

Crack, Science, Weird-Ass Events, and an Alternate Reality!

Section 6: Back To the Goobers--OH S***!

"Hey, whut's dat up ahead?"

The question caused Pecshe to turn to his right, the direction his over-sized companion's voice had come from. The smaller of the two stomped his foot in a twitchy reaction.

"H-HEY!" he wailed, "I thought I told ya--don't go off without me! If you'da gone down that hallway a little more I'd be all by myself..! All *alooooone*..! In this scary place..!"

With a whimper the bug-masked man scuttled over to join Dondochakka, who gave him a long funny look.

"But... But I called ya..."

"Er... Oh," Pesche's argument wilted. Perking up, he seemed to forget what his friend had called him over for and gasped in fascination at what was down that hall. "Hey--What's that?!"

"Some kinda thingie wid a lotta people!" Dondochakka pointed ecstatically, "It don't matta whut it is! There's *gotta* be a bathroom in dat place!"

Whooping eagerly, and performing urgent little shuffles, the two dashed off down the hall, right for a vast open area where the tiny distant figures of many Arrancar were casually moving about.

Unaware of what approached them.

Meanwhile, Down the Long Hall...

The place where the comedic duo were currently heading was the location of the Palace of the Octava's Fracciones Mess; an immense cafeteria of sorts where close to fourty of Szayel Aporro's people, plus a good dozen members of other Fracciones who were either honestly visiting friends or shameless moochers, were breakfasting and trying to wake up fully.

And, yes, there were restrooms nearby.

Coming out of one of those restrooms was one of the aforementioned "visitors" (one of

the mooching variety), a skinny, shortish, underclothed Arrancar with a bulbous mask fragment that looked most like a huge turban. His teeth, when he grinned, were horrifically snagged. He approached a nearby table with that grin, sauntering up to a trio of other Soldados Fracciones who were seated there and seemed to silently groan at his approach.

"Whoof! Don't go in there, boysh!" D-Roy laughed, earning some exasperated looks from his three pals. They all took an extra sip of each of their forms of coffee.

"Hmph, *please*. We don't need to know," the tallest of them spoke, a rather thin-faced and serious Arrancar. He was trying hard to continue reading a magazine through the distraction the hapless D-Roy provided. Another of the three, one that looked remarkably like a blond Szayel Aporro with a differing mask and hairstyle, rolled his eyes.

"Guys... The only reason we're all still allowed in here is because my brother's in charge... So please, don't fight or fool around while we're here," the Szayel look-alike groaned, his chin slipping dangerously on his palm and threatening to fall onto the table. The third Soldado, this one an actual Fracción del Octava, nudged him to prevent the calamity.

"You need more coffee or somethin'? You're lookin' a little dead t'day," the Soldado said. D-Roy snickered, air hissing out horribly between his jagged fangs.

"Sheshesheh! Yeah, give 'im shome more coffee..."

Eying the partially drained mug before him suspiciously, the Octava's brother glared at the slurring Arrancar and shoved the cup away.

"What'd you do to it?" Ilfort growled. D-Roy began backing away, scared off by the venomous look on his face, not wanting to get creamed by the much stronger fighter. As Ilfort stood partially and feinted at him with one fist the snagged-toothed Arrancar cowered behind Shawlong's chair.

"Eshesheh... I jusht replashed it wit' decaf, I shwear!"

Shawlong flipped a page in his magazine and sighed, shaking his head as if to knock away the grating "sh"s bombarding his ears.

"There ain't nuttin' real bad in it... like inshtant diarrhea..."

"D-Roy!" Ilfort snarled, "You bastard!"

Shawlong and the Octava Soldado were immediately treated to the amusing spectacle of a panicked D-Roy being relentlessly pursued by the Espada's brother. Around and around the table they went, using Sónido and freaking out several of the servant-class Fracciones royally. The servants dove out of the way, trying not to spill things they were carrying.

The only reason the mischievous little twerp wasn't quickly caught by his assailant and pounded into submission was apparent: Ilfort still had some bandages on his neck and shoulder showing through gaps in his clothes, mementos of some earlier battle.

