

I am a Demon

What could it mean? What does it *mean*? That's a question that has haunted Byakko's mind for two days as he delved into the History of Jutengai. The bakemono stuff was irrelevant, mostly, but what he wanted to know- No, what he *NEEDED* to know was the nature of Darkness and Humanity. The book makes mention of both, but barely glances upon the subject at all, beyond citing Darkness as the reason humans and bakemono live apart. It was infuriating, because he just needed some kind of confirmation. If his instincts were correct, this "Darkness" must be some kind of spiritual energy humans could manifest. A negative manifestation certainly, but energy all the same. Whatever the bakemono had just wasn't compatible with him. It was like being a fish above water. Suffocating. But... but, the darkness could be just what he needed to get his powers back; again, assuming Suzaku hadn't just burnt out his energy as opposed to destroying his powers outright. It's not like he could test either way in this environment. All he needed to do was find a human and bring them here, and wait. How could he get away with it though? It'd require a lot of planning, and preparation. He'd need knowledge of Jutengai's design, and the old map in the book has probably been outdated by several decades at least. He just needed more time.

Reclining on his pillow pile, he kneaded at his gut, pushing and squishing his immense mass to make a better stand for the book. "What does it mean?" he whispered to himself.

Flipping past a few pages, the book went in a new direction about the construction of the city, with nothing else about humanity. It was useless information, to say the least. But what bothered him was the abruptness, like there was a sudden need to not mention any further about it. Perhaps these bakemono had some kind of secret shame? A hidden past with humans? Again, irrelevant, but it would help in figuring out the ties between the two of them. And it was unlikely that the loud dumbass would know anything about it, or that he would let the tiger anywhere near humans. Not that he could be blamed for that. The very idea of being able to hunt them was already making Byakko salivate, and he wouldn't be able to control himself if the chance to hunt them arose. He just needed more time to figure this out. More time to theorize, and find ways to test his hypothesis. *"There must be a way to get a human into this town. There has to be passages, or how could that moron get human books for me?"*

The idiot was training outside, so if he kept a charade going, he could use him for information. Nodding, Byakko carefully set the book aside and went to find Kumatetsu outside. As was said he was training, though the demon raised a brow as the bear fluttered around in his jacket, and his fundoshi. "Do you want something Fatass?" the bakemono demanded.

“Where did you find the books for me?” Byakko questioned.

“Eh?” the bear grunted, ceasing his training. “Why the hell do you want to know that?” he demanded.

“I wish to know where they came from. Do you recall? Or have you managed to drink those memories to death?” the tiger scowled.

“It doesn’t matter where they came from” Kumatetsu answered, and lashed at the air with a fierce kick. “It’s not like you can go and get them yourself” he added with a dismissive tone.

“Why?”

“Why are you suddenly questioning me about dumb stuff? Unless you wanna help me train “mister demon”, you can go away and let me concentrate” the bear rebuffed.

“Fine then” Byakko responded, lowering his stance and raising his hand out flat. “I’ll stop questioning you if you can hit me. If I block you, you **must** answer my questions” he declared.

“Or I can just train instead” Kumatetsu responded, ignoring his rising temper.

“Scared bear?” the demon taunted.

“Fine. Fine! I’ve been wanting to kick your ass for a while, so come on then” the bakemono hissed, and let out a sucker punch.

BAMF! Kumatetsu’s jaw slackened as the tiger blocked his attack effortlessly. “Where did the books come from?” Byakko demanded.

“A stall in the market sells them” the bear shrugged.

“And where do they get their stock?” the demon pressed.

“How should I know?” Kumatetsu answered, and went for an underarm slug.

Byakko twisted his massive body, and blocked the strike again. “Well?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” the bear pointed out. “Obviously from the human world.”

“Can anyone go there?”

Kumatetsu narrowed his eyes, and his pose relaxed. “Oh, I see what you’re doing now Fatass. You’re trying to find out how to get to the human world? What? Don’t I feed you enough here?” he demanded with a hard **SLAP** to the demon’s gut.

Byakko let out an intense glare, and placed a paw to his gut to cease its jiggling. “And if I am, what does it matter to you?” he hissed.

“Lemme tell you something right now lardo” the bear began with an accusing finger raised. “You are never, and I mean *NEVER* going to the human world while I’m around to watch you. And while I couldn’t care less about their wellbeing, I sure as hell am going to keep you away from them at all costs. Got it Fatass?”

