

What is up, everybody! Here is the next chapter of GDWHOM, which has returned due to ATP and Horse for the Force finishing. It and Effect of a Horse and Dragon are part of my Ranma only poll. I will be posting a full one in September here, but if you want to have a larger say in what fics, both Ranma and HP related, get updated, you all know what to do.

This has been edited by **Hiryo** and a portion of it was edited by Grammarly too. One of these days I will have enough time to Grammarly whole chapters again. I will, I will, I, I, will...

Chapter 15: Fee Fi, Fo Fum, This Way a Pervert Comes

While Ranma and the large group from Kuoh were having fun at the beach, elsewhere, things were continuing apace, which in this instance meant that the factions and the Japanese government to examine, argue, and point fingers about what happened with Kokabiel and his assault on Kuoh. Of those, perhaps the Japanese government had perhaps the easiest time coming to a conclusion as to what to do. By the time evening began on the second day after the attack, a secret bill had been passed by the Diet and numerous messengers were traveling throughout the islands of Japan to try to recruit a supernatural team of martial artists and others. Who would be in charge, who would organize and what kind of funds this team would have, let alone a base of operations, was still up in the air.

The Fallen continued to eat a lot of political crow with the Devils, much to the chagrin of many, although the leader of the Grigori, Azazel, didn't particularly care. Indeed, he was often heard mention that, "There's no way that Ranma guy can be human! There's got to be some kind of Sacred Gear involved. And I'd wager I could figure it out if I was just allowed to..."

Whereupon his much put upon advisors would shout him down, and force Azazel back to his desk, often at lance point to continue to do some actual work for a change. While Azazel was undoubtedly the leader of the organization, the Grigori was a somewhat haphazard body. Many of the higher-ups would, like Azazel prefer to follow their own interests. But they couldn't. There were not so many Fallen around that the losses they had taken could be absorbed without consequence, on top of the political consequences of Kokabiel's actions.

Conversely, the Devils had a very decent, well-organized government, with Maou Lucifer at the top and the other Maou involved in various governmental bodies, which fit their personalities. Currently, Sirzechs was leading the discussion with the Fallen and with the Church, although both had stalled out for various reasons. The Fallen tried to spin it so they seemed to be the injured party given their losses and the fact Gabriel had executed Kokabiel rather than handing her over for Grigori justice, with the Devils who owned Kuoh being complicit in the execution. To the Fallen this smacked of collusion, a point their diplomats belabored to the

point even Sirzechs, who had quite a lot of self-control, wanted to turn his Power of Destruction on them.

As for the last faction of the three, Heaven and the Church, Heaven was silent at present on the matter. Michael, fully trusting in Gabriel, save in her sense of proportion and timing, to handle matters in Kuoh had not said anything about what had occurred there. He was actually more involved in following up on a group of exorcists disappearing in the Middle East at present, and a name that the Church's agents had begun to run into more frequently. The Khaos Brigade.

Thus left without holy guidance, the Vatican continued to debate the point, about what had happened in Kuoh and the ramifications of it. Most importantly to many of the Supernatural Council of Cardinals, the body of senior cardinals who knew about the true extent of the supernatural realm, was the outing of the truth: that God was indeed dead.

This was a secret that the Church had gone to insane lengths to hide. Excommunicating and denouncing someone as a liar, was just part of how they dealt with it. Memory wipes if possible were another means, as was simply quietly disappearing someone. There were rumors of prison cells underneath the Vatican, but in this one area, the mysteries of the Vatican that so enthralled people the world over did not do the reality justice.

And if those cells would not serve? Well, a quite grave always beckoned.

Gabriel's involvement somewhat limited the means with which Irina and Xenovia could be dealt with immediately, but after she returned to Heaven? Well, surely the Archangel would understand necessity, right? That was the hope of some in this secret meeting, at least.

However, at the precise time that Ranma returned to the beach after his confrontation with the descendants of Joan of Arc and Cao Cao, one voice rose, quite literally, over the ongoing argument. "You are all dangerously close to the sins of sophistry and arrogance!"

The voice was like that of a foghorn, the voice of someone who could stand at one side of a football field and shout so loud he could be heard at the other end. To say that it filled the small out-of-the-way and very secret chamber currently being used by the Supernatural Council of Cardinals was putting it mildly. Indeed, practically every person there had to clamp their hands over their ears and they turned and glared at the individual who had shouted so loudly.

The door banging close behind him, the massive man who stood there seemed to physically fill the room as much as his voice had. He was quite easily the tallest man any of the cardinals or exorcists in the room had ever seen by a wide margin. Indeed, if you would go up to a cardinal later and say that there was some troll or ogre in this man's ancestry, you would probably only get a sage nod in reply. He was so tall that even Ranma would've been surprised, as he stood almost as tall as Pantyhose Taro's beast form. What was even more surprising was that he was equally as wide, with a monstrously powerful body and massive arms, on display thanks to his exorcist robes ending at the shoulder.

That was the body of a young man, a young man who had been both blessed and worked hard to achieve results that would make any professional body builder weep. Yet the face of the man in the doorway was elderly, covered with wrinkles, his head bald due to age rather than affectation. His was a kindly face, the kind most parishioners wanted to see on their country priest, almost grandfatherly. If you looked closely at his arms, other signs of age could be seen in small scars and further wrinkles, few and far between though they were.

The man was also known to most of the people within the room, and as one, they shouted at him, "Inside voice, Vasco!"

Vasco Strada, the Church's strongest man, paused, and then contritely nodded his head in apology. He moved forward with a speed and lightness of foot that spoke of intense training as he pushed into a space left empty for him at the table. "My apologies," he said, his voice still loud, but not loud enough to deafen any longer. "But when I heard this morning after getting back from my sabbatical, that you all were **still** debating this point, well, I let my temper get away from me little. I will prescribe a penitence for myself later today."

Instead of taking a seat, Vasco stood between two of the cardinals, reaching down and placing his hands on the table knuckles first. The entire table, a massive wooden thing that was bolted to the floor and was also exceedingly heavy, pushing at least nine hundred pounds of solid wood, creaked underneath his touch, and more than one cardinal there who had not previously dealt with Vasco in person flinched, staring at the man.

But Vasco was something of a gentle giant, and hastily removed his hands from the table. Although that did not mean that, he was in fact a peaceable frame of mind. "My secretary told me about these deliberations, and that my vote would be wanted to silence and excommunicate my apprentice."

That last word was said in such a tone that many of the men they are quail, but some did not, simply staring back at Vasco. One of them, garbed in the robes of a cardinal, and with a symbol of office on one shoulder, which looked like a series of papers held together by chain spoke up first.

This man was the Keeper of Secrets, the head of the church's internal espionage service, and one of the most powerful men in the Church despite his advancing years. "Xenovia has learned the great secret, and even if she had a history of probity and keeping secrets, she is far too young to be trusted with that. And we both know that Xenovia has anything **but** such a history. In fact, her willingness to speak her mind as often got her in trouble even after you took her on as an apprentice."

Vasco guffawed, shaking his head. "Ah, but unlike you my old friend, I like people who speak their mind. Better to speak such words in the light of his day, then it to keep them close to their heart where they can fester. And I do not understand why we are even considering this.

Yes, my apprentice and young Irina has learned of the great secret. And so what? The Archangel Gabriel was right there. Do you doubt her? Do you doubt the abilities of one of His archangels?"

That was very much a loaded question, and the Keeper of Secrets fell silent, scowling. That was in fact one of the points the Council had been trying to work through, and they hadn't been getting anywhere.

However, one of the other cardinals tried to fight back, saying, "Lady Gabriel might not understand the position of the Church. While she is the Herald of God and a most accomplished diplomat, Lady Gabriel has never had anything to do with the Church, so might not understand that the knowledge God is dead could cause so much damage to the Faithful."

"She is a bit... naïve about humanity," another man interjected. He would have used the word flighty or perhaps ditz, but could barely think about those words in conjunction with one of His Archangels, let alone say them aloud.

Vasco scoffed at that, shaking his head. "Perhaps, but perhaps not. Have you tried to talk to her? Or have you gotten in contact with Michael to ask his opinion?" Vasco glared around the table, his hands once more coming down to rest on it, this time so lightly that there was nary a tremor in the heavily built table. But the fact that he was restraining himself did not take away from the impact of his words, which cut to the quick. "This is an unusual situation, and one we need to look at on its own, not blinded by past deeds. Look me in the eyes, any one of you, and tell me you are looking at this problem as if it is a singular issue, without using the ways we have dealt with such events in the past to cloud your judgment."

None of the extremely old men around the table could meet Vasco's eyes, and he snorted. "I thought so. Procedures, secrets, and your own fears. I'm afraid brethren that you have taken false counsel in yourselves. Perhaps you too should set yourselves some penitent Hail Marys?"

"We are almost certain that Lady Gabriel is under some kind of illusion magic," the Keeper of Secrets came back into the argument, his face set in a grim cast. "We're not denying that one of the Fallen led an attack against the Devils in Kuoh, or that the timing of such a movement that Lady Gabriel and her two companions were caught up in advance. We simply do not believe that events there could have played out as reported. And Lady Gabriel, for all of her martial prowess or strength of voice and faith, does not have any inherent ability to see through illusions."

"Exactly! The return of the dragon Níðhöggr, the use of human weapons, and mere martial artists who don't have a hint of Faith, holy weapons or anything else making a difference!? No, it's far more believable if everything there was some kind of elaborate illusion. An illusion designed to try and make Gabriel fall from Grace by the Devils!" another man shouted in a tone that of a fanatic. "Everything is their fault, everything, but Lady Gabriel's faith was too strong for them to sway!"

“And there I think we have certainly dropped into the sin of pride,” Vasco said sadly. “Have you been so cooped up in here that you do not believe the strength of humanity, the potential of humanity that God himself believed in so strongly that he cast aside the Dawn Star for his actions against us? Have you forgotten how high we humans can rise, even without Sacred Gears?”

Once more, no man at the table could meet Vasco’s gaze, his words going through them like the fire, and Vasco sighed, shaking his head.

The secret of God being dead was **the** penultimate secret of the Church, something they had striven almost their entire existence to hide. Discrediting, excommunicating, or killing anyone who came upon that secret was so ingrained into the hearts and minds of this Council that it was almost instinctual, like a man closing his eyes at a bright light in front of his face.

But the mental hoops these men were going through in order to try to convince themselves to do so in this instance given how Archangel Gabriel had been there, was a sign that perhaps it was all of them be retired. *And it is said that the Herald has a way with words, after all. Perhaps Xenovia and Irina will have questions. They will perhaps no longer believe in the Church. But I think that Gabriel can be trusted to keep their feet on the path of the holy. These men however? They do not believe. They have lost their Faith in man, and in one of His Archangels...*

Sighing faintly, Vasco turned his gaze away from the men at the table, taking a step back and looking instead towards the door. “Come in, please.”

The door opened, and several other men entered, younger by a good ten or twelve year by the men at the table, along with one woman, Griselda Quarta. She had adopted Xenovia, and had been her first sword master before Vasco had taken Xenovia under his wing. Griselda was one of the other five most senior exorcists within the church. “You all heard?”

