

The Flying Thunder God

“One miso ramen, please.”

Naruto turned and looked at the girl next to him. He was slightly surprised that anyone had managed to sit next to him without him noticing.

She was pale, with violet pupil-less eyes and long dark hair. A Hyūga, clearly. She was wearing Chūnin flack jacket over a sleeveless black t-shirt, with netting underneath.

“Hanabi?” he guessed, vaguely remembering the pipsqueak sister of Hinata.

“Hai,” she agreed. She paused. “Firework jokes are as passé as processed seafood jokes.”

He smiled slowly. “Ahh, but I’m not processed seafood, where as you are definitely a fire cracker. However, your point, while prematurely made, is valid. So I’ll stick with Hanabi-chan.”

She raised an eyebrow. “Awfully familiar, aren’t you.”

He nodded. “It’s about as formal as I get. But, if it helps, I could come up with a nickname for you?”

“Hanabi-chan is fine,” she said quickly.

He grinned at her, and said a quick prayer as his food arrived. As he had company, admittedly, not company he had asked for, he used a few more manners than he normally would, although he still had enough time to finish five bowls to her one.

“So, what brings a Hyūga to this place?”

“Hey,” Ayame protested, as she cleared up some bowls behind him.

“Pssh, you know I love you guys,” Naruto protested, “but apart from Hinata and Neji, all Hyūga’s had a stick surgically implanted up their posteriors at birth, and as such, wouldn’t be seen dead in a honest place that serves great value and great tasting food. They’re not happy unless they’re being ripped off.”

Hanabi’s face shifted almost imperceptibly, and he realised she was smiling. “Perhaps, not all Hyūga are the same.”

“Oh yeah?” he challenged.

She nodded.

“Excellent.” He grinned. “Thanks, Ayame-chan,” he said, as he paid for his own meal, and hers. “Come on.”

“Oh?” Hanabi asked.

He nodded energetically. “You’ve turned up at just the right time. I wanted to try something new, and you want to prove that you’ve not got a stick up your arse.” He grabbed her hand, and pulled her away.

Naruto arrived at the top of the Hokage monument, just as the last clone popped out. He smiled cheerfully. It was perfect; his clones had done a great job.

“Why are we here?” Hanabi asked.

“A new sport,” Naruto said proudly. “Well, new for Konoha anyway.”

“Oh?”

He nodded eagerly. “Ready?”

“Wait, what?” she asked, her eyes a little wary, but her face in its normal calm demeanour.

“Bansai!” Naruto yelled, as he pulled the girl in to a bear hug, and leapt off the top of the platform on top of the third Hokage’s head.

“Woooooo,” he yelled, as they hurtled head first toward the ground, at ever increasing speeds.

“EeEeeeeekkkkkk,” Hanabi screamed, at the same time.

Fifty feet from the ground, his legs snapped upward, and they started to slow dramatically. Ten feet from the ground, they stopped, and started to reverse, heading back up.

"Yeeeeaaahhhh," he yelled, as they were thrown back half way up the Hokage Monument. Hanabi's grip was now so tight he had a little trouble breathing.

They bounced a few more times, before coming to stop, about twenty feet from the ground, hanging upside down.

"Wow," he grinned, and opened his eyes. They rotated slowly, until they were facing away from the mountain. Stood on the ground, staring at him, appeared to be half the ninja in the village, lead by the Hokage.

"Hey, hag," he greeted her. He flipped to the ground.

Hanabi released him, and immediately bowed. "Hokage-sama," she said. Her self control had her looking like she'd been on an afternoon stroll in seconds.

"What, in the name of Kami, was that, brat?" Tsunade demanded.

"Bungee jumping!" he said cheerfully. "I found it in a magazine."

Tsunade sighed. "They do it in Cloud. They do, however, use a large rope made of elastic. I see no rope."

"Oh," Naruto said and scratched the back of his neck. "That seemed boring."

"Explain, before I get bored and just assign you thirty d-rank missions for disturbing me."

He pouted at her. "Look, I was with Kankurō a few weeks ago, on that joint mission with Sand."

She nodded.

"One night, we got to talking about chakra strings, and how his puppets work. I tried, but couldn't do it."

"Too much chakra, not enough control?" she snarked.

"Nah, my control's great," He said. "Way too much chakra, though. So I was thinking about it, and realised the solution was the same as my clone problem."

Kakashi pushed his way through the crowd of Ninja, so that he was along side the Hokage. "Use more chakra and use a harder technique to compensate?" he asked.

"Give the man a prize!" he smiled. A clone of his appeared, and handed over a package. Kakashi blinked, and opened it. It contained an orange book.

"Yay," Kakashi cheered. "My favourite, look what I won!" He held it up to show the gathered ninja.

Naruto smirked. "Anyway," he continued, noticing the ever increasing glare of Tsunade. "Turns out, that a Chakra rope is quite elastic. I had my clones build the platform so that I wouldn't hit someone's impressive snout on the way down and hey presto."

"And the Hyūga?" she asked.

"Oh, I kidnapped her from lunch; she said she wasn't like the others."

"She has a name," Hanabi murmured.

"Oh, yeah, you know Hanabi-chan, right?"

Tsunade rolled her eyes.

"Right," Naruto grinned. "So, want a go?"

"No."

"What's that," he yelled, pointing behind the gathered Ninja. As they all turned, Naruto leaped forward, grabbed Tsunade, and flickered them both to the top of the mountain. "Ready?"

"I'm gonna kill you," she promised, although she didn't exactly fight to get away.

"Bansai," he yelled again, as they jumped off.

"Woooooo," the Hokage yelled, as they plummeted down. As before, the Chakra rope kicked in, but this time, to preserve the dignity of his leader, as soon as they reached the lowermost point, he kicked away, and dropped them down.

"Fun," Tsunade smirked. She smacked him so hard in the chest that he flew against the monument, narrowly missing several outcropping rocks.

Next time you try something like this, warn people beforehand. We could feel the chakra in your rope a mile away!"

"Oh. Sorry."

"Back to work, people," she yelled at the gathered Ninja.

"Oh, yeah," Naruto said. "Hey, hag, watch this." He turned, pulled out a chakra rope in his hands, and smashed it on to the ground. A thirty-foot long, and ten foot deep crevasse appeared about a quarter of a second before an explosion of noise rocked through the gathered Ninjas, sending some of the lower ranked one's flying.

He reached out, and pulled Hanabi against him, as he noticed she was losing her grip.

There was silence as the noise abated.

"Can we learn that technique?" Anko gasped, she was stood next to some of the other Jōnins. "Please, please, pretty please?"

"Can you make a hundred Shadow Clones?" Naruto asked.

"Awww, no fair," Anko pouted.

"Can it do anything else?" Tsunade asked.

Naruto shrugged. "Dunno, all I've done is jumped with it, and used it like a whip."

"Hanabi," the Hokage said, looking at the dark haired girl. "Congratulations, you're the nearest ninja in sight. Spend the next few days with the blonde idiot. Find out what this chakra rope can do, and see if you can find a way that normal people can use it."

"Hai," Hanabi said, saluting smartly.

"Don't do that," Naruto nudged her. "You'll make the hag think she's important!"

"Naruto," Tsunade growled, approaching angrily.

"Eek," Naruto said, and grabbed Hanabi. One body flicker later, and they were free from the fast approaching leader.

"So," Naruto said, as he lounged against a wall. "You're a Hyūga, so you have control coming out the wazoo?"

He had the feeling she was rolling her eyes at him, but without pupils, it was difficult to tell. "That is where control comes from, yes."

He blinked at her for a second, and then grinned. "Point to you," he acknowledged. "You know how to make a chakra string?"

She shook her head.

"Right, hold up your hand and spread your fingers."

She did so. He did it as well. "Now, flood you hand with Chakra, so that it's visible."

"Byakugan," she called. The veins around her eyes bulged.

"Whoa, stop," he said. "When I said visible, I meant to normal people, not to special eyes."

"Is that possible?"

He released his chakra, allowing the purple haze to float all around him. He took control again and the haze vanished.

"To normal people?" she finished.