“Perfectly” the tiger seethed, and buried the desire to claw his face off for his insolence.

“Interrupting something, are we?”

Byakko rolled his eyes as he recognized the pig’s voice, and the raucous laughter of the monkey as well. “No, I’m done with him now” Kumatetsu answered, and gestured for the demon to move his fat ass.

The tiger snarled lividly, but chose to go for the front door, only to be stopped by Hyakushubo. "Actually, before you go Byakko, I have something for you" he announced.

Meekly he held out a book for the demon to take, and he wasn't exactly pleased as he read aloud "Useful Meditation Practises". Byakko stared at the neutral expression the pig bore, though it was noticeable in how his facial muscles twitched that there was an inherent feeling of fear just below the surface. "I know it's not something you'd usually read, but I felt it might be helpful" he explained. "And I was thinking that- Oh" he said sadly as the demon tore the book from its cover.

Byakko stared into Hyakushubo's eyes as he placed the pages into his mouth, and he chewed them slowly, and deliberately. His powerful jaws ground over two hundred pages into wet, pulpy mush; and with little ceremony, he spat it back into the cover. Closing it with a wet **squish**, the demon presented the ruined manual back to its owner. "It's not to my tastes" the tiger stated, his tone bereft of humour as drool dripped from the manual.

"I-it's alright, you can keep it" Hyakushubo sighed.

"Hmph" Byakko grunted, and he let the world's biggest spitwad fall to the ground.

"WHAT THE HELL?!!"

The tiger rolled his eyes as Kumatetsu stomped over and grabbed the dusty book. "WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?!!" he screamed, Byakko's green hair flapping in the wind as the bear slapped his gut with the book.

"I don't care for his empty, meaningless gestures" the demon insisted.

"IT WAS A GIFT YOU FAT PRICK! YOU'RE SUPPOSED, TO SAY, THAAAANNKKK YOOOOOUUUUU!!!" the crimson bakemono screamed.

"It's alright Kumatetsu" Hyakushubo sighed.

“You kidding?” the bear scoffed. “It’s *not alright!* You’ve been acting like a damn baby for too long Fatass. Hear me? TOOO LOOOOONNNGGGG!” Kumatetsu screamed harder.

“I’m pretty sure this entire wretched city has heard you by now” Byakko snorted testily. “But you heard him, it’s “alright”. So no harm no foul” he smirked.

Steam was just about ready to blast out of Kumatetsu’s ears. “LISTEN HERE LARDO! When my friend gives you a gift... you ACCEPT IT! And then you say THANK YOU!” the bear roared.

Raising the book for another strike, his arm was gently caught by the monk. “Kumatetsu” he uttered. Guiding his friend down, the monk gave the tiger a cautious look. “I’m sorry the book wasn’t to your liking” he apologised to the demon.

Kumatetsu was at such a loss for words that his jaw hung open, and yet his fists were clenched tighter than ever. Byakko naturally glared at the swine. “I’m not interested in apologies from livestock” he growled, and went back inside.

“How do you do it Hyakushubo? How do you not want to *STRANGLE HIM?!?*” the bear complained as he played out the very act.

“Well, given how much time I’ve spent around you Kumatetsu, I think I’ve developed a tolerance for infuriating people” Hyakushubo answered.

“Heh, you’re not the only one” Tatara laughed as he joined them, but his smile quickly faded from the grim look his friends gave him. “Sheesh” he grimaced.

“The point is, Kumatetsu, is that Byakko seems to have some kind of inner turmoil that’s making him act out” the monk explained.

“So why can’t he just talk about it instead of being a giant pain in my ass?” Kumatetsu complained.

“Well Kumatetsu, how often do you talk about what’s up your ass?” the monkey interjected.

The bear snorted loudly. “I *always* talk out my problems when I need too” he asserted. Hyakushubo and Tataru shared a disparaging look, and the crimson bakemono could just feel the judgement radiating off them. “What? I do!” he insisted.

“Even if you do Kumatetsu, I don’t think he’s the sort that does” the simian bakemono figured.

“Tataru is right. He’s not like us Kumatetsu. I don’t want to disparage him, but I doubt he’ll willingly want to talk about how he’s feeling, especially when he seems so conflicted right now. Pushing it will probably set him off” Hyakushubo added.

“Again, like it would for you” the monkey needed.

