fighters from what had been the numerically largest faction.

Saji shrugged helplessly. "The police moved in on Rakuyo immediately after the final match of the tournament. I got out the troops that I could, well, those that I could convince to come with me. After all, it wasn't like they didn't know that I was Toutaku's enemy. The others put up a fight when the police came for them, but were pretty well overwhelmed." The police had used standard riot tactics against the Fighters, making liberal use of knockout and tear gas, tazers and four water cannon bearing APCs. They took some casualties, and would probably hear it in the media for police brutality, but the end result was that with this and Toutaku's demise Rakuyo and its subordinate schools were a non-factor going forward.

"I was able to call in a few from Nanyo, as well, but we never had that many fighters to begin with, and over half of the ones I contacted declined to join me. Gakushu is already reaching out to the government apparently." That rankled Saji a lot, as the very thought of seeking outside assistance to the destiny was beyond his understanding, after all if the destiny was forced to end how could anyone win the prize? And before Ranma showed up the idea that the government could respond like this to the Fighters was laughable. Now it seemed they would have to fight the government as well as Seito if they wanted to win.

Shibai rubbed her forehead. At present, they had a little under 100 fighters of C or D rank, four fighters of B rank including Kakuha and Temi, Saji an A-rank fighter and herself. The fact that Myosai hadn't returned had been a major blow, as she would have given them another A-rank fighter. While on paper it was a decent force, against the police, Seito, Gogun and the remnants of Nanyo, she didn't think it was going to be enough. A burst of irrational anger struck her suddenly as she thought about their situation. She shouldn't have to sulk around like this, she had plans! Damn it! She could've ruled the Wei ruling faction from behind the scenes for a long time, if only not for this outsider!

The anger however was so unlike her normal cool analytical mindset that she was easily able to throw it off. She looked over at where Kakuha and his girlfriend Kaku snuggling together, talking quietly. "Well, I see that at least is turning out as well as it could be," she muttered. How Kakuha could still care about Kaku after all she did with Toutaku was beyond her.

Saji grinned impishly at her. "Aw is someone jealous, you know I'm here for you if you're having urges in that direction."

Shibai glared at him. "No it isn't that, and I wouldn't let you touch me with a ten foot pole you man-whore!" she said. "It's just that she doesn't really add anything to our forces, and if Ryofu decides to be neutral in this after her defeat and capture having Kaku among our forces may make her re-evaluate that neutrality."

Saji shrugged. "I don't know, I think that the punishment Ranma gave her more than sufficed." He personally was terrified of not being able to orgasm, after all if you couldn't fully enjoy sex what was the point of anything really? Once Kaku quite angrily confirmed that particular rumor Saji had vowed to never come within twenty yards of Ranma ever again.

"You are not Ryofu Housen," she said tartly. Her voice then took on a sly edge, "By the way whatever happened there, I thought you had some plans to turn her against the Emperor using your charms. How did that turn out?" Just because they were allies against a common foe didn't mean they had to be nice to one another.

Saji scowled. That was a very tough spot for him, not only had he failed to convince Ryofu to attack the Emperor, but she had decided to try for Ranma instead of being with him. She had just summarily dismissed their connection (a rather weak connection admittedly mostly to do with how they had dated once and how he might or might not have raped her, but at the moment he wasn't rational enough to see this) to go for the powerful new fighter on the block. *What is it about that guy that attracts the ladies so much*, he thought half whimsically and half jealously. A flash of anger went through them at the remembrance of Ranma's fight against Sousou, but he quickly tempted down. For some reason he was having difficulty with his emotions lately, far more than usual, but he could still retain some control. He smirked back at Shibai "Oh, noot nearly as well as your plans for your faction did. So how's being the power behind the throne working these days?"

Shibai scowled at him, angry that he had turned the tables on her, but she shook off the anger again. "In any event, do you have anything we can use? If we can get one of the Dragon shards on our side, maybe we can figure out something, without them we're pretty much screwed."

"It just so happens, he said slyly, "that I know where one is. It seems that Hakufu likes to go into the mountains behind her home at times to train."

"And," Shibai said to herself "with what I know of sealing I might be able to pull her dragon out and put it into a more suitable host." Neither she nor Saji questioned where that knowledge had come from, though it had not been her in her head as little as a moment ago.

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Ryuubi sighed leaning back from her desk. Thanks to the near total cessation of hostilities between the factions her position as leader of her faction was pretty much unimportant at this point. This, of course, was the way she liked it, but pretty much wasn't the same thing is totally, and any position of authority had to deal with paperwork.

Because they were operating with the police their fighters were not among those that had been rounded up, nor had Ranma taken the beads of the lower tier fighters. However, ever since the second round of the tournament ended Seito's lower level fighters had been much rowdier than usual. There was much more infighting among him than had previously been seen, and at a much higher level of violence than before.

She had talked it over with Kan'u and Koumei and decided to start rounding up the beads from their fighters, and telling them that the destiny was a lie. That was what she had just been working on, both the order and an explanation written out for every fighter to see that would be posted online and on bulletin boards in the school.

Tomorrow Kan'u and the other higher ranked fighters would start rounding up the beads. Koumei wasn't happy with it, wanting to keep their fighters as a reserve just in case something bad happened down the line or they needed more manpower than they could have otherwise, but Ryuubi for once it overruled her.

Koumei had looked as if she was going to argue, but then thought better of it. She had not stepped foot into the same room as her bead since she had learned of the curse, and had forced herself to think of other things whenever she could, but it was still hard going. Somewhere deep inside her, there was this voice telling her that she should be strategizing, planning ahead and trying to outperform her enemies in a war, rather than simply being a young girl who had ancestral issues. Ranma's teasing of her actually helped matters by giving her something else to concentrate on.

The thought of Ranma gave her pause for a moment, and she blushed, remembering some of the dreams she'd had that first night after meeting him. They had been among the most erotic she had ever had, which had surprised her at the time. She wasn't normally one to just look at the appearances of somebody, well other than you know, actors and other celebrities. But other than his looks nothing about Ranma was her type. Then too she he was already with Kan'u and now Ryomou.

For just a moment as she closed her eyes anger suddenly bloomed inside of her, demanding that she move, that she take, that she control, take Ranma for her own and kill their friends, then take control of everything else. She

shuddered inwardly as she tried to push the thoughts and feelings aside, by it was getting harder and harder. She knew it was her inner dragon shard, what she didn't know was why it was becoming harder and harder to resist, shouldn't it have become easier with the evil soul losing one of its main anchors?

A knock on her door broke her out of her sudden paralysis and she breathed a sigh of relief as the foreign feelings of anger receded, "come in."

Koumei stood in her doorway clad in pajamas, rather cute pajamas with little pandas on them for someone who wanted to be looked on as an adult, though Ranma had flinched when he saw her in them for some reason. "Er, I was wondering, if you would want to have a sleepover or something? I've been gone for so long after all and..." Koumei trailed off, blushing and stammering.

Ryuubi looked at her for a second then smiled widely and waved her inside. What she needed right now was to be surrounded by other people, the better to take her mind off her own inner turmoil. Friends could always be a help against the dangers in the dark, even if both the dark and the danger was inside of you.

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*Somewhere that did not fit that description, some-when that had no way of marking the passage of time, an entity would have smiled if it had any physical form to do it with. Despite being reduced, despite the continual attacks on its minor anchors, it now had a plan in place, and tools that were still following its plan. One main anchor was away from nearly all of its others, and without that support, would be much more open to suggestion, and could thus be used to help face this threat. Once it came closer to one of its medium-size anchors, the ones that it had created over time by happenstance or luck, and then the main anchor could be fully awakened or removed, placed inside a more powerful container. The knowledge it had given a few of its puppets would fool them into thinking it was their work, when in actuality it was its own. The dragon had created its three main anchors out of spite, but it wasn't necessary to keep them in those specific containers. If one container could not or would not serve, than another would. The other main anchor was proving more resilient, but it could be left alone, for now at least. Regardless, this interference with its revenge would soon be put to a halt. No matter who or what this interference was, it would not escape its fate.*

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Over the next three days as Ranma healed Kan'u and Chou'un collected the magatama from every other fighter and brought them to Ranma, who wasn't quite up to dealing with them just yet. Some of the Fighters responded with horror at the news about the curse, while others were disbelieving. Despite this the fights and violence didn't stop, in fact it got worse throughout the region, though no one quite put it together just yet.

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Kan'u stepped out of her history class smiling slightly at the grade she had gotten on her last paper. Not so important in the long or short term, but it still felt nice. Her thoughts were interrupted however by a bellow of anger. Looking up she saw two C-level fighters pounding on one another right in the middle of the hall. Her eyes narrowed and she strode forward. "What is going on here, fights are only allowed to occur on the grounds outside or in the dojo! Take it outside!"

Both fighters turned to her and to Kan'u's surprise, tried to attack her. She grabbed the arms of the first one and swung him toward a window. When the other tried to land a haymaker she dropped to her knees, letting it pass over her head grabbing his outstretched arm and flipping him to slam bodily into the first. "Now boys, when I say take it outside," and before either could untangle themselves she kicked out hard, smashing them into each other again and then into and through the glass which shattered on impact, "I mean take it outside!"

She lowered her feet and looked around her, a small smirk on her face. *I seem to have picked up a few of my Machan's ad habits, that was actually rather fun, including the one liner.* "Does anyone else want to break the rules?" She paused and most of the students laughed nervously, though a few, other Fighters, either muttered worriedly, or glared silently. Her eyes sought these fighters out and she stared at them until they looked away. "Thought not."

She walked off with her head held high, inwardly chuckling at how fun that was. Her humor evaporated later however when she and Koumei interviewed the two fighters to determine the cause of the fight. It turned out neither could remember why it had started, they'd just pumped into one another coming out of a classroom and for some reason began to fight. Kan'u dismissed them making certain they knew the penalty for any more fighting then shared a look with Koumei. "I wonder what that was about?"

It was not the last incident. By the time Ranma was on his feet Seito alone had ten more incidents of random violence and everyone was beginning to get worried. The other schools were having a similar time, though they responded to it differently. Strangely enough the fighters under Shibai and Saji didn't have so much trouble. They all had anger

issues but were able to internalize it for now, the better to use it later.

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Gakushu and Kokin looked at each other over the comatose forms of six of their fellow students as Hakufu brought her foot down hard on the lone Fighter that was still on his feet. This was the fifth and largest internal fight they had to break up, and considering they only had twenty Fighters left in the school that was a bad sign. Gakushu shook his head. "What in the world is going on?"

Kokin shrugged, keeping one eye on his cousin. She had almost flashed into berserk mode at the start of the fight, which was really odd as she hadn't been in any danger at all. "I don't know, but I don't like it."

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Ukitzu laughed madly as she punched out, catching another of her own schools fighters in the temple, rocketing him backward. She stood triumphantly looking around at the rest of the school. "Next!" Thoughts of why her own fighters were so willing to indulge in violence never occurred to her, she just shut them down hard whenever they did.

Nor was she alone in that thought. Down the hallway by the stairs Ryu smirked as his elbow slammed into the forehead of another Fighter, sending him to the ground senseless. "Anyone else have any comment they want to make about me?"

One of the fighters scowled. "It's just not fucking fair, what the hell did you do to get Ukitsu-sama to notice you, all of us have been trying that for nearly a year!"

Ryu's smirk widened. Ukitzu weren't really a couple just yet, the term fuck-buddies suited them far better, which was what both were really looking for right now. "Well for one thing I can fight better than all of you can put together you bunch of pussies."

This seemed to enrage more than a few of his audience, and they all rushed forward together. Ryu chuckled then ran forward to meet them. His style was basically a cross between Ryoga and Ranma. He stayed on the ground like Ryoga but outmaneuvered his enemies Like Ranma, dodging everything they threw at him and returning punishing power blows much like Ryoga's own blows. He was also far more brutal than Ranma was during his time at Nerima. This was evidenced at the grin that blossomed on his face as he smashed one of the fighter so hard his head was imbedded in a door, while he kicked another so hard he bounced over the railing of the stairs.

A minute later both had finished their fights, giving a fourth abject lesson in as many days why violence in the school or against them personally was a mistake. Ryu grinned as he hugged Ukitzu from behind, rubbing salt into the wounds of every fighter there who didn't want Ukitzu to be with him. Ukitzu smirked too, looking over her shoulder at him. "What do you think is causing all this? It can't just be their jealousy over us being together, they'd only be attacking you if that was the case, not each other and anyone else."

Ryu shrugged still smirking. "Ranma, somehow or other it will have to do with Ranma. Trust me, whatever this is he'll be in the middle of it."

Ukitzu nodded her head. "Well then we'll find out soon. According to Ryuubi-chan," Ukitsu wasn't one for honorifics, and handed out the -chan with abandon, "he should be on his feet tomorrow and we'll set up a meeting soon after."

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Ranma was indeed on his feet three days after Dr. Oden made his first visit. His feet were now fully healed, and only his hands weren't completely healed, though they would be after another nights healing. His ki reserve wasn't nearly back to normal, but it was more than enough to start analyzing and destroying the beads again. His decision to first look at Ryofu's bead before looking at the pile of lower tier magatama they had collected sparked a conversation though.

"I think we should destroy the lower ranked beads first," Ryuubi said. "Maybe it will put a stop to some of the fights that have been occurring." The police had even reported that the Fighters they had arrested were rowdy and causing s while in prison, and had to be moved to a separate prison from the regular inmates. Even so they were causing trouble, and the ones that could had been placed in solitary. The problem was, they were running out of solitary confinement cells both in this region and in the surrounding ones. "Besides, her bead is probably going to be one of the more aggressive ones.

Ranma however shook his head regretfully. "Sorry Ryuubi, but if we can help Ryofu, we need to do it as soon as we can."

Dr Oden looked over at them from standing near to Ryofu's bed. "And we need to do it now," he said grimly. "Hosen-san is fading quickly, healing her body is putting a massive strain on her ki reserves, and that is activating the ki allergy, which further drains her life away." The others looked at him with wide eyes then Ranma turned to Kan'u who picked up Ryofu's bead from nest to the bed. Seal master Harumoto leaned forward, eyes wide and glowing slightly white to see what he could see when Ranma pushed his consciousness into the bead.

"Just be careful Ranma, I have plans for you." She gave him such a little look that despite everything that had occurred between them since they met Ranma blushed to his ear tips. He coughed uncomfortably and made a point of not noticing the giggle and smirks around him as he closed his eyes, concentrating a pushing his ki into the bead in his hand.