He shrugged. "I suspect Kankurō was teaching me the Jinchūriki way. Okay, try gathering all your chakra, and putting it through your hand."

She nodded and did that, and her hand took a faint violet haze.

"Good. Now concentrate, and move it, so that it connects your fingertips together." He demonstrated on his own hand, allowing the chakra to become around an inch wide. "This is as small as I can get it."

A small bead of sweat appeared on her forehead, as the chakra slowly concentrated into a brighter violet thread.

"Impressive. It took me two days to get to that stage."

"I am Hyūga," she said, as if that explained everything. And it probably did.

"Okay, next, take each of the strands and detach one end. And you have a basic chakra string." He held up his hand, with five thick strings floating off the end. They waved like snake heads.

He settled back, and pulled out a scroll.

“What are you doing?”

“It’s going to take you a while to master that,” he chuckled.

Hanabi sat down, cross-legged, and turned her eyes back on. He was impressed with her dedication, as she hardly moved for the next few hours. No matter how boring it was – and he knew it was extremely – or how tiring, she showed the sort of dedication that he normally only saw in his – or Lee’s – training.

“Done it,” she finally whispered.

He looked, and she had ten razor thin strings dancing out of her fingers. “Hmm, you know, if you want to learn puppetry, I can pull a few favours from Gaara?”

“Maybe in the future,” she said. “What’s next?”

He shot to his feet. “Now, we start to increase your Chakra levels. Follow me.” He started to run, keeping his speed down to something she could follow. He headed toward training ground eighteen, the one next to a large lake, and as they arrived, he jumped high into the sky, allowed his Chakra to float around him, and dived deep underwater.

He looked back, to see Hanabi behind him, only without the Chakra. He headed up, exploding out of the water, hovered in the air around fifteen feet up, before landing on the surface and standing there.

Hanabi was standing there as well, slicking her now wet hair back. She pulled off her Chūnin jacket, and then her t-shirt, leaving her in a mesh covered sports bra. She shivered slightly, as the late winter breeze drifted over her skin.

He was impressed on two counts - that she hadn’t complained about getting wet and that she had followed him exactly. It took him an amount of willpower that he hadn’t used in a while, not to continue to run his eyes over her.

“Okay, we’re going to start again. You know how you did your hand earlier?”

She nodded.

“This time, allow it out of your face.”

Her look was a little disbelieving, but she did as she was told, her face starting to glow with the same violet hue.

Naruto allowed himself to sink into the water, until everything but his head was underneath. She matched him.

“Now, put your head down, and simply breathe.”

“Are you sure?”

He nodded.

She looked at him for a long moment, before she sunk down until she was submerged, her hair floating on the surface.

A minute later, she re-appeared, and gave him the first real smile he could remember on her face. “I could breathe,” she whispered.

“Yup, so for now, we’ll just play. Grab hold of my belt.” He moved next to her, encased himself completely in his chakra, and started to move, heading down. He kept out of the real depths, as she’d need a lot more chakra before she could handle that, so he kept near the surface, and shot around, using his arms to propel himself. He tried to keep moving fast, as it would help her keep warm. When she had more Chakra, she’d be able to use it like a full wet suit.

Around half an hour later, she tugged on his belt three times. He looked at her, and she appeared exhausted. He headed up, and as they burst out the water, he caught her.

“Sorry,” she whispered. “I was running out.”

He nodded. “I want you to meet me here at ten am tomorrow, so that we can do this again. Forcing your chakra to the surface like this is the best way to burn through it cleanly – there’s no adverse reaction, like when you do a technique that sends it out in a burst.”

“Could I not just do it on dry land?”

“Well, yeah, but where’s the fun in that?” he grinned. “I’ll take you to Wave sometime, and we can explore the oceans.”

Naruto created a clone to pick up her clothes, and carried the now almost unconscious Hanabi to the Hyūga compound.

He met up with Neji and Tenten as he carried her.

Neji looked at the girl in his arms. “What have you done to her?”

“Chakra growth.”

Neji winced. "Like you did with us?"

Naruto nodded. "New technique, burns through Chakra even faster, and far smoother."

"Poor girl," Tenten said, absently patting her stomach. She was only two months pregnant, and was the first of their age to be expecting.

"How's little Naruko and Naruka?" he asked brightly. The hag had already examined Tenten, and with her consent, announced the gender and sex of both babies.

"We're not naming our twins after you," Tenten groaned.

"Of course you are," Naruto protested. "Who else are you going to name them after? The hag?"

"Don't call the Hokage that," Tenten chided. "And no, probably our parents."

Naruto pouted at her. "Spoilsport."

Neji smiled, and opened the gates to the compound. "I'll put Hanabi to bed; you can go and make some tea for Tenten."

"Hai," Naruto agreed, as he handed the now damp girl to the Jōnin.

"Is the hag up yet?"

"Good morning, Naruto-kun," Shizune said brightly.

"Sorry, Shizune-chan," Naruto said, scratching the back of his neck. "Good morning."

She smiled at him. "You're never here before eight. What's gone wrong?"

"You know the hag assigned me the Hyūga shrimp? Well, I think she could do it."

"What is 'it', exactly?" Shizune asked warily.

"Train with me!"

Shizune shuddered. "You put three Genin into hospital! We agreed, all of us, that your training is only suitable for Gai, Lee, and people on a war-time footing!"

Naruto grinned. "I know, I just thought if I pushed them, they'd do great!"

"Not everyone is you, or the other members of the rookie eleven. You were all special."

"I guess," Naruto sighed. "But anyway, Hanabi, she stayed with me all day yesterday, and I put her through day one of Chakra Growth. She didn't complain once!"

Shizune's eyes widened in surprise. "Impressive," she agreed. "Come on, you can join us for breakfast and try and talk Hokage-sama in to it."

Naruto rolled his eyes at the formality.

"Morning, Hanabi," Tenten said brightly, as Hanabi walked in to the living room she shared with Neji.

"Tenten," Hanabi said with one of her normal tiny smiles.

"So, how'd it go?"

"Tiring, absolutely exhausting actually. However, I have noticed a small increase in my reserves already."

"That wasn't exactly what I meant," Tenten chided.

"Fun," Hanabi admitted, as if the word was foreign to her. "Do you have any idea how much Chakra he has?"

"A stupidly large amount," Tenten said cheerfully. "Wait until you see his echo-location trick."

"Oh?"

"He sends out his Chakra like a pulse, and can identify any source that he knows in a ten mile radius."

Hanabi went quiet, which was her way of showing shock.

"You weren't wearing much when he was carrying you back," Tenten noted, as she poured two cups of the now cool-enough-to-drink tea.

Her tiny smile re-appeared. "I took advantage of being wet. I think he liked it, but he was training me, so he was being professional."

"We should get you a bathing suit," Tenten mused. "A violet one to match your eyes."

"And my chakra."

Tenten chuckled. "Similar to Neji then, mine is dark green. You do realise that doing this sort of training will help you get to Jōnin far faster than normal?"

"No, I didn't."

"Naruto took it upon himself to help increase all of our Chakra a few years ago. We went through hell for three months, but at the end if it, we'd all had our Chakra increase by a factor of fifteen."

Hanabi's draw dropped slightly.

"Jiraiya came up with the ideas before he died. Naruto took it as one of the ways of remembering him."

Hanabi nodded slowly. A messenger bird floated in through the open window and landed on her shoulder. It dropped a message it was holding in its beak, before flying away.

Hanabi opened the tiny scroll and read it out loud.

"Chūnin Hyūga Hanabi, you have been assigned to Jōnin Commander Uzumaki-Namikaze Naruto for the next three months. You will be accompanying the blonde brat on a tour of the elemental countries. At the end of it, you will be taking the Jōnin trial. You will be expected to demonstrate the Chakra Rope technique at these trials. Tsunade."

Tenten whistled slowly. Hanabi had paled a little more, and her hand was shaking.

"Three months personal training with a Jōnin Commander? With Uzumaki-Namikaze Naruto, the man who defeated Uchiha Madara," she whispered.

"You won't ever get an opportunity like this again," Tenten said. "I'd put aside your chase of him, and just learn everything you can."