“We’re talking about Fatass here Tataru” Kumatetsu grumped. But, he couldn’t help but sigh in frustration as he brushed back his hair. “Fine, I’ll leave it. But I’m not going to just take his bad attitude lying down. If he pushes me I’m going to make damn sure I push him back.”

“If you do that, then I’ll help ya find a new hovel to live in” Tataru offered. “I hear there’s some nice ones on the east side.”

“Are you saying it’s going to get violent?” the bear demanded.

“I think we all know it’s most likely going to end violently Kumatetsu” the pig confirmed.

“BAH! To hell with the both of you on this” the crimson bakemono grumped as he stomped around his veranda. “Know what I need? To let off some steam” he decided, pounding his fist into his hand.

“You going to break some pots?” the simian guessed.

“Yeah, actually. If I can’t break Fatass, I’ll have to break some big pots instead” Kumatetsu decided.

“Will that work, given you’re going to have to take Byakko with you?” the monk pointed out.

“Eh? Why the hell do I have to- Ah crap you’re right. Can’t let that fat bastard out of my sight can I? Unless...?” he mused, rubbing his chin and smiling. “Either one of you feel like babysitting him?”

“Considering we’re going to come with you, I don’t think that’s possible” Hyakushubo responded.

The bear rolled his eyes grumpily. “Fine. Fine! I’ll go get the big baby, and hopefully he’ll keep his mouth shut as I blow off some steam. I need to get my fists ready for when I fight lozen anyways” he said as he made to leave, only to impact something big and soft. “OOF!”

Falling to the ground, Kumatetsu stared up at the massive hemisphere of Byakko’s gut. “Why the hell are you outside?” the bakemono demanded.

“My walls are thin, and you are loud. So I heard that you’re leaving, and I figured I would come out the spare us all the trivialities of a pointless argument you’d no doubt start” the demon answered, his fist clutching a book.

“Well, good” the bear grumbled as he got to his feet. “Nice to see you being reasonable for once.”

“I’m doing this because I’m getting sick of your shrill screams insect, nothing else. Now let’s go before I change my mind” Byakko growled.

“FINE!” Kumatetsu yelled.

“It is shrill, isn’t it?” Tatara whispered to Hyakushubo.

“Well, to be a strong fighter you would need strong lungs” the pig mused.

It was a surprisingly eventless walk to the ruins. Well, eventless aside from Kumatetsu having to run back for his pants after they were halfway there. But with Byakko adamantly refusing to talk to them, it was mostly eventless as they reached the ruin, and he parked his big butt on the ground with his book. It was still a riddle to understand what was going on with humans and this world. "Y'know, it'd do you good to maybe practise like me instead of keeping your nose in a book all the time."

The tiger's ear flickered irritably, but the idiot wasn't worth the effort. Not when he could eradicate him later with a Tiger Scream. But that would be a waste of his meat, wouldn't it? "I mean, maybe work out your muscles a little, so they don't atrophy so much you can't cart your fat around."

Granted, erasing his existence utterly would be quite entertaining. And certainly wouldn't carry any regrets. No regrets. None. "I mean maybe do something since you're out and about."

"ENOUGH!" Byakko roared, slamming his book shut. "Regardless of what an insect like you believes, I am a demon. And given your sheer ignorance on just about EVERYTHING that could EVER exist, I will explain to you something about us demons. We are always strong, for our strength never wanes. We only ever improve, and can only atrophy through centuries of aging" he matter-of-factly put it.

Kumatetsu scoffed loudly from the lower side of the ruin. "Sure, always strong huh ya big baby?" he muttered to himself as he primed his fist, and struck a large pot.

It fell to pieces in an instant, water flooding the ground from the ruined pottery. "I've seen you with that book a few times Byakko. Are you interested in the city's history?" Hyakushubo inquired, noting the title of the book.

"Hmph. Like I'd care about your kind. There is simply an entry in this book I want to understand" the demon answered brusquely as he hunched into himself more.

"What is it?" the monk asked.

Byakko glared at him, the intimidation serving to give him the time needed to think about telling him or not. He had lived here longer, and compared to the other two morons he would most likely be smarter than them. But that's not saying much, considering he was a monk. "If you want to know so badly, pig, it's something relating to humans in this world" the tiger explained.

"Then I probably won't be much help then. Jutengai hasn't seen a human in a very long time" Hyakushubo explained.

"Yeah, because of their Darkness" Tatara absently commented.

"Darkness?" Byakko repeated.

"Yeah. They can become corrupt, which is bad for us" the monkey answered.