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*Ranma found himself not in a gazebo nor even a battlefield or whorehouse, like he had with Ganryu and Bunshu, but in a forest that as far as he could tell was primordial. There were far more noises around, far more birds in the trees and animal sounds in the distance than any forest that had been seen much of humans for any length of time would ever have here. He looked around quizzically for a moment then shrugged. Every bead seemed to be different and this bead was no exception, though it sure as hell wasn't what he had expected from the magatama of someone with Lu Bu's reputation.*

*What was really strange however, was that there was no ancient soul here to greet him. Every other time he entered the sacred bead he was almost always greeted either by imagery for the lower levels or actual people for the upper. Here it just seemed as if it was just endless forest. "Or, he mused, "someone's playing silly buggers, and is hiding some place."*

*Shrugging, he decided to stretch his legs for a bit, after all while this might all be in his mind, he hadn't been out of the house, barely out of bed really for over three days now, and that was way too long for someone like him. He jumped up into a tree and from there began to make his way through the forest.*

*As he did so he began to discern more and more details of his surroundings. The trees were a mixture of bamboo, fir, and maple, much like a forest in Northern China would have. That made sense, he supposed given that this whole thing started in China. The details on the animals he saw were fantastic. There were lots of birds in the air, he startled a falcon out of its nest as he passed by one tree and on the ground he could see tracks for different animals, most prevalent were wolf and wild dog tracks, but there seemed to be at least one larger animal in the area. This was really surprising, as none of the other souls had anything so alive as this. Bunshu's ancestor may have created a brothel, but he was the only one in there, the creation of other people had been far beyond him (thought the creation of liquor had not, a drunk soul was something that Ranma wouldn't forget quickly. When he shattered that bead he sort of felt it was pretty much a mercy killing).*

*Even Kan'u's ancestor had a Japanese-style rock garden, with only a few trees rather than a full garden. What this meant in terms of the soul he was looking for he really didn't know, or have any way of figuring out but it was interesting. Actually Ranma realized he was having fun here, exploring this forest was more his idea of fun than a lot of other things civilized people would consider fun. Grinning he sped up hopping around among the tree canopy and waving at the animals he saw.*

*A few minutes later he paused as suddenly a feeling of being watched came over him. He landed on a large tree limb, and waited there looking around his surroundings trying to find out who was watching him. It took a few minutes but he spotted it, what looked like a wild dog was watching him from the undergrowth a few meters to the right and below him. He noticed it was a chow-chow with a very shaggy coat. Ranma jumped down to the ground, which caused the dog to back away into the undergrowth, but he simply sat there with his palm out, calmly waiting for the dog to either come towards him or run away.*

*The dog after a moment's hesitation came forward to sniff his hand and Ranma scratched it behind the ears. They really do look a bit like lions don't they? I've only ever seen two of these before. "I don't suppose you know where your owner is?" he asked quizzically. As he said this several other dogs came out of the undergrowth and he stayed put, letting them sniff at him for a few minutes.*

*Eventually he got tired of this and decided to continue his search. When he went to stand up however his sleeve was caught by one of the dogs who proceeded to tug on it to the left from the direction he had been going. Shrugging and realizing that he really had no idea where he was going in this strange soul area he let the dog leave him off.*

*About 15 minutes later they came to a clearing in the side of the forest next to a river. The river was flowing down a waterfall, and next to the waterfall was a small, ugly little hut. Though ugly it was sturdy, as whole trees had been uprooted and piled together to create it. A small fire was burning in front of it, and over the fire was cooking several*

fish stuck on sticks.

What drew Ranma's attention was that the person on the other side of the fire next to the house, rather than being an old man, a middle aged soldier or anything like that, was actually a girl. A teenage girl, maybe his age or a year or so younger, though it wasn't just that she was a girl though that was so striking, it was her appearance. Her hair was maroon, cut in a very messy almost chopped off manner down to her neck in the back and long bangs that fell almost into her eyes. She also was slightly tanned, a little less than Kan'u actually and had purple tattoos on her shoulders and on her sides. She wore a tight top of black and white bisected by a gold line right between her breasts, and the white side had what looked like gold links. She had a two part skirt, one part over the other, long and black kept closed by a large purple belt. The under skirt was white and had creases, and was very short, coming down to barely half her thigh. Her eyes too, were maroon, and by her side was a copy of Ryofu's ji, though maybe it should be the other way around, that Ryofu's was merely a copy of the real Houtengenki, as this one appeared older and of better quality.

The girl looked up as he arrived. She kept her eyes on him as he walked forward slowly, making certain to make no threatening moves. As he came up to her she asked "Can I sit down?"

She continued to look at him for a while, then nodded. Ranma sat near her, not near enough to touch but near enough to have a conversation. The dogs that had led him were piled around, and the young girl reached out to pet a few of them.

"Err" he asked "you're name wouldn't be Lu Bu by any chance?"

The girl shook her head though her eyes remained on the dogs that had taken Ranma here rather than on Ranma himself. "Huh, well I don't suppose you'd be willing to tell me your name than?"

The girl was silent as all of the dogs save the dog that he had first spotted padded away. After a moment she said softly, "Ren."

"Your name is Ren?" Ranma asked, making certain he had it right.

The girl nodded and he smiled. "That's a nice name."

The girl turned away but he could tell she had blushed a little. "Name?"

Ranma blinked, then understood, "My name you mean, I'm Ranma." The girl nodded reached forward and took three of the fish off the fire, giving them to the dog who took them one by one over to the other dogs, who all began to eat. "You've trained your dogs pretty darn well."

The girl shook his head. "Friends."

"Not your dogs but your friends?" The girl nodded. "Huh, well I can understand that. I'm a dog person myself too." The girl plucked a fish from the fire and handed it to Ranma. "Hey thanks." She girl smiled a little then took her own and began to eat. Ranma realized that whatever else she was, this young girl was practically starving for human interaction why else would she trust him so quickly? The two fell into a companionable silence as they ate their fish.

When he finished Ranma looked across at Ren with a smile. "I don't suppose you could tell me why history says your name is Lu Bu? And you don't seem like the type to betray anyone, so I'm going to assume that crud was someone else."

The girl looked at him with her head cocked to the side for a moment as if she was trying to think of the answer. When she spoke it was with what Ranma was coming to understand as her normal mono-syllabic tone, but Ranma was able to follow it surprisingly easily. "Followed general who paid for friends, fought good but he lost. Girl."

Ranma translated this. "Okay, so you were a girl, that... All the warriors back then were men weren't they. Kind of a, what's the word... ahh screw it they just didn't like women being tough right?" The girl nodded. "heh, frack-em, their loss, strong girls are great as long as they're strong inside and out, which is definitely what ya are, yer still you after who knows how many decades. The girl blushed and scooted a little closer but Ranma didn't notice as he went on, staring into the fire. "And you worked for a single general, but when one died you would go on to another general, whichever one would pay for food for your friends. Am I right?" He looked up and noticed that Ren had come closer, but he thought nothing of it. "Any idea where they came up with the name they gave ya?"

Ren made an interrogative noise that sounded something like "Hrrm?" that Ranma found almost too cute for words, that he guessed meant no.

"Huh, not important really, though it could be part of the whole curse thing." The two were quiet for a moment as Ranma thought about the strength it must have taken a woman to become a real warrior, let alone a commander back then. Ren split her time between looking at Ranma and out over the river. After a moment Ranma decided to move on to the more serious stuff. "So, have you been able to follow what's been happening outside with yer descendants and all?"

Ren nodded and then looked out toward the east, growling slightly. Ranma looked then remembered that was direction the evil miasma, the real soul of the dragon's curse had been in that direction. He reached over and gripped Ren's shoulder. "Easy Ren-chan, we've been doing all we can to get rid of it. So don't worry about it for now ok?" Ren nodded, leaning her head against his hand on her shoulder, sighing happily. Ranma blushed a little and somewhat reluctantly pulled his hand back. "So can you influence your descendant?"

Ren reached over and picked up her ji. "Houtengenki."

"Just their preference for weapons, huh? And...." He paused wondering how to bring it up. "Um, do you like your current descendant?" Ren shook her head quickly, hair flying from side to side. "Um, can ya tell me why?"

Ren looked away, silent for a moment before she looked back at Ranma. "Not fun. Hate actions. Hate choices. Not alike."

Ranma parsed his way through that. "You don't like her because you're not alike, she has done things you hate, both personal and as your descendant?" He looked at Ren and she cocked her head for a moment then nodded. "Er.. do you know that your ki and her ki interacting is slowly killing her?" Ren's eyes widened and she shook her head wildly. "Huh thought not, ya didn't strike me like the type ta do something like that." He paused for a moment. "Um do ya think you are influenced by the dragon's curse? Um, how close were ya by the way?"

Ren thought for a moment, sitting down right next to him, so that their thighs touched. Ranma blushed at the contact but for some reason didn't pull away. There was something about this girl, something like what he saw in Kan'u, that made him want to stay where he was. "Not close. Far. Had thrown spear, sliced wings, lost it."

Once more Ranma had to translate that. "You weren't there for the final battle but were in the area, and you threw your spear, slicing one of the dragon's wings, and you decided to go and find your spear?" Ren nodded, now leaning towards him. "Well, that answers most of my questions, but still doesn't answer my questions about how to help Ryofu, or you." He grinned at her, staring into her eyes from less than a foot away. "Ya seem more a victim of circumstance than any of the others."

Most of the other beads he had analyzed had been from darker souls, or at least had degenerated into that. Only Guan Yu had not given into it, and even he was tired, looking forward to his final dissolution in a quiet way. Ren in contrast was alive, he couldn't think of her as some ancient soul, she was a complete person, an odd person but still a complete person, and if he could figure out a way to save her he would.

She leaned forward suddenly pressing her forehead against Ranma's. "Mate." She said simply. "My mate."

Ranma blinked. "You mean me? I..." He was interrupted as Ren twisted her head to the side slightly and kissed him. Though surprised, Ranma found himself gently returning the kiss, but refused to deepen it.

When Ren tried, he broke away. He stood up slowly, not wanting to appear as if he was rejecting this lonely girl, but uncertain of what Kan'u would think. "I, um I have to go, we need ta figure out how ta get ya out of here, wherever here is, I promise." Ren nodded, looking a little downcast despite his assurance. "And er, about that mate thing, if we do get ya out ya'll have ta talk ta Kan'u, er the descendent of Guan Yu, she and I are together but we're also with Ryomou, er I think she's the descendent of Lu Meng?"

Ren looked at him, smiling more widely than he had yet seen. "Sharing fine! Back soon?"

Ranma grinned at her, giving her two thumbs up. "You bet Ren-chan, I'll be back as soon as I can." Ren nodded and with a final wave Ranma concentrated and...

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When Ranma returned from his sojourn into the sacred bead, he was greeted by concerned faces all around. He looked at them all, and said "Well, that was an interesting experience, and we've got a little bit of a problem."

After explaining what he had found out, all the girls were looking shocked. They couldn't imagine the amount of skill

and personal strength it would take to have been a warrior back in a time where fighting of any kind was seen as only being for men, and when women were not seen at all outside the house or kitchen. "And you say she is nothing like the legends say Lu Bu is supposed to be?" Ryuubi asked intently.

Ranma shook his head emphatically. "No way, frankly she's a little too... innocent really to betray anyone. I don't think she could even if she wanted to, she could be a savant or something. You know one of those people that are just really, really, really great at one thing, but can't handle much of anything else outside of it?"

Kan'u smiled, "Well, I'm certain that with the proper training she can move on from being a mere fighter to something else. After all, it's worked for you." She didn't mention that most of what he was interested in outside of fighting was travelling and well her and Ryomou, she was the same way after all. "But she is a complete personality, with none of the anger or dissipation that you saw in the others?"

"Yep," Ranma said, "as near as I can figure, I think she died a little ways after the dragon died, so she was still young and powerful, so she could overcome the curses influence. She's not old, she's not evil like that knife freaks, or broken like Bunshu or looking forward to death like Guan Yu was in his quiet way, she's just a girl, a strong fighter, but still a girl trapped in there and really lonely."

Kan'u looked at him with a smirking little and he flushed uncomfortably under his girlfriend's gaze. "And she's interested in you I take it?"

Ranma coughed a little "Uh, well yeah, but you gotta understand I don't know if it's me or if it's the fact that I'm the first person she's seen in decades."

Kan'u smirked and mouthed 'its you' at him while Ryomou nodded.

Dr. Oden interrupted at this point. He had been examining the bead closely as well as Ryofu and was shaking his head. "Regardless, we must figure out some way to exorcise this Ren girl from Ryofu. And I don't know if just destroying the bead will be enough. If that happens it may just force their ki to finish assimilating, and that could kill her instantly. I need to see the effects of destroying a bead on someone firsthand to determine what actually happens to them."

Ranma looked around at the others and Chinkyu immediately came over and handed her bead over. "Anything to help Ryofu-sama" she said.

Ranma nodded at her and once again forced his consciousness into the bead. This time however the images were much more normal, a few scenes of fighting, a few friendships, nothing bad or outright evil like in the first bead he had looked at. There was a sense of resentment and rage, and much like in Bunshu's case, a desire to be let go from whatever was trapping it. Bunshu, drunk as he had been in his inner world, had known that he was trapped in the bead and that he was trapped in a cycle with his descendants carrying out his role in the War of the Three Kingdoms. He had hated it, but he hadn't been able to break the control of the curse. He had simply been tired of it all, after all, he had had a full life and had actually been looking forward to the afterlife. This bead gave much the same feeling off, though the soul wasn't powerful enough to make its own inner world. Ganryo's bead on the other hand hadn't wanted to die and had reveled in the carnage and ongoing bloodshed it was a part of. This told Ranma that how the beads interacted with the curse varied greatly from person to person.

Once he was done analyzing the bead Ranma brought his ki encased fist down on it, shattering. Once again there was the sense of something unseen passing, but that was all.

Dr. Oden and Harumoto watched intently and both nodded in satisfaction. They looked at one another and Oden bowed his head to his nominal elder. "It would appear as if that was simply a case of letting a soul rest in peace, much like an exorcism on a ghost that has been forced to remain behind because of unfinished business rather than exorcising a demon or evil soul."

Dr. Oden took up the discussion then, "and I was right, what little ki was in the magatama has merged with Ms. Chinkyu's own. If it does that with Ryofu, she'll die almost immediately."

Ryomou shook her head. "I'm looking at this and I'm thinking, but I don't see a certain solution that could save both Ryofu and this Ren girl. Though in turns of Ryofu, would distance from the holder as it is destroyed matter at all, so if we wanted to destroy the soul inside would that help Ryofu?"

Ranma growled at the very idea, for some reason he was feeling very protective of Ren. Even if they had only been around each other for a few hours he had felt a connection there, something in her eyes told him that she might've

gone through the same kind of things when she was younger than he did with his father. And he wasn't about to let her die without a fight.