“We did. We, the quorum of secretaries, exorcists and aides believe that this body, the Council of Faith, has turned aside from that faith. We do not say so gladly, but we believe that it is time that all of you gentlemen, retire from any position of power and authority within the Church.”

There were a lot of protests, but they died as Griselda stepped forward, holding in her hand a piece of parchment. And on it, a seal gleamed with golden light as she opened it and began to read. “These men and women have acted with my authority. For the good of the church and the faith, they have done what must be done.
Signed Michael, Lord General of the Light.”

With that message in hand, none of the men in the room could argue with what was being done. Indeed, Griselda having that parchment in hand stunned them all into silence. One after another they stood up and moved toward the door, meeting with their individual aides or

seconds, touching them lightly on the shoulder, bowing their head as they made their way out of the room.

Many of them would take up Vasco's advice, kneel before God in their rooms as they prayed, asking for forgiveness for the Sin of pride and letting their fears overwhelm them to reality. Others, others would simply retire to their rooms and from thence to a small abbey near Rome. They would be watched, but Vasco doubted any of them would try to reclaim their power. It was obvious that the men in this room had been fighting amongst themselves on what to do up to this point and within themselves as well, trying to fight through long engrained instincts.

When the last of the original Supernatural Council of Cardinals adjourned, the new Council sat down, and within moments, had reached several decisions. First, there would be no attempt to excommunicate the young exorcists for learning the secret of God's demise. They would need to be sworn to silence, yet they were church exorcists. They would be used to keeping secrets, even the brash Xenovia. Moreover, since the two of them had remained by the Lady Gabriel, the Council deemed it extremely unlikely that either would have lost their faith.

Yet even with that out of the way, there were some issues about what Irina and Xenovia had reported that everyone there considered even more intriguing. When it came to the actual battle, the reports were not the best, and while the men and women at this table were experienced enough to know that a play-by-play was practically impossible, they still wanted more information on the actual battle itself. That however they could wait on, since Lady Gabriel and the two exorcists would have to return to the Church shortly. They could be questioned then, and for all of her flighty nature outside of her duties, the Lady Gabriel was a proven warrior, who could be trusted to give them information on the actual battle. Nevertheless, the players involved were just as interesting as what has actually occurred. And to that end, the Council decided to prepare an expedition back to Kuoh once Lady Gabriel and the two young exorcists returned.

"After all, while we might have no power over the Japanese government, that does not mean that we cannot work with them," Irina's Father mused. "And it has to be said, that our exorcists training in gun fighting could perhaps do with some work. Perhaps we have been too wedded to the idea of conformity in terms of weapons styles, keeping the tradition of gone and sword combined for the majority of our exorcist core. And then there is the holy maiden's big brother."

Some snickers and chuckles went around the table, but many were tinged with annoyance and bitterness. The loss of the holy maiden, and the fact that her power had been proven to be merely a Sacred Gear, one which was not discerning in who it healed, had hit many of the men around this table and their previous bosses equally hard.

"Agreed!" Vasco boomed, causing Griselda to smack him on the shoulder as the others shouted at him, 'Inside voice!' causing Vasco a somewhat amusing moment of déjà vu.

“Agreed,” he went on in a much lower tone. “I rather think I would like to meet him. Perhaps I should be part of this expedition to Kuoh we’ve been talking about to pave the way for the peace talks...”

OOOOOOO

As evening began to settle over the beach, Ranma found herself once more in the water, although both the fact that she was in the water and the fact that at the moment she was female did nothing to stop the eye dropping goodness around him/her. They weren’t due to leave until seven, and it had only been around three when Rias had returned with food, so the teens had eaten and then gone back to having fun.

Saji and Issei were elsewhere, trying to talk up some of the local girls. Why remained a mystery to Ranma, but that was up to them, and he’d heard something about them having their own contest, whatever that was about. Rias and Sona, apparently having had enough of physical fun for the day had begun a game of shogi underneath a umbrella. This didn’t stop Rias from occasionally grabbing Ranma’s eye as she sat there, her legs crossed, red hair flowing in the wind, her chest moving slightly as she shifted this way and that, occasionally looking up to catch Ranma’s eye as the shorter redhead swam by, a tiny smile flitting across her face.

Serafall sat nearby cheering on her imouto, while the rest of Sona’s peerage were doing something with Mousse and Kiba nearby that Ranma couldn’t see from where she swam. Kasumi and Asia were somewhere nearby, while Akeno, Saeko and Gabriel lazily swimming around, just enjoying the water.

Gabriel in particular delighted in it, commenting allowed that “Of all of nature’s wonders, I have always felt closest to water. Perhaps that is simply because of my powers, but I like to think that like those powers, my delight in Water is a reflection of Father.”

In keeping with that concept Gabriel was really swimming around, diving down into the water and swimming around near the ocean floor. Whereas Akeno and Saeko were not, lazing about nearby on floating devices. This was getting reactions from both Ranma and the men on shore. Akeno enjoyed the attention regardless of where it came from, but Saeko only had eyes for Ranma, and lazing about on top of a floating chair. Her daring bikini, which was so small Ranma could barely call it that, put her body on display to a tremendous degree, and the sight of her slightly heaving chest, long perfectly formed legs, and taut, toned stomach acted like a lodestone to Ranma’s gaze whenever she looked in the purplette’s direction.

So much so that Ranma didn’t see a wave coming and gagged as it caught her in the face, causing her to submerge with a splutter. “PWAaggh!”

Saeko giggled at her currently redheaded love interest’s mistake, watching as she recovered and then dove back down into the water. As did did, Saeko’s eyes, hidden behind a pair of sunglasses, flicked over to where Rias sat, narrowing in thought. Ranma had come back

from walking along the beach with a frown on his face, and confusion evident in his eyes. It was not a sight that she was used to seeing and Ranma had yet to explain what had happened. *And I know Rias went with him. Rias then came back alone with the food, and her smile when she looks Ranma's way is a bit too... something. Secretive, smug? Tender? UGGH, I don't know what it is but I don't like it!*

What happened when they were getting the food? And why do I think whatever did happen is going to make our love life more complicated? I can deal with so-called rivals coming out of the woodwork thanks to Ranma's father. I am... uncertain how I would react if Ranma suddenly began to encourage Rias' interest in him in some fashion.

Even as they swam around like this, Saeko was not the only one thinking deep thoughts. Indeed, Gabriel's thoughts were even deeper than Saeko's, and not at all tinged with the self-interest that the human woman's thoughts were, although they were centered on Ranma. Or rather, what Ranma and she had talked about that night on his rooftop. His connection with Jusenkyo and the chaotic mass of raw magic there. That was **very** interesting, as was the fact that the spirits there could manifest themselves in such a way.

Gabriel had to wrack her brain to remember, but there had been attempts from the Church and from the Grigori and the Devils to somehow probe the wild magic, which had been created by Father's demise. But off the top of her head, Gabriel couldn't remember what had happened during the research, only that the entire area had been deemed off-limits to the factions.

But I wonder if the place has settled down in some fashion? Or could Ranma perhaps, perhaps siphon off enough of the wild magic in order for us to set the spirits there to rest? Such a thing would be a tremendous boon, to say nothing of recovering the holy weapons that fell there. If their magic can be pulled out of the background magic of the area and reformed, it would be like gaining several hundred Sacred Gear users to Heaven's cause. Raquel was not the only one of my brethren who died on the day our father passed this plane after all.

And... Biting her lip, Gabriel twisted around, placing her feet on the sand underneath her, staring up through the water at the sun above. And to recover any bit of his holy light, be it in the form of magic or simple impressions of his presence, that would be a gift beyond fortunes favor.

Kicking up off of the bottom of the ocean floor, Gabriel burst out of the water, sending a cascade of water every which way. Her breasts heaved in her suit and her golden hair clung to her upper shoulders and neck, causing many of the men was still swimming nearby to gaze at her in awe, more than a few of them ignoring their significant others to do so. Although even the normal women around them also stared in surprise.

Although she hadn't won the contest earlier, that had very little to do with Gabriel's actual beauty, rather how approachable she seemed. Such was her beauty that no man, not

even perverts or men who habitually picked up women would ever try their luck with her. Looking though, even Ranma, currently in his female form, couldn't stop from doing that. Especially when her chest, a chest of a size to compete with Akeno's shifted and moved like that.

Gabriel did not notice, simply smiling at Asia who had just called out her name, telling her and the others to come in for food. As she waved back at her young friend, Gabriel's thoughts continued along the same vein they had been following him before. *If that is the case, then perhaps I should make a detour before heading back to the Vatican. And that will give Irina and Xenovia more time to come to grips with whether or not they can rebuild their faith knowing the truth about Father.*

Ranma, Saeko, and Gabriel along with a few of the others waited out of the water, finding that Rias and several of the others had brought out a grill, and had begun to cook some shellfish and even some fish they had caught in the water. Since they had bought food earlier, Gabriel was somewhat surprised, but decided this must be a sign of the fact they were all growing boys and girls. *Although that doesn't explain Serafall.*

It did actually have something to do with that. Devils routinely ate more than most humans. While martial artists like Ranma and Saeko ate even more.

Ranma was also somewhat surprised but by the fact, it was Rias who had taken over cooking rather than the idea of more food. Kasumi was laid out nearby, kicking her feet idly as she read a book of some kind and Ranma wondered what kind of conversational-judo Rias had used to convince Kasumi to let someone else do the cooking for a change. *Hell, I never got her to do that even when Soun dragged her and the rest after me and my Pops on camping trips.*

Seeing the look on Ranma's eyes, Rias laughed. "Apparently the book is just getting good, and Kasumi actually prefers to use a kitchen rather than a grill. Whereas I actually enjoy cooking like this. Informal faire like this is fun, and setting it up like this is almost like we're at a festival or something," she said enthusiastically.

Ranma smiled at that, amused by her enthusiasm for something so simple, but also enjoying the look on her face as she turned back to cook, taking some orders from Sona and the others.

Once more, Saeko noticed the smile on Ranma's face, and fought back a frown of her own, leaning into them from one side. "Tell me Ranma, do you prefer a woman who cooks? I have to admit that I do know my way around the kitchen as well, although since I met you, I haven't had much opportunity to show it," she teased.

Ranma laughed at that, putting in arm around her shoulders and pulling Saeko into a hug, which allayed Saeko's fears and put a smile on her face as she heard someone nearby gritting their teeth and annoyance. "Yeah, you mentioned that er, on that train first train trip we

took with Asia-chan, right? But I always thought that making your date cook for you was kind of selfish, you know? Cooking at home is fine, cooking as part of a date or when you're living in someone else's home, not so fine. Not unless you're on a training trip of some kind."

Nearby Mousse had stayed by Asia and Akeno, having spent some time apologizing to Akeno, but also out of a sense of intense obligation to the young Healer for his repaired eyesight. Glancing over to Asia for a moment, then Akeno and the others, Mousse asked, "How exactly do Devils train? Do you train as we humans do, or is there some kind of magic you can use to I don't know, heighten the gravity in an area to build your muscle strength?"

Rias frowned heavily at that as she turned away from her cooking to stare at Mousse, and Ranma sighed, nodding his head, although he didn't remove his arms from around Saeko. "Yeah, sorry to say, but Mousse is a bit of a Dragon Ball Z fan."