"Whoaa! Hey, don't shtrangle *meee*!" D-Roy squealed, darting around a servant who was carrying a tray. Ilfort followed furiously, leaving the poor servant dizzily staggering over to a table. He managed to barely save the waffles and syrup from certain doom.

"I'M GONNA RIP YOUR BUTT OUT, YOU LITTLE WANNABE!"

Shawlong winced, both at the sound of the creative threat and that of a flurry of punches.

"Oooah! Oww! Ooch! N-not th' fashe! OOW! Never mind--not the crotch!"

"Hmph. Neanderthals," Shawlong commented disdainfully, flicking his long thin braid back over his shoulder where it belonged. The dizzy servant Fracción paused to catch his breath against a nearby chair. He glanced over at the cool and collected Soldado, his gaze stopping a bit longer on the contents of the magazine: What the Sexta Espada's chief Fraccion wanted to read decorating tips for he had no idea.

"You know... I saw D-Roy earlier. Whatever he did to Ilfort's, he did it to *yours* too."

There was a dramatic change in Shawlong's attitude. A very sudden, dramatic change—further sealing D-Roy's fate.

"He *what*?!"

"Waaah! C'mon, homie--forgive an' forget?! An eye for an... er, I mean, don't lishen t' that one—AAAH!"

Now that all the other Fracciones knew they were safely out of danger of being bowled over they had begun snickering and a few of the rowdier Soldados started whooping and goading the two chastising the "little wannabe". D-Roy was in no danger of dying, murder being illegal in Hueco Mundo just as in any other society. He *was*, however, in very severe danger of being heavily and mercilessly pranked.

Most were of the opinion that he kind of deserved it.

"What'd you *really* put in my coffee?!" Ilfort demanded between punches. D-Roy was cowering underneath one of the tables now, twisting around to dodge most of the blows but occasionally taking one on the oversized mask fragment. Now that Shawlong had joined in on the mob justice, he knew he was royally screwed.

"Ahh! Ow! I dunno! Shome shtuff in a little bottle! Ouch! Shtop whackin' me in th' head! Ow!"

Shawlong pitched in, making a lunging reach under the table before D-Roy could crawl away. Snatching him up by the collar, he ignored the strangled little gag sound with a stone face and hauled D-Roy out. As soon as the snaggle-toothed Arrancar was upright Shawlong took his magazine, rolled it up, and slapped him humiliatingly in the face with it.

"Nneh!" D-Roy squirmed to get away from the papery assault. Ilfort split his face in a grin which was, naturally, just as Cheshire-like as Szayel's.

"Bad human," Shawlong smirked as he scolded in a flat voice, earning some sniggers from the other Fracciones.

"Aagh! Shtoppit! You guysh *shuck!*" the "little wannabe" sounded just like the title might suggest. The Espada's twin rammed his hands in each of the smaller guy's shirt pockets, searching for the mystery chemical D-Roy had nearly poisoned them with, "HEY! Whatcha gropin' me for?!"

"Give the stuff up," Ilfort warned, "before I have to search the other pockets!"

"And Ilfort is not above punching an opponent in the genitals."

Abruptly the blond interrogator stopped, rounding on the tall one with an insulted look on his face.

"That was *one* time and I was aiming for his stomach!" He dropped D-Roy on the floor. Seeing that the two were sidetracked, the Soldado let his jaggedy fangs poke out in a grin as he scrabbled away, slipping off past the crowd and towards the hallway. "I got startled and my aim was off. Don't tell me that's never happened to you."

"That has never happened to me," Shawlong's face was smug. Ilfort flipped errant locks of hair over his shoulder.

"Liar," he accused, "It did so. Last week, when you and Edorad were training. You kicked him, remember?"

"It hit him in the thigh!"

"Oh, *sure* it did," Ilfort took a fresh, non-pranked cup of coffee and blew on it.

"It *did*." A vein popped out on Shawlong's forehead.