The sealed master shook his head. "In matters pertaining to the spiritual realm, distance matters not at all. If you're connected to something you're connected to it regardless of distance, time or anything else. The moment that magatama is destroyed, the remaining ki of the personality within, which is quite a bit more in the terms of Ryofu's bead than Chinkyu's, will join with the users regardless of how far away the bead is when destroyed."

"So," Herb said slowly "we need to think of some way to extract it. Could we use the same capture extract tags that we used against Sousou and his dragon shard?"

Harumoto shook his head. "That would work certainly, but it would also be a little bit of overkill. Those seals are designed to be used against those of draconic dissent, and this girl, despite her apparent strength according to Ranma and Dr. Oden's ki sight is not a descendent of dragons. We could simply use a simple trap tag to get her out if she wanted to come out. But that wouldn't really solve the issue would it? The stronger the soul, the less effective tags seals are, and even if she isn't a descendent of dragons this Ren person is obviously a strong soul to have remained intact and unsullied by the curse for so long. We would need an entirely new container almost immediately."

Dr. Oden chortled a little. "Sorry, I may be a doctor but I don't keep bodies just lying around without souls in them."

Ranma cocked his head for a second. I had a quick question about ki and souls actually what happens to the ki and souls of those who have been cursed by the accursed Springs? I mean do they remain the same when we change forms or what?"

Harumoto shrugged. "I haven't made a study of them, but I imagine so yes."

Ranma went over to the bedside where a half eaten meal had laying along with a class of water. "Well, Doc, I suggest you start studying."

He poured the wattle water over is head and Harumoto and Dr. Oden both watched intensely. Harumoto gasped a little. "There is actually a moment there where you do not have a soul!"

"Excuse me?" Ranma asked quizzically.

"I imagine it has to do with the amount of pain that changing on the molecular level like that would cause, Dr. Oden said speculatively. He too had seen the same thing. For a moment there, it's almost as if your soul goes away somewhere while you're changing from one form to another, so that you don't actually feel the pain of the molecules changing like that. Then it comes back almost instantaneously. The time is so small I don't think you could even measure it, but it is there.

"Is that we if I'm splashed with both hot and cold water I feel such intense pain but don't when I just change from one from to another, my soul can't go away' so I feel the change?"

Both of the older men shuddered while Kan'u put her hand on Ranma's shoulder comfotingly. "Yes," Oden said after a moment. "Yes that's probably why."

"Well," Ranma said slowly "if the soul goes away the body becomes a blank slate, what if you're able to somehow transfer another soul into that moment while your body is transforming.

Dr. Oden shook his head violently. "It wouldn't work, your souls would fight one another, you are talking about two powerful, complete souls inhabiting one body, even if you could co-exist, there no way your body could sustain you both."

Herb said thoughtfully, "Isn't there a spring of drowned twins?"

Ranma nodded, "yeah, yeah there is, why?"

"Well," Herb said, still thinking it through, "what if you are splashed with spring of drowned twins at the same time as you are being splashed with hot and cold water to trigger your previous change and the change back?"

Harumoto put his head in his hands groaning aloud. "Who the hell knows? We need some expert on the Cursed Springs here, I'm certainly not about to give any advice one way or the other."

Dr. Oden frowned thoughtfully. "If we can time it exactly right, we **could** end up with the soul of the girl inhabiting the

new body that is made by the drowned twins water. I imagine if the drowned twins water follows the same pattern as the water of your curses it doesn't change, so there would be a moment before your soul is multiplied and if it doesn't have any place to go. It won't be multiplied. Therefore, leaving the body the curse creates empty of life, and it will also separate your curse form. Really though this is all so much speculation. If it wasn't a matter of life or death I don't think I would recommend even contemplating it, but it is. And as doctor, I am under oath to do everything I can to preserve life. Even giving my okay to do something like this.

Ranma and Herb looked at one another their faces carefully blank. Kan'u coughed delicately and said, "I believe we need to talk to Ranma and Herb alone for a few minutes gentlemen, ladies, could you excuse us?"

The others all filed out, leaving Chou'un, Ryomou, Kan'u, Herb and Ranma alone. Chou'un looked at Herb for a moment then shrugged. "Your personality and intelligence does not change with her body. Though and I am not particularly interested in the female form I am not repulsed by it. This decision, however ultimately has to be yours, I'm not going to pressure you either way." With that she bowed slightly to him, which he returned, and left the room. Herb looked at the others and decided to remove himself from their conversation for a time moving over into one of the corners.

Ranma looked at his girlfriends. "Do you have any opinions one way or the other?"

Kan'u shrugged uncomfortably. "I don't want to pressure you," she said softly, "but you do know that I am, well bisexual. Ryomou is fantastic and I have come to care for her, but I fell for you Ranma. Yet your girl body was a bonus not the entirety. If you want to go through with this I will support you, if you don't want to go through with this I will also support you. Just be very careful! This is all completely untried and sounds so incredibly out there that it's just..." she paused. "I could barely follow what's was said here in the past few minutes, and it really has thrown my ideas of soul, ki and their connection to the body for a loop. But you're still you. Whatever your shape, I will support you."

Ranma looked over at Ryomou who shrugged and replied. "I can't say I find your female form as enticing as your male form, but that's just because I don't like redheads. I'll say basically the same thing as Kan'u said. I fell for you, not your bodies your female body isn't a bonus to me but it isn't a hindrance either. Whatever your decision I'll back it." Ranma nodded and kissed Kan'u and Ryomou softly on the lips. Then he walked over to Herb.

Herb gazed at him and Ranma shrugged. "Let's face it," he said, "one way or the other whoever doesn't do this is gonna second-guess himself for a long time, but I've had longer to acclimatize to my curse, but it does cause me a hell of a lot of problems." Ranma wasn't certain if he was trying to convince himself to go for it or not, but his thoughts were kind of jumbled.

Herb shrugged uncomfortably. "I haven't become so used to my curse, and well," he shrugged uncomfortably not wanting to pressure Ranma.

"We could leave it up to chance." Ranma tried to grin as he made the joke "want ta play some rock paper scissors?" Herb looked at him askance. "Guess not."

"I want this Ranma. My female form has caused me nothing but grief from day one, and among my people..." He actually shuddered. "It is seen as a major weakness. I had to fight every other member of my family that could be in the running for my father's throne to prove it hadn't weakened me."

Ranma nodded and then stared off into the distance. As little as two months ago, this would be a no brainer to him, any chance to get rid of his curse he would've jumped at. But that was before he had found acceptance of the curse from Kan'u and from the others to a lesser extent. Now, now he realized that this wasn't something he needed. Not any longer, he didn't know if he could picture himself without it any longer. *Maybe it's a sign that I'm growing up*, he thought sardonically. "All right Herb, you take it," he said. "How long will it take you to get some water from the spring of drowned twins to us? Wait, have the springs even gone back to normal?"

Herb shrugged. "I can probably get it to us within a few days or so. My father is rich, and has bought a private plane to take me there and back if need be, and the Chinese government will expedite us through their air space."

"Can a airplane even land in your territory? I wouldn't think there was enough flat ground up there for a runway." Ranma asked quizzically.

"No, but I can fly from the plane down," Herb answered dryly.

Ranma nodded and headed over to call everyone back into the room. "All right, we've decided Herb is going to be the

one to do this. He'll get the water we need to try this and then we'll see if it works. I'm going to tell Ren about this if that's okay?"

Kan'u smirked at him happy that he had decided to keep his female body, even if he wasn't completely comfortable with either the decision or the body in question. It was part of him and part of the allure he had for her. "That's fine, but leave a few hours tonight, I want to talk to you before you go to bed." She leaned forward whispering into Ranma's ear "And no flirting or letting her kiss you until I get to meet her okay?" Ranma blushed but nodded and Kan'u handed Ren's magatama over.

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*Ranma once more found himself in the forest, but this time he knew where he was going. He leaped up into the trees, and then made his way toward the river. Following it he found Ren's home quickly. She was still sitting there, though this time she was playing with a few of her dogs rather than cooking. She looked up, and even though her face wasn't very expressive her eye lit up when she saw her. "Ranma!"*

*"Hey, Ren," He jumped down from his treetop perch to land next to Ren as the dogs ran off, apparently wanting to leave the two humans alone. As they were figments of Ren's imagination or memory, that was pretty impressive. "I got some good news for ya." As he moved to stand next to her she blushed and made to hug him, but Ranma backed up a little. "Uhuh, none of that, ya gotta meet my two girlfriends before we do anything like that."*

*Ren nodded immediately and backed off. "Pack. Beta."*

*Ranma never studied animals that much, so that comment went right over his head. "Well, anyway, I wanted ta tell ya we think we came up with a way ta get ya out of here and give ya a new body. Have you ever heard of Jusenkyou?" Ren looked over into the distance for a moment, then nodded. "Well, ya see we've thought up is..." Ren seemed to listen for a few seconds, but when he started talking about souls it started to go over her head. After a moment Ranma realized this and stopped, shrugging. "It's magic?" Ren nodded her head rapidly and Ranma shrugged. "Well anyway, I was wondering if you wanted to play or something while I'm in here? I'll stop by every day out there for a few hours in here until we get ya out."*

*Ren blushed a little, then nodded. The two played tag through the woods, and then wrestled around with the doggies. Though her face didn't change much, it was obvious Ren enjoyed the fun, and was sad when Ranma had to leave. He promised to come back every day though, which brought a smile to her face.*

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That night Ranma moved back to his apartment, and was surprised by Kan'u deciding to come with him. He was also happy with it but was surprised when Kan'u entered the bedroom that night carrying a glass of water. "Er, what's that for Kan-chan?"

Kan'u smirked, though inside she was a little nervous. "I thought we could, that is, I could help show you that keeping your female body wa a good idea for more than just mooching food."

Ranma gulped, but he realized that Kan-u had been very understanding about his problems with his female form despite wanting to push for more. "Um, I-I guess we can, b-but if I start ta get uncomfortable we'll stop right?"

Kan'u sighed in relief then smiled gently. "Ranma, trust me any girl knows that line, and I won't push you further than you want to go." With that said she poured the cold water over Ranma's head. Ranma shivered from the cold water, then she shivered for an entirely different reason as Kan'u gently ran her hands up the now much shorter and female Ranma's side. Kan'u gently pulled the shorter gril closer, and then kissed her just as gently.

Ranma shivered, her entire body felt more responsive for some reason, even kissing Kan'u was different this time Ranma's lips were softer, and he couldn't quite get as much pressure on Kan'u's lips as he had as a guy. When Kan'u ran her hands down to the redhead's rear, she found that part of her body was **way** more responsive. When Kan'u shifted one hand to her chest Ranma moaned as she fondled her breasts, which not surprisingly were also more sensitive in this form. Ranma followed suit, and soon both girls were moaning and grinding against one another in open mouth kiss, their tongues scraping against each others teeth writhing around one another.

When Kan'u pushed one of her legs between Ranma's though the shock of electricity this caused in Ranma made her pull back. "Wa-wait I'm not ready for that." She gasped out, feeling weak and breathless.

Kan'u stepped back a little nodding and regaining control of herself. She reached down and undid the buttons on her school uniforms top, dropping it to the ground. Her bra soon followed it, as she leaned in to kiss Ranma again, who responded eagerly. As their lips locked Kan'u tugged a little at the shorter girls shirt, who nodded a little into the kiss,

her own hands playing with Kan'u's breasts and nipples, causing them to harden quickly and pulling a low moan from her girlfriend. Kan'u broke off the kiss to pull Ranma's shirt over her head, then dove back in.

A moment later the two were still making out as they fell onto their bed. Kan'u was on top and Ranma mewled as she licked down her body to latch her mouth around one of Ranma's cherry-red nipples. Ranma bucked up off the bed at the sensation, moaning loudly. Kan'u broke off and moved back up her boy/girlfriends body, kissing her softly before moving back. "Is this good for tonight?" Ranma nodded, eyes glazed in pleasure, and Kan'u moved back down the redhead's body. She delved once more into Ranma's chest. Ranma gasped and her head lolled back, as she felt what had been a trickle down below turn into a flood.

Ranma didn't know what she was feeling, never having felt it from this side of the distaff, but Kan'u recognized the signs and clamped down hard on one of Ranma's nipples, sucking and licking at it sending Ranma over the edge for the first time in this form. She held Ranma as the aqua-transsexual bucked up off the bed, wailing and shuddering as she had her first female orgasm. As Ranma came down from her high, Kan'u smirked slightly. "Now, the female body isn't all that bad is it?"

Ranma nodded then her head rose, and her eyes were glittering. With a heave the shorter girl set Kan'u to the side shouting in surprise. Kan'u pushed up her hair back from her eyes only to see Ranma looming over her, a little smirk on her slightly bruised lips, "My turn." Kan'u gasped then gasped again as Ranma latched onto her neck. She put one hand on the back of Ranma's eyes, smiling internally as she felt the feelings build up in her. *This seems to have worked very well indeed! Body shy meets horniness, horniness wins!*

---

Over the next two days Ranma continued to destroy magatama. Almost invariably, the lower-ranked beads had been corrupted, whatever goodness in the original individual completely buried under the evil and bloodlust of the curse.

The higher ranks had many of the same, and Sosou was the worst of all. The soul of Cao-Cao still retained much of its intelligence and honor, but had lost any of its empathy, and its desires had been enlarged dramatically. He tried to convince Ranma to serve him, which obviously did not go over well, and Ranma destroyed the bead with no remorse whatsoever. He was able to destroy nearly every bead they had had, as well as Ryomou and Chou'un's both of whom followed the Guan Yu mode rather than the opposite.

During that time the fighting among the Seito faction died down, as had much of the fighting in the prison cells among the prisoners detained by the police. The lower-ranked fighters had almost to a man got their skills and power from their sacred beads, and without them were just normal hooligans. Some of them appeared quite contrite after their bead were destroyed, breaking out of an almost hypnotic trance, but most of them were simply sad that they had lost their strength and skills. There had been no word from the Fighters that had fled with Shibai from Wei and no sign of Saji or the force he had been able to convince to follow him from Rakuyo and Nanyo, nor would there be for two more days. Ryuubi worked on keeping the communication with the other schools/factions open, but rebuffed Ukitsu's attempts to come and see Ranma, sighting his work on destroying the beads and keeping Ryofu alive, which he was helping with under Dr. Oden's direction by pumping some of his back to normal ki into the comatose Fighter. He also continued to enter the bead to see Ren, who he talked with and played with for at least two hours each day until Herb returned with the water from the spring of drowned twins.

