Plastic Plants and Sundry

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Plastic Plants and Sundry

by riptideghosts

Summary

Ichigo has been beginning to think of Kish in a new light as the days get shorter.

Notes

Originally posted a few years ago on ao3. This fic is also on SquidgeWorld.

Original notes:

This is a (very late) Secret Santa gift for Annabunnie from the Cafe Mew Mew server! I hope you enjoy!

And a big thank you to SerendipitousOracle for their beta work!!

Ichigo was just finishing putting her coat and boots on when Kish teleported into the backroom, making her jump in surprise.

It had been a long day. Already mid-December and yet Ryou had decided they should go all out decorating today on a whim. He had dug a number of large boxes out from somewhere and promptly disappeared into the basement for the day, leaving the mews and aliens to decorate.

Pudding, Taruto, Berry, and Tasuku had quickly started having fun putting up strings of lights and fake bits of evergreen everywhere. Mint had mostly sat at her table and told Lettuce where to hang things.

Meanwhile in the kitchen, Zakuro and Keiichirô had spent the day trying to explain Christmas to Kish and Pai. The topic had quickly proven complicated to explain without something of a history lesson on how all the different parts had come together, and eventually branched into other holidays that took place around the solstice. Every time Ichigo had walked through the kitchen the two aliens had looked more lost.

Ichigo hadn't had the chance to join in because with everyone else distracted, Ichigo had been the only one actually waiting on tables all day. Now her feet hurt and she just wanted to go home.

Unfortunately, it seemed Kish had his own plans.

Kish giggled at Ichigo's surprised reaction to his arrival and leaned against the locker next to her, one hand tucked behind his back. "Kitten! Today has been an… educational day on human traditions. I feel like I understand this planet less than I did before this morning."

"I'm not really feeling the holiday spirit today. I just want to go home and put my feet up for the night," Ichigo said, hoping Kish would cut this short.

"Well before you go, I did want to ask you about one strange tradition Zakuro told me about," Kish said, while pulling his hand from behind his back and holding it over their heads. In his hand was a plastic piece of holly, red berries unnaturally vibrant.

"Some of the stuff about mistletoe being believed to be magically powerful by ancient Europeans was confusing, but! The important part is the modern tradition around kissing, don't you agree?"

Ichigo rolled her eyes and reached up to pluck the plastic decoration out of Kish's hand. "Well first off this is fake holly, a completely different fake plant. Second, it doesn't count if you hold it over someone! You need to just find yourselves under mistletoe, like a surprise. You can't just walk around with Mistletoe to make people kiss you."

"Hmmm, what if I held it over other people? Am I allowed to make other people kiss?" Kish asked with a smirk.

Ichigo laughed. "I guess you can try."

"So is there any mistletoe in all this greenery?" Kish asked with a smirk playing at the corner of his mouth.

"Probably somewhere, but I'm not pointing it out to you," Ichigo deadpanned.

"Oh Ichigo! That's not fair, how am I supposed to learn of Earth's customs and flora that way? Wait for a customer to ambush me?" Kish said in an overly dramatic tone while putting his hands over his chest.

Berry had put up a bunch of mistletoe by the north window that afternoon, Ichigo remembered. The image of Ichigo catching Kish by surprise under the plant flashed through her mind. It would be fun to catch him by surprise for once, and he certainly wouldn't mind if she suddenly kissed him.

And it would be nice to have a real kiss with Kish now they were friends.

Ichigo felt the blood start to run to her face at that thought from her traitorous mind. More and more often her thoughts had been drifting that way lately.

She spun around so Kish hopefully wouldn't see the blush growing on her face. She didn't want to be teased right now about her confusing thoughts.

As had become Ichigo's habit the last couple of months, she pushed her feelings down.

"Well it's already dark out and just going to get colder from here. I'm going home now!" And with that declaration Ichigo began marching to the front of the café.

"Ichigo?"

She paused in the doorway of the backroom. "What?" Suddenly she felt heavy cloth being pulled over the top of her head.

"You forgot your hat," Kish said quietly.

"Thanks." Ichigo glanced over her shoulder at him. Kish was standing so close she would barely have to move an inch to lean against his chest. She turned around to face him and shuffled her feet back half a step while looking up at his face.

There was a softness about Kish's face that wasn't there when they were younger. The stress of the past put away leaving a happier and healthier boy in its place. Or young man, really.

"You should walk me home!" Ichigo blurted out, catching herself off guard with her demand.

"Oh?"

"Yes. It's dark out. It's polite to walk a woman home in the dark to make sure she gets home safe." Ichigo ploughed ahead.

Kish grinned. "I think you're more dangerous than anything else lurking out there right now."

"Well fine! If you don't want to, I'll be leaving now."

"I didn't say that, kitten." Kish flew back across the room and grabbed his own coat and hat before returning to Ichigo's side. "Lead on."

Smiling to herself, Ichigo led the way to the exit. She could hear Kish's boots tapping on the tiles just behind her as she went.