"Hai," Hanabi agreed. "I will go and tell Father that I won't be able to fulfil my duties for a while."

"Finish your tea first."

"Hai. Is there anything else about Naruto that would help me?"

"Loads, but I'll give you one more piece of advice. Naruto does things differently. Until you know him, try and keep your mouth shut and don't ask silly questions. His way, bizarrely enough works. Once you've been with him for a while then feel free to challenge him – but only when you know him. He appreciates discussions and being asked to justify his position, but not when it's from someone who doesn't have a clue about how he operates."

Hanabi nodded. "I will do my best."

Tenten sniggered, "and it will drive you mad. It did with Neji-kun."

"Father," Hanabi greeted, as she entered her father's office.

"Sit down," he said, gesturing. "Congratulations."

She looked at him as she gracefully took her seat.

"The Hokage informed me a few minutes ago that you impressed Naruto yesterday, and he's decided to train you."

She nodded.

"For all his laid back attitude, he is an incredibly strong ninja, and the student of the legendary Jiraiya. Learn everything you can."

"I will."

"You are excused your normal duties for the duration. " He passed over a scroll.

She took it.

"Inside, is full camping equipment, as well as a bed. I suspect that we will not see you much, so try and be comfortable."

"Thank you."

He gave her a small smile.

“Work hard. Good luck.” He paused. “As a final piece of advice, the Gentle Fist style, especially how you and Hinata practice it, is incredibly strong. However, I am aware that people outside the clan are learning how to defend against it. Our clan is only strong as we continue to evolve.”

“Thank you.”

At precisely nine o'clock, Hanabi appeared in the same training ground as yesterday. Naruto was already there, reading what appeared to be the same scroll he had been studying the day before.

She had a small pack on her back, which now included the swimming suit Tenten had shoved into her hands as she left that morning.

“You’ve got potential, Hanabi-chan,” he said, “So I got the hag to give you to me for three months. Ready to learn?”

She nodded.

“Right, it takes a Chūnin three days to get to Suna. We’ll do it in two. Let’s go.”

Hanabi barely had time to gulp and wonder what she had gotten herself into.

Naruto smiled. They were camping on the border with Bird Country. Hanabi was opposite him, the other side of the fire, wearing her normal night clothes – a pair of shorts and a t-shirt.

She was stretching, allowing her muscles to relax, and when she finished, she would soon sit down and study the next scroll he’d given her.

They probably wouldn’t say anything to each other for the rest of the evening, unless she had a question or two.

But what surprised him, was that he didn’t feel the need to fill the silence. It was a calming and relaxing silence that allowed him to focus.

She finished, and padded silently over to him. He shifted to the right, allowing her to sit next to him.

She’d study for as long as she could, before she’d fall asleep on his shoulder. He was pushing her every way he could, physically, mentally and spiritually.

And she hadn’t yet complained once.

Even he might have complained – well, would have complained – if he’d had the energy to do so, if he was being put through this training.

Hanabi walked after Naruto, pleased to see the signs of civilisation ahead. The deserts of Suna might have been great for training – they were certainly forgiving of destructive techniques, but the heat during the day and cold at night had been playing havoc with her skin, and she urgently needed to restock on some moisturiser.

After the utterly exhausting run to Suna, with only three hours sleep each night, she’d been slightly surprised by just how warm a reception they’d received.

There was none of the normal formality at the gates, sure, Naruto was unique, but the way he was waved through was surprising. Her father, as noticeable and influential as he was, always had to go through the correct channels.

Naruto, rather than wait for the Suna Kage to see him, had acted just the way he did in Konoha – marched straight into his office.

He’d been welcomed with a faint smile, and she suspected that Gaara-sama had expected such an action, and had cleared his schedule accordingly.

Naruto had man-handled the Kage out of his office, and to a small restaurant, where he’d badgered Gaara into paying for them.

It was clear to her that Gaara didn’t mind paying in the slightest, but put up a protest anyway, on principal.

They’d soon been joined by Kankurō, Temari being back in Konoha.

The food had been nice, but the company was better. After the food, they’d gone back to the Kage’s mansion, and sat around chatting. It wasn’t a Kage, a Jōnin commander, a Jōnin and a Chūnin. It was four friends having a good time.

And then, Naruto had told Kankurō that she was looking into puppetry, and that she had mastered creating chakra strings in a few hours.

Kankurō had demanded a demonstration, and after she had done so, he’d vanished upstairs and returned loaded with scrolls.

The fact that they were Suna secrets, admittedly, low level secrets, wasn’t even discussed. Why? Naruto had vouched for her and because it wasn’t a favour to Konoha, but a favour to Naruto.

Hanabi pulled herself out of her reverie, and looked hopefully at the small hotel they were approaching. Sure, she’d have turned her nose up at it when she was a child, and she knew her father would not even notice it, but now, it looked heavenly.

Only, Naruto walked straight past it, and the next one. So, perhaps they were going to stay in a top class one? She knew he wasn't poor. No-one who did the amount of high ranking missions he did would ever have to worry about money.

Only, he kept on going, until they reached the gates of a large compound. She shuddered to herself. He couldn't be thinking of visiting the ruler of Bird country? It was all very well meeting a Kage, one you were friends with, but meeting Toki-Hime? You needed to set up the visit long in advance, you needed to go through the right channels!

Everything needed to be perfect and impressive, to ensure that everything went smoothly.

One simply did not drop in on a Daimyo!

It was only with both effort and Tenten's words ringing in her ears, that she didn't say anything.

"Toki-hime in?" Naruto shouted up to the guard who was manning the gates.

The guard squinted, and then shouted, "Open the gates."

The gates slowly opened, and with a cheerful wave, Naruto entered. She followed him, aware that she was grimy, that her hair needed a wash and was now in a pony tail.

The door opened, and some guards came out, but they were quickly pushed aside as Toki, the Daimyo of the Land of Birds ran forward.

Hanabi had to concentrate to stop her jaw from dropping, as the Daimyo launched herself at Naruto. "Naruto-kun," she cheered.

He caught her easily. "Toki-chan!"

"It's great to see you again," Toki continued, obviously not taking offence at his familiarity with her. "You look like you've been training hard, and some of the stories I've heard about you!" She giggled. "Makes my own adventures look like a little girl playing with knives!"

"It's been to long," Naruto agreed, "but don't put yourself down, you were great!"

Toki blushed demurely, a grin on her face.

Hanabi suddenly had an epiphany. Her grimyness and tiredness didn't matter.

They were ninja; they didn't have to play the same games as nobles. People just presumed that they were doing something dangerous and beyond the ken of civilians.

"You mind putting us up for a couple of days, Toki-chan?" Naruto asked. "We could do with a bath."

"You do smell, a little," Toki answered cheerfully. "Of course, you're always welcome to stay, Naruto-kun."

"This is Hanabi-chan," Naruto said, throwing an arm around her and pulling her closer. "The hag's let me train her, as she's the first one I've found that can handle it!"

"Wow," Toki had said, giving her a huge smile, "welcome to my home. Come on, let's get you two settled, we'll have a feast this evening, and you can tell me all about it. Our chef's been waiting for you to visit; he's been experimenting with baked Ramen!"

And just like that, she had been accepted, not because she was a Hyūga, but because Naruto had deemed her worth of being trained.

Toki had been a wonderful host, a hell of a gossip, and had regaled her with tales of how her cousin, Tenten, and Naruto had helped her avenge her dead brother.

And so, they had ventured out, and everywhere they went, the pattern had been repeated. She had always thought her father was influential. He was a nobody compared to Naruto, the orange wearing loud mouth Jinchūriki was one hell of a diplomat.

From Demon, to Vegetables, to Moon, to Wave. Everywhere, it had been the same thing, he'd known the Princess, or the Priestess, or the Daimyo, or the Mayor, and he'd been welcomed with genuine warmth and affection.

All the state visits she'd been on, as a Hyūga had been cold and sterile. They'd been formal and boring, and only her status as a Ninja had stopped her being leered at.

Well, except once, and the feeling had returned to his legs four months later.

But with Naruto, they weren't State visits as much as friends getting together.