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Ranma, Chou'un and Ryomou had set up a room with two large water guns in the corners and another one against the far wall that was empty at the moment. Ranma sat by one, as he knew the trick to heat his ki. Ryomou stood by the other, as Chou'un came in with the others. Ryofu and her bead was placed on the floor and Herb, not even waiting to get over his jet lag, laid down on his back next to her.

Harumoto had spent a day creating and powering the transfer seals, and he placed one under the bead on the floor and was standing ready with the other when/if the twins body appeared. Dr. Oden stood by on the sidelines, mustache bristling with interest as he watched alongside Chinkyu and the others.

Chou'un, wearing rubber gloves very carefully poured the water Herb had handed her into the water gun, being very careful about not letting any of it touch her skin. As soon as the gun was full she left the room and dumped the container into the trash. She came back and took her position by the gun.

Harumoto looked at her, eyes twinkling mischievously. Be careful where that water splashes girl, I don't think the ladies of the world could handle two of me." Behind him Ranma shuddered, remembering what his reaction had been to the sight of the old seal master. *There's already two of you around old goat, the other's just named Happosai.* Chou'un merely nodded, letting none of her revulsion at the very idea show on her face.

Herb nodded to Ranma and he concentrated, heating the water in his gun. After a moment he saw steam appearing on the inside of the tank and he nodded.

The dragon prince let out a long, slow breath, then nodded. "Begin on three, one, two, three!"

Ranma, Ryomou and Chou'un all opened fire at once, and Herb was splashed with the water from all three guns at the same time.

Herb felt the change begin then stop and he gritted his/her teeth to keep from screaming as his molecules fought one another trying to decide what body he should take. To his side, a body began to appear, though it's gender began to fluctuate, until it settled on female. The instant it had Harumoto slapped the second of his tags onto the bodies scroll. He put a finger on the first tag under the bead and shouted "Exchange!" Everyone there who had a bit of ki sight was able to see the ki signature in the bead disappear, and then reappear in the new body.

Ranma and the others stopped firing, and a now male Herb fell back unconscious. Chou'un and Ranma moved forward to check on him and found his pulse steady, he was just insensible from the pain. Ranma left Chou'un to look after him and moved to look at the female body. Dr. Oden and the others had never looked away, struck dumb by what was happening. Herb's female form was rippling, changing as Ren's soul spread out into it and changing it to match her own body. Soon the white and blue hair changed into maroon and her tattoos appeared, even the skin color and bust size changed. The process took a little under half an hour but by the end of it Ren's body lay there.

It took another ten minutes before she stirred, breathing in slowly. As soon as she did, Ren's eyes opened and she cocked her head. Then she sat up, looking around and down at her own body. "Hmrhm?" She made that cute inquisitive sound again flexing her hands and touching her body wonderingly.

Kan'u smiled walking forward. "You were right Ranma, she is very cute!"

Ren looked up at her as she neared then her eyes slid to Ranma and back again. She cocked her head to one side and looked at Kan'u inquisitively. "Beta?"

Unlike her boyfriend Kan'u understood the reference and smiled. "Yes you could call me that, though we really don't have that kind of hierarchy." She put her arms around the other girl and Ren didn't reply merely humming in pleasure. Ryomou and Ranma came over and joined the hug. "Welcome back to the land of the living sister."

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Kan'u took the rest of the day to get to know her new sister/lover, and Ranma did the same. Ren still wasn't very communicative, but she was fun to be around, and had some of the cutest reactions to things, such as phones (she destroyed one accidentally) and the TV (she simply stared at it wide eyed for a while) and especially eating (even Koumei was taken in by the cuteness of watching Ren eat). That night Ryomou and Ren joined Kan'u and Ranma in his apartment and in his bed. Herb, who had woken up completely male once again, had moved into the temple, bolstering the defense significantly in case someone tried to get to Ryuubi. They were only there a single night however, when they got a call from Gakushu. This call would be a prelude to the endgame and would put an end to the simple time they had been having for the past few days. "Hakufu's gone!" he said over the phone. "She disappeared last night from her bed!" One of the Rulers was missing, and with her one of the main anchors of the curse.

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End chapter.

Bet no one saw that coming, HAH! If you are not familiar with Ren, she is Ryofu Hosen in Koihime Musou, Ren is her real name. An anime that has some amusing lesbian overtones, but is based off an h-game that is actually fun to play even if you remove the h-scenes, a massive rarity among the genre. I just really wanted to have her around to play with, she's a great funny character.

And thus Herb has no more curse, and Ranma and the others have decided to welcome Ren into the group. Sorry but when it came down to it two reviews about Kan'u and Ranma's female form made me unable to choose him to lose his curse. I also stopped referring to female Ranma as Ranma-chan to signify how he was becoming more comfortable with that form, not completely just yet, but he's getting there.

And if the part about the way they saved Ren sounds farfetched, it's supposed to, what we know about how the cursed springs is literally nothing, because its magic. This is magic twisted to their purposes. We also see the buildup continuing. The final battle will be in either the next chapter or the chapter after that. Also if anyone could look back at chapter 7 and look at my definition of the evil dragon soul. If anyone thinks I should add to it or change it I'll do it.

## \*Chapter 12\*: Chapter 12

I don't own Ranma or Ikkitousen.

Sorry for the lateness of this chapter, RL got in the way. I thought about waiting and adding the epilogue to this chapter, but since i had already said it would be out and it was already late i decided to post what i had.

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### Chapter 12 Final confrontations are always so messy

Saji smirked looking down at the unconscious body of the Ruler of the east, the Shao Haou Hakufu. She had been almost ridiculously easy to capture, just a few hours of practicing with her 'in secret' the night before and then offering some of his meal to her, and with that she was out like a light thanks to the knockout pills mixed in with the food. Evidently Gakushu hadn't thought that she would be a target again, or hadn't listened to Ryuubi's concerns about it, as the only person that had been in the area was Kokin, and despite the boy's skill, he was no match for Saji and the group he had stationed nearby.

Now he looked down at her and shook his head. "Seems almost a shame," he said, running his hands none too gently over her chest, trusting the amount of knockout pills she had consumed to keep her out for hours yet.

Shibai glared at him. "Stop that!" she exclaimed sharply. "We can't take a chance on her waking up and trying to run away. We want to control the Dragon Spirit inside of her, not become its target!" That said she turned back to writing diagrams and spells around Hakufu to control the spirit within her with a brush as large as an arrow to allow her to do so without forcing her to kneel on her ruined legs. Once that was done, whoever held the tag in her other hand would be able to control the spirit within the ditzzy girl completely. She frowned suddenly uneasy as she tried to remember where she had found the spell for this, but that unease was swiftly buried under a feeling of avarice as she thought of what they could do with the power of one of the Dragon Rulers under their command.

Saji too was feeling a little uneasy, but he couldn't put a finger on why. All around them their fighters were getting ready to move, except for two were standing over Kokin's comatose form, his face a mass of bruises. He had put up a good fight, but in the end he had fallen to their superior numbers. "Are you sure you know what you're doing?"

Shibai turned from her work to glare up at him, her eyes glowing red a little bit. "Yes you idiot, I do!" she snapped, "now shut up and let me finish." By her side Teni stared fingering her bow and staring hard at Saji. Saji backed off, but stayed close by Hakufu's unconscious body.

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*Somewhere that defied that description, somewhere that did not change to mark the passage of time, the awakened intelligence carefully felt out its remaining tethers. One of its main three was now near to the forces that it still could control, including one of the medium anchors that had been created by chance over the centuries. It felt out the containers combat ability and though it's ability to grow further was great, at this point it did not have the skill to match the medium-sized anchor that was nearby. Feeling their thoughts, which it could not have done earlier until its intelligence had woken up, it could see that this medium anchor was much more suited for its needs in the present crisis. Foolish monkeys, they hadn't even realized the so-called spell was merely its own creation, the soul merely needed the anchors to be near one another, the spell was merely a reason they could comprehend not reality. With an effort of concentration that was incredible to it, it was able to grasp the main anchor and slowly start to transfer power over to the medium-sized anchor. This exchange would take time but it would be able to transfer almost all of its energy to the medium-sized anchor. The other tethers nearby would also serve well, and it began to manipulate them, making them stronger, angrier, more mindless in equal proportion to the energy transferred from the main anchor to the new vessel. Once the transfer was complete it would simply crush the last of their willpower and its peons would go forth to do its bidding.*

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Herb sighed happily as he once more put his shirt on, after all he hadn't wanted to get it wet again. "Fully male," he breathed happily, still getting used to the sensation of cold water that wasn't immediately accompanied by his body changing shape. "How I have missed this."

Dr. Oden snorted at him. "Indeed you're an irritatingly perfect image of health," he said sardonically. "There've been no ill effects to you, nor am I happy to say to Ren, judging from the checkup I gave her yesterday. I must say that makeshift ritual was an interesting experiment to watch. The fact that Ren's soul was able to change your 'twin's' body to match her own image of herself was astonishing."

"Count your blessings Dr.," Herb said dryly, "if she hadn't been able change it I might've been forced to kill her to remove a potential challenger to my place as heir to the throne."

Dr. Oden looked at him askance at that, unable to tell if the Musk prince was joking or not. But their conversation was interrupted by the hotel room's phone ringing. Being closest Chou'un answered it, having come over with Herb to check on the progress being made with a special seals by Harumoto while he got his checkup. Thankfully the gnomish sealmaster had finished the next promised seal tag, but unfortunately it had taken most of his power to create, and he would need months to recover before he could make another. A few seconds after picking up the phone Chou'un frowned, and Herb and the old man could tell that whoever the person on the phone was, what they had said was bad news.

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Days after the operation/experiment/ritual that had saved her life the once mighty Ryofu Hosen was awake yet barely able to lift a spoon to feed herself. That didn't stop her from glaring at Chinkyu, her eye twitching fiercely. "What?"

Chinkyu shrank a little under her glare but replied to the one word question, fingering where her magatama had hung on her right ear for so long. Ranma had destroyed it, Koumeis and Chinkyu's at the same time he had destroyed Chou'un's. "Er, like I said, Ranma sort of somehow sent his mind into your bead and found out that the soul inside wasn't Lu Bu, like we always thought, but a girl named Ren. Then well, they did this wired ritual that removed her soul from the bead, which stopped the ki allergy disease that was slowly killing you, and somehow put it into this new body, I didn't follow what they were saying but it was basically combining three curses to get rid of two or something like that."

"Not that" Ryofu snapped, her voice almost back to normal despite her weakness, "I meant the part about where my ancestor getting with him and Kan'u."

The younger girl shrugged, trying to keep her sudden surge of jealousy off her face and out of her voice. "Well, apparently she, Ren that is, fell for him during their meeting, and Kan'u and Ryomou had no objections so.. yeah she joined them. They're actually cute together."

"Hmmf, when I get better we'll just see about that. No way am I going to lose to my own damn ancestor! Her and the Kan'u bitch, taking advantage of my weakness, I'll show them both!"

Chinkyu stood up abruptly glaring down at her angrily. "So that's it, you'll just go right back to what you were doing before? Not even caring how Ranma and Kan'u helped save your life, not even caring that they love each other, you'll just try to take what you want!? You know who you sound like!?"

Ryofu stared at her in shock, but the words did penetrate and she fell back with a sigh. "You're right Chinkyu, what was I thinking? I don't even know the man that well and I want to kill to possess him, no that, no, that's not something I want. I'm sorry."

Chinkyu sighed and sat back down. "That's alright Ryofu-sama, I'm just glad you snapped out of it."

Ryofu looked at her best friend thoughtfully. *I have been so blind, look at her, that's not a crush driving that devotion, that's real love. And now that I think on it, who has been there for me when I needed a friend, Chinkyu. Who was there to help me move past my rape by Saji, Chinkyu. Who has stood there thick and thin through everything, Chinkyu. And who can I no longer see my life without...Chinkyu. Well at least I have a chance to correct my mistake in not seeing the best thing in my life sooner.* She smiled softly, reaching out a weak hand toward her friend. "You're right Chinkyu, Ranma and the troubles that come with him isn't something I want to put up with, especially," and her smile widened, "since there is someone far closer to me much more deserving of my attention." Chinkyu looked up, eyes filled with sudden hope, and Ryofu nodded. "When I get better, we're going to see about doing something to reward you for your devotion, Chi-chan." Chinkyu looked down with a bright red blush at the desire in her eyes, yet reached forward to take Ryofu's hand in her own.

At that point a knock on the door interrupted them. Chinkyu leaned back and cleared her throat before calling "Come in."

Ryuubi came in followed by Chouhi, who had recovered from the wounds she had taken, and now was ready for more, and Koumei. "We have a problem." Ryuubi said grimly.

Within an hour Ranma, Ryuubi and Ryomou were on their way to their somewhat ally Gogun high school to tell them in person about the curse, answer any questions and warn them about what might be going on, with the ongoing violence. Not that they had any real idea what was going on, only that Saji had wanted to wake up the 'Ruler' within

Hakufu, and might have some way of controlling it. The idea that the dragon's soul had somehow awoken and was working against them hadn't crossed their minds.

Chou'un and Herb set off directly from the hotel Dr. Oden and Harumoto were staying in to meet with Gakushu and to see if they could hunt down where Hakufu went. They were armed with the seal tag Harumoto had finished the night before, though if they ran into an awakened Hakufu they were going to retreat if they could until they could meet up with Ranma. Even Herb didn't want to tangle with an awakened 'Ruler' on his own if he had any choice.

That left Kanu and Ren to patrol Seito's area. Chouhi and Chinkyu would stay in the temple to guard Ryofu, who was in no condition to move around let alone fight, and Koumei who was no good in a direct confrontation.

They all thought they had a idea of what was going on, but they really had no idea.

---

Saji hissed as power and fury suddenly filled him and he tried to beat it down to no avail. He'd felt it coming and simply assumed that the spell was transferring Hakufu's power to him as Shibai had told him it would (she had lied), but what filled him now wasn't just power but rage and hate in such strength it nearly overwhelmed him. The rage rose within him, the anger, the bloodlust, and he tried desperately to regain control of himself, wondering where the hell this is all coming from.

Among the myriad scrawling marks that actually did not do anything save look vaguely mystic Hakufu twitched as the shard of the dragon soul within her began to leave her body, and began to take over Saji's. Shibai gaped in horror from her wheelchair, and then her mind shut down, the dragon simply blasting her mind with so much anger and hate that she could not contain it and her own mind collapsed momentarily under the assault.