"Well then, maybe I should have my brother look over poor Edorad, because that's not where a human thigh is supposed to be!"

Shawlong took a step closer, almost in position to throw a retaliatory kick into Ilfort's chest, when a piercing shout echoed off the white walls. The two, and every warrior-class Arrancar in the mess, forgot their showdown immediately.

D-Roy had been snickering to himself, pleased that he could get away from the two much stronger fighters so easily. He didn't think that maybe it was because he was relatively wimpy compared to them and they were actively trying not to injure him, or maybe that the two didn't really take the little idgit very seriously, but if he did he didn't show it. He was grinning ear to ear, his unfortunate dental catastrophe for all the world to view.

He peeked over his shoulder, a tiny doubt causing him to worry that maybe he wouldn't be out of sight fast enough and they would chase him. Then he crashed into something very big and squishy.

"Oof!" D-Roy was bounced back by whatever had obstructed him. Shaking his head dizzily, he was about to stand up and give whoever was in his way a piece of his mind when he glimpsed the massive Moai mask.

Dondochakka and Pesche stood speechless, their jaws just as slack as the snaggle-toothed Sexta Fracción's. Neither party was entirely sure what to do in this situation.

Holy shit! Holy shit! Holy SHIT—them! D-Roy's mind was racing, despite its relatively low processing speed. *I'm gonna diiiiiiiie!*

So he screamed. A piercing call not unlike that of a majestic elk or hawk or girl scout. D-Roy knew immediately that, if he and any witnesses survived this, the scream would forever kill any attempt at a macho ethos he was trying so hard to go for.

"W-whoa!" Pesche wriggled a finger in his ear and took a step back. Distant shouts were answering the girly shriek of the Fracción they had just blundered into. "U-uhh! D-Dondo..! We should skedaddle..!"

"T-too late..." They looked behind them. Four Fracciones del Octava had slipped in behind them using swift Sónido, cutting off the retreat the hallway would have provided. Turning back around, they came face to face with Shawlong and Ilfort, backed by close to a dozen other Soldados. The two skidded to a halt, their eyes wide and their expressions more surprised than the comedic duo would have expected. What was the big deal? It was only two-thirds of the Great Desert Bros. Their disguises were perfect, and they hadn't been really well-known Fracciones to start with. Why was everyone acting like they were such holy terrors, fighters that could lay waste to all with their mighty strength?

"*You two...!*" Ilfort's hand immediately went for his sword. Pesche went to hide behind Dondochakka in the same moment that Dondochakka went to hide behind Pesche. "How do you have the nerve to show your faces around here?!"

"Uhh..! Beg your pardon, sir, but we're not showin' our faces technically." Pesche's little detail was cut short as the Espada's brother drew his sword with a zing of steel.

"Shut up!" He grinned, "Save your stupid jokes for the Espadas... After we thrash you into submission, of course!"

"Wh-what?!" Dondochakka cowered with one huge hand on his "face", "Bu...but we didn't do nothin'! We swear! C'mon, guys, can't we all just be pals?!"

"No," Shawlong flicked his blade out of dormancy and eyed them scathingly, "We don't make friends with traitors... We make compost with them."

"Sheshesheshesh!" D-Roy sniggered gleefully, wrenching his sword out and waving it in Dondochakka's direction. He was peeking out from behind Ilfort and two others, but felt the need to enter into the exaggerated tough talk as well, "Ya gonna pay for makin' me fall down, and for betrayin' ush Arrancar!"

"D-Roy, you're ruining the mood," Ilfort stepped on the edge of his foot to shut him up, "Now, where were we? Oh, right! We were about to kick your asses!"

The throng of Arrancar chuckled nastily and started to move in, taking their lead from the two Sexta Fracciones.

Just as Ilfort lunged at him, a demonic grin stretched across his face, Pesche realized that he had not once felt Nel's spiritual pressure since they had awoken.

Pesche stopped cowering and held back a grim smirk, even knowing that it could not be seen by his attackers.

Then the ass-kicking began.