"That would make sense. Not much can threaten the purity of us bakemono, though a corrupted human could possibly do great damage" Hyakushubo theorised.

"And why can't you become corrupted?" Byakko inquired.

"We bakemono are whole and complete, basically. It's hard to explain but we are more spiritually aware than humans, and aren't likely to be corrupted by negative emotions" the pig explained.

"That would explain why the moron hasn't exploded in rage yet" the tiger commented as he returned to his book.

"HEY!" Kumatetsu snapped. "You wanna come down here and make your comments huh Fatass?!"

"I'm happy up here and away from your tantrum" Byakko snapped back.

“Tantrum? TANTRUM?! YOU BROKE MY NOSE TWO DAYS AGO!” the bear shrieked. “You had a complete tantrum and you BROKE MY DAMN NOSE!”

“And?” the tiger grunted. “I gain nothing by smashing a few pots. It’s the same as stomping an insect to me.”

“Oh look at the big scary demon” the crimson bakemono quibbled fearfully. “Feh. Just sit there and keep growing your ass until it’s as big and soft as your pillow pile then” he spat and drew his sword.

Raising it above his head, he brought the sheath down and smashed another pot. And with a deft twist he struck another, more pottery going everywhere. “It’s pathetic that you need a tool like that. Are your fists just not enough that you need a sword as well?” Byakko chided.

“And what do you know about swords huh fatty?” Kumatetsu demanded. “It takes a lot of *actual* skill to master the sword. You’re probably just mad that you can’t grasp the sword in your heart” he sneered, a hand to his chest.

“My what?” Byakko snorted in disbelief. “A sword in my heart? What ridiculousness are you talking about?”

“Y’know, you gotta grasp the sword in your heart. You do that, and just, y’know, fwoosh” the bear explained, swinging the sword in the demon’s direction.

His white fur fluttered in the gale, and yet his questioning look never escaped his face. “That is so childish, and yet, somehow, I’m surprised you would have such stupid beliefs like a “sword in the heart”” he scoffed disapprovingly.

“Well, come on then lardo, you try it” Kumatetsu suggested, holding his sword out.

The tiger looked from the blade to the idiot holding it, and back to the sword. And as ridiculous as this was, he wasn’t about to let himself be shown up by a cockroach like him. “Fine” he decided as he rose, and jumped down to the lower area.

The ground around his feet **cracked** upon landing, the beast's immense weight shifting about as he snatched the weapon out of the bear's hand. "Watch" he spat at Kumatetsu, the sword held high.

Swinging his arm with all his might, it whizzed through the air, and that was the end of it. "You didn't do it right. You're supposed to bwoooooosh" the bear explained (poorly).

"THAT IS MEANINGLESS! THAT MEANS NOTHING!" the demon bellowed (furiously).

"It's because you aren't doing it right" Kumatetsu repeated. "You gotta grasp your heart's sword an-"

"HRRRAAAAGGGGGHHHHH!"

The sheathed sword went down, smashing a pot and the rock it sat upon. The tiger's chest heaved from his furious breaths, but an odd sound caught both of their attentions. Slowly raising the sword, the two idiots watched as the sheath cracked and crumbled away, exposing the blade. "ACK!" the bakemono yelped, snatching it away. "Look what you've done!" he groaned as more cracks spread across the sheath as it slowly fell apart.

"It's not my fault your materials are so weak they can't handle my strength. This is why I need nothing more than myself to win a battle" Byakko boasted.

"Oh sure, so do you feel like ponying up to pay for this? Our swords gotta be kept secured and unusable as a cutting weapon" the bear explained.

"Then what's the point of having them if they can't cut anything?" the tiger derided. "A club would make a better weapon than your useless swords."

"Because we're a lot more civilised than that!" Kumatetsu snapped as he walked over to his friends.

"Feh, you could have fooled me with your slovenly lifestyle. You're more of a pig than the actual pig" Byakko retorted while looking at Hyakushubo.

“Please don’t involve me in this” the monk sighed.

“You take that back!” the crimson bakemono demanded. “You’re just as big a slob as I am. Bigger when you compare our weights!”

“If we did that, then you’d find that my muscles alone outweigh you by themselves! OBSERVE!” Byakko boomed, taking the closest pot.

Squatting down, his impressive muscles tensed and he heaved hard, sending the pottery high into the air; water and all. “Yeah, real impressive” Kumatetsu snorted jealously as he idled with his blade.