Unlike Saji the fighters around them had no chance to fight back, even Kakuha was subsumed swiftly by the curse they had for so long unwillingly and unthinkingly served once it was far enough along in the process of taking Saji over and transferring its power from Hakufu to him. Moments later every fighter, all 100 of them in the abandoned warehouse was under its control. Only Shibai had been able to retain control of her mind, her cold analytical nature so different from the dragon's mindless fury it allowed her to come back from the brink of destruction, but that was all. Her body was no longer her own and she screamed as she watched it move under a will that was not her own. She stood up, the curse made berserker she had become having no need to continue the pretense of her being crippled. She watched in horror as Kakuha, completely under the berserk rage reached out and ripped his pleading lover Kaku apart. The girl had lost her magatama to Ranma weeks ago when he interrupted her plans for Chinkyu, therefore the cursed warriors saw her as an enemy, and slew her mercilessly. Kaku hadn't even tried to run, too shocked by what was going on around her to react in time.

Saji was fighting back as hard as he could, but it was now only Saji fighting, the spirit inside his head, the spirit that had for centuries tried everything it could think of to break free and take control of the destiny for itself had already succumbed to the dragon's fury. Saji however, kept fighting with the foremost thought his mind being that if he could somehow gain control of this he would be able to change his destiny, and take control of the game.

A thought emerged from the rage and fury that had besieged his soul. *Fool*, it said coldly, *see the truth and despair!* Before Saji could even think of a response his mind became inundated with images. Images of the dragon falling to the earth, images of the dragon being slain by his ancestor and the ancestors of all those involved in the destiny, the curse that had been placed on them all, the curses purpose, all the blood all the horror all the fear and terror that the curse created over the centuries, the soul of the dragon growing stronger and stronger with each cycle of the destiny. All for nothing but the continuance of the dragon spirit itself, nothing for the actual pawns involved. Saji stared and somehow knew without knowing how that these images were true, and that everything we had known about the destiny was a lie, there was no big payoff at the end there was no way to achieve his dream. There was nothing but blood and the fury and the curse from a soul so evil it polluted the very earth it strode. With a last desolate wail that no one heard the last bit of the individual known as Saji disappeared forever.

What strode forward afterward was not him, but the dragon's fury made manifest. It wasn't back to its full power as it had hoped to be, nor was it as intelligent or as in control as it would have been if it's soul had been completely repaired, but it would have to be enough for it to deal with the interference to its curse. With its position in its new anchor secured and the Fighters nearby under its thrall, the dragon began to funnel some of its power to the other anchors it still retained, the better to sow chaos and division among its enemies. With a thought, its mindless troops went forward to do its bidding, and the thing that wore Saji's skin walked out to find its last main anchor and add that anchor's power to its own.

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At the edge of Gogun High's territory Ranma and the others with him were met by Ryu Kumon, as Ranma had

supposed and the girl he took to be Ukitsu, a short well built girl with a heavy tan and spiky blue hair going in every direction around her head.

Ukitsu looked between the two men for a moment and then smirked. "See you both side-by-side it's pretty obvious that you're not related, but Jesus at first it was really weird."

The two men shrugged, still staring at one another. Ranma finally said "how are you doing dude, haven't seen you in a while?" While the two of them had gotten off to a very rough start, as long as Ryu stayed away from his mom Ranma didn't have any problem with the other warrior.

Ryu responded roughly "well enough I suppose. I heard what you did to your father in Nerima by the way, let me just say that was excellent. I wish I could've seen his face when he realized he was going to be weak for the rest of his life, but I was in Hokkaido at the time."

Ranma nodded. "We must have just missed each other then, I went up to Hokkaido after clearing up in Nerima."

Ryu shrugged, "Whatever."

"So what are ya doing in this area?"

Ryu now smirked at him. "You don't think that little video of you and that Sousou character only got show in this area did you? I saw it and I thought to myself, 'heh, I should probably go and see if I can get into this.' You can't just hog all the fun fights for yourself you know."

Ranma grinned at him and Ryuubi rolled her eyes. *Great, just what we needed another combat junkie... On second thought maybe that is precisely what we need right now.* "Is that the reason that you decided to ally yourself with us?" She asked Ukitsu.

"Pretty much," the other girl replied. Then she tossed her magatama to Ranma who caught it reflexively. "That thing has never really influenced me specifically one way or the other, though it gave me my mission of going after and killing Hakufu. Still, was at least unable to think for myself. After Ryuubi tried to tell us about the curse I was a little skeptical but after I saw that thing come out of Sousou in that video I was sold."

Ryuubi nodded and took over the conversation, discussing a schedule to bring along the magatama of Gogun High's fighters. There were going to be a few issues as some of them weren't going to be willing to hand them over, but for the most part, this would leave Saji and Shumei standing alone.

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Ren and Kan'u were walking around the town making certain that none of their fighters or Reny of the fighters of the other schools were making trouble, but this was much easier to say than it actually was when Ren was involved. While she wasn't very interested in the town itself, she did tend to stop whenever she saw a TV and stare at it for a few minutes before moving back on. This was nothing however to the time she spent staring at any dog that came by. Indeed there were far more dogs coming out to greet her than Kan'u had ever thought the area contained. One dog came out of a one alleyway and three out of another within the first ten minutes of their patrol. All of them appeared to be wild dogs, shaggy and cagey looking, but Ren greeted them all like old friends, kneeling down and patting them on the heads and scratching them behind their ears. Even the most dangerous looking was swiftly putty in her hands.

Every time she would look up at Kan'u with a question in those expressive eyes and Kan'u would be forced to reply, "No Ren I'm sorry, you can't keep your friends in Renma's apartment. There just isn't enough room for them. Maybe after this is all over, we can get you some pets then okay?"

This was repeated at practically every alley they passed. Kan'u sighed heavily as a dog dragged its owner down the street towards Ren who had already kneels down to welcome. The girl had truly an uncanny way with animals. It wasn't just dogs, when they passed a pet store all of the animals inside had turned to look at them. Kan'u would've found it very irritating, if Ren wasn't so darn cute! She wasn't very talkative, in fact, she was the exact opposite, she was almost completely silent, but she was very expressive with the noises she made, that little pleading noise she made and the soulful eyes staring at her had practically broken Kan'u. *One more time she thought, I can probably stop myself from saying yes one more time, but after that she'll have me wrapped around her little finger.*

Despite the animal/pet/friend issue she was well pleased with the newest addition to their small family, Ren was fun, cute as all get out, very responsive to the few times they had exchanged kisses, and even more responsive when Renma had kissed her. She was gentle, friendly and insanely strong and, despite her ignorance of the modern world, intelligent. While they haven't had time to spar just yet Kan'u's ki sense could tell her that Ren was nearly as strong as

an awakened dragon. *No wonder the curse had gone out of its way to make her act out the part of the bad guy.* Once again Kan'u wondered though where all the history about Lu Bu had come from. *Surely it could not have all come from the curse?*

Her thoughts were interrupted were interrupted as in front of her Ren suddenly stiffened, swiftly crouching down into a fighting position and bringing out her Houtengenki from weapon's space, which she had picked up incredibly quickly once her ki had built up to its normal level. Kan'u looked around wondering what had startled the other girl, knowing she had better senses than Kan'u's own. "Ren" she said slowly, "What's wrong?"

"Enemy," Ren replied, staring down the street.

Kan'u looked where she was staring, but couldn't see anything for a few minutes, and she was about to say so then paused as six fighters dropped down from a building at the end of the street right into a group of civilians and began to literally rip them apart with her hands. The screams and cries of the wounded and swiftly dying reached her where she was standing and she gasped in horror.

Ren however didn't bother to gap and simply shot forward as fast as she could down the street. Kan'u swiftly followed bringing out Seryuutou and whirling it over her head to bring it slashing down, slicing the head of one of the attackers off his shoulders. She took out one more and by that time, Ren had dealt with the remaining three.

Kan'u looked down sadly at a young boy who had been caught by the mad berserkers and torn asunder. "What in that hell" she said slowly, angrily, "caused that?" Ren knelt, staring sadly up little boy then up and Kan'u. "Sight" she said simply.

"They attack on sight you think?" Ren nodded. Kan'u looked down at the dead fighters for a moment recognizing four of them as coming from Rakuyo and the other from Nanyou. Then the thought hit her, *It doesn't matter what caused them to go nuts like that, all that matters is what they'll do!* Swiftly she got out her phone and called the police commissioner on the line Ranma had provided her. "Commissioner we have a big problem." She swiftly outlined what had occurred and then told him "broadcast on the TV, on the radio, hell get a plane into the air anything and everything every civilian needs to take shelter inside the nearest building and stay there until we figure out what the hell is going on and how to stop it. No civilians on the streets at all within a maximum of fifteen minute of me calling you do you understand do anything you need to get back down or else were going to face a blood bath if this isn't an isolated incident." As she said this Kan'u motioned to Ren and indicated the girl should pick up the beads of the fighters they had killed. Ren did so quickly, though had some trouble finding the magatama of the warrior Kan'u had beheaded.

The police commissioner had paled and then red and then he paled again as Kan'u outlined what was going on. A part of his brain was thinking *so this is the endgame, the curse must be aware somehow and striking back*, but the rest of them was swiftly going about his business. In 10 minutes not fifteen as Kan'u had said a helicopter was in the air blaring out emergency warnings to get every civilian off the street and into the nearest building. He swiftly ordered his police groups back into the stations or into the nearest large buildings like schools or grocery stores and places like that, which were quickly boarded up, the better to defend against these berserkers.

Thankfully the people reacted much like this was a tornado warning, and soon enough were safe all inside their houses. This would save untold countless lives in the following few hours, as indeed that first group Ren and Kan'u had run into had been one of the three forerunner groups. And of the three was the only one that had found any civilians the other two would run into other fighters from Nanyo and Gogun. However most of those fighters had in turn been turned, as they still had their magatama, giving the curse a way to infect and control them, further swelling its numbers.

About 30 minutes later Ren and Kan'u were aghast to see a group made up mostly of Nanyo students and a few fighters from Rakuyo coming down the street in the same nearly blind yet purposeful manner, snarling out their rage to the world. "It's like invasion of the body snatchers meets zombies from Hell," Kan'u muttered "and then throw in a dash of berserker strength. This is not going to be pleasant."

Ren didn't reply to this statement, she simply looked at her, "plan?"

Kan'u looked from her to the on rushing fighters, who had apparently seen them and sped up their shambling walk into a semblance of a normal run, arms outstretched, faces hard with rage and fury. "Plan," she said as she once more brought out her spear "I don't think we need a plan Ren. Those people had a choice," she said softly. "They could've chosen to come forward to surrender themselves and to have the grip of the destiny on them broken. They didn't. Now let them reap the whirlwind! Remember to pick up their beads after we finish off each group, guard each other's backs and let's go!" she said grimly.

Ren smiled at her then followed her as Kan'u shot swiftly forward shouting a wordless battle cry.

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At the same time this was going on Chou'un and Herb had met up with Gakushu and were trying to trace Hakufu steps with the help of Goei. This is the last place I saw her," Goei muttered, as she led the way up the hills behind their property. "Kokin was with her, though, I'm not quite sure what could've gone wrong so fast he couldn't at least have called me."

Chou'un nodded calmly as Herb and Gakushu looked around. "No sign of combat or any kind of struggle, they'd know Saji and anybody with him wasn't to be trusted right?"

Gakushu nodded "Kokin would at least," he said thoughtfully. "I'm not quite sure if the discussion we had about Saji got through to Hakufu thought. She's a bit of an airhead you know?"

Chou'un rolled her eyes. "Yes, she is a little too trusting wasn't she? Still, I don't think she could have been taken by force without leaving some kind of struggle, so some kind of subterfuge was used here, possibly poisoned food from a friend or something like that.."

Goei muttered, "I knew I should've made certain she was immune to knockout pills and cyanide and stuff. Oh well something to train her on later".

The three warriors looked at her a little askance then shrugged. "We're not getting anywhere here, do you know any places Saji could've gone, or hid himself?" Chou'un asked the warrior from Nanyo.

"I don't off the top of my head but..." his reply was interrupted as above them a emergency helicopter flew low blaring out of its speakers its message of alarm.

The three warriors looked around suddenly wary. "I wonder what that was about?" said Herb thoughtfully.

Just as he said this Chou'un's phone beeped and she looked at it and held it to her ear. A moment later she put it away and said grimly "that was the police commissioner, passing on a message from Kan'u and Ren who apparently ran into some kind of berserkers, several of them in a pack, not very skilled, but completely mindless. They attacked a group of civilians and wiped them out before Kan'u and Ren could get to them."

Herb nodded understanding, his eyes suddenly hard, looking more reptilian than they had before this. "In that case we should get a move on shouldn't we?"

Gakushu shook his head at the news wondering what the hell was going on now. "I know of a few empty warehouses on the edge of the district, they're technically in my factions territory, so I know they haven't been searched yet. We meant to search them, but with the fights breaking out among our warriors we never could get to it."

"It sounds like a good place to start" Chou'un said grimly, "let's move."

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While they hadn't succumbed as quickly to the madness of the curse as the fighters near 'Saji' had all the fighters from Nanyou and Gogun, those schools that hadn't been forced to submit their beads for destruction, did succumb once they came face to face with a warrior who had already fallen to the curses fury. Luckily they began to fight among the themselves and once they had done that, weeding out the weak among them they move moved around to find others to kill. By which point all of the civilians had gotten inside and all that was left for the fighters to find were Ranma's group and those allied with them.

The first Ranma and the others knew about it though was when Ukitsu suddenly grabbed her head in agony as the curse hit her. Ryu and the others turned to look at her then Ryuubi that also collapsed to her knees. Ryuubi however was able to throw it off. Her bead had been destroyed by Ranma last night, which only left the dragon shard within her, which without a mind behind it couldn't break her will. With the intelligence moving itself into Saji to control him, it had lost the ability to influence Ryuubi from afar. The shard itself could try to influence her, but with their friends around her. She felt no concern or irritation or anger that it could use as a lever to force her to do what it wanted.

Ranma swiftly turned and after only a second to gather his ki pushed his consciousness into Ukitsu's magatama and was immediately assailed by a myriad of images. *Fighting, fighting honorable battle honorable combat one-on-one fight, growing remorse, anger, sadness, pain, desire to end.* With a gasp he broke out of his trance and brought a fist down filled with ki. The bead crumbled, and Ukitsu gasped as the curse's hold on her disappeared.

"Your ancestor was a pretty honorable person," he said softly holding her up with the help of Ryu. "He tried to fight the curse back, but he couldn't. Finally he just wanted to end." Ukitzu nodded slowly and then pointed wordlessly down the street. Coming towards them as if on homing in on an unseen signal was a group of fifty fighters mixed from her school and the fighters from Rakuyo. At the same moment the emergency helicopter appeared in the sky above them, blaring out its warning.