Akeno laughed her normal 'fufufu' laugh, shaking her head. "Sad to say, but most of us simply do magical exercise or physical ones. And given how learning under Ranma made both Rias and I sweaty and in pain afterward, I think you marital artist types have a bit of a leg up there."

Issei blushed at that, while Saji stared, and Rias blushed a bit, but the innuendo went right over Mousse and Ranma's heads. "I honestly think a training journey would be a great idea, me and Saeko talked about it the night after the fight with Koka-baka. I was thinking of bringing it up to the police. If I can get them to agree to funding it, I might be able to convince my mom they ordered it or something."

"Mama's boy," Mousse snorted. "Not that that that was a taunt, just an observation, it isn't as if you had any other parent worth the name. Comparing your mother to Genma is like comparing dirt to a hawk on the wing, no comparison."

The two men shared a laugh, and once more, Asia found herself wondering if they were friends rather than rivals. *Although I don't honestly know if Ranma-nii understands the difference there. Still, Mousse-san is actually quite nice when you get to know him. And a bit handsome too.*

Akeno noticed the look on Asia's face as she looked at the long-haired Chinese youth, and bit back another giggle. *Oh my, I really am spoiled for choice in terms of teasing targets these days. Rias, Ranma, Issei, Sona and now young Asia. Mmm... who to choose first?*

"Actually we, my peerage and I, might be going on a training trip soon ourselves," Rias admitted. "I would really like to start pushing us further. Honestly, before we met you, Kiba is the only one I can say really had a good training regime. But even if we hadn't started training with you, Ranma, that battle against Kokabiel was a wake-up call. One we only survived because of good luck and help from you and the three churchgoers..."

Gabriel giggled at that, shaking her head. “Mah, we were guests after all. And I did have some justice of my own to administer to Kokabiel, after all. But I actually might take Irina and Xenovia on a journey of our own. The two of them need training just as much as the rest of you young folk.”

Snorting at that, Serafall raised her hand, bouncing in place, drawing the eyes of every male there bar Ranma, who had turned back to his food, much to Saeko and Rias’ amusement. “Ooh, I’ve got a better idea! I could stay in Kuoh and coach you all!”

“N, nee-sama, surely there’s no need for that!” Sona stammered, looking horrified at the very idea.

Pouting, Serafall looked at her sorrowfully, before pulling Issei and Saji into a hug, which pressed their heads against her chest from either side, causing blood to pour from their nostrils. “Wah, b, boys, look! Sona’s entered her rebellious stage! Wahhh!!!”

Later, the group headed back to the train station, although many were surprised when Ranma, instead of entering the train with the others, decided to hop up onto the roof.

Kiba looked up at him in confusion, gesturing to Gabriel and Serafall, who were in line for the train tickets. “You do realize you don’t have to go up there to save money any longer, right? And what is it with you and rooftops?”

“I know, but it’s way more fun to be up here than it is to be inside. And I like being up high,” Ranma answered simply.

Thinking this might be a perfect time to get some alone time with Ranma, Saeko hastened to follow him, leaping up onto the roof with the same ease Ranma had shown, although her landing on the train’s roof was a bit less graceful.

“There’s a thought for further training. More balance work, and fighting on uneven surfaces.” Ranma nodded thoughtfully as she he watched her stumble a little before righting herself.

Her eyes narrowed as she stared after her rival for Ranma’s affections, Rias also bounded up words. “This looks like fun!”

Koneko followed instantly, leaving Akeno and Kiba to look at one another, then shrug and follow suit. Asia frowned a little, then shook her head, and moved over to stand between Kasumi and Gabriel, as they entered the train like normal people, along with the rest of the group that had come to the beach together. Issei scowled angrily up at the roof, wondering if he should follow, so that Ranma was alone with all those hotties. However, when he saw Kiba also joined them. *Is that good enough though? Just because Saeko is off the market doesn’t mean any of the others are, and I will be damned if I let Ranma achieve the harem dream before I do!*

“You too know that you’re going to have to get a lot stronger for that dream to become reality, right?” By this point in the relationship, Ddraig well understood what levers to use on his container. ***“No way would any woman on the supernatural side of things ever get it on with a male who’s weaker than her.”***

“Then that’s what we’ll do! Ranma might be ahead of me now in both strength and getting a girl, but I will reach of the finishing line first!”

Inside the train, the groups split off along seemingly natural lines, with Kasumi and Asia joining the three churchgoers for a pleasant conversation about places of natural beauty they had seen in their lives. Even Xenovia was in an extremely good mood because of how well the day had gone. That this also removed them from the drama around Sona and her sister was just a bonus.

“Onee-sama, please stop!” Sona whined, her head almost jammed into her big sister’s cleavage, bending her body at an unnatural angle as both of them were sitting down.

“Nope! I’m going to have to head down to the underworld almost from the moment we get back. I need my So-tan recharge!” Serafall retorted.

The rest of Sona’s peerage, those who had come with them, anyway, since several had been left behind in Kuoh to watch over things, all looked away as their king looked towards them pleadingly. *Traitors! I’ll have the lot of you sitting seiza for the entire school week!*

As the train slowly began to pull away from the train station, Ranma found himself sitting sandwiched between Saeko and Rias. Rias was simply smiling sunnily, while Saeko was nearly glaring at her. And at Ranma too, her eyes almost accusing, narrowed in consternation.

Nearby, Akeno watched this with something like glee, taking delight in both Ranma’s uncomfortable expression, and the battle going seemingly brewing between Rias and the Saeko. *But I wonder why Rias isn’t looking as combative. Oooh, could she have decided to go the multi-route so quickly?*

Kiba and Koneko decided to just stay out of things, although Koneko glancing in Ranma’s direction too. Sunbeam Boy grabbed her attention like that whenever he was around. Yet Koneko was a little annoyed to realize that she was feeling a little jealous of her King for sitting so close to him. *Grr... thought I was over the whole wanting to be his little sister thing. But then again, this feels different. What is it?*

Feeling danger rising from all around him, Ranma glanced over at Kiba, who, in a moment of male solidarity, decided to do what he could to save Ranma from Saeko’s growing anger. “So did you have anyplace specific you wanted to go on that training journey you mentioned earlier?”

“Not really. I know a few sword legends, but most of them tend to turn out to be crap,” Ranma answered quickly, thankful for the distraction from the two heavenly bodies pressing into them from either side. Talking to Kiba at least allowed him some measure of self-control, both over his blush and his flight instincts, which were telling him that being between two girls like this was a recipe for pain despite what Rias had said about being fine sharing him.

“There is actually only one sword I’ve heard about that would be a power up, and that’s down in Okinawa. Even if we take the trains and everything else, that’s several days journey. And while I kind of was joking earlier, I don’t really want to upset Mom by taking off without talking to her, and I think the best way would be to either have you lot give me an excuse, or for the police to come up with a ‘mission’ for me.

Snickering slightly at Ranma’s wording, Akeno frowned pensively tapping her chin with one hand as the train began to pick up speed. The speed of their passage started to cause the train to shake a little, although thanks to the quality of Japan’s railways and trains, that shaking was kept to a minimum. “Perhaps you should ask Tsubaki for help? You are after all her fiancé,” she teased. “And the Shinra clan is highly involved in the occult side of Japan.”

This earned her twin glares from Kiba and Ranma, and Akeno laughed. This set her chest to jiggling in such a way that Ranma had to look away hurriedly.

From where he sat nearby Mousse didn’t, instead staring unabashedly for several seconds, before shaking his head, and staring ahead of them, leaning back and enjoying the wind in his face as the train reached the equivalent of cruising speed. *For some reason, I’m remembering one of those books I saw the normal boys at Furinkan pass around. It was called something like mammary mountains? I’ve never understood the term, but now I do.*

Mousse quickly hit himself in the face with a rubber duck from his sleeve. *sque-eek* *No! *sque-eek* Stop it! *sque-eek* Don’t think like that. *sque-eek* You have Shampoo! *sque-eek* Don’t look at other girls and most definitely not the honored healer Asia. *squeeeee-eeeeek* She is far too pure for that. *sque-eek* And while Akeno certainly is not pure at all, she is not Shampoo, which is much more important! ...Isn’t it?*

“I’m just teasing,” Akeno said shaking her head, having seen Mousse’s reaction and enjoying it more than a bit. “Although I still have to laugh at how quickly Kiba came in to defend his lady’s honor without getting the full story.”

“Yes well, I suppose everyone deserves to leap before they look at least a few times,” Kiba said with dignity. A stance that was somewhat ruined by the wind from the train’s speed flinging his hair around in every direction including covering his eyes despite how short he kept it.

Akeno, Saeko and Rias were having it much worse than Kiba, Koneko or Ranma though, thanks to their far longer hair. Even with hair ties, it was practically impossible for the two Devils

to tame their hair, and Saeko had to tie hers up in a severe bun, using the boys as a momentary meat shield as she did so. Eventually all three of them decided to lay down, getting the majority of their hair out of the wind for now.

By this point, the shaking of the train was also causing... issues. Even laying down, the swaying and slight movements of the train 'traveled into the bodies of the martial artists and Devils. While the men didn't show much of a reaction save for their footwork needing a bit more concentration, that was not the case for Akeno, Rias, and Saeko. Koneko's chest was small and firm enough it didn't sway all that much, while Saeko's were firm enough to simply sway almost hypnotically to Ranma's gaze.

Rias and Akeno on the other hand, their jiggling was far less...contained. Even wearing bras as they were, their breasts swayed in every direction, and Mousse, who still clung to his rubber ducky and was squeezing it lightly but insistently, could barely look away from the Jell-O-like jiggles of Akeno's barely contained chest. Ranma was having the same problem with Rias's somewhat more restrained chest, something the redhead noticed but did not comment on more than letting her lips form into the same small, pleased smile Saeko wore whenever she saw Ranma's eyes lock onto her until Ranma turned entirely to look in the direction the train was going, ignoring looking at the others entirely.

But the fact that they were no longer looking at one another did not stop the conversation, and Rias flung herself into it wholeheartedly. The Occult Research Club was after all, not just a cover name, since she had begun to go to Kuoh Rias had organized several trips for her peerage, heading out to historical sites, most particularly ones with stories that connected to the occult. They hadn't found any special magical weapons yet, but she could at least cut down on Ranma's list of possible areas to go.

Ranma did the same, and his offhand remark about being the reason why Mount Horai was no longer open to the public because half of it was missing caused stares from all around. However, Ranma refused to be drawn into that story, turning his attention elsewhere.

After a little bit, Saeko asked, "Do you really think the government will go through with their plan to create a police force to, well, police the supernatural? I think it sounds rather far-fetched. Not that they would try in the first place, but that they would find enough martial artist types willing to work with them to do so."

"You've got a point, working with the government wasn't exactly my first choice. But if it pays well, I can see a few other martial artists taking it up. I just hope they remember what I told them, and don't try to recruit from Nerima. Or that ass Kumon. I really don't think I could work alongside that asshole," Ranma grumbled.

He was now standing, going through a series of katas as Koneko watched him, occasionally hopping to her feet to shadow his movements. Saeko too had occasionally gotten to her feet throughout the conversation to practice her balance, but the speed of the train

flummoxed her several times, as did her hair even though she tied it in a tight bun on top of her head rather than letting it loose as she normally did.