Here, it was fun, but she started to notice, that each time, he'd check on them, make sure they were okay, see if they needed anything, give advice, and generally be himself.

Every time, he'd get a positive reaction that meant that Konoha would continue to get good trade agreements and missions.

Hanabi shivered. They were on the border with Spring, and despite it's name change, it was still dreadfully cold in early spring, and that was the

one feeling she hated.

Naruto shifted, he was now asleep, which allowed her to snuggle a little closer, and get some of his warmth.

As with her sister, she'd found herself attracted to Naruto as she'd grown up. The Hyūga were a cold clan, and he was warm. He believed in everything they didn't. In showing emotions, in physical attention, and in emotional support.

She'd watched her sister stutter around him, never getting close, and waited. As much as she'd wanted to interfere, she'd known it would have been the last straw in their tenuous relationship, and despite everything, Hinata was still her beloved sister.

But then, Hinata had gone on a date with Kiba, and she'd gone straight to Tenten. Her cousin-in-law was someone she trusted, and someone who knew Naruto well.

Tenten had given her excellent advice. Don't hold back. Naruto lived each day by a simple rule. If he hadn't extracted every single ounce of life out of it, it had been wasted.

She'd started with Ramen, and compared to the cold sushi she normally ate, it had filled her with a wonderful warmth. And then they'd done the bungee jumping, and that had set her blood racing. And finally, all within two hours of sitting next to him, she'd watched first hand, the incredible relationship that Naruto and Tsunade-sama had together. Not quite mother and son, not quite brother and sister, but so absolutely family, it was clear to see. And it had made her heart race.

So when he'd jumped into a freezing cold lake, she'd followed without hesitation, and even though it was cold, those first seconds when she'd take half her clothes off, and he'd looked at her, not as a ninja, but as a man, had been enough to show that she was right.

She needed that warmth in her life.

He rolled over, sliding her back against his chest in his sleep. She was surrounded by him.

First, she needed to finish this training, so that they could be on equal footing. Or rather, so that the gap between them wasn't as huge as it was when she had started. Then, she needed to change their relationship. Then, she'd be warm.

She just hoped she could give him as much as he gave her.

Naruto stretched. The training was about over, and they were heading back to Konoha. As much as he loved that place, he'd miss this. The trip with just the two of them had been far more enjoyable than he'd expected.

Hanabi hadn't said much to start with, but now felt confident enough to question him when he was doing something weird, and he appreciated her view point.

She'd adopted his Chakra techniques, and with her superior control, had taken them far further than he could. He was so proud of that!

"Naruto?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you remember when we first talked?"

"Yeah?"

"If I'd said yes, what nickname would you have given me?"

He looked at her for a long moment. His nicknames were always personal and always slightly exaggerated.

He smiled. "Chibi-hime."

Her eyes smiled at him and she went silent. He thought that she liked it.

There were around fifty people in the stands around her, with more arriving. Jōnin trials didn't happen that often, and most of the existing Jōnins tended to show up to see them. They wanted to see who they would be working with. A lot of Chūnins were there as well, watching one of their own attempt the harder way to gain promotion.

Naruto had pushed her every waking moment, but what had surprised her, was that he'd done everything himself, but done more, pushing himself as hard as he'd pushed her.

Sure, especially near the end, she'd been able to give him a good fight, but he'd always kept something back. It had allowed her to go all out, and she'd found it most enjoyable.

She allowed herself an internal smile. Her chakra was unrecognisable from before, as the reason just why only fourteen percent of Chūnins became Jōnins was made abundantly clear. Chakra reserves, control, style, knowledge, all of it had to be so much higher. While there was a Jōnin exam, like the Chūnin exam, to get evaluated as she was, you need the sponsorship of an existing Jōnin, who was putting their own reputation on the line.

Tsunade appeared, dressed in full Hokage regalia. "Who sponsors this Chūnin?"

"I do," Naruto said, appearing next to her with barely a flicker of displaced air. There was some noise, as people recognised him. It wasn't common knowledge that he had taken her on.

"Is she ready to become a Jōnin, with all the responsibilities that entails?"

"She is," Naruto said formally.

This formal nature surprised her, as he was never like this. Until she realised it was for her. She allowed the suppressed feeling of attraction to him to reappear for the first time since the night in Spring.

"Chūnin, being a Jōnin is not easy. You will be the best the village has to offer, an example to other ninjas, and a deterrent to our enemies. Are you ready?"

"I am."

"Jōnin Sakura," she called. Sakura appeared in a swirl of leaves before her. "Chūnin Hanabi, you will be fighting my apprentice. Victory is not important, how you fight is."

"Hai," Hanabi said.

"Hand to hand only, you will be expected to demonstrate five a-rank techniques in the second part. Good luck."

Hanabi nodded again.

Naruto slid in front of her and looked into her eyes. "Kick her arse," he whispered with a grin. "You can do this." He faded out of sight.

"Begin," the Hokage called.

Hanabi slid smoothly in to her famous clan's stance.

Sakura moved forward, and attacked her. A cross right punch, followed by a straight kick. Exactly ten weeks ago, in her first proper fight with Naruto, he had done exactly the same thing. She had followed her clan's style's response perfectly.

She had then spent the next two minutes coughing her guts up, as Naruto's kick had slammed into her stomach.

She swayed just enough to allow the kick to go past, and then head-butted the other girl directly.

Sakura dropped to the floor, and then rolled back. "Damn it, Naruto," she yelled.

"What?"

"You've bloody taught her your damn annoying style!"

"Well, of course," he replied, and Hanabi could hear the proud smile on his face.

Naruto's style, as he explained it, was simple. In every fight, there was a flow. You attacked, someone defended. Someone attacked, you defended. There was a right way, and a wrong way. Naruto's style was to do neither.

She ran forward quickly, her hands moving as if she was using her clan's style, Sakura moved back and blocked properly, which allowed her to send a knee into the girl's stomach.

"That's really distracting," Sakura said, as she ran a hand over her own stomach, healing any damage. That was what made fighting medical ninja's so difficult. "You look like you're using the Gentle Fist style, but then at the last second, when I'm defending, you switch."

Hanabi nodded. "If you try and anticipate the switch, I can use the Gentle Fist style, and close your Tenketsu points."

Sakura nodded. "Then, let's take this up a notch." She vanished, and Hanabi was already defending on instinct alone. Sakura was an experienced Jōnin and was the apprentice of the Hokage. Her punches and kicks were devastatingly fast, accurate and immensely strong.

The only saving grace that she had was that she was used to fighting Naruto, who was faster, and stronger.

After a few minutes of stalemate, she started to get used to Sakura's style. All of her life, she had been trained in hand to hand fighting, and while Naruto had added to it, he was building on a life times dedication.

Sakura was attacking with her fists now glowing with Chakra, so she saw no reason to hold back either.

A fast paced attack approached, and she allowed a punch to smack into her shoulder, the pain was incredible, but it gave her the chance she had been looking for. Her hand swung around.

"That'll do." Her hand was caught, inches from Sakura's neck. Sakura's right hand, which was heading toward Hanabi's unprotected stomach was also caught.

Naruto was standing beside them, his hands on their wrists, holding them both still.

She met Sakura's eyes, and saw the same thing. Shock that someone had managed to cross the arena, catch both their attack and negate them.

"Draw," Naruto announced firmly.

"What?" Sakura demanded. "I would have shaken that punch off."

"Sakura-chan," Naruto sighed. "Look at her hand."

Sakura turned her head, and looked at the five visible claws coming off her fingers, and gulped.

"They are at quarter power," Hanabi explained.

"They don't look like chakra scalpels," Sakura said, as she took Hanabi's hand, and examined it.

"They're not. The hag would have struggled to heal you, if they'd landed."

"Don't call her that," Sakura yelled, and punched him through the wall of the stadium.

"You know he lets you do that?" Hanabi whispered.

Sakura smirked, before the smirk faded. She turned and bowed to the Hokage. "Chūnin Hanabi is ready."

"Agreed," Tsunade said. "Chūnin. The next portion of your test is simple. Five A-rank techniques please."

"Hanabi," Naruto called. She looked at him; he was standing next to her, as if he hadn't just been punched. "No Hyūga techniques."