Ryu grinned cracking his knuckles explosively. "Looks as if we have a fight on our hands!"

"Ukitzu stay with Ryuubi until you're recovered," said Ranma calmly as he stepped forward, "Ryomou left, Ryu right, I'll take center. Ryomou once you're tired switch out with Ukitsu and we keep moving. Take their beads if you can see if that breaks them out of this weird berserk trance of theirs. If it doesn't keep the beads anyway, and well we all know what we'll have to do," he finished grimly.

Ryu again cracked his knuckles a fierce light burning in his eyes. He had never been a kind or gentle as Ranma was, a good fight always ended with at least one person the hospital if not the morgue in his opinion. He wasn't a bully by any mean, he lived to test himself on those that were stronger than him but he wouldn't feel any remorse about killing any of these fuckers. "Let's get it on!" He said and started forward the others following swiftly after him.

The following fight was brutal, and ended with most of the fighters dead, with a very few simply unconscious. Apparently a strong enough blow to the head while at the same time taking their bead would be enough to break them out of their berserk fury and knock them out. But it had to be at the exact same time or it wouldn't work, and there were simply too many fighters and they were too strong and too dangerous to fuck around with. "I wonder what the hell is causing this," Ranma mused as with one hand he plucked a fighters bead from around his neck where it had hung on a chain and with the other, crushed the side of his head in, sending him into lala land.

Ryomou ducked under a blow and slammed her leg up between her attacker's legs sending him into the air with a scream of agony that had broken through its berserk rage. "Analyze later, fight now" she exclaimed dodging another hammer blow, grabbing the arm and twisting until it snapped then kicking the person in the side.

Ranma nodded and his hands moved catching the blow that was aimed at his head from one direction, but he grunted as another punch got through from his other side until he turned carrying the first person he had caught and using him like a flail to hit the second person sending both of them went down in a tangle of limbs and he jumped in and slamming hard shot straight to their necks snapping them instantly.

He looked up and found that was the last of this bunch. Ryu stood beside him with Ukitsu, Ryomou having just fallen back to guard Ryuubi. Unfortunately, this was just a prelude, as another thirty fighters came towards them baying a challenge. Ranma groaned. "Here we go again."

The quartet of fighters moved forward, forgetting for just an instant to leave one of them behind to guard Ryuubi. This proved to be an almost fatal mistake, as another group of ten this time moving purposefully and under a driving intelligence jumped down from a nearby rooftop. Before Ryuubi could shout out the central fighter, Saji had grabbed her around the neck. She screamed "Ranma!" as she felt something inside of her start to tear away.

The dragon exulted. This main anchor was completely unsuitable, but now that it had the container within reach it could transfer its power to its own body. Its enemies came towards it but it ordered it spawns into their way delaying them enough to it when it could suck out its power from the center into its now sold single anchor. That done it began to suck out Ryuubi's own soul, intent on adding its power to the dragon's own. This process was interrupted by a boot to the head™, which send the creature who had once been Saji flying into and through the wall of a nearby building. Ranma gathered up Ryuubi, who surprisingly was already beginning to stir, and shouted over his shoulder. "Ryu, plow the road, we're getting out of here!"

Ryu nodded and brought his hands forward in the Yama-sen-ken, "Kijin Raishu, Dan!" Several dozen vacuum blades shot forward, slicing and mangling the fighters around him. With that lull in the attack, the group was able to take to the rooftops and retreat.

Behind them the dragon pushed its way out of the rubble of the building, a thankfully empty café whose owners had hidden in the basement, and jumped after them.

Hearing the thing and the few followers remaining in the area. Ranma passed Ryuubi over to Ryomou. Ryomou take Ryuubi and get the hell out of here, get back to the temple and wait there until we call ya, me, Ryu and Ukitzu will try and hold it off. Get in touch with Kan'u and the others, she's on speed dial the first one," He said, tossing her his cell phone. "We'll try to pin this thing in place. Take out all the rest of the fighters in the area first and then come and help us." Ryomou nodded understanding and took off as the other three turned to engage Saji.

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At the same time 'Saji' struck at Ryuubi, Chou'un Herb and Gakushu had run into their own problems. While a large amount of the fighters had been sent out to kill everything in sight they found ten of them had remained behind near the abandoned warehouse, having been among the first sent out and discovering a few workers and vagrants in the area, who they hunted through the warrens of abandoned buildings until Chou'un and her group came along, saving several of these workers and vagrants who hadn't yet been caught. To make matters worse these ten were among the most dangerous, all C or B ranked fighters, with one A rank among them.

The berserker that had been the A-rank fighter Teni pulled back on her string and let fly as soon as Chou'un's head was visible around the final corner to the warehouse. She ducked back around corner and the arrow banged off the brick wall leaving a large dent in the brickwork. "I think we found them," She said dryly.

Herb grunted and using his flight power ascended into the sky, only to immediately come under fire again. He blocked two shots with ki enhanced hands but the third was able to graze his cheek and he growled angrily coming back down to the ground. "That archer is exceptional! I was barely out there for 3 seconds and she got off three shots in that amount of time?"

"Were you able to see how many arrows she had left?" asked Gakushu.

"No," Herb said grimly, "but there were several others and they were coming towards us. We'll have more to worry about in a few seconds than just one archer."

As he said this nine other fighters all B-rank or C-rank charged around the corner engaging them in close quarter combat. Many of them were wielding weapons, some makeshift others, such as one wielding a black katana, obviously not. One even stayed at mid range and began to throw senbon needles with deadly accuracy, but Herb swiftly put an end to that by using one of his special ki blasts, bouncing it off the roof behind her and impacting her head, destroying her head at the same time it knocked her out.

One-on-one, these fighters would be no match for any of the three of them, even Gakushu who was easily the weakest of the trio, but together they were a potent threat. Soon the trio was bogged down, back-to-back and warding off the remaining eight fighters, all the while searching for the archer who could probably kill any of them if caught off guard.

Herb leveled one fighter to the ground then negligently kicked down snapping its neck before slamming his fist into another fighter sending it careening to the ground. But he was forced to dodge back as an arrow came out of nowhere that would've impacted his head had he not sensed in the air. It tore past him impacting another fighter and slaying him instantly, literally exploding his chest.

Two more fighter's were cleared, then Gakushu grunted in agony as his arm vanished under the impact of a ki laced arrow. He grabbed at the now blood spurting stump and tried to staunch the flow of blood but another fighters slammed a spear butt into his head and he went down. Before either Herb or Chou'un could get to him, Gakushu, last of the nanyo Big Four, was swarmed under.

Grimly the duo fell back trying to make their way toward of building that hopefully would be empty, trying to get there just to block further shots from Teni.

Herb grunted as he suddenly had to lift his hand to catch an arrow that was aiming for his head. This unfortunately uncovered his right side and he took a spear in the side, grunting in agony. But the spear couldn't penetrate too deeply, his specialized Dragon scale technique able to take much of the blow, causing what could have been a killing blow to be merely debilitating. A single blow hammered out shattering spear and spear holders neck in turn. Then he ducked under another arrow which impacted on another fighter.

Now there were three of them. Chou'un got enough space finally to reach down to her pocket and bring out her sword from weapons space and she sliced forward it, killing two of the remaining three instantly and then brought it back around to block an arrow bolt with the side of the blade. Herb cleared the last attacker way, slamming his head into the wall with a high kick. This left the archer free to shoot and he did so rapidly six shot coming at them faster than either could blank.

Chou'un was able to block three with her sword but one got through grazing her shoulder but with nearly enough force to rip her arm out of its socket. She was flown backward like a puppet two slammed into the wall of the building behind them. Herb had simply grabbed the two arrows aimed with hands flaming with his ki and threw them back. This caused the archer to dodge just enough to let him close the distance. "You came too close," he growled, bringing his fist in towards her face, but she responded by dodging under his blow, and bringing out a kunai to try and stab

him.

Chou'un however had reversed quickly, and interposed her blade, catching her kunai on her blade and bring her pommel up to slam into the archers head with enough force to send her to the ground. Before she could get up again, Herb, acting on a hunch reached down, his hands still incased in ki, and crushed the girls magatama where it was in her ear. As soon as he did she fell to the ground like a puppet with its string cut.

Chou'un turned, moving to check on Gakushu as Herb, seeing he could now destroy the beads moved around to do just that, making certain they were all destroyed. Chou'un shook her head sadly over Gakushu's body, then reached down gently and closed his eyes.

After a moments silence they moved on into the warehouse, where they found Kokin, miraculously still alive, having been ignored in his comatose state, and no longer having his magatama, having lost it at the same time Hakufu and Gakushu lost theirs. His injuries were such though that even without anyone guarding him he had been unable to break his bonds. Chou'un moved over to free him as Herb moved to look at Hakufu.

From a single glance he could tell the so called spell around her was mere gobbledygook, and he took up one of the girls limp hands, testing for a pulse. It was there, but barely, and he stared at her with his ki sight, seeing that she had lost practically all her ki, what she had left was barely enough to keep her body alive. Lifting up one eyelid he looked at her eyes, but couldn't tell if there was anyone home. He sighed, that would be for Harumoto and Oden to figure out. Right now, they had to get these to someplace safe and meet up with the others.

As he picked Hakufu up, Kokin got to his feet unsteadily and Chou'un cell phone rang. She answered it and after a moment turned to Herb. "Once we drop these two off at the temple we're to meet the others at Rakuyo high school, apparently it's the only school that was emptied by this emergency, and it's the closest open space to where Ranma, Ukitsu of Gogun and someone named Ryu are battling the awakened dragon."

Herb nearly gulped at that new but refrained. "In that case, I think we'll need to hurry don't you?"

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About an hour after the madness had begun Kan'u and Ren had finally met up with Ranma and the Ryu. They found them heavily engaged with someone who looked like Saji, and Kan'u gaped for a moment stunned by 'Saji's' ability to fight her lover off. Then she realized, *it's not Saji at all anymore, is it?*

She dove in, alongside Ren to engage the thing shouting "Where's Ryuubi?"

Ryu grunted under the impact of the kick and barely was able keep in place for a moment as Ranma answered, slamming home several hundred Amiguriken blows with the thing didn't seem to even feel. "That thing sucked out the Dragon soul from her. She was still breathing when Ryomou carted her off just now, hell she was already moving her arms'n stuff.

Ryu grunted again as another kick came in towards him, the thing having ignored Ranmas attempt to draw its attention and he tried desperately to bring his hands forward to use the sealed technique. The fighter was too fast though and hammered his fist down and then another kick came in crushing into it the side of his face sending him down onto the street below.

"Shit," Ranma muttered, "Ren, Kan'u hit the rooftop with your strongest ki attack on 3,2,1!" and at three all three of them hit the street with their strongest ki attack, alongside with his Bakutsai Tenketsu technique, buyring the bersker momentarily and allowing them to fall back.

"Okay," said Kan'u calmly a little too calmly under the circumstances, "at exactly what point did we lose control here?"

"I don't know" Ranma said, breathing deeply and gathering his ki. "But that thing is a way stronger than Sousou was, even before it took Ryuubi's dragon shard into its own. I think it's the dragon, the soul didn't want to wait anymore, we were weakening it too much, and it somehow woke itself up. We beat that thing, and its all over, no more curse!"

"Easier said than done lover," Kan'u muttered, watching as the thing in Saji's body forced its way out of the rubble of what had been a karaoke bar, thankfully empty at this hour of the day.

"Agreed, we'll need some space to fight it, we've gotten lucky so far and I haven't seen any civilians injured or anything, but that'll change if we don't find someplace to fight it away from buildings, where's the nearest field or open park?"

Ukitzu looked around from where she was tending Ryu, pointing off to the left. "Rakuyo high is that way, about five blocks, but why don't you and Ryu hit that thing with that attack he used before to clear the streets?" She was feeling angry as hell, all her training had been to fight without the use of ki, merely pure physical ability, but her strongest punches barely caused that thing to blink, let alone hurt it.

Ranma nodded. "As soon as we're away from buildings that's the first damn thing I'm gonna try. But for now let's move."

Even as he said this 'Saji' broke out of the last of the debris holding him and jumped forward toward them.

Ren swiftly brought her spear around slicing at its arms but the slice barely broke the skin and it was soon healed over. Ren cocked her head quizzically but dodged aside again and cut at the thing's eyes. This blow however the thing dodged, kicking out at her and she was forced to fall back with the others. Ranma and Kan'u swarmed in, one going high the other low, Ranma shouting "Moko ha Reiku!" and a beam of golden light hit the thing in its chest, while at the same time Kan'u shouted "Crescent blades Earth Roar!" The impact of the two ki blasts lifted the thing off the roof and in the general direction of Rakuyo.

Ranma touched down. "Okay general, what do we do now?"

Kan'u nodded at him taking charge immediately. "Alright, Ukitzu head over to the temple and meet up with Ryomou, go around and make certain we've gathered or destroyed as many beads as you can, if you find any more of those berserkers, well you know what to do." Ukitzu nodded grimly. While she had never really been friendly with the lower ranked fighters of her faction, having to kill so many of them after they were infected with the berserker madness had been a sobering experience. "Ranma, can you engage that thing with that hurricane maneuver of yours?"

Ranma nodded. "Sure, and while I do that..."

Kan'u nodded, the three of us and Chou'un and Herb will hit the hurricane with as many long range ki attacks as we can, hopefully that will be enough to kill this thing, if not, it will at least injure it severely."

"Gotcha, I'll keep the thing busy until yer all in position, but don't take too long, I don't think I can last for long against that thing by myself." With that said the group broke up, and Ranma raced toward where the dragon had been thrown.

The thing was already back on its feet only its lack of hair denoting any damage from the twin ki attacks. As Ranma neared, its aura burst forth again, covering its body in hotted denser, flames than even Sousou's aura. Thankfully Ranma had started to enter the Soul of Ice as soon as he left the others, and he charged forward to meet it. The two collided, and as with the fight against Sousou it was as if two weather fronts were battling it out. Ranma began almost immediately to lead the thing towards where Ukitzu said the high school was, wincing as a blow got through his defenses. Even with his massive advantage in speed Ranma was still taking far too many hits.

Suddenly, as they passed a fire hydrant Ranma hit on an idea, and he ducked under a blow spinning and kicking the top of the hydrant. A huge fountain of wire appeared shooting up into the sky and Ranma dodged through it, gasping as the change hit. Now as she, Ranma was just that little bit too fast for the dragon to hit, and it raged after her as she dodged around, leading her towards the ambush point.

