

Win, Lose or Draw?

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I have too much time to think sometimes.

They say I defeated you, and maybe from a certain perspective I did. But did you lose?

No, you didn't. Not from where I'm sitting looking at you sleep. I never saw that smile on your face before we fought that day. And I will never confess that I studied you a few days before I made myself known to you. I can't describe what I thought of you then with any certainty. I know what I noticed about you though. It was the little things that added up to make the whole bigger picture of the notorious Raitei.

You never smiled, or if you did, it was false - it never once reached your eyes.

Your eyes were cold, distant, and haunted. There was something going on behind them, some turmoil you held at bay and it exhausted you. No one seemed to notice as they danced around you.

I noticed.

You were nothing like I know you today, but I could tell there was a part of you, the Amano Ginji I care about was there, but the weight of your world had you caged.

You are a free spirit and that is something if caged will die. I saw that in you then, I saw the chains clearly, you were so bogged down with the weight of them you couldn't see them anymore. They had become a part of you.

That was what I decided to fight when I challenged you. I was never after Raitei - I was after the soul he had in a crushing prison.

I guess figured if I could get something like that back from an opponent who was as challenging as you were, then my

idea for creating a retrieval service might just work. Because most people wanted tangible things back, this was a metaphor, pretty damn hard to get a concept back when it was never really a stolen good to start with.

Just goes to prove I'm a pretty smart guy, either that or I stand by my statement that I think too much. It's probably a little bit of both really.

I won that first battle. I defeated Raitei in that aspect. I made you stop and think about you for a change. What did Ginji want, what was Ginji's purpose in this world?

I'll never forget your face, the way your eyes suddenly came alive when you realized there was more than one path before you.

I'll also never forget the pain there, if I could go back and take back what I did to you I would. I would have found another way to open your eyes without the use of my Jagan.

You are the only person I've never asked "Did you have a Nice Dream?" Because I know you didn't, I saw it all, and Ginji right then I realized you're a lot stronger than people give you credit for. I learned on the inside, you surpass me in ways I cannot begin to describe.

That's the battlefield I lose in. If you compare the measure of our souls, yours is infinite in its capacity to love, care, protect, nurture, desire, the list of good qualities goes on for eternity. It's huge, immeasurable and I was absolutely blinded with its brilliance and shocked that someone like you even existed.

I lost.

My world was so petty, so materialistic and so cynical, that in comparison with you I was a sad joke of a man. We'd both been through things in our lives that were horrible and foul, and downright evil. I let those experiences make me cruel, caustic and violent. The term bastard comes to mind actually.

I was a supreme miserable bastard.

You? After a life of hell you still gave a shit about others, in fact, it was your whole purpose in life. You never once stopped to think about what was in it for you. You gave and gave until you were lost and then kept on giving. I concede defeat. My soul was never capable of that, I will always be a lesser man than you, but I can try to be a little less jaded. You give me hope again.

So I win again.

Back to square one.

So really... I think if you look at how we met, how we fought, and how we decided that our separate paths should become one and how you walked away from Mugenjou with only a promise from a stranger who had just given you the worst nightmare of your life we both won something.

We won trust.

We both lost something.

I lost my bitterness and hatred of the world, for the most part. It's still there to a degree, but it's not all encompassing as it once had been. I couldn't see the world as completely evil anymore... I lost that ability when I met you. You are a bright spot in this world that no evil can touch, even if you claim otherwise.

You lost your cage, and you lost your way. You lost Raitei, your identity. That must have been terrifying for you. Yet, you reached out for my hand and I took yours and promised to help you find yourself again.

Win or Lose? It was more like Win AND Lose.

We did both, so if you want to get technical I guess you could call our 'battle' a Draw.

And we're still making our way aren't we? We may not be rich... yet.

But that's only if you look in our wallets.

Right now from where I'm sitting, I'm the richest man alive.

I have you by my side.

That to me is worth more than money. You can't buy hope or trust and you gave me both.

You can't buy love either for that matter, and you have given me that too.

I take that back, I'm definitely a Winner.

We're both Winners.

END