"Hai."

Naruto created five clones for her, and took a seat next to the Hokage.

"Swamp of the underworld," she yelled, placing her hands on the ground. The chakra-sucking swamp that appeared was about a tenth of the size that Naruto could create, but it was the first ever earth based technique that a Hyūga had used. The clone popped, signalling a death.

There was some applause for the stands, and as she looked up, she saw her sister and father both applauding as well.

She took a deep breath. "Running Fire," she yelled, and clicked her teeth, igniting the chakra sending it toward two clones. She cut off the stream. "Demi-godly wind from the mountain!" Her wind technique caught the fire technique, swirling it into a tornado of fire. The two clones were obliterated, and she panted, pleased with herself.

Learning those techniques had been incredibly hard, but Naruto wouldn't let her fail. He could perform the full Godly wind from the mountain, as he had a natural command of the wind element that she lacked.

"Hanabi," Naruto called. "Original techniques for the last two."

"Hai."

"Chakra Technique, decapitation," she called, as she threw her right hand forward. Five chakra strings braided together into a razor sharp rope, and as she yanked her hand back, the rope curled around the clone's neck and decapitated him immediately.

"Chakra technique, deadly chakra net." She threw her hands forward, sliding her fingers around, creating a mesh of chakra that flew toward the clones. It hit the clone in the chest, and went straight through him, causing the clone to disperse, before her technique flew into a tree, leaving holes all the way through it.

There was a hush, as the Hokage stood.

"Chūnin Hanabi. I have read the report of your sponsor, detailing your skills. I have seen your ability with Taijutsu, and viewed several of your techniques. You have mastered difficult techniques, and created your own.

"I, the Godaime Hokage, hereby promote you to Jōnin. Congratulations, Jōnin Hanabi."

Hanabi smiled, as her sister rushed over and hugged her. Even her father had a proud smile on his face, as others congratulated her.

She met Naruto's eyes, and his simple nod and look of pride filled her with the most warmth.

Ayame turned to her father as Naruto and Hanabi left their stand. "You think he has a clue?"

"None what so ever," Teuchi promptly replied. "She, however, at least had the sense to challenge him, and not just fall over him like all the others. And I've never seen him so at peace."

Ayame sighed. "The clever ones would have nabbed him years ago, before he became popular."

"She would have been twelve," her father pointed out. "And that would have been disturbing."

"True," she agreed. "Well, good luck to her."

"I think I'll head down to the bookmakers after work."

"Father," Ayame said, shocked. "You gamble?"

Teuchi chuckled. "This will be the second time. I bet a million Ryō five years ago."

"Father! We couldn't afford that!"

"I got odds of a hundred to one against Naruto becoming Hokage."

Ayame's jaw dropped.

"And I'll bet I can get great odds on a Hyūga being the wife of a Hokage."

"Father?"

"Yes Ayame?"

"I may never say this again, but you are a genius!"

Naruto stretched as he climbed out of the shower. He dried himself and pulled on a pair of pyjama trousers and settled down on the couch. He pulled out a scroll and re read it for the thousandth time. He was so close to a break through, he had most of it down, it was just that final push that was needed. The three month training trip with Hanabi had been incredibly useful.

He looked up sharply at the knock on his door. He slid the scroll to one side, and walked over his nice, lush, expensive (one whole s-ranked mission to pay for it) carpet, and opened the door.

Security didn't bother him, not like when he was younger. Living in the penthouse of a ninja apartment, complete with Chūnin guards, meant he felt extremely safe. "Hanabi-chan?" he said in surprise, at the smaller girl in front of him.

"May I enter?" she asked politely.

He nodded, and moved back, allowing her to do so. She kicked off her sandals, and walked past him. For the first time, he realised that she was close to a foot shorter than him. And a good six inches shorter than Hinata. When they had been training, it had been strictly business.

He had hated it when the pervert had hardly trained him at times on their trip, so he had promised himself that he would always train other people seriously.

"Drink?"

"No, thank you."

He moved over and sat on the couch. She perched on the edge of the seat to his left. "What's up?"

She sighed softly. "I am sorry for bothering you this late."

"It's nothing," he said with a grin. "I'm always happy to help."

"I have a mission tomorrow," she said.

"Cool."

"A seduction mission."

"Not cool."

Her eyes smiled briefly. "Intel reports that he likes smaller girls. The others qualified are already busy, so the Hokage asked, not demanded, if I wanted it. It is my duty as a Jōnin to accept."

"Those missions suck, and Tsunade hates accepting them. You could always talk to your father."

Hanabi's eyebrows rose imperceptibly. "I will not use my family to hide behind. I am a ninja. I signed up for this, aware that this sort of thing might happen."

He nodded. "I'm sorry," he said softly. "I can understand why you are nervous."

"I am not," she said. "I have accepted it."

“Okay.” He didn’t like the idea, even if she had accepted it.

“However,” she continued. “I do have a related issue.”

“Anything I can do to help, I will.”

She seemed to relax slightly, before she turned to him. He noticed a faint sheen to her eyes, “I’ve never done it before,” she whispered. “And I really don’t want my first time to be with a stranger.”

In the past, he may have asked what she meant, but now that he was older, he knew. He looked at her briefly. She was a very attractive girl, and he didn’t like the idea of her being with someone else regardless of anything else.

He moved over and knelt before her. He reached up, and stroked her hair back from her face. “Are you sure, Hanabi-chan?”

The hint of a smile appeared on her face. “Hai,” she said firmly.

He leant up and kissed her, and didn’t stop.

“Morning , hag,” he said, as he entered the Hokage’s office.

Tsunade didn’t look up, as she threw a pencil at his head. He tilted his head back slightly, and caught the rocketing pencil between his teeth.

There was a brief silence. He took the pencil out of his mouth, walked over and placed it on her desk. “How come,” he said, “that when ever we do something cool there is no one around to see it?”

She shrugged. “Bad timing, probably. What are you doing here so early?”

“You had a bad day yesterday,” he said, as he took a seat the other side of her desk. “So I figured I’d bring you some breakfast. And some sake.”

“I love you,” she said solemnly. “Although, my day wasn’t any worse than normal yesterday.”

“Oh,” he said, as he placed a box in front of her, and opened the bottle. “I know you hate sending Kunoichi on seduction missions.”

Tsunade leaned back and swallowed the sake he had poured into a wooden cup. She looked at him for a long moment, before she groaned deeply. “Who was it?”

“Huh?” he asked.

“Which of my Kunoichi came to you last night, told you that they were going on a seduction mission, and that they didn’t want their first time to be with a stranger?”

“How the hell did you know that?” he demanded, pointing at her dramatically. “Have you been spying on me like Ero-jiji?”

Tsunade snickered. “Poor baby-brat Naruto,” she mocked.

“What the hell is going on, hag?”

“When I was seventeen, Dan and I had been dating for about a year. He was so noble and brave, and was very respectable. So one night, I got fed up of waiting. I went to his place, and told him that I was being sent on a seduction mission, and that I hated the idea. But I had to do it, and I didn’t want my first time to be with anyone other than him. Of course, I was lying through my teeth, but it worked. We moved in together the next day.”

“I was tricked?”

Tsunade nodded. “You’re not taking away my sake,” she added, grabbing the bottle and cradling it protectively.

Naruto chuckled to himself. “Should I be upset or flattered?”

“Flattered, very.”

He nodded.

“So who was she?” Tsunade asked, as she stared on rice.

“Hanabi-chan.”

“Was she any good?”

“A bit shy to start with, but I soon broke her Hyūga-ness.”

“That better not be a filthy analogy for her hymen.”

“What? No, I meant I soon had her screaming. It’s a good thing the rooms are sound proof.”

Gotcha," Tsunade said.

"Here," Naruto said, as he pulled out another bottle of sake. He placed it on her desk. She looked at it, and then blinked.

"The Rich and Revered Sage, A Flower," she read out in awe. "There are only about fifty bottles of this stuff left in the world. This stuff is so rare you can name your price for it – and get it!"

"It was going to be a bribe," he said. "But call it an early birthday present."