“Then you’d best wait for the actually impressive part” the tiger smugly crowed as he brought his fists together.

The pot had just reached its apex, and was already on its way down. And in its descent the demon kept count, patiently waiting for the most opportune moment. Closer now, but not yet. Perhaps this will shut the moron up for good to see the vast, *vast* gulf between their strength. Almost there, almost within striking range. With the last precious few seconds, Byakko arrogantly turned to see if the idiot was watching. And in that second, the bear twisted his exposed sword in just the wrong way, catching the midday sun. “ARGH!” the tiger roared, covering his eyes and staggering about.

SMASH! Pottery rolled down Byakko’s shoulders, water slopping off of his soaked robes and fur. He seemed in a daze, just standing there blankly in spite of the fact that the pot didn’t even hurt him (much). “HA HA HA HAAAAAA!”

The demon’s head turned slowly, his eyes bugging out of his skull as Kumatetsu was laughing his ass off. “HA HA HA HAAA! Oh, you, ha ha haaa! You were right fatty” he cackled and wiped away a tear. “I should’ve waited for the best part!”

Even the damn monkey was rolling about and bawling at his expense. *HIS*, expense. They were laughing, even though it was damn insect’s fault for blinding him. It was his fault. IT WAS HIS FAULT!

“HHRRRRRAAAAAAGGGGHHHHH!!!!”

The trio clasped their ears as all the pots closest to Byakko shattered from his scream. One that didn't was immediately grabbed and hurled at Kumatetsu, who narrowly avoided it. “WHAT THE HELL FATTY!?!” he demanded, only to be grabbed by his shirt.

The tiger effortlessly lifted him up, with the bear's feet dangling three feet from the ground as he stared into Byakko's furious face. “You BLINDED ME!” he howled, his facial muscles convulsing from pure rage.

“I, grk, did not!” the bear gasped while grabbing the demon's wrists.

“DON'T LIE TO MEEE! YOUR SWORD BLINDED ME!” the demented tiger accused.

“Nrrfggh. Even... even if it did.... You... ugh, you shouldn't have been... been showing off” Kumatetsu stubbornly refuted.

Byakko's vast form trembled as he held the bakemono by one hand, his other now outstretched and baring its claw. His fingers twitched anxiously, as if they were begging to rip and tear the bastard. To end the life of the one who humiliated him. Better yet, he could use his fangs and tear his throat out. End it that way before tearing him apart. Let him gasp and wheeze. “Byakko” Hyakushubo said softly.

The tiger's head snapped to the right, his expression unchanging as the monk didn't even flinch. “Please put him down. It was an accident” the pig insisted.

“You're trying to bargain, with a demon?! Why should I let this insult go?” Byakko demanded.

“You know what will happen if you kill him” Hyakushubo warned. “A moment's joy isn't worth a lifetime's regret.”

The demon's hand clenched tightly, and he roughly tossed Kumatetsu. He hit the ground hard and rolled until he hit the wall. "Urfk" he groaned, his head spinning.

"Don't think this was because of you" the tiger spat at the monk. "And if you speak to me like that again, I won't hesitate to end you" he added.

"Don't... don't you dare... THREATEN THEM!" Kumatetsu growled as he got to his feet. "Insult me all you like, but never.... *EVER!* THREATEN THEM!"

"Or what?" Byakko sneered.

WHUMP! A shockwave passed over Byakko, his gut rocking as the bear's fist impaled him by a god six inches. "Pathetic" he uttered, and backhanded Kumatetsu's face.

The bakemono hit the wall hard, and he collapsed to his knees. "That... all you got...? Huh demon? It's not my fault your eyes are so crap that, that they, they can't handle a little sunlight" he huffed as he got to his feet. "Maybe if you spent... more time training, instead of... of reading! Then maybe you could handle it" he taunted.

The tiger's teeth clenched, as if he was threatening to break them by the force of his own jaw. All that reading.... All that time WASTED! "RAAAAAGGHHHHH!!!!"

In a blink he was gone, out the ruins on a mission. Never before had Kumatetsu see Byakko run that fast, and it was nothing short of shocking to know he still had that kind of agility. "You need to go after him" Hyakushubo warned.

"Why? So I can go coddle that big baby again?" the bear scowled.

"So he doesn't HURT anyone" the monk asserted.

And like that Kumatetsu was gone as well, a little pain and something possibly fractured not even slowing him down one bit. "That's crazy. He completely flipped out" Tatara commented, finally finding his tongue.