“That would be the man who pretended to be you in front of your mother. Am I remembering that right?” Saeko mused, causing Rias to ask for the full story there. Nevertheless, Ranma simply nodded to Saeko, again refusing to be brought into a story of his time in Nerima.

Instead, he concentrated on Saeko’s previous question, saying that the police had mentioned that they knew some Devil Hunters, a name that caught everyone’s attention, causing Ranma to hurriedly explain, “They probably aren’t Devil Hunters as in the type to go after you guys. I’m kinda assuming they mean rogue Youkai.”

“That makes sense. Actually, the government has put themselves in a good position to recruit Youkai,” Rias mused. “We heard recently that the Japanese government saved the daughter of the Association’s leader from being kidnapped somehow.”

Ranma nodded at that, having heard something about that from the police.

“I don’t know what the reaction of the three factions would be to such a move,” Rias went on, before grinning cheekily. “Still, that’s not my problem. If the police want to act as peacekeepers out beyond Kuoh’s borders, that’s no skin off my nose.”

“And I really doubt they’ll be able to find anything that can help them tangle with people like Maou Lucifer regardless,” Akeno added dryly.

Well, that might not be true for Ranma if he can figure out how to consciously use his connection to Jusenkya to power some magical abilities. Not just that whole sort of thing. I still can’t believe he gave that sword back to Gabriel for free! Rias mused. As nice as she was, Rias was still a businesswoman in many ways, and giving such a weapon back to Gabriel and through her the Church annoyed her on many levels. But with the power of Jusenkya if Ranma could use or harness all of it at once, he would be at least as strong as my brother, maybe even stronger, although he would never be able to sustain it. And I’d also wager that’s at least a decade or more of meditation into the future.

Shaking that thought off, Rias turned back into the conversation just as Ranma finished agreeing with her, adding that, “I’ll wager that even the government will realize that guns and stuff isn’t enough, although I would really like to see a handgun built for someone with my strength in mind. But the rest of what they brought to the party? Teamwork, tactics, communication? I’ve never been involved in a fight like the one we had against Kokabiel, but even I could tell that communication and working together was a big deal. So if they have some policeman to handle that aspect that might be a good idea.”

Ranma laughed then, shaking his head and going from standing and performing a kata to sitting in one fluid motion, then laying back down and staring up at the sky as he put his hands behind his head as a pillow. "And I got to say, that Rika chick kind of impressed me. She's the first actual policewoman I've ever worked with... or met really, I always thought they were like you know, those two gals in You're Under Arrest, dealing with just traffic and stuff."

At that, Saeko and Rias found themselves in the strange position of sharing an opinion beyond the fact that they both wanted Ranma. "How dare you! Women can make it in any profession they want, and be the equal of any man," Rias declared.

"While Japan might still be a patriarchal society in far too many ways, you will find policewomen in practically any Western Nation that is the equivalent of the men there," Saeko intoned.

Ranma laughed, and Akeno said slyly, "So even Saeko has occasionally watched anime? Or was that just a general objection just then?"

Saeko looked over at Rias, and has looked over at Saeko. "I've always preferred Natsume what about you?"

"I have read the mangas more than watch the anime, but if we're talking favorite female character, it would have to be Tier Haribel or Sung-Sun from Bleach. One is a martial artist who takes her Art incredibly seriously, and who is one of the most powerful fighters of her society. The other was woefully underutilized for her general demeanor, the aspect of death she was supposed to exemplify, and the loyalty she seemed to inspire," Saeko answered with some heat in her tone.

"OOH, nice choices!" Rias gave the other woman a thumb up, thrusting her hand up into the air so that the other woman could see it from where she laid out nearby. "If we're talking Bleach, I kind of liked Orihime but I liked her more with Tsubaki than with Ichigo. I always felt her crush on him was a little... too bland I guess."

"Gah, what is it with you and choosing crappy anime to talk about? All that inner world nonsense from Bleach, and don't get me started on the plot," Ranma grumbled, causing everyone else on the roof of the train to raise their heads to stare at him. "What?"

"You, of all people do not get to say that the idea of inner world is nonsense Ranma, Mister connected to the largest source of chaos magic on the planet," Rias shot back the others on the roof nodding their heads like bobble heads in agreement.

Ranma raised a finger as if to argue, then slowly lowered head and lowered his head in turn. "Dammit you're right! After all the times I made fun of that hole in her other self nonsense, and how weird it would be for other people to control your inner mind like that, here I am, connected to Jusenkyo, and where the spirits from there can occasionally reach out and

poke my brain. Thankfully, it seems as if they can't do it all the time, or else I'd probably be going crazy right now."

Deciding she wanted to head off any kind of serious conversation at this point, Akeno spoke up now. "As my king's best friend growing up, I was subjected to a lots of different anime, but I have to say from all of them my favorite character was..."

"Anko?" Ranma interrupted, causing her to pout and stare at him then over at Rias in a betrayed manner, which in turn had Rias shaking her head and laughing at how accurate Ranma's guess had been.

Snorting, Mousse shook his head. "I agree with Ranma, Anko is something of an obvious choice. Although, I believe you could, what is a phrase, rock a Tsunade costume."

Even Kiba paused for a moment at that, while Rias and Saeko both frowned, but had to concede the point. Akeno truly would look amazing dressed up as Tsunade, although her hair was totally different from the blonde powerhouse's.

"Hmm... Well if we were talking about cosplay, who do you think fits Saeko?"

"Nagato from KanColle, or that main character from that steam punk anime, Sakura Wars," Ranma answered instantly.

That got the girls on the discussion of KanColle for a time, and Ranma was very thankful that he was laying out now, so that none of them could see his blushes. *God damn that one sailor who introduced to KanColle doujins.*

Kiba too was in much the same position, imagining Tsubaki dressed up as some of the characters the girls were mentioning.

During a lull in the conversation, Koneko decided to speak up at last, having been silent up to this point. Not that that was unusual for her obviously. "I liked Yoruichi."

This caused Ranma to twitch a little. "No thank you! I've had it up to here with teachers who prefer to make fun of their students over actually teaching them, and I really don't want to talk about Bleach anymore. I swear our watching that the night before is where that weird hallucination with the furry demon talking came from."

"Wait, what?" Koneko asked, cocking her head to one side. "Idea a cat could talk?"

Ranma waved his hand airily. "Just a hallucination I had that day I, er, you know with Shampoo and her cursed form. I passed by a furry demon on a rooftop, and imagined it talked to me."

The others all laughed at that, but for some reason, Koneko seemed to take a little more interest in Ranma then, twisting around and swinging towards him, looking down into his face causing him to shift rapidly backward. "What did the talking cat say?"

Ranma was about to reply when the train started to slow and he rapidly stood up, flipping himself back and away from Koneko. "Come on, off the train everybody!"

Rias frowned for a moment, but then remembered that they really shouldn't be seen here, most particularly herself and the other Kuoh students. They could of course use memory spells to modify anyone's memory that noticed them, but it would be better to not need to do so in the first place. Moreover, the train station in Kuoh entered an actual station, rather than pulling up alongside, which meant there was a very low roof coming their way.

Everyone was able to hop off of the roof in time, and eventually met up with the others outside of the train station. The exception was Serafall, whose phone had gone off as they were exiting the train. This relieved Sona of her sisters' attention for the first time in hours, something she was very thankful for. "Oh Maou, thank you whoever called her! Now if I can get back to the house, she might not have time to come after me before she has to go down to the Underworld."

Wordlessly Rias patted her friend's shoulder, knowing how much her own brother would have annoyed her in the same timeframe while stuck in a train. "If you want to run off, I'll try and run interference if I have to."

Smiling gratefully at that, Sona was about to agree and indeed rush off but then the piece of the night was shattered by several screams, and a loud call of "Hotcha! What a haul!"

Paling, Ranma slapped one hand over his head, trying to ignore reality for a few seconds. "No, please, no! Don't tell me he found me already!"

"Oh dear, is that who you I think it is?" Saeko said, pulling out her bokken and shifting to stand closer to Ranma, staring around over the heads of the rest of the group as Kiba and the other knights also reacted, not understanding what was going on but knowing it was bad.

"What a hall, what a haul! Look at all these silky darlings that were just waiting to be liberated!" came the shout once more.

"Happosai," Rias growled, making the same connection that Saeko had already thanks to the numerous times Ranma had mentioned the ancient master of Anything Goes. "I do hope I get the opportunity to introduce him to my Power of Destruction. I'll wager even a pervert of his caliber won't be able to survive a head on strike."

"Getting that strike in is going to be the tough part," Ranma muttered, finishing triangulating where the screams and shouts are coming from. He instantly took off, racing

towards a nearby building in that direction, leaping up and heading towards the sound of the disturbance in the fastest means possible.

Behind her, Saeko hastened to follow, with Rias ordering her Devils up into the air. "We'll come at him from every direction and on high in particular. The guy might be a martial arts master, but if we can keep our range open, that shouldn't matter much."

Gabriel frowned in confusion, staring around at all the activity as she wondered aloud, "Whatever is going on?"

"Ano, I believe that Ranma mentioned him a time or two to me. He is a very old, um..." Asia began, only to be cut off as a loud booming noise reached them.

A second later, Ranma slammed down into the ground in front of them, rolling as he struck by a small... well, Gabriel thought of it is prune the size of a normal person's foreleg for a moment. "Is, is it human?"

Behind him on the wind dozens or perhaps even a hundred bras and panties floated on the wind, freed from their previous confines in Happosai's bag. But despite that, Happosai sounded cheerful as he and Ranma danced around one another.

"There you are, Ranma! I've missed my favorite pupil since you left Nerima. I'll even forgive you for attacking my bag of darlings, so long as you wear this little number! Look, it even matches your hair color!" Happy intoned as he alighted on a lamppost, pulling out from underneath his black and brown gi a set of panties and bra that was indeed done in red, silky red, with lace around the edges.

"Never you ancient, wrinkled asshole!" Ranma shouted as he charged forwards, while above, Rias, who had been about to dive down and attack the man, froze at the sight of her own panties in those tiny, grizzled hands.

Akeno and Kiba did not pause. With Koneko coming up from below, it looked as if they were coming in from too many directions for Happosai to get away. However, their timing was a little off. Akeno's lightning blast flashed forward towards Happosai as she shouted, "Ara, someone is most definitely asking for some punishment!"

But Happosai dodged easily, the lightning missing him by a country mile, showing ability to read his opponents that caused Rias' eyes to widen. Then Kiba's sword was flashing out of his hand as Happosai performed a block with his pipe. The pipe reinforced by his ki catching the demonic blade in Kiba's hands, hurling it away before a tiny fist found his chest, cracking into it with enough force to cause Kiba to gasp and fall out of the sky. "Don't interfere pretty boy! I make an allowance for Ranma because he's a student of Anything Goes. But I'm not going to allow any pretty boy to chase after me like this! Only pretty girls."

“Pervert!” Koneko growled, only to find her own punch deflected easily, and then Happosai grabbing on to her chests.