"Thank you," she said, still staring at the bottle in disbelief. "Bribe for what? The job? Because this is probably enough to do it."

"Nah, I'll earn that properly. This was to get you to cancel Hanabi's mission."

"Oh, you like her, then?"

He nodded. "Yeah, a lot. She's calming, strong, dedicated, and good in bed."

"Really? On her first time?"

Naruto nodded. "She didn't hold back, and trusted me. Pervy sage had many faults, but knowing how to please a woman in bed was not one of them."

Tsunade smirked and changed the subject. "What about Hiashi?"

"I guess I'll go talk to him," Naruto said. "Might as well make it official." He finished his breakfast and stood. He reached over her desk, to a pile to her right, flicked through it, and pulled out the mission Hanabi was on. She was with Team Ebisu on a border patrol near Oto.

"How come you can find that so easy?"

"Shizune-chan puts today's missions in front of you, tomorrows to the left, and yesterday's to the right. On going missions go far right, as yesterday's get sorted."

"Really?"

He nodded. She frowned. "I didn't know that," she admitted. "Thanks brat, and thanks for breakfast."

He decided not to ask how she had managed to do her job without knowing the system. "I'll be training out in the Forest of Death today, if you need me."

"Have fun."

He body flickered out of her office, and headed toward the Hyūga compound. He appeared in front of the gates. A Chūnin was on guard.

"Yo," he said cheerfully. "Hiashi around?"

The Chūnin sneered at him. He was clearly one of the few that still held the fact that he was a Jinchūriki against him.

"Chūnin," Naruto growled. "I asked you a direct question."

As an immediate answer was not forthcoming, he spin-kicked the guard through the wooden gates, through the house immediately behind it, and into a tree.

Several Hyūga ran out, lead by Neji. "Naruto?" he asked.

"You might want to remind him that a Jōnin-commander outranks a Chūnin," he said cheerfully. "And when I ask a question, I expect an answer."

"Hai," Neji said, saluting. "What was the question?"

"Is Hiashi in?"

"I am," Hiashi said, looking at the mess with distaste. "Neji, please get this mess repaired. Take the money from the idiot's salary. Naruto-san?"

"Hey, Hiashi," Naruto said. "Got a few?"

"Hai. Come." Naruto followed him through the main house, and into his office. He helped himself to a seat opposite Hiashi's.

"What," Hiashi asked, as he sat down slowly, "would it get to show me the respect every one else gives me?"

Naruto put his hand on his chin, and thought for a while. "An act of Kami," he finally said. He nodded firmly. "Yeah, that would do it."

Hiashi sighed.

"I could always give you a nickname," he offered hopefully.

Hiashi is fine," the older man said with a glare.

"Damn," Naruto sighed. "No one wants nicknames."

"You call the strongest person in the village 'hag,'" Hiashi pointed out. "We are scared what you would call people who can't fight you to that level."

"Ahh, that makes sense. Anyway, I wanted to talk to you about your daughter."

"Hinata?"

"What? No, Hanabi. She came to my place last night."

Hiashi paused, and stared at him. He groaned loudly, and opened the bottom of his desk. "I'm going to need this," he said, and opened the bottle. He pouted himself a cup of sake, swallowed it. "It's not even ten in the morning yet," he mumbled. He looked at Naruto, and was suddenly the head of the Hyūga clan, and a very strong fighter. "Please tell me that Hanabi didn't pull the "I'm on a seduction mission," routine?"

"Does everyone but me know about that?" Naruto demanded.

"Probably," Hiashi sighed. "Her mother pulled the same trick on me many years ago."

"Really?"

He nodded. "Hinata takes after her aunt, Neji's mother."

"I always thought Hinata took after her mother," Naruto said. "And that memory was why you were such a bitch to her, growing up."

Hiashi sighed. "A bitch to her?" he quoted and asked.

"Yeah, you know, undermining her confidence and all that."

"Tell me something, do people sigh around you a lot?"

"Yeah," Naruto said with surprise. "How did you know?"

"Luck," Hiashi said dryly. "I acted in a way I thought would help her be strong. But I do admit that Hanabi was so much like her mother. A prim and proper Hyūga on the outside, a firecracker on the inside."

"I was told that firecracker jokes were passé," Naruto grumbled. "I've wanted to ask you for ages, how come you changed a few years ago?"

"Oh, that," Hiashi said as he took another sip. "It was after Pain attacked, and you had that conversation with him? I'd just returned with Hanabi from a meeting with the Daimyo of Tea."

"Poor guy," Naruto said. "Really lost sight of himself. Good man, though, in the end."

"I suddenly realised that you were friends with Hinata, and that sooner or later, you'd do something about her being unhappy. And the idea of fighting you, then having one of those talks, was frankly horrific, so I hired a therapist, and talked about some of my issues. One of the things I discovered was that I was punishing Hinata out of my guilt with Hizashi, as she was like Hakiri."

"And you apologised, so it's all good." Naruto gave him a big smile, and then leant forward. "There is one other thing that I wanted to bring up, as I'm here anyway."

"Yes?" Hiashi asked.

Naruto concentrated on him, wanting to ensure that he got his neck point across clearly. "Tenten-chan and Neji have asked the hag and me to be god-parents to their twins. As the hag is the Hokage, she gets the first one born, I get the second."

Hiashi nodded, subtly retreating in his chair.

"Now, history tells me that you clan likes to take twins, and put a seal on one, relegating it to the branch house. Is that correct?"

Hiashi gulped, and nodded.

Naruto smiled. "I strongly believe that it is time for that custom to change. In fact, I'd even go as far as to say that my god-child will never have that seal on him or her. Is that totally clear?"

Hiashi was now sweating heavily. "It's, it's not me," he managed to mutter. "I'm all for banning it, but the elders..."

Naruto leaned back and grinned cheerfully. "Then they'll just have to die, won't they?"

"Old age will get them soon," Hiashi whispered.

"Does it need to be old age?" Naruto asked. "I mean, the fact that Hanabi likes me, and I quite like her wouldn't go down well with some of them."

"Likes?" Hiashi interrupted, his face regaining some colour. "I can assure you, like would not have been enough to get her to pull last night off. She

has decided that you are going to be her husband. You had no chance.”

“Oh,” Naruto said. He tried to work out how he felt about that. And as a memory of the night before came into his mind, and when he compared it with some of his other nocturnal adventures, he found that he really didn't mind. In fact, the more he thought about it, the more okay he was with the idea. “Okay.”

Hiashi smiled. “That's what I said,” he agreed. “As much as I wanted to protest what I was told something similar, I decided that it was probably best for me not to complain. Best decision I ever made.”

Naruto reached over, and picked up a mug. He pouted Sake into his, and Hiashi's. “To strong women,” he toasted.

“To strong women,” Hiashi agreed.

“Despite being a prick, you have got two amazing daughters,” Naruto complimented him.

“You know that Hinata has had a crush on you for a long time?” Hiashi asked.

“Yeah,” Naruto sighed. “It's why I got Kiba to finally ask her out.”

“You did?” Hiashi asked.

Naruto nodded. “Went round one night, gave him some advice, threatened him, reacted to him trying to express dominance, smacked the crap out of him, warned him that if he ever hurt her, I'd make what I did to Madara seem like a friendly pat on the back, and left it there.”

“You weren't tempted yourself?”

“Hinata is a great girl,” he said, “but not one I've ever been interested in.”

“And Hanabi?”

“I feel at peace with her. I'm normally always on, you know? With her, I can be quiet and happy about it.”

“So what are you going to do?”

“Take her on some official dates when she gets back, and then propose early.”

Hiashi chuckled. “I'll invite you to dinner; you can clear up my problem.”

“Okay, those that don't die of a heart attack; I can kill for wanting to brand my future god-child.”

Hiashi nodded.

“Cool. Well, thanks for the chat.”

“You're welcome.”

Naruto nodded and body-flickered away.

Hiashi watched the cloud dissipate as Naruto vanished. There was a knock on his door, and Neji entered at his call. His nephew sat down. “Good conversation?”

“Apart from calling me a ‘bitch’ and a ‘dick’, yes.” Hiashi wiped his forehead with a napkin. “Oh, and that is one scary young man.”