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Chou'un and Herb arrived at the ambush point barely five minutes after Kan'u and her group got there. Chou'un looked a little worried as she looked at the school. "Are we certain no one is inside there we really don't want anyone around when we do this?" She remembered all too well how much damage the first tornado Ranma created caused.

Ren nodded, and Ryu shrugged. "The quiet one said she couldn't feel anyone inside, so we'll have to take her word for it."

Kan'u who had been listening to something on the phone, put it away and turned to them. "Alright, Ukitzu and Ryomou are in the process of clearing up the few beads we missed, the police are out now in force to round up prisoners, but they haven't seen any more of those berserkers, it looks as if we might have taken them all out." She winced as she said this, while she and Ren might have killed the lion's share of the berserk army, it wasn't a task she had enjoyed. Unlike the other teams, neither she nor Ren had figured out how to stop the berserkers without killing them, and really with the image of the family that first group had torn to pieces they hadn't wanted to. She shook her head to get rid of the memories and focused on the here and now. "Alright I want us all hidden in different places. Ryu, that tree on the right side of the track field, Ren the tree on the left, Chou'un, up on the roof with Herb, I'll hide behind the corner of the building until Ranma has moved 'Saji' into position in the center of the track field." The other

all nodded and they ran off to their positions.

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Ranma still hadn't been tagged, but her own return blows were no longer enough to hurt the thing, and she could barely get through its flame aura. It was getting frustrating, but they had at last arrived at the school. Ranma moved the fight into the center of the track field, the largest clear space in the school yard, and began to move into his spiral. A moment later the redhead caught sight of Kan'u poking her head around the side of the building, and she flashed him a big thumbs up to indicate they were ready. Ranma didn't bother responding, she merely kept going into the spiral, tighter and tighter, as her ice aura dueled with his opponents flame until at last she reached the center of the spiral. Ranma punched upward, impacting one of her larger opponent's fist with her own and shouted coldly "Hiryu Shoten Ha!"

A monstrous tornado appeared from the point of impact, picking up 'Saji' and twirling him into the air with a roar. At the same time the other fighters came out of cover, and immediately began their attacks.

Ryu was first, his attack not needing much buildup "Saidaikyū Kijin Raishū Dan!" Several large vacuum blades appeared, then rocketed forward into the tornado.

From above Chou'un swung her sword shouting "Silver blade Slice!" And a long thin but dense scythe of ki lanced out from the end of her swing.

Next to her Herb, "Hito Ryu-Zan Ha!" Several smaller blades of ki shot forward into the tornado.

Ren didn't bother shouting merely saying in a normal voice "Twin slicer" and slashing her ji forward twice at Amiguriken speed. Two very wide crescent moon shaped swathes of ki appeared and shot forward. At the same time Kan'u did her lightning roar, pouring as much power as she could into it, causing the roar, which was normally only the size of her arm to grow as large as her own body before streaking forward into the tornado.

Ranma reached into his weapons space pocket and pulled out some hot water, knowing that he put more power into even hi ki shots in his male form. "Cat fist revised, claw fist Storm!" Hundreds of tiny slivers of ki shot forward into the tornado.

Herb, with his near bottomless supply of ki continued to throw ki attacks into the tornado, which had begun to expand and move outward. Soon enough he and Chou'un had to leap away from the roof, and it was only thanks to his flight ability that the two weren't pulled into the tornado as it destroyed the school buildings, first the main building and then it expanded to include the gym and the rest of the grounds.

By this time Ranma and the others had retreated to the edge of the schools boundary, standing on the wall and watching as the tornado continued to rage. It did so for another forty minutes before it began to subside.

As it did they were all astonished and not a little frightened to see the Saji-thing still in one piece, crashing into the ground. It was tattered, its clothing torn and its skin bruised, but it had survived the tornado and everything they had thrown at it.

As the others looked in horror, Ranma simply gritted his teeth and jumped forward to finish the job. Kan'u followed swiftly, with Ren moving right behind her. The other three looked at one another and Herb shrugged, and they all charged forward together.

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The dragon soul raged in what had become its prison. It could no longer feel even a single anchor outside of its present body, its ki was fading, and the body was being held together now more by its will than by blood and sinew. It had nowhere to go, and not enough energy to recast the curse that could have saved it. For the first time in millennia it felt fear, which angered it all the more as the fighters it had thought so puny once more closed with it.

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Ranma rushed forward, hands glowing with ki as he shouted "Tiger Amiguriken!" the power shots came in hundreds at a time, draining Ranma's energy more than anything he had ever done before but doing their job and the thing was barely able to get its arms up to block.

This proved a mistake as Kan'u slashed forward, adding her ki to her weapons to make its edge sharper. One of 'Saji's' hands flew away, severed completely and the thing roared even as the stump closed slowly, falling back and kicking out, sending her backward with cracked ribs.

Ren and Ranma worked in tandem then, Ranma, grabbing the things arms as Ren sliced one of them off before the thing could wrench free. Again the stump began to close quickly, but with noticeably more time. Ranma grunted as he took another kick to the ribs, but held the thing in place as Ryu, Chou'un and Herb pounded on it.

Chou'un sliced a long gash across the things chest, which started to heal even slower than the stump where the thing arm had been, but she wasn't fast enough to dodge a punch to the side of the head which sent her to the ground senseless.

Ranma and Ryu used point blank "Kijin Riashin Dan!"s and the thing lost its left leg, the leg sliced into several pieces. With a roar that was more a despairing wail than anything else the thing fell to the ground and rolled down the mound of rubble to come to a stop against a girder. Even so, the wounds began to heal, slowly, so slowly, but surely before their eyes.

It fell to Herb to remember the spell tag, and he walked forward waiting until Ranma and Ren engaged the thing where it lay on the ground before darting in, slapping the spell tag onto it's back. "Activate!" the Musk prince shouted, and with a last roar the soul of the dragon was pulled out of its last anchor into the tag. At the same time Kan'u and Ren Slashed forward, and sliced what remained of the body of Saji Genpou into three pieces.

For a moment they all fell silent, and Ranma sat down heavily one the ground, Ryu following a second later. Kan'u came over and leaned on Ranma's head, while Ren did the same thing from the other side. They all looked at Herb who looked at Chou'un. The swordswoman nodded and he tossed the tag into the air. She swung her blade forward, and a last despairing wail rent the air as she sliced the tag neatly in two. The curse of the sacred beads was at last ended, and Ranma and the others all collapsed, exhausted beyond belief.

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End chapter

Some of you may ask why I keep referring to the dragon soul as it rather than coming up with a name, I did that deliberately to show that even the dragon soul had forgotten some things down the centuries, and because I think it was more evil and in a way soulless without a name to it. Still hope you all liked the final solution of the curse, there will be an epilogue next week, but that will be it for this story.

## **\*Chapter 13\*: Chapter 13**

I don't own Ikkitousen, and it will be the last time I have to say that for a while, Hallelujah. Nor do I own Ranma, just Akane, 'nuff said.

Warning there is a bit of a lemon near the end, but it can be skipped if you wish to. Oh, I noticed that I got the name of one of Sousou's female followers wrong in the chapter before last, and I will go back and correct it at some point tomorrow, but it has been changed in this chapter to the correct name.

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### **Epilogue: Living happily ever after in their own way**

Thanks to the quick reaction time of the police force and the police commissioner the casualties from the zombie berserker assault among civilians was very low, or at least low in comparison to what it could've been. The berserker warriors had been focused on finding other fighters and the threat to the curse that controlled them and had not entered houses or other buildings to get to the civilians inside. As such there had only been sixteen civilian deaths, nine of which had been vagrants living near the warehouse Saji and Shumei had been using as their hideaway.

However among the fighters it was a different story. Of the non-dragon controlled fighters, those that had already turned in their magatama for destruction, thirty had died, and another fifteen had been crippled saved only by Ryomou and Ukitsu searching out other berserker fighters while Ranma and the other warriors fought the dragon controlled Saji. Of the berserker fighters, who numbered over a hundred and fifty at the finish, the original hundred having somehow infected most of the fighters from Gogun and Nanyo, only about fifteen were still alive. Six of them, including Shumei and Temi were brain-dead, and the government had almost instantly made the decision to finish the job on them.

The others were only still alive by chance or by Ranma purposely not killing them, as the majority of the berserker fighters had invaded the Seito controlled section of the city, and been met by Ren and Kan'u who hadn't made any attempt to knock them out or save them after seeing the first few in the area rip a family of seven apart like a pack of raptors. The bodies of the berserkers were spread out everywhere around Seito High.

Reports were still coming in from this section of the city, two days after the berserk assault, where police and surviving fighters from Seito were going through the dead bodies collecting the magatamas, as well as area around Gogun High School, where the majority of the other fights had been going on. Ryu and Ukitsu were helping in the search, but had already made plans to skedaddle, not wanting to remain in the area any longer and certainly not wanting to get involved with the government.

Ryuubi was in charge of the search working closely with the police commissioner. They worked together putting every police squad out in the district with at least four fighters from Seito. She, Koumei, Chou'un and Herb were all there, answering any questions that came up on the police side, and making certain that every magatama was accounted for. While they were almost positive that the soul of the dragon had finally died, being ripped in two after having been weakened severely, half of it dying with Saji's body and the other half being destroyed with the magic tag, almost wasn't close enough in something like this.

With every report that came in of magatamas found already in pieces every person there breath a small sigh of relief. Even the policemen who were most skeptical of the supernatural aspect of the curse had become believers by this point and were determined to find every magatama from every fighter involved in the 'destiny'. This was true for the fighters as well; none of the survivors had any wish for any of their descendents to have to go through something like this again.

Ryuubi looked up in surprise and pleasure as one of the Three Pillared God's, Bunken walked in. She stood up holding out a hand in welcome and escorting her to a seat after noticing that she was still limping and had a crutch. "We feared the worst, how did you all get along?" Myosai was one of the best fighters in the region and if she had succumbed to the curse and joined in at any point and retained her skill like the other lighter level fighters it could've gone badly in any battle she had joined.

"We got along alright although it almost went very bad, Bunken replied, smirking slightly. Myosai and Kyocho both began to fall under that madness, whatever the hell it was when a few of those zombie berserkers came near Kyocho's house. At that point we'd already sent you our magatamas however, so they were the only ones that had them and thankfully we were able to subdue them and knock them out before they succumbed." Her smirk widened slightly at the memory. Both girls had been nursing crushes on Sousou for a long time, and had realized what was

happening and almost begged him to knock them out. The look on Myosai's face in particular when he finally agreed to do so seemed to indicate she might be a bit of a masochist. The other girl had simply smiled as she collapsed into blissful unconsciousness, happy she hadn't hurt any of her friends. Since they both had awoken neither had left Sousou's side and she was almost certain that her friends' devil may care bachelor days were over, one way or the other.

"Good," Ryuubi breathed, "and their magatamas?"

"Already shattered!" Bunken replied happily "we kept the pieces though as proof. I brought a list of the fighters from our faction, and we can match them up with the bodies as you find them, make sure this shit is over with. I was also asked to inquire about what will happen to all of us after this is cleaned up? I don't think that many of us who were tricked by the curse into following this destiny crap have very clean hands at this point." She looked over at Koumei who had since the beginning of the conflict been very good at subtly steering other factions into attacking one another, but the younger girl refused to meet her eyes, looking away guiltily.

The police commissioner answered from where he was sitting correlating reports as they came in. "The government has decided to follow a live and let live policy for all of you, however, this is a 'one strike you're out' system. All of you will have to keep your noses clean from now on as the most minor infractions will see you in jail, and those of you who didn't work with us on this from the start will be fitted with tracking tags so we know where you are at all times, and will not be allowed to leave the country. I'm sorry, but some of you simply are too dangerous to let walk around free without any supervision." He honestly didn't think the below skill fighters that have already been incarcerated would be much of a problem, all of them had relatively clean records, well prior to becoming involved in the fighting caused by the destiny and curse anyway.

The higher-level fighters however were much more of a mixed bag, and some of them Ryofu and Sousou and Myosai in particular worried him far more. Sousou and Myosai he could live with letting free, pretty much because they couldn't pin anything major on either that did not involve the curse created destiny. He would just have to hope that the tags would let them keep tabs on both of them as they should.

Nor did he have a problem with Ryofu walking away free as long as she gave her word not to involve herself in any criminal activity, and it looked as if her friend Chinkyu was going to remain nearby and watch her closely. Her devotion to her friend was actually quite touching. But if Shumei or her pet assassin had survived neither of them would be walking free under the sun ever again. The same went for the fighters that Ranma had already weakened when they tried to kill him, such as Ganryo and Kannei.

There were some in the government who wanted to throw all of the strongest fighters into jail, but honestly the police commissioner just did not see that happening anytime soon. Ranma, Kan'u and Ren in particular, were simply on a whole different level of dangerous, so antagonizing them unnecessarily would be disastrous. Speaking of which, he turned to Ryuubi and asked, "Where are Ranma and the others? I expected them to be here to help with this."

Chou'un giggled a little as she replied for her friend. "They're actually in Tokyo on a group date. Something about wanting to follow up with a plan Ranma came up with a few weeks ago?" The police commissioner and Bunken both looked at her heads cocked in enquiry but she kept on giggling with Ryuubi and even Koumei joining in. Despite her dislike of Ranma the Sasami look-alike had to admit that the date he had come up with certainly sounded amusing.

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The leader of the street gang grinned, staring at the blue haired girl's ass as she was dragged deeper into the shadows of the alleyway by two of his fellows. *What a lucky find* he thought to himself *a girl like that walking around all alone in this neck of the city. She must've had a lobotomy when she was younger, or she doesn't know where the hell she is.*

The girl tried to get away, weakly pulling her arms to free herself from the two thugs that were gripping her tightly around each bicep and pulling her deeper into the alley. "Please no" she whimpered, "Let me go! I won't tell anyone you attacked me or anything, just let me go!"

One of the street thugs chortled darkly, "Oh don't worry darling we'll take good care of you, who knows you might enjoy it eventually!"

"Once we drug her up, she certainly will!" The other tough laughed, "damn look at her body! We're going to get a shit load of money for her when we sell her."

The other seven members of the gang entered the alleyway, a few of them already unzipping their pants. The two thugs holding the girl threw her down against the far wall of the alleyway, grinning at her as she began to whimper

and try to crawl away, but there were too many of them blocking her way out of the alleyway. "Who wants to go first?" One of them asked.

The girl looked up at them seemingly to count them all for a moment and then her face firmed and she stood up swiftly "that's about enough of that, she said out loud. For a moment all the thugs looked at her, wondering what the hell she was talking about. The gang leader suddenly felt a sinking sensation in his gut but before he could do anything he was knocked unconscious by a blow to the back of his head.