"Something is really wrong with him" Hyakushubo idly spoke, only to notice Byakko had left his book behind. It was still open to the page it had been before, and the monk rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "*Why was he so curious about Darkness?*" he wondered.

It wasn't hard for Kumatetsu to tail Byakko home, as he left a trail of terrified townsfolk in his wake. And while that wouldn't be one to rattle the bear, he was nonetheless concerned as he returned to a home filled with roaring and destruction. The door was close to being off its hinges, and paper filled the living space/Kumatetsu's bedroom. "*He didn't.*"

Catching his breath outside Byakko's room, the bakemono dodged some flying pages, with plenty more scattering around like a morbid shower of snow. And in the middle conducting the blizzard was the tiger, his meaty fists ripping apart the only thing that had given him peace in this wretched town. Kumatetsu's jaw hung as a sense of wrongness filled his very soul. Sure they were books, but... this was so wrong. "Byakko!"

The demon snarled loudly, taking an unmolested tome and waving it at the bear. "LOOK AT THIS!" he roared. "LOOK AT WHAT I'VE WASTED MY TIME ON!"

The book was confetti in seconds, scattering around the enormous tiger. "He-HEY! STOP! SOME OF THOSE ARE BORROWED!" the bakemono shouted, finally coming too.

"RAAAAAH!"

Kumatetsu jumped back in horror, claw marks cut into his shirt. "WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!" he hollered. "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!" he demanded.

"Because: I. Am. A! DEMON!" Byakko screamed.

The bear gripped his ears tightly as all the discarded sake bottles around him shattered. “AND SO WHAT?! DOES BEING A DEMON MEAN YOU ACT LIKE A BIG BABY?!” he screamed back.

“WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT HOW ANYONE ACTS?! YOU CAN’T EVEN ACT LIKE YOUR OWN KIND!” the demon fumed, his attention turned from his books. “YOU’RE SO DETESTABLE THAT THE ONLY KINSHIP YOU’VE EVER FOUND IS IN TWO MORE DREGS OF SOCIETY!”

“MAYBE THOSE TWO ARE ALL I NEED! CAUSE AT LEAST THEN I’M NOT AS ALONE AS YOU!”

“AND YOU THINK THAT MAKES YOU BETTER?!? WHY WOULD I EVEN WANT *YOUR* KINSHIP?!” Byakko demanded, gripping the doorway and cutting into it deeply with his claws.

“You didn’t seem to mind it much before” the bakemono retorted levelly. “I almost actually thought there might be something worthwhile inside you.”

“Then you thought wrong” the demon spat.

“This is so typical. Why did I even waste my time with you? The inn. Winter. The dinner we all shared. They didn’t mean a damn thing to you at all! They didn’t make you want to change at all! Make you wanna be better!” Kumatetsu countered. “Then if you’re so happy being your asshole demon self, fine! Don’t let me stop you! I’ll leave you to it!”

And he stormed out, again. And Byakko snarled as he crushed one of his larger volumes in his hand, the falling pages never making up for all the time he wasted on them. “That damn...” Kumatetsu grumbled as he went outside, only to find Hyakushubo waiting. “Why are you here?”

“Byakko left this behind” the pig explained, handing him the History of Jutengai.

“Why bother? He’s tearing up all the others, you might as well keep. At least it’ll be safe from his tantrum” the bakemono sourly said.

“I wouldn’t be so sure. Maybe if you give him it, he might calm down” the monk figured.

“Fine. But I’m done doing favours for him. If he wants to be a big whiny demon, then fine! I won’t bother doing anything besides the bare minimum” Kumatetsu declared.

Storming back inside, the bear threw the book at Byakko’s head. It neatly bounced off his skull into his waiting hands. “Wait, this is...?”

“Hyakushubo brought it back after you left it behind. He could have left it, but he’s nice. He was nice and brought it back cause he thought you’d miss it” the bakemono dryly explained.

The demon’s eyes flickered from book to bear. “This changes nothing” he huskily stated and turned his back on Kumatetsu.

“You’re welcome” the bakemono sarcastically said, and left him.

“Pathetic” the tiger grumbled as he pushed away any feelings of, ugh, being touched by this.

It meant nothing. Nothing did. All that mattered was his plan. He was going to find a human and feed off their darkness, no matter what. And when he has his powers back, the bear will be first to go. That was a solemn promise.