Down below, the others who had yet to decide what the hell was going on saw this, and instantly began to decide to get involved. Irina and Xenovia raced to either side, pulling out their Excalibur fragments, while Gabriel summoned up her wings, and took to the air, flapping towards the point of conflict.

Meanwhile, Happosai was happily rubbing his head against Koneko, saying, “Oh my word, you might not have much volume dear, but these are quite perky and nice for their size. Don’t worry, I can see your future will be very bright!”

“DIE!” Koneko shrieked, bringing a fist down on top of Happosai’s head. The blow landed, hurling Happosai away from her.

“OWW!!” Happosai shouted, grimacing. *I thought she was just a Nekomata, but that strength, is she one of those fancy Devil Pieces I heard about a few decades back?*

Koneko followed up snarling in rage, her Nekomata features on full display, and that gave Happosai an idea. *I made this up to deal with Neko-Ranma, but I suppose this will do for a show.*

He reached into his gi, but then had to dodge to one side before Ranma’s fist smashed down where he had just been standing a second before. Ranma began to kick and punch at Happosai, who dodged ducked and redirected them all, nodding in approval, his plan to deal with the cat girl derailed for a second. “I see you’re still taking the Art seriously! I can tell a slight difference in your style and strength since the last time we met.”

Like Cologne before him, Happosai also noticed that something had changed in the way Ranma’s ki flowed through his body. It reminded him of something, but besides noticing how much better it was able to flow and empower Ranma further, Happosai had no time to figure out what that was about. Instincts screaming, Happosai dodged to the side, seeing a blast of ravaging power flash through the space he had just occupied.

Koneko reached them then, coming down from above, blocking Rias from taking her next shot, and the redhead cursed. “Darn it! Need to work on teamwork for certain!”

Koneko tried to punch the pervert’s head off, only for him to redirect her blow into Ranma’s chest. Ranma grunted under the impact, staggering back, and Koneko’s eyes widened. But she didn’t have time to apologize, as Happosai pulled out the small packet he had been searching for in his ki space. Leaping up into Koneko’s face, he slapped the small packet between his hands, blowing hard as he did. The resultant cloud of dust exploded into Koneko’s face.

Caught unawares, Koneko breathed in the dust just as Ranma's kick caught Happosai and hurled him away. None of the others noticed anything for a few seconds, the fight moving away from Koneko. Then she too was moving, but surprising Akeno and Rias she moved away from the battle, heading off to one side.

"What is Koneko doing?" Akeno questioned, confusion plain on her face.

"I think she might be trying to circle round," Rias said, smiling in approval. *Funny thing though, I swear I saw a firefly right before she took off. And what was that powder supposed to do?*

That was a question on Ranma's lips at that moment, although of course, he was a lot cruder about it. "What the fuck, Gramps!? What was that stuff ya blew in Koneko's face!? It better not've been anything dirty, or I swear I will break you like a KitKat if it's the last thing I do."

"No, no, nothing like that. It's just catnip," Happy shouted back. *Well, that and some weed mixed in.* "I thought it'd be funny. Pity the girl didn't stick around for long."

A gleaming lance thrust at Happosai's back, causing him to duck forward rolling underneath Ranma's legs. Ranma leaped high, letting Gabriel's spear pass below him, lightly tapping on her shoulder to redirect himself into a flying kick towards Happosai. But Happosai caught the kick on the end of his pipe, and Ranma had just a second to shout, "Oh not again!" Before finding himself hurled up through the air away from the point of conflict as he imitated a helicopter.

"Stand by and prepare for your punishment, sinner!" Gabriel shouted, bringing her light lance forward as she let some of her power enter her voice. To her surprised astonishment, Happosai didn't seem affected at all. *Is he really human!?*

Even more surprising was the sight of Happosai's pipe intercepting the light lance and instead of cutting through or even being redirected, it shattered like so much glass. For just a moment his pipe seemed to glow, and as Ranma pushed himself to his feet after crashing into a rooftop nearby, Ranma spotted that, realizing that probably meant that Happosai had filled his pipe with more ki.

The next second, Happosai had sprung forward into Gabriel's reach. A desperate grab missed him by an inch, but before he could latch onto her chest, Gabriel bounded backwards, another light lance appearing in her hand, sword sides to this time, chopping in from the side.

"Have a Hoppo Daikarin, my dear!" Happosai shouted, pulling a large firework from his weapon space and tossing it into Gabriel's face.

It exploded as it struck her face and would have blinded anyone normal, but Gabriel was far from normal. Indeed, she barely felt the explosion, and although forced to close her eyes for a second Gabriel wove a circle of death around herself with twin light lances, keeping the diminutive Grand Master at bay.

Tsking at that, Happosai decided to not try his luck further with the blonde woman with the terrifying amount of magic and instead bounced off, racing away. *I don't think I want to stay close to that lady, not until the rest of them start to close and I can use the chaos of that against her.*

This was seen by Sona, Rias, Akeno and Tsubaki. The foursome watched Happosai disappear into a group of women who it must have been chasing after them, idly noting that this didn't include Nodoka, although Shampoo could be seen among the girls below. "They'll need to disperse," Sona ground out. "When they do, we strike, no hesitation, no mercy."

"Yes my king," Tsubaki answered, watching as the women down below shrieked and began to flee in different directions. "We will have to use wide area of memory charms after all this, however. Our wings are fully visible for anyone who can see us."

Sona was about to reply when she felt someone clamped onto her rear, nuzzling in. "Oh my word! You might not have much up top, but your rear is top-notch, my dear!"

Tsubaki instantly turned in that direction, a blast of magic forming from her hand. But then Happosai, who had used the inside of an office building to hide his presence until he could leap out onto Sona, was gone. Instead, Tsubaki's attack instead struck her king, causing both women to cry out one in pain, and the other in shock and horror as she apologized rapidly.

Down below, the rest of Sona's peerage had begun to fan out, trying to create a cordon, while Ranma and the rest with Happosai. But in her position at one of the points of that cordon Momo became Happosai's next target, the girl screaming as her bra was stolen out from under her clothing, joining Sona's panties and Rias' bra.

Dodging and ducking into alleyways and breaking through windows to avoid being attacked from above, Happosai continued to run away from the lightning, water and Power of Destruction attacks raining down from on high, moving faster than Ranma had ever seen him move. "What the hell old man! You've been holding out on me!" he shouted as he closed,

The two Anything Goes Martial Artists exchanged blows, while behind them, Saeko once more grimly tried to close, having failed up to this point to get close before Happosai could bounce away again. *I really do have to work on my straight-line speed!*

"Of course, you wouldn't use all your power to crush a toddler, would you? I am many things, a sadist, a masochist and a fetishist, along with other things that probably wouldn't even

understand if I use the words to describe them. But do you think I am someone who would play with those so much weaker than myself?"

"Depends, are we playing cards or chess?" Ranma grunted, hoping the odd answer would throw Happosai off his game, but Happosai merely laughed, blocked Ranma's next punch, and then flicked the tip of his pipe up towards Ranma's eyes, as if he was going to stab one of them out. Ranma dodged to one side, but the grazing strike to the side of his head rang his bell a bit, causing Ranma to stumble. *Damn! That hurt nearly as much as a punch from the Crazy Crow!*

The memory of his battle with Kokabiel made Ranma wonder if he should reach for his connection to Jusenkyo and try to use magic. But while Ranma knew he always learned better in a fight, there were far too many people around, it being only around nine thirty at night, and a large crowd of women who had been chasing after Ranma were still trying to close with Happosai, trailing him along the road below.

As he bounced back away from his young protégé, Happosai once more exulted in the joy of being chased like this. It had taken him a while to figure out how to track Ranma down, but eventually the idea came to him that if Ranma was anywhere, his mother, who had met Happosai several times, might try to force him to go back to school. If so, his previous record would need to be transferred. A quick breaking and entering and a one-sided spar with Kuno the elder, and Happosai had figured out where Ranma had gone. *And I have to give it to Ranma, this place is amazing!*

"Ranma, try to steer him towards the school! There will be more room to play with there and far fewer people worry about," Rias ordered as she and the other magic users were stymied by the crowd. Since it was Sunday, the school's grounds would be empty save a few maintenance workers.

"Steer, right," Ranma grumble ended in a grunt as he took a hit to his leg that nearly upended him even in midair. He was still able to roll with it, using the momentum to hurl himself higher into the air and away from Happosai, The next second, a point-blank ki blast took Happosai in the face, sending him sprawling back onto the earth below.

This finally let Saeko get involved, and she, Kiba, and Sona's two knights hurled themselves forward from every direction. It was only as the smoke cleared that three of the attackers found that Happosai had somehow displaced himself with the fourth, who was now on the ground groaning in pain from the multiple hits.

Then Kiba was being kicked away, and Saeko found her sword blocked by that simple wooden pipe once more. "And you would be Saeko? I've heard quite a lot about you, you seem to be quite skilled my dear!"

“Thank you for the compliment, ancient one!” Saeko said, even as she brought up a leg to kick out, shivering as a small hand smacked her bare calf out of the way, allowing Happosai to springboard up into the air just like Ranma would do.

Nearby, Asia dithered, her hands ringing together as she wondered aloud, “should, should I go and try to help the wounded?”

Mousse, who had not moved from her side since the moment they first heard screaming, shook his head firmly. “No. If he comes nearby, I will try my best to protect you, but you shouldn’t draw attention to yourself like that.”

And I am in no rush to add my own humiliation to everyone else’s. Mousse knew that he was best at mid-range armed combat, but as Ranma had proven many times, against an Anything Goes practitioner, he wouldn’t be able to keep that range open. *And my weapons would just cause more trouble for everyone around me.*

Asia looked torn, then stared as a scream reverberated from up in the air. Looking up, she saw that Irina had become one of Happosai’s many victims. “Oh, now my dear, this is magnificent! You might not have quite the size of some of these other ladies, but they are the perfect torpedo shape! Although your choice of underwear leaves something to be desired. It’s all too plain.”

Still shrieking, Irina activated Excalibur mimic, which became a series of daggers thrusting out from where it coiled around one arm. This actually caused Happosai to spring away in surprise, slicing into his gi around his waist and side, but drawing no blood. And as he leaped away, in his hands was Irina’s admittedly quite plain bra.

This was the scene, which Serafall came out of the train station to. She blinked, staring as Gabriel launched herself through the air, her wings visible now as she closed with the diminutive creature, her light lance flashing forward with such speed and strength it was as if the archangel was treating it as if it was the most deadly enemy. The only thing ruining the image was the fact that she hadn’t called upon her aria to unlock her powers. Everywhere Serafall looked, she saw several of the women she’d spent most the day with crouching down and holding their chest or hips protectively. More than half of Sona’s peerage had been taken out of the fight by this point by the simple expedient of removing various articles of clothing, and two of them had been simply not straight unconscious to join Kiba and Saji.

“What in the heck? Who is that? What is he doing, and what did I miss!?” Serafall paused, then growled out. “AGAIN!”

Tsubaki crashed down right in front of her, hurled away by a blow from one of the other combatants as Happosai dodged letting her take the hit entirely. She had heard Serafall’s shriek however and answered as she pushed herself groaning to her feet. “In order, Happosai, an

ancient martial artist pervert and quite a lot! I hope that call you took was worth it Serafall-sama, because that pervert has groped more than half of us by this point!"