Before the gang could even realize she was there Kan'u was in and among them knocking them aside and out with swift, hard punches. The previously demure girl joined the fun swiftly running forward and grabbing the two thugs that had been holding her and slamming their heads together before bringing her feet up and out in a mule kick to a third thug's privates. A few seconds later the fight was over.

Ryomou, for it was indeed she, started to rifle through the thug's pockets whistling appreciatively at the amount of yen they had carried. "This is a great haul," she said. When Ranma had first thought of this idea, he had imagined that he would be the bait in his female form, but Ryomou convinced him to let her do it. Once he saw her acting skills he and the others all agreed to let her be the bait when they went trolling for thugs to hustle.

Kan'u flicked her hair to one side, "So do we have enough for a trip to the amusement park?" Not stopping she moved around them hitting a specific pressure point that Ranma had showed her. the same pressure point he had put on the girl with glasses a few weeks ago. Then she took permanent marker and wrote the word rapist on each of their foreheads and then tied their arms behind them with duck tape.

"We have enough for an amusement park trip movies food and souvenirs!" Ryomou said jubilantly coming over and grabbing one of her hands, snuggling against her mistress contentedly. "But where are Ranma and Ren?"

Kan'u looked down at her smacking her ass which caused Ryomou to actually moaned a little. "Oh, Ranma and Ren," she laughed a little, "they ran into a little problem." Ryomou looked at her quizzically but Kan'u simply kept on laughing and pulled her along out of the alley and away from the run down street.

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Pets were wildly escaping a small pet store four blocks away from where Ryomou and Kan'u had found their third group of thugs to roll for the day. Birds were flying away into the air despite two workers best efforts to catch them with nets, cats were walking down the street pausing only when passerby leaned down to pet them or pick them up, and rabbits and hamsters had all escaped long ago but the dogs had gathered around the one who had freed them all where she stood near the door of the shop.

Ranma sighed, "no Ren-chan," he said calmly. "You can't take all the dogs home. And you can't actually go into pet stores and free all the animals all like that. The pet store owns them until they're bought by their new families."

Ren looked at him stubbornly, though her eyes remained shiny as her face was locked in the puppy dog eyes attack. "Not property," she said stubbornly "friends."

Ranma grinned rubbing her head and she rubbed against his hand momentarily though her eyes remained on his face. "I see yer point" he said, "but you have to understand until they're sold they remain in the store, where they are cared for. Their new families will treat them like family members, but until then they stay here. Do you honestly think that all of these dogs and cats could make their way on the street?" Ren looked down, not wanting to answer. "And we can't take them with us, we don't have room in my apartment for them all and pets aren't allowed in the complex anyway."

Ren pouted and redoubled the power of her puppy dog eyes attack. "Please?"

Ranma forced himself to look away, knowing that if he stared into those eyes any longer Ren would have anything she wanted out of him. "I promise Ren-chan, as soon as we have a place of our own, a house with a huge garden and backyard and everything, we will bring in as many dogs as you want, but until then no I'm sorry." Ren whimpered a little, but it subsided as Ranma and drew her into a hug kissing her forehead. "It won't be that long." Ren whimpered as he pulled away, leading the dogs one by one in back into their cages.

When the manager of the store came back in carrying two cats and saw this he glared at Ren and Ranma, but Ranma glared right back and he subsided quickly moving away to put the cats into their cages. Once he was done with the dogs he walked over to the still sadly staring Ren and took her arm, leading her out of the building. Come on Ren-chan let's go meet the others okay?" Ren nodded, but still looked a little sad. He smiled at her knowing what would cheer her up. "I'll even get you some cotton candy, it's a type of sweet candy that I don't think you've tried yet."

She perked up at the idea of a new sweet and followed along much happier than she had been a moment before.

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Kan'u and Ryomou screamed aloud, their hands high up into the air as the roller coaster banked and turned and zoomed down the tracks. Ranma grinned and whooped, while Ren simply raised her hands up and let them flop around in the air like the others, but her face was broken into a huge smile. She had never experienced something like this, never even thought of something like this.

All the new things she was learning and seeing in this new age was fantastic to her, and Ranma looked over at her, pulling her into a hug as the roller coaster went up a steep incline. "Having fun?" he asked, looking over at the others. All three girls nodded, grinning at him and he smiled back. "Cool, me to." A moment later, they were got off the roller coaster and he asked, "Now, what do you gals want to do next?"

Ren pointed behind him and he turned, seeing a stall selling various confections. "Oh yeah, I did promise to get you some cotton candy huh? Well, come on, I think you'll like it." He was perfectly correct on this point, Ren had one taste and beamed happily at him. It was always fun to be around Ren when she was eating, she seems to radiate happiness all around her, and she ate the cotton candy with one hand while Kan'u led her around by the other. Strangely enough the small family wasn't the only ones who thought Ren was too cute for words. Several passerby, mostly women and younger boys and girls came over to hand her food as if she was some kind of cute animal. She accepted it all and kept eating, showing no sign of stopping or no longer being hungry.

Kan'u and Ranma said down on the bench while Ryomou and Ren were shopping in a souvenir shop. Ranma had already purchased a T-shirt for himself, extra-extra large to sleep in, which had promptly been stolen by Kan'u. The fact that she whispered into his ear that she would wear it for him Later that night went far along the way to make him forget the fact that she had taken it in the first place. Kan'u smiled at him smirking a little at the blush still on his face. "This is been an excellent idea Ranma. I've never been to one of these places before, and all the rides are fantastic. But what movie did you get for later tonight?"

"Oh, I got that American movie Rush Hour, Jackie Chan is supposed to be really funny, and we can all laugh that the martial arts."

Kan'u smiled happily at the idea and then frowned as his expression turned serious and his eyes stared off into the distance. "What are you thinking of? She asked softly.

Ranma tugged at his pigtail smiling slightly. "I should know that you can see right through me by this point, it's just memories y'know. This stuff, all of it went so bad so quick at the end there, and all those dead combined with what I had to do weeks ago... I'm not used to leaving that many bodies behind me. Knocked unconscious sure, crippled sometimes, but all those dead..."

Kan'u nodded, leaning into shoulder, answering softly. "I know how you feel. It wasn't the killing that bothered me so much, I'm a warrior and was trained that way, but watching those, those things, they weren't human any more, tear into that family..."

Ranma drew her onto his lap hugging her tightly. "I know, you and Ren-chan woke me up the past two nights with your nightmares about it." He had comforted them both those nights, holding them as they broke down crying at what they had seen. "And I understand. I suppose were both going to be messed up for bit huh?"

Kan'u raised her hands to cup his face. "As long as we're together love, I think we can get through anything even nightmares." She leaned in kissing him passionately, and he returned the gesture. Soon they were making out ferociously, causing mutters of disapproval and gasps from passerby, but they ignored them until Ren and Ryomou returned from their shopping trip and Ryomou smacked Kan'u on the shoulder. "Save it for later you two," she said, "we still got a few more ride to try. I hear they've got a section made out to look like a ninja village and that sounds really fun."

Kan'u stood up then without warning dragged Ryomou into a kiss of her own. Ranma did the same to Ren, who smiled happily at not being left out. This drew even more gasps from people walking around, and they soon drew a crowd. Ranma ignored it though as he pulled away hugging Ren to her him. "Okay we can go now." Ryomou who Kan'u had just let go blushed bright red at all the attention but nodded and followed the others.

The ninja section of the park had only a few rides, but they were all good, and two of them were water rides which Ren and Kan'u in particular loved. Thankfully for Ranma's blood pressure none of the girls had worn white today, and the two of them kept on going back for more of the water rides.

Ryomou and Ranma on the other hand had decided to look at the ninja souvenir shop. They sneered at the fake throwing stars and other toys, but Ryomou paused, looking at a shirt with a ninja on it, who was wielding a kusarigama. Ranma walked up to her looking at her quizzically then back to the picture she was looking at. "The weapon?" he asked, and she nodded.

"I've been thinking of getting some kind of weapon and adding it to my repertoire." She said thoughtfully, "but I'm not a sword or spear sort of person. That weapon though Looks like something I could use, and it's a very versatile weapon isn't it?"

Ranma cocked his head thoughtfully as he stared at the picture and then nodded. "I could probably teach you how to use it, though you'd have to figure out your own special attacks, and we'd need to find a smith to make one to your specifications, you don't want some kind of store bought weapon. I've fought a few ninjas that used it, and it is a tough weapon to fight against has so many pieces to it. But if you start buying Naruto mangas, we **will** have to break up." He said jokingly.

Ryomou shook her head laughing. "I've read those before, and all the characters irritate the hell out of me. 'Oh woe is me my teammates died and I can't go on without thinking about them for fourteen hours out of every day' thereby not training my genin my favorite of whom runs off to join a traitor? And the main character going after that one girl who keeps on hitting him? Yuck.

She smirked at Ranma who almost glared at her then very adroitly put his hand behind her where no one else could see it and gripped her ass hard. "You're going to pay for that one." he muttered. Ryomou shuddered, thankful beyond words that Ranma was slowly coming into his own as her master. Inwardly he shook his head. Some parts of having Ryomou as a girlfriend were going to take quite a lot of getting used to but it sure as hell was going to be fun trying.

Outside Ren had got away from Kan'u and was staring at a young girl with a big dog and her family. The dog was staring back at her and Ranma once more wondered again why Ren seemed to have such a connection to two dogs. *Of course* he thought wryly, *it could be worse, it could be cats*. Despite no longer being desperately afraid of them, he didn't like them at all. He came up, putting his arm around her and steering her back to the water ride, and the four of them spent the rest of the day going around and redoing all the rides.

They were only interrupted once as Ryuubi called to tell them that they had finally found all of the beads and that the government had officially declared the emergency over. Not a single bead had escaped them, nor had a single fighter. The curse was fully and completely over, and Ryuubi had formally released Kan'u and all of the others from her service, smiling a little where she was sitting at her desk as she thought about the future which was now wide open to her.

Kan'u had laughed a little, cried a little and then went back to having fun with the others darting from ride to ride reliving her childhood dream of going to an amusement park. The only left when the park was closing around 10 pm, and it was a day that all of them had enjoyed immensely.

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### **Warning lemon part**

Kan'u moaned as Ranma sucked at her neck lovingly, leaving a hickey there as he trailed his way down to her nipples while next to her Ryomou did the same to her other breast. Ranma left off for a moment reaching over and pulling Ren, who had just come in kissing her on the lips and helping her remove her shirt. Ren did not believe in bras, and her very perky B cup breasts bounced as they pulled off her shirt. She moaned, her face contorted in pleasure as Ranma cupped them gently playing with her nipples.

This had been the natural end result of the day. After a magnificent day and finally freed from her destiny and the curse that made it Kan'u had determined that she and Ranma would be losing their virginity tonight. When Ryomou had realized this she had asked to be included and Ren had simply followed them into the bedroom after the movie. Her eager face, however, had betrayed her desire to join the fun. All of them spent half an hour or so kissing hugging fondling and nibbling at one another, before they got serious.

Ranma moved away from Ren slightly licking at her nipples a little before moving his way down her tanned body to her core where he stuck his tongue out, licking at her small clit causing her to shriek aloud at the sensation.

Behind him Kan'u had crawled around him and kissed Ren on the lips while Ryomou pressed herself against Ranma's back. Ranma took one of his hands and put it behind him cupping her pussy gently and she moved around to where he could see her and his fingers began to play with her.

The play continued getting more serious and suddenly Ren screamed bucking off the bed as she had her first ever orgasm. Ryomou and Kan'u turned from their own fun to hold her gently as she came down from her peak, and then Ranma turned to Kan'u.

Ryomou crawled up the bed situating her pussy over Kan'u's mouth lowering herself just as Ranma began to nibble at Kan'u thighs. About 10 minutes later Ryomou came in turn, falling to the side and Kan'u licked her lips from Ryomou's girl juice and stared at Ranma where he was kneeling between her legs playing with her gently. "Now, she said huskily "I want you in me now Ranma!"

Ranma looked at her and seeing her expression, a mix of seriousness and sexual ecstasy, he nodded and pushed down his underwear. Kan'u gulped expectantly as she stared at his hard cock, and he positioned himself at her entrance while Ren and Ryomou had recovered enough to watch the action. Ryomou licked her lips and almost made to reach forward to take hold of Ranma's cock, but she knew that Kan'u needed to be first. She was however looking forward to her own time, while Ren looked a little worried but very, very game.

Ranma fit a condom over his dick and was just about to start entering Kan'u when the doorbell to the apartment rang.

### **End lemon**

At first none of them could believe it had and ignored it, but quickly rang again, and kept on ringing, as if someone was keeping their finger on the button.

Ranma reared back in surprise, looking over his shoulder towards the entrance to the apartment and Kan'u scowled angrily her fist coming down thumping the bed. "Seriously!" she exclaimed "we're going to get interrupted now!?"

Ranma quickly put on his clothing and then very carefully closed the door to the bedroom. He stalked forward, hands clenched in rage at the interruption. Everything had been perfect, the day had been perfect, the dates had been perfect, the rides had been perfect, even hearing from Ryuubi about the end of the curse had been fantastic. *I should've expected that something was going to come along and ruin my day.*

Behind him Kan'u came out of the bedroom as well, though she didn't bother dressing simply throwing on a bathrobe. She reached down to pick up Seryuutou from where she had leaned it against the wall, muttering darkly "whoever is interrupting us had better have a damn good reason."

Ranma didn't bother answering verbally simply nodding his head as he walked to the doorway. He ripped the door open nearly ripping it off its hinges and stared angrily out. Outside the door stood two men in black suits with black ties.

The younger of the two looked startled at the speed with which the door opened and the violence of it, but the older man didn't even blink. "Ranma Saotome" he said formally, "the government has a proposal for you..."

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End chapter.

And there we have it ladies and gentlemen, the end of Destiny vs. Chaos. No full lemon, no penetration as it were, since the offer from the government, which will lead into the next book of this series, was pure Ranma in its timing. How do you tell the government to not cock-block you?

It's been a fun ride, and I thank you all for reading my first completed work. I will not be coming back to these characters and moving on with the next book, which will be its own story separate from this one, until at a minimum Warriors Way and Chaotic Space are done. However, I will be opening up a poll after Warriors Way is finished on which anime to go into next. The choices will be Rosario Vampire, Omamori Himari, High school DxD, or Sekirei. I will be again voting for the one I want, so you will have to convince me via lots of votes and sound arguments to go for anything other than Rosario Vampire. I really want to write Kan'u meeting Ura Moka and Ren trying to make a pet out of Gin, but I am willing to be persuaded to go with one of the others. Hail and farewell friends.