Neji nodded. “He has no fear, or respect for status, does he?”

“He told me it would take an act of Kami to get him to call me something respectful, and then used his trump card.”

“Nickname?”

“Hai. Did you know that Hanabi likes him?”

“I'd noticed she'd been hanging around with him. It wasn't until Tenten informed me this morning that I found out it was more serious.”

“Ahh. He is going to propose to her, here.”

“The Elders will have a fit.”

“A heart attack,” Hiashi corrected. “It would be better for them. Naruto is taking to being a god-parent most seriously. There will be no branding of one of your children. Naruto has decided to kill those that protest.”

“Imagine that,” Neji said with a badly concealed smile.

Hiashi nodded. “As clan law dictates, we will try to stop Naruto, of course, but he is a Jōnin commander.”

“And we are only Jōnin,” Neji agreed formally. “And he is only a commander because we don’t have a rank higher.”

“Our consciences will be clear.”

“They will.” Neji snickered briefly.

“So, how are my grand children coming along?”

Neji smiled properly for the first time, and it transformed him.

Hanabi found that one of the only problems with her actions last night, was that she was sore in places she’d never been sore before. She ignored it, and easily kept the pace with the other three. To her, this was nothing more than a light jog, and she was grateful once again for Naruto’s training.

Seeing the three Chūnin she with, showed her just how astronomically she’d grown.

“We’ll stop here for the night,” Ebisu said, as he cleaned his glasses. “Make camp.”

They worked together, and soon had three tents erected, and five rabbits cooking over a fire. The conversation was generally between the three Chūnin, as she read a scroll on intermediary puppet techniques.

“Bed time,” Moegi announced. “Kon’s going to take first watch, Udon second, me third. We’ll cover the night tonight. We’ll rotate so everyone has a night off frequently.”

Hanabi nodded, and entered the tent. She sat cross legged, and winced as her inner thigh muscles pulled.

Moegi joined her and grinned. “Sooo,” she drawled.

Hanabi looked at her blankly.

“Come on,” Moegi pleaded. “What happened?”

“With what?” Hanabi asked, feeling a little bewildered.

“Please,” Moegi sniffed. “You’re walking different. That only means one thing.”

“It is none of your business,” Hanabi said quietly.

“Maybe not,” Moegi agreed, “but we’re going to have girl talk, even if it kills you.”

Hanabi glared at her, but Moegi didn’t appear fazed. “I can badger you all night.”

“Fine,” Hanabi sighed. “I used the seduction-mission routine.”

Moegi gasped. “Really?”

Hanabi nodded, wondering why redundant confirmation was needed in this girl talk.

“Who was it?”

“Naruto.”

Moegi squealed. “You...”

Hanabi was already moving. She had Moegi’s jaw and vocal chords disabled in a flash. This is why she didn’t do girl talk.

“Is everything alright,” Kon called.

“Yes,” Hanabi called back, keeping her voice flat, to discourage any attempt at follow up conversation.

Moegi was waving her hands pleadingly. Hanabi sighed and released her.

“Sorry,” Moegi whispered. “But you did it with the boss?”

Hanabi nodded. She relaxed down. “I am going to sleep now.”

“Like hell you are,” Moegi whispered intently. “I want details.”

“Ask Naruto.” Hanabi turned over and faced the side of the tent.

“Come on, Hanabi,” Moegi wheedled.

Hanabi ignored her. She’d tried girl talk. It was not enjoyable. She preferred spending time quietly with Naruto.

She allowed a small smile to drift over her face, as she remembered the quiet times when they were both studying in a camp site, she'd sit next to him, luxuriating in his warmth, and reminding herself not to allow her attraction out until it was time.

And last night had been time.

"Sir."

"What is it?"

"There's a Konoha patrol a few miles away."

"So? We're friends with them, now. I've had enough time away from home dealing with these blasted peace missions."

"There are only five of them, two Jōnins and a team of Chūnins."

"Get to your point!"

"They have a female Hyūga, sir."

"Hmm, we could deny all knowledge to the Raikage, and keep her locked up. A few years of baby production and we'll kill her. No evidence, no crime. Konoha will complain, but they won't risk war over it. Good work. Gather the men, today is the day that the Noon Sun Clan break the Night Moon clan's exclusive access to the Byakugan!"

Hanabi allowed her senses to reach around her, as she did every few hours. It was one of the tricks she'd got from Naruto.

This mission had been as dull as expected, and while she had been welcomed, she wasn't a member of their team, and worse, she had been trained by Naruto, where they'd failed at doing so.

"Incoming," she said sharply. "Twenty of them, mainly Jōnin. Byakugan!" As her eye sight improved dramatically, she focused. "Cloud."

Ebisu moved forward and frowned. He raised his hand and waited for them to arrive. "Gentlemen," he said.

"Look," the leader said. "I'm going to be blunt. The Night Moon Clan might have an alliance with you, but we, the Noon Sun Clan have not. Normally, we wouldn't care, but you have a Hyūga, so we're going to have to kill you and take her."

"Chakra Decapitation," Hanabi called, after her hands had finished moving. The leader's head dropped to the ground.

The other Cloud Ninja looked shocked, before they all moved at once, and the fight started.

"Retreat," Ebisu called, "Hanabi, buy me some time."

Hanabi dove forward, using a fire technique, before adding a wind technique to it. The swirling fire blasted through the forest, setting a lot of the foliage on fire, and creating a smoke screen.

A messenger hawk exploded out of Ebisu's hands, heading toward Konoha.

To the right, Kon, Udon and Moegi were defending themselves from several attacks, before launching their own.

While on their own, they were good, together they could probably take on a Jōnin. She, however, did not have a team, and more, she was a Jōnin trained by Naruto, so she sure as hell wasn't going to go down easily.

She used a body-flicker to move behind one, and her clan style to blast his heart into his ribcage, killing him instantly.

She had to jump to avoid being hit by two lightning bolts, a fire attack, and an earth based spike.

The smoke from the fire was stinging her eyes, but she ignored it. Turning off her Byakugan right now would be suicide.

Ebisu was now with the other three, and despite herself, she was impressed. The normally casual Jōnin was fighting like there was no tomorrow.

She snapped a Chakra rope onto a branch, and swung with it, before dropping silently, allowing herself to fall on to another of the Jōnins, where a tap to the head ensured he'd never move again.

"Water, heavenly rain," someone yelled, and the sky seemed to explode in water, drenching her, and putting out the fire.

"Wind, great breakthrough," another yelled, clearing the smoke away.

She muttered under her breath as their cover was gone.

From behind her, she saw Ebisu step in front of an attack that would have hit Udon. As he crumpled, Kon was diving to the right, but was still tagged by then earth attack which caused him to crumple.

She groaned, even as she slid forward and managed to take out another one.

She body flickered back in front of them. "Moegi, Udon, grab these two and run back. They want me."

"We can't leave you," Moegi protested.

"That was an order, Chūnin," she snapped. She ran forward from them, allowing herself to be a bit noisy. She wanted the attention on her.

"Get the Hyūga," a voice rang out, and she almost smiled. She knew that Naruto would come for her, she just had to delay as long as possible, and try and get injured so they'd wait until they raped her.

And even if they didn't wait, she'd just retreat to how warm she'd been with Naruto.

She conducted a running battle, taking out a few more. She was starting to run out of stamina, but kept going until one jumped in front of her. She attacked him, and allowed him to punch her in the ribs. She felt a couple of them break, and spat blood, before stumbling.

"Damn it," one of them cursed. "Why did you break her damn ribs! We need her intact!"

"She was supposed to block!"

She saw one of them come behind her, and hit her. She knew no more after that.

Naruto was in the middle of training, when a messenger bird approached, carrying urgent summons for him.

He put on his shirt, and quickly flickered to the council chamber. The guards nodded and opened the door.

"Hey, I was training, hag," he called, as he walked in.

As fast as lightning, Tsunade threw a pencil at him. He didn't even have to move his head as he opened his mouth, and clamped it shut, catching it in his teeth.

Tsume, Kiba's mother, applauded. "That was cool."