Happosai had also taken quite a few licks. One of his eyes was swollen shut by a blow from Ranma, and he was now favoring one leg things to a near miss from Sona, although Rias' Power of Destruction blasts had probably done the most visible damage, searing away his clothing and places with near misses, and Akeno had even hit him once with her lightning, although that hadn't seemed to do much astonishingly.

Nevertheless, it was very obvious to both Kings that the old pervert somehow understood their powers coming into this fight. This was why he was now retreating away from the combined efforts of Ranma, Akeno, Gabriel and Sona shouting out, "Why won't you let an old man just had his fun, huh?!"

But he still left destruction in his wake, which was more than enough for Serafall. As that destruction consisted of Sona who was now braless to go with her previously stolen panties. "You're a dead man walking, Shorty! Only I get to feel So-tan's tight little curves!"

With that she charged forward, bounding into the air and moving faster than several of the watchers could track, just as Issei finally got involved in the fight as well.

He had been sneaking around the edges, wanting to get in the best shot he could before the pervert was aware of his presence. That and a large part of him actually enjoyed seeing the girls after Happosai had relieved them of their undergarments. Oppai should be bouncing free after all. Better than that had been the sight of Saji and Kiba being laid out so easily.

What Issei had not enjoyed was seeing the old pervert grope so many of his harem targets. While he wanted to be the Harem King, seeing someone else grope some of the oppai he was aiming for was beyond the pale. *Peeping, stealing underwear is fine, but groping someone's butt or oppai is where I draw the line! Especially when it isn't me that's doing it!*

Now Issei gleefully took his revenge. "You bastard, all those oppai belong to me! Boosted Blast!"

"Boost!" shouted the Boosted Gear on his arm, lashing out with a blast of energy towards Happosai.

The others all flipped or flew backwards as the blast connected, causing Happosai to actually let loose his first cry of pain throughout the fight and finishing the job of hurling him towards the school. In fact, it carried him across the grounds, to crash first into the ground whereupon he began to skip like a flat stone over water, several times before finding himself embedded into the side of the old building the Occult Research Club used as its headquarters.

Groaning, Happosai pushed himself out of the rubble, watching as Gabriel and another woman whose proportions were simply astonishing to him leaped over the school wall towards him. Although Happosai desperately wanted to charge forward and feel up the oppai loli coming towards him, Happosai could feel the power hidden within both women despite how tightly leashed the majority of their power was. *Or perhaps it could be described better as locked away? Either of them alone would be dangerous to play around with, and that redhead was right, there's too much open space around here!* The open area of the school grounds, with no more bystanders around and the weaker members of this group of mystical beings pulling back, Happosai would have far less of an easy time of it.

With that in mind, he pulled out several dozen of his firecrackers, hurling them all around as Gabriel and the other one closed. "Leave an old man to his fun curse you! Hoppo Great Escape Cloud!"

With short fuses the fireworks exploded in midair, sending bright flashes of light and smoke everywhere, doing no damage to either of the powerful women, and not even doing a very good job of blinding them. But the smoke obscured his position just enough for him to duck back inside the hole in the outer wall of the ancient schoolhouse. Here Happosai found himself standing in a staircase, and he quickly bounded upwards, bouncing off walls and looking for a Windows had could lead him elsewhere.

Finding a door, he pushed it open into what looked like a managers receiving room maybe, or something like that. Although the woman frozen up to her neck in ice in one corner was most decidedly not normal for such places.

Raynare had been left on ice up to this point. Call it arrogance, call it a lack of priorities, call it confidence in her ice magic, but after Serafall had imprisoned her within her ice, not a one of the other young Devils or even Ranma and Gabriel had barely given the prisoner a spare thought.

But despite freezing her tits off, Raynare was still somewhat aware of her surroundings. She could hear the sounds of, "Get the pervert," and, "while the Lord father might forgive any sin, I believe this particular sinner is due for some penitence!"

Hearing that, Raynare came up with a plan. A plan to do what female Fallen always did, use men's own sins against them. "Hey old man, get me out of here and I'll let you use my tits as your pillows for a week!"

His eyes widening and a nosebleed starting, Happosai leaped in her direction. His leg glowed blue for a second before crashing into Raynare's ice prison, shattering it. As the ice broke, his legs lashed out in a series of kicks, hurling the pieces of ice towards the window set in one wall, smashing it in turn. "Then let's get out of here, toots!"

A currently female Ranma appeared in the window, but she had to duck out of the way, as two light lances zoomed through where her head and shoulders had been a moment ago, followed by Raynare. The Fallen Angel dove out of the window headfirst falling toward the ground where Ranma landed for a second before her wings appeared in mid fall, arresting her momentum and hurling her back upwards as Haposai clung to her chest. Several more light lances kept Ranma dancing as Raynare passed over the redhead and away.

Beams of Power of Destruction, high-pressure water, and lightning lashed out from every direction, along with several boosted blasts from Issei and a few ki shots from Ranma. However, Raynare dove down quickly once more, putting the outer wall of the school between her and most of the attacks, with predictable results. Haposai once more pulled out several bombs, tossing them every which way and further confusing the issue before Raynare burst out the other end of the smoke and dust, flying low to the ground as fast as she could go.

Behind them, Ranma paused alighting on a portion of the wall that was surprisingly still standing in the middle of the impromptu target zone, staring after the twosome, shaking her head in consternation. She had been splashed several times in the fight by Sona's attacks, and Haposai had almost succeeded in forcing that dratted red bra on her. "Okay, I admit it. I did not see that pair coming. I don't know who to pity more in that relationship right now, but I know I'm glad they're running away for now."

"Please don't make me throw up! While I have no love for the Fallen, and Raynare least of all, I would not wish that on anyone," Saeko said, grumbling a little and rolling one of her shoulders where she had taken a hit after she had actually been able to join the battle. Feeling that she had been relegated to second-class throughout this little impromptu conflict was somewhat galling, but Saeko resigned herself to that fact with the help of realizing that many of the Devils, and particularly Rias, had found themselves in a similar position. *Including having our underwear peeled out from under our clothing, drat it!*

"Should we go after them, Ranma? You are the expert on the odd little man after all," Gabriel asked, alighting next to Ranma. Her hair was disheveled, her skirt and blouse both torn in places, from strikes from the other women in the chase more than Haposai, and it was all Ranma could do to not stare and drool.

Gabriel had been the only woman who was able to actually fight Haposai in close quarters, and keep her undergarments where they were supposed to be. He had still gotten a very good grope over the clothing grope on her though, something that Irina and Xenovia were both incredibly incensed about judging from the curses Ranma had heard from them at the time. Indeed, Ranma as he looked away, reflected that Haposai might just be the target of a holy war if what he did ever got back to the church.

"Odd little man? Have you been practicing your use of understatements?" Saeko teased gently, nudging the older woman with her shoulder and trying hard not to feel jealous about how good she looked even disheveled as she was. The day spent at the beach competing

against her in various forms of exercise had worn away quite a large amount of the awe and reverence towards Gabriel that Saeko had felt upon meeting her.

“Well he is, is he not? He is very little, and is very odd,” Gabriel answered back, knowing that Saeko was simply playing around, but uncertain why her own words had garnered such reaction.

Rias alighting nearby, followed by Sona, Serafall and Akeno, who instantly began to report on the status of the rest of the two peerages. “Saji is still out. When he was flung through that one wall, he hit a girder inside and appears to have developed a concussion. Tsubaki, Reya, Momo, Ruruko and all the rest were all looking for their underwear. When I last saw her, Koneko was chasing off something or other, and I believe at least several hundred people saw our wings and us flying around tonight. I don’t think we can actually afford to go after them in any numbers lest we miss someone whose memories or phones we need to deal with.”

Gabriel frowned shaking her head. “And once they go to ground, I have no ability to track them. I am the Herald of His host, not the Pathfinder.”

“And I have to head down to hell as soon as possible to start helping Sirzechs deal with the fallout from that Crazy Crow’s attack. Drat it,” Serafall announced, looking over at Ranma. She then looked over at her sister. “And after all this, I need to get another So-tan fix!”

With that she rushed Sona, picking her up and nuzzling into her chest.

Seeing that, Rias shook her head and turned back to Ranma. “You know, I think you kind of understated how much chaos Happosai can leave behind him. This was honestly quite impressive, if equally annoying!”

“Yeah, that’s Happosai in a nutshell,” Ranma grumbled. His bruises had already healed thanks to his ki healing, but he was still feeling extremely irritated himself, knowing that Happosai had actually held back on him in Nerima. *I don’t buy that he did it all the time, and I for sure know he didn’t hold back on his tricks! But still, to see he still retained an edge in speed and strength is really annoying!*

“True. Although I don’t think, there is any way we can do anything about him now. Unless one of you is capable of tracking him down?” Ranma was the only one who raised his hand, admitting he could probably track them out in the fields but not in the city. Seeing that, Gabriel sighed, and looked over at Rias and Sona who was still trying to squirm out of her sister’s embrace. “In that case, I think we all need to start clearing up after tonight’s events. Repair the damage we did to your city, and, although a part of me is somewhat pained by the necessity, erase the memories of everyone who saw us tonight.”

Ranma scowled a bit, but let the others talk about that for a bit. He wasn’t altogether happy about it, but understood the necessity of keeping the whole devil thing at least a secret.

“In that case, I’m going to head home. There’s nothing me or Saeko can do about that kind of thing unless you want us to start rebuilding some of the wall here? I’m good martial arts construction, but I don’t think I’d be as fast as your magic spells or whatever.”

“If you could check on Koneko on your way, I would appreciate it,” Rias answered, sighing faintly at the fact that this would allow Ranma and Saeko some time by themselves. *Drat it, I get the impression the more I let Saeko have alone time with Ranma, the more she will be able to convince him not to let me in. But then again, my peerage and I have already moved out of Ranma’s house, so it isn’t as if they wouldn’t be alone anyway. Still, it annoys me more than a little bit. I need to think of a way to bring up sharing Ranma to Saeko when we’re alone.*

“Huh, come to think of it, yeah... we might want to get on that right away...” Ranma answered, sweatdropping as he remembered where. “Where was she last time anyone saw her?”

OOOOOOO

“Mah, my poor little Shirone-chan, to be groped by such a horrible little old man, nya. And to top it off, what was in that cloud you inhaled? If there weren’t so many witnesses and I wasn’t so freaking terrified of Serafall and Gabriel, I’d have filleted that asshole, nya. Still, at least he said that you had potential for the future, nya? Maybe eventually you’ll be as big as your big sister, nee?”

Koneko’s consciousness returned to her slowly as these words penetrated her drug-addled brain, and she slowly stopped playing with what her drug addled mind was certain was a large ferret. It was actually a short hose, left out in the middle of a construction area, yet under the influence of whatever concoction Happosai was drugged with, Koneko could barely tell its shape, let alone anything else.

But more than the words, it was the voice, which truly pushed through the haze of her mind, a voice that she had heard every day of her life before coming to live with Rias. A voice that belonged to a loved one she had not heard of for many years now. *Nee-chan!*

Before her mind could truly grasp what her sister’s presence might mean, Koneko shot upward, grabbing towards where the voice was coming from, finding her arms going around her sister’s waist and pulling the older girl into a hug so hard both of them thumped to the ground. “Nee-san!”