It was still strange sometimes to see the aliens walk so much more now that they were trying to blend in amongst humanity. She wondered how it would go if she invited them to visit her at her house. Would the illusion hold in a private setting, or would her parents see something was off right away?

It was surprisingly easy at this point to picture Kish sitting on her family couch watching tv with them, or having dinner and asking her parents about the human food that wasn't made in the café… or standing under the mistletoe her overly romantic parents had hanging in the kitchen doorway.

No. Nope. No letting Kish into her house anytime soon. And definitely no thinking about pointing out what mistletoe actually looked like while standing there with him. Nope.

She pushed it down. Again.

"You okay kitten? You aren't usually this quiet," Kish asked with a small frown on his face.

"Hmm? Oh yes of course! I'm just tired like I said; it's been a long day," Ichigo replied, hoping her thoughts weren't all over her face.

"Would you like me to teleport you home?" Kish asked, the look of concern still on his face.

Ichigo smiled at the thoughtful gesture. "No I could use the fresh air, but thank you. That's very kind of you."

Kish looked caught off guard at the complement for a moment. "Well if you change your mind let me know… it is a nice time of year to walk in the dark though, with all the extra lights in the park! Maybe I should take some of Ryou's and hang them in the ship, I bet Taruto would like them too—" Kish continued to ramble about the lights for a few minutes, filling the air with noise.

Ichigo felt a curl of warmth in her chest as she watched him try and cover up his moment of embarrassment over such a small comment. When the aliens first came back to Earth she had avoided saying too many nice things to Kish on purpose. It had been strange to see them as allies instead of enemies, and at the time she hadn't wanted Kish to feel like they were

suddenly friends. It felt a little silly and mean looking back, but there was no point in dwelling on the past. She would just have to make a point of being kinder herself in the future.

Especially if it was going to fluster Kish so much. It was endearing hearing him be embarrassed for a change.

"I don't think I'll ever get used to how much colder it gets on Earth, though. I knew coming here it would drop below freezing temperatures across a large portion of the planet, but actually feeling it is completely different to knowing."

"How did you three manage the first winter in just your regular outfits with so much skin exposed?" Ichigo asked.

"We had portable heating devices sent with us. In theory they were a good idea but in actual practise the wind would just blow most of the warmth away. So basically it sucked and we suffered! These coats are much warmer, and cosy too" Kish said.

"Hah, well you deserved it back then" Ichigo teased.

"Oh how cruel my kitten is!" Kish joked back.

Ichigo put her gloved hand into the fresh powdery snow on top of a snow bank they were walking past and tossed a handful of the loose flakes over Kish. They fell around him like a million cold sparkles catching on the dim light while he squawked indignantly.

They both froze for a moment, just looking at each other.

"Well kitten, you started it!" Kish said and grabbed his own handful to throw at Ichigo's face.

Ichigo giggled and tossed another handful at him before sprinting ahead to her street.

Kish caught up a moment later, flying a few feet off the ground to drop an armful over Ichigo. Ichigo laughed as she zipped over to the next snow bank to make a snowball, tossing it hard through the air and hitting Kish square in the chest.

They continued to zigzag down her street throwing snow at each other and laughing until they were out of breath. They were only a couple houses down from Ichigo's house now.

"We should bully Ryou into giving us a weekend off so we can try some winter games," Kish said as they started walking the last few feet.

"Maybe we can get him to take us to a ski hill or something," Ichigo mused as she glanced up at her house.

She paused for a moment as she noticed the real, not plastic, mistletoe one of her parents had hung above the front door. She had forgotten it was there.

Her mind wandered back to her thoughts of earlier and heat returned to her face with a vengeance. She tried pushing her thoughts down. Again.

"Well I guess this is your stop then," said Kish, oblivious to the thoughts running through Ichigo's mind.

Oh, screw it, thought Ichigo. Nothing was actually stopping her, nothing but her own nerves.

Ichigo stood in front of the door and gestured Kish forwards. "I want to show you something before you head back," she said.

Kish hummed a questioning noise as he stepped closer. "What is it, kitten?"

Ichigo leaned into his personal space and grabbed onto the lapels of his coat before pushing forwards and meeting her mouth with his.

Immediately, he kissed her back, sliding his hands up her neck to cup her cheeks delicately. The softness in the gesture made her smile against his mouth. He leaned more deeply into the kiss as Ichigo moved her hands higher to wrap around his neck.

They continued to stand there for a minute, holding each other, mouths pressed together, the cold night still and silent around them.

Finally Ichigo stepped back and put her one hand on the doorknob behind her. Kish stood frozen in front of her, shock written across his face. Ichigo smiled at the sight. She had been right, it was fun to flip the script.

Kish was just starting to grow a smile of his own. He opened his mouth to say something, but Ichigo cut him off by pointing straight up.

"That! Is what mistletoe looks like!" Ichigo declared triumphantly.

Kish looked up and blinked in surprise. He looked back down. "Ichigo?"

"Good night Kish!" Ichigo said in a rush, her sudden bravery of a few minutes ago starting to fade.

She spun into the house and quickly shut the door behind her.

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