“Nyaa!? That is so not the reaction I expected,” Kuroka, S-class wanted Rogue Devils stated as she looks down at where her little sister was nuzzling into her stomach, more than a little bewildered, one hand rubbing her back as she slowly sat up. Then she sniffed the air, and muttered, “Drat! Shirone, are you high!?” *That smells like marijuana and catnip mixed together! Oooo... my little sister is as high as a kite right now. I hope it doesn’t last long.*

Koneko mumbled something about that not being her name anymore, but only squeezed the older girl cat girl harder. “Not getting away. Not leaving, not again! Want to watch over me, want to check up on me? Stay!”

Sighing, Kuroka threw out any thought of questioning why Koneko was having such a positive response to her, or anything really serious about Rias or any of the others, which was ostensibly part of her mission into Kuoh: to gather information about the Devils there and the strange new martial artists on the scene. With Koneko so high, it would be really unfair. *That, and getting hugs is way better than getting punches!*

“Shirone, you know I can’t! You are far safer with Rias-chan and the rest of your new family than you would be with me out on the road. I’m involved with some very bad people, or at least very powerful and bizarre anyway, nya,” Kuroka amended, shaking her head.

After all, the term bad didn’t really describe many of the more powerful members of the Khaos Brigade. Single-minded, simple, and without empathy, sure, but fairly few were outright evil. Not on the same level as Kuroka’s former master, who had been a sadist and murderer and who had couched both in terms of his own power rather than owning up to the fact that he simply enjoyed hurting those within his peerage.

Then a thought struck her. “And how do you know I’m watching over you anyway? I’m positive neither you nor any of your Devil friends could pierce my shape changing, nya.”

“No!” Koneko mewled like the young kitten that was her familiar not answering her sister’s actual question. “Stay!”

Kuroka sighed and began to pat Koneko on the head, rubbing her fingers across Koneko’s ears as they appeared on her head, watching as her tail swished happily behind her. “Still a little spoiled, aren’t you? Still, that’s what makes you so cute! I’m not about to go full sis-con like Serafall, but you do know I care about you a lot right? Maybe someday, I will be able to come back and see you for longer, but not right now. You’re going to have to let me go you know. I’m going to get into a lot of trouble both from your friends and from the people I’m working with now, nya.”

Nevertheless, her little sister simply mewled more, and nuzzled harder against her, causing Kuroka to giggle. *Oh, she is going to be so embarrassed when she comes down off this. Although hopefully she’ll still feel kindly disposed towards me. I was afraid she’d still be blaming me for abandoning her, or believe I’m insane from that stupid ‘chakra bad’ nonsense.*

Kuroka looked up as a scent hit her, two scents in fact, neither of which were very familiar to her. But when Saeko and a now-male Ranma landed on the rooftop across from her, she breathed out another sigh, this one of relief. *Well, if it had to be anyone, the two of them are probably the best I could hope for.*

“Hey you two, I don’t suppose you could give me a hand could you, nya?” She asked, while probing out with her Chakra powers towards the two of them. The young woman felt powerful, strong and full of vibrate life, like the best human athletes, only amplified. But the male took that to an even further extreme, nearly buzzing in her senses with contained energy. It felt almost like a sunbeam to her, much like Ranma did to Koneko’s senses.

But on top of that was the magic interwoven into his very being that she could also sense, magic of a type that she had never felt precisely that kind before, and on a large scale to. It was hard to get a hold of even as Ranma walks towards her, but it was there. *And it gives me the feeling like I’m only staring at the tip of an iceberg. Where did that magic come from? It certainly isn’t part of this young man’s normal makeup like it would be for a magician, Devil, or someone else he could use straight up magic. It’s separate, but connected, like, like a thread or something? WEIRDDDD....*

“And who are you supposed to be, Koneko-chan’s big sister or something?” Ranma demanded, trying hard not to flinch at the site of the cat ears and tails on both Koneko and this new girl.

“Bing Bong, nya,” Kuroka caroled, looking for any sign of recognition in either of their eyes. While the woman looked a little introspective, as if she had heard a smidgen of something about Koneko’s past, Ranma didn’t seem to put two and two together if he had done the same. “I’m not supposed to be around here, but I couldn’t stop myself from looking in on my little sister after I heard about Baka-Koka’s insane attack on Kuoh, nya.”

“Baka-Koka? You know what, I think I like that nickname better than any of the others I’ve come up with for him. Mind if I use that one?” Ranma asked, moving forward to gently take Koneko by the upper arm and tug her loose of the older woman. But even as he did, his eyes were on her, narrowed in suspicion. “Funny thing is, I can’t remember Koneko mentioning anything about having a big sister. And considering the fact that she and Asia got into a kind of argument about the little sister position in relation to me, you’d think I would have.”

Saeko had not moved forward before this, and now stood to one side of the still kneeling Kuroka and Koneko, who was now trying to fight against Ranma’s tug, holding even harder on to Kuroka who reached down and began to push her arms apart. “Indeed not, and something about seeing you is trying to jog my memory of something I believe was mentioned offhand at some point or other.”

Kuroka thought about using her powers of illusion and ability to hide herself from other people senses for a second, before deciding she probably wouldn’t be able to get away with it considering how tightly Koneko was still trying to hug her. *Ugh, dratted Rook strength. Best to give them a little bit of the real story. Besides, from what I know of martial artists of this caliber, they’re not exactly the most law-abiding sort themselves for the small things.*

“Let’s just say that I had to do some things that most Devils didn’t appreciate to help protect my little sister, and then I had to scarper, leaving her with Gremory, nya” Kuroka finally answered, even as Ranma succeeded in pulling Koneko off of her.

Instantly, Ranma had something else to concentrate on. Because as Koneko came away from her sister, her nose detected Ranma’s scent, and she twisted, headbutting him lightly in the chest, catching him by surprise so much so that he stumbled, and then she was leaping into his arms, burying him to earth. She sat in his lap as Ranma froze, both in fright and simply startled horror as Koneko began to rub her head against his shoulder and pectoral muscles, purring in delight as she murmured, “Ranma-sempai, Sunshine Boy,” over and over, alternating between Ranma’s name and nickname so fast they merged becoming “Sun-sempai!” after a few minutes, which she seemed to like even more.

Saeko gripped her sword hilt hard, kneeling down next to Ranma who was now completely frozen, and Koneko, reaching forward to tug lightly at Koneko’s ear, causing her to turn to her and hiss angrily, which in turn caused a low whine of fear to come from Ranma’s mouth as his treacherous mind superimposed the image of an angry cat the size of Koneko in her place.

“Well, would you look at that. Looks as if the next time I see her, my little sister and I might have something more than just the past to talk about, nya,” Kuroka murmured, before leaping to her feet, and bowing towards the two martial artist. “Well, it’s been fun, but I have to get going. Hopefully Koneko-chan’s metabolism will work that drug through her system quickly.”

“Wait, what?” Saeko asked startle. “I thought this was just superpowered catnip, not an actual drug.”

“Ehh, it looks to really be a mix of the two, which seems to works on us Nekomata like the best hash you can find, nya,” Kuroka snickered, shaking her head as she pointed at her little sister. “It’s messing up her thought processes something fierce and her inhibitions too, making Koneko-chan act out in ways she might want to, but never would.”

“That does not fill me with joy!” Saeko grumbled, before sighing and hugging Ranma’s side tightly, deciding that trying to push Koneko off of Ranma wasn’t going to work. While Saeko was powerful for her frame, and had begun to develop the same kind of martial artist type muscles that Ranma it under his own trim fit frame, Koneko was a Rook, and they were built for strength and durability. Which meant she had no chance of overpowering the younger girl.

But she could combat the younger girls ‘cat’ impact on Ranma’s self-control. “You realize that we will be checking up on your story,” Saeko concluded looking back towards where Kuroka had been. When Saeko did, she was entirely unsurprised to see Kuroka gone. “Of course. What a mysterious little kitty.”

More importantly, Koneko had just begun to shift herself ever on Ranma's lap, her mewls becoming lower, almost like moans as her thigh and then her rear began to grind against Ranma's lap. And despite knowing that Ranma had the self-control of a Buddhist monk, Saeko knew that certain problems were about to arise if she didn't get Koneko under control quickly.

"Sorry for this Ranma," she muttered, pulling out of her limited ki space a water bottle. Chilled by the impact of her key space it was now cold, and she dumped the contents of it over Ranma and Koneko's bodies causing the cat girl to hiss and leap away, before some semblance of actual intelligence returned to her eyes and she stumbled, those eyes going wide as her system finally began to get rid of the gas she had inhaled.

At the same time, Ranma was broken out of his momentarily paralysis and shook herself, looking over at Saeko and hugging her back before looking over at Koneko. "Koneko, are you okay?"

A low embarrassed whine came from the girl, and her hands flew up to her face as she turned to run away. Before she took two steps, Saeko caught her from behind, having jumped the intervening distance from where she had been kneeling before Koneko could get away. She pulled the younger girl off of her feet and into a hug, murmuring, "I don't think so! Running away is not going to help matters, even if it seems to be a family tradition."

One highly embarrassed apology and explanation of what had happened later, Saeko released the girl to rush off over the rooftops towards the Academy, turning to look at Ranma, who was looking back at her, shaking her head. "I really hope that interaction was mostly fed by the drugs, Ranma. I really don't want to have yet another rival for your affections."

"I wouldn't want to deal with that either," Ranma said shaking his head and getting to her feet. "Whoever said having multiple girls after you was a good thing should have their heads examined."

OOOOOO

"I think we lost them," Raynare gasped, leaning against a wall on one side of an alley before glaring down at the little pervert who had yet to let go of her chest even once since they had to dive out of the window of the old schoolhouse. "And you can let go anytime, Gramps!"

"You are the one who said you let me use your breasts as my pillows for a week, my dear. I don't see how you can complain about an old man enjoying the finer things in life after that," Happosai retorted, inwardly cackling at the fact this young thing had just called him the same nickname that Ranma used.

He did however hop off, and Raynare finished slumping to her rear against the wall of some kind of large building. There was a sign to one side leading out onto the main street, but Raynare couldn't be bothered with looking too closely. Nearby, she could hear loud music going,

and it looks like they were in some kind of red light district, which suited her just fine. There were few other places where a woman on her ass in an alleyway would garner less interest than here. *But why the heck do I feel so tired?*

Smiling faintly to himself, Happosai hopped up onto a rung of an emergency ladder leading up to the roof of the building, perching there almost like a bird as he began to light his pipe, pointing it at the Fallen Angel in front of him. "So, what is your story? And I don't suppose you know a youngster named Azazel?" At Raynare's gaping stare, Happosai snorted. "Oh, I know he isn't actually young, but at the time I envied the fact that he could look so young, so I kept on calling him that. But he was quite a connoisseur of the finer things in life and I think we got along splendidly."

In the underworld, several dozen women shivered in fear including Grayfia, who instinctually froze everything about her in a wide radius, including Sirzechs. And Azazel looked up from his work and smiled at a sudden flash of memory coming to him for some reason despite the amount of paperwork in front of him.

"... Moving past that, what about you old man?" Raynare asked, finding her breath coming in gasps between words. *Am I still recovering from the time I was on ice, or did my muscles atrophy somehow? I know they left me there for a few days, but this goes way beyond being starving.*

"Me? I'm just an old man, enjoying my time on this world, having fun in my waning years." The look he was getting from Raynare caused Happosai to laugh, shaking his head. "Not buying it? Well, let's just say that I have certain tastes and delight in certain things. And I appreciate the beauty the female form above everything."

"Yeah, I got that impression," Raynare answered dryly, even as her stomach grumbled.

"Give me your tale, girl, and I'll go grab you some food. You look a little out of it after your long captivity," Happosai said, mock-solicitously. He had drained Raynare's ki quite a bit when he was nuzzling into her chest, after all. Because of that and the joys he had discovered during the chase, Happosai felt more vibrant and alive than he had in years, the wounds he had taken during the fight with Ranma and the others having disappeared during their pell-mell flight.

Heck, I would go back for round two if it wasn't for my fear of that blonde woman and the short stack. They're scarier than that Devil Girl I met a few decades back. What was her name again? Grace something?

"Fine," Raynare snapped, although it was a snap of wet twig, and she quickly began to explain what she'd been doing, lying through her teeth. She told Happosai that she had been in the area to observe the Devils, but when another Fallen Angel mission had come through, her presence had been exposed and she had been captured. She made it sound as if it had only

been a matter of time before they would have to release her, since the old man seemed to know about the Fallen and Devils and knew Azazel by name.

While he normally didn't want to think about anything beyond the martial arts and his own perversions, Haposai was no one's fool, and could tell the girl was lying through her teeth. *But still, I really would like to meet with Azazel again, and she can be my ticket to that. And to spending more time with the lovely ladies among Fallen- and Devil-kind! I had forgotten how much energy I can get from them from just a mere touch, let alone stealing their silky darlings! And if my heir is going to be with the supernatural, I need to get back into that scene as well.*

"Well dear, it sounds as if you had a run of bad luck. Although I don't know why you were so quick to ask me to free you if you thought you were just going to be exchanged back to your masters anyway," Haposai said, getting that little dig in, before hopping forward to land beside Raynare, patting her companionably on the thigh, getting a good grope in and hitting a few pressure points, which would make her legs unable to move from their current slumped position. "Regardless, I'll go get you some food now, and then we'll be on our way."

Raynare waited until Haposai was out of sight before trying to push herself to her feet. She had no intention of going through with her deal, and had actually thought about stabbing the bastard when he came close to her then, but hadn't been able to build up enough energy for a light lance. *No, I have to escape andddd, akk! What the hell! My legs! Oh, shit, what did that bastard do to me!?*

Try all she could, Raynare could not get her feet to obey her. She couldn't even move them at all, let alone get them underneath her to push herself to her feet. And when she tried to summon her wings, Raynare found she was too tired even for that. *It wasn't the ice at all! That old wrinkled fucker did something to me when we were flying! What the heck is he?!*

Moments later, a tray of food landed in front of her flung from the main street. Seconds later, she heard the screams of women being fondled and loud Hotchas in the distance, and another question came to Raynare as a sweatdrop dripped from her head. "What did I sign up for here?"

OOOOOO

That night, Ranma lay in his futon staring at the ceiling. It might have surprised many that he wasn't thinking about the fight with Happy. To Ranma that entire run in, despite the fact that Haposai kept on the move and was faster and stronger than before, wasn't really anything to think about. Happy was a pervert and a masochist. If you knew that, his actions were fully understandable. The fact he could keep up with supernatural individuals was surprising sure, but nothing that Ranma was going to lose sleep about.

Instead, he was thinking about something far harder to understand, in his opinion. The fact that he could no longer deny that he was attracted to Rias on a more than physical level.

Those kisses we shared, there, there was a lot of emotion in those. Not, not love, I can't say that, but I...DAMN IT.

And, judging by what Kuroka said, if her words could be believed, Koneko was interested in him too. That was a little disturbing, and Ranma really wasn't certain what to do about the younger girl. Thanks to the few times that she had been able to train him to not react to her as if she was a furry demon, Ranma was no longer running away from Koneko at first sight. But that didn't mean he was comfortable being around her yet, let alone comfortable with the idea that she was interested in him.

Especially when I'm going out with Saeko, and Rias has already done everything but pull a Shampoo and glomp me in public to declare her interest in me. Ugh, and now I'm wondering if this will cause trouble between Koneko and Rias? I don't think it will, Rias' peerage seems to be pretty close-knit. And if it is, they'll need to handle it, I need to figure out what I am going to do about all this.

On the one hand, it was pretty obvious what he should do. *I'm with Saeko. I should make it very plain to both Rias and Koneko that I'm not about to leave her or cheat on her or anything. But if I was going to do that, I should've stopped Rias from kissing me on the boardwalk. I probably still can tell her that, but will she believe me? Hell, I don't believe me! I am as attracted to her as I am Saeko... Fuck that makes me feel like such a damn asshole!*

Ranma rolled to one side, growling a little to himself. *Emotions! Sometimes I'm not so sure I should've thanked Asia for healing my body from what my Pops did to me. Life was a lot simpler without needing to be all introspective and crap.*

At that, Ranma paused, furrowed his brows and then snickered a little to himself. *Yeah right! Life was just as difficult then, it was just that most of the problems I was running into were types I could solve with my fists, or things I would just run away from, like the girls in their interest in me.*

That was a familiar refrain by this point, and Ranma was able to turn away from it for now and return to the problem at hand. *Koneko... I've got no idea what to do there. Maybe asking Rias for help might work? Getting to know her more might be a good idea, maybe help me figure out a way to let her down easy and help her help me through the whole Neko-ken? And maybe talking to Saeko about her. She seemed more amused than anything we got back tonight. And horny.*

Ranma flushed a little at that, remembering the intense make out session, wherein Saeko's hand had delved a little south of his chest for a time before they had both yawned, and mutually decided that they were both too tired to do anymore tonight. These were certainly proceeding in a fun direction with Saeko, Ranma admitted, and a large portion of him was interested in seeing where it would go.

Nevertheless, the memory of that strangely brought his mind back to the make out session with Rias back on the boardwalk. Kissing her had proved to be a very different experience than kissing Saeko but he had enjoyed it either way.

Which kind of forced Ranma's mind to compare the two girls, and not just physically, but what Ranma liked about them. *I like how they laugh. I like how Rias tries to tease people so much, but can't take it when it's turned on her. I like how confident they both are. I love how serious Saeko is about the Art. I like the fact they both want to grow stronger. I think Saeko is easily the best mix of deadly and sexy in the world. I think Rias is one of the best-looking women anywhere.*

They even listen before jumping to conclusions, which is amazing. I, I don't think either of them would just attack me because they were angry, and neither have ever held my past or, or even my curse against me. Hell, Saeko likes me even after meeting Pops! And Rias didn't seem to blame me for bringing Happosai into her life, even if he stole some of her bras and panties.

Ranma sighed once more, rolling onto his back and staring up at the ceiling again as he said aloud, "I'm a scumbag! I really am interested in them both. Dammit! I don't want to turn into a playboy, or worse, Kuno! UGGHG."

Deciding he wouldn't be getting any sleep for a bit, Ranma hopped to his feet, and moved over to the laptop that Kasumi had bought for herself for work. She had said anyone in the family could use it and his mom had already begun to pay for Internet access. *This feels like a very bad idea in some way, but maybe the Internet has some advice for me. I've never used the damn thing before outside of on the cruise ship with Asia.*

This proved to be most decidedly a mixed bag. Discussion threads, Ranma quickly decided, were not for him. Some of the taunts and names being tossed about there were such that he would be looking for someone to punch. Asking the question in the actual search engine thingy also proved to be a nonstarter. Most of the time, the advice boiled down to either 'you're screwed,' or 'you should admit that you are playboy,' or 'you obviously don't love the person you're with if you're prepared to two-time her.' None were helpful in Ranma's mind, but a step above 'go die playboy' or 'all pretty boys should die' comments that he would probably be getting if he asked any of his fellow male friends in person what he should do with this problem.

However, Ranma did come away with some good ideas.

First of all, Ranma realized he needed to get to know Rias a little better, and in particular, find out what interested her beyond her fixation on anime and manga. What else was Ria into, how far did her fixation on everything Japanese go? And could Ranma come to enjoy her hobbies just as much as she did? Could Rias understand and come to enjoy martial arts? She seemed to enjoy learning from him, so that was a start. That would probably be a good place to start with her.

Similarly, Ranma and Saeko needed to figure out what they had in common **beyond** the martial arts. What other hobbies did Ranma know that Saeko enjoyed? Certainly not shopping, which had come up occasionally, or fashion. *I think Saeko said something about flower arranging. I know of martial arts style about flower arranging, hidden weapons and such, but I don't think that's what she means. Damn, who knew there was a downside to talking about the Art so much? Oh, but she enjoyed talking about anime too, didn't she? If we all have that in common, that's a start.*

And finally, one other thing that Ranma had discovered on the Internet eventually, after he narrowed his question down and asked it in a very different way, was that communication and compatibility were the most important things in any relationship. The more complicated the relationship, the more important those two concepts became. *So in a three-way relationship, Saeko and Rias would need to be compatible with one another too, since I know that me and Saeko are pretty good together, and Rias said she'd try to get along with Saeko.*

The problem will be Saeko. But she's the one who I'm already with too. But if the two of them realize they can get along like I get along with them? They're already friends so maybe that's not that big a stretch?

And as for communication, ugh... That's never been my strong suit. But I suppose it boils down to me sitting Rias and Saeko down and talking about all this. I, I know Rias said she was fine sharing, but Saeko needs to be on board with that idea. And Saeko's got a veto vote there. I... I guess that I can leave trying to convince her to Rias? Feels weird, but if I give the decision to Saeko, it, it makes sense?

UGH. I hate all this thinking. Time to move on to something else.

Having made some progress with his own personal issues, Ranma turned his time on the Internet to looking up old legends and other things that, coming up with several swords that had curses on them, one sword that might be linked to the thunder God Raijin and a cursed suit of armor that sounded a little familiar for some reason. Ranma decided after a few seconds to see what they could figure out on the sword with the connection to the God Raijin. *Hakata, huh? I think that's where the Mongols made landfall, ain't it? Huh...*

With something of a plan on both the emotional and Art level, Ranma finally turned in for the night, turning off Kasumi's laptop, and returning to the futon, hoping to get some sleep before dawn broke. *Huh... weird... I feel like I'm forgetting something. Something I wanted to tell Rias, Gabriel and the rest of the leader types? Meh, if it's important it'll come to me.*

End Chapter

It'ssss baaaaaack! Both this fic and Happosai, LOL. I wonder what Grayfia's response to this will be? And what kind of trouble Ranma and Saeko (and Asia, since Ranma's not about to let her alone) will run into, because you just know they will. Will they even be able to leave Kuoh

without anything else happening? Yeah, right. Anyway, hope you enjoyed this chapter even if not a lot really happened in it. It's just setting up what is going to happen in the future. This fic will return to the Ranma poll in September, along with Effect of a horse and Dragon, which will be updated in August.