He shared a wink with Tsunade and grinned. "So, what's up?"

"Would it kill you to pay some respect?" Nara Shikaku demanded, a smile in his voice.

"There's a chance," he said with a solemn nod, "I wouldn't like to risk it."

The Nara chuckled.

"I've just received word from Ebisu," Tsunade said. He suddenly snapped to attention. "They were ambushed by some Cloud ninjas. They have Hanabi."

Naruto growled. He felt a disturbing coldness clench around his heart. It wasn't something he could ever remember feeling before.

A clone appeared and vanished with a body flicker. He was back a few seconds later. Naruto pulled off his t-shirt, and pulled on a simple red polo neck jumper, and then a white cape with orange flames at the bottom. It was a tribute to his father, just as the red jumper was a tribute to his mother.

"You will be in charge of a team of nine other Jōnins, comprising of"

"No," Naruto interrupted. "They will only slow me down. Where is Team Ebisu exactly? They were patrolling along the border with Sound?"

"Naruto," Shikaku said, "the others will be able to help you. Ebisu and his team are camped at the Valley of the End."

"Send them after me," Naruto grunted. "Is there anything else I need to know?"

"Are you sure you won't take anyone else? Kakashi and Gai are fast."

"Do you know of anyone else we have that can make it there in three hours?"

There was absolute silence as everyone stared at him, even in the civilians were looking at him in shock.

"N-no," Tsume said, breaking this atmosphere.

"Naruto," Hiashi said softly.

He looked at the older man.

"Bring her back."

Naruto slowly smiled at him. "I said I'd never say this again, but it's the promise of a lifetime. Now, if there is nothing else?"

At Tsunade's shake of the head, he body-flickered to the gates, unleashed all his chakra, and sprinted away.

Kakashi wandered in to the council room. He was with Gai, his team minus the pregnant Tenten, Sakura, Ino, Hinata, Anko and Kiba. "Where's Naruto," he drawled, looking at the slightly stunned faces of the council.

"Already on his way."

"What?" Sakura growled. "He didn't wait?"

"He said you'd slow him down," Tsume said with a smirk.

"Yosh, but we are fast," Lee pointed out.

"True," Tsunade agreed. "Hands up all of you that could get to the Valley of the End in three hours."

Kakashi frowned. "I know of one ninja who could have done it," he eventually said. "The Fourth Hokage."

"Yeah," Tsume agreed. "That was why we didn't stop him."

"You are acting as back-up," Tsunade said. "Cloud has kidnapped Hyūga Hanabi."

"Sister," Hinata gasped.

"I would not worry too much, Hinata-chan," Hiashi said softly. "Naruto will get her back."

"But he's just one man," Ino pointed out. She paused. "Some of the time, anyway."

Kakashi sniggered to himself.

"I suggest you get moving. You are to back up Naruto. He is in charge."

"Hai," Kakashi said. "North gate, ten minutes."

Naruto found the camp easily. Ebisu was sleeping, Moegi was re-applying a bandage to Kon, as Udon watched on.

"Boss," Kon called in delight.

"Report, Chūnin," Naruto snapped.

Kon straightened up. "We were on patrol, when Hanabi noticed twenty Jōnin level Ninja from the Village hidden in the Clouds. They approached, and said that they wanted Jōnin Hanabi. They were from the Sun Moon Clan, and claimed not to follow the Raikage. Hanabi decapitated the first one, and then we fought a defensive battle, as we retreated.

"Ebisu-sensei helped us hold them off as long as we could, before he was knocked out in an earth fracture move. I was injured in the same attack. As he fell, Hanabi took his place. She ordered us to retreat to here. We protested, but she pulled rank. As we retreated, she went forward. That is the last we saw of her. Cloud did not follow us here. Udon went back to check, and while there signs of a huge fight, but there was no sign of her, or any bodies."

Naruto nodded. "You did the correct thing. Wait here. Reinforcements will be arriving in five hours."

"We left her behind," Moegi whimpered.

"Hanabi knew what she was getting in to," Naruto pointed out. "And that Cloud have wanted Hyūga eyes for a very long time. The chances of her being killed were slim. And with time, anything can happen."

Moegi, Kon and Udon nodded.

"Let the others know that I've gone ahead."

"Boss?" Moegi asked.

Naruto grinned at her. "Hopefully, we'll be back here at the same time."

"Naruto," Kon called. "They all had this clan symbol on their right shoulder." He held up a sketch.

"Good work, rest you three. And don't worry; I'll have her back faster than you can say something pretty long." He turned, and sprinted off, releasing his full power once again.

Moegi sighed as Naruto vanished.

Udon looked at her. "I still feel shame," he admitted.

"We all do," Moegi agreed. "It's just, well, we expected it to be like Ebisu, you know?"

"We'd be legends," Kon agreed sadly. "But we got spooked. We were kids, that's all."

They all drifted into silence, each wondering why they hadn't tried a little harder to stick with Naruto's insane training.

Especially with Hanabi, their classmate, being so far ahead of them, that it wasn't even close.

Naruto practically flew up the mountain, until he got to the gates of the Village Hidden in the Clouds.

"Halt," the guards, Chūnin by the looks of it, called.

"Get the Raikage down here now," Naruto snarled, making no attempt to reign in his temper. Every second was needed, and while he wanted to just destroy the village, he did have a few friends in there.

The guard on the left sniggered. "Who are you to demand anything?"

Deciding that a lesson was in order, Naruto applied the same move he had to the Hyūga guard. This Chunin did the same thing, crashing through the wooden gate.

"What is going on here?" a short haired blonde demanded as she appeared in a body flicker.

"Samui," Naruto growled. "Get Ē down here, now."

She looked at him for a moment, before flaring her Chakra quickly.

The Raikage arrived, along with Kirābī. The Raikage was an imposing man, with his heavily muscled frame and slicked back white hair. Kirābī was just as imposing, with his swords strapped to his back, and visible shared features with the Kage.

"Naruto?" Ē growled.

Naruto stared at him. "Ē, why have you kidnapped my girlfriend?" he growled back, and he did have more experience in growling than the average human. He decided not to let Ē know about his clan problem, until he could be sure that the people he respected were not in on it.

"Yo, we wouldn't want to do the time, so we've not done the crime," Kirābī rapped.

"Kirābī, now is really not the time," the Raikage said firmly. "Although he is right," he finished, looking at Naruto.

Naruto placed his arms in front of him, and gathered his Chakra. He threw his arms out dramatically, not bothering to call out the technique's name. He concentrated, and waited. Chakra responses came back to him immediately, unbelievably strong from the three in front of him. He concentrated, before nodding; he'd recognise Hanabi's violet chakra anywhere.

The three Ninja in front of him tensed. "Hyūga Chakra," Samui whispered.

"Naruto. I have not authorised any mission to touch her, I swear on my honour as a Kage."

Naruto looked at him for a long moment. "I'm getting her back."

"We will search immediately."

"It's too late," Naruto snapped. He shook himself. "I can not go through life with people thinking they can act against my family. I can forgive a lot of things, but not attacks on my family."

The Raikage looked at him curiously. "If you want to kill the perpetrators – feel free, anyone acting without my orders is a traitor. But we'd be faster. We know our own village."

"Acting against the Cloud? They deserve the funeral shroud," Kirābī agreed.

"Mass Multiple Shadow Clone," Naruto yelled. Exactly nine hundred and ninety nine clones appeared. They body flickered away, so that they were spread out in circle, some clinging to the mountain side, surrounding the village.

Naruto pulled out a special kunai, and the Raikage paled dramatically, his eyes locked on it.

He threw it in the air. It was joined by nine hundred and ninety nine others. "Mass kunai shadow clone!" The call was echoed by the others, and the thousand kunai became a million.

Naruto gathered his chakra. He took a deep breath, he could not afford to screw this up this time. Hanabi needed him, and he was not going to let her down.

"Please," The Raikage begged, surprising the others, "just the guilty."

Flying Thunder God," Naruto screamed and vanished.

As Naruto, and all his clones vanished, Cloud glowed a golden yellow for around a minute, before the bright light faded.

The Raikage touched his neck, and looked at the blue paint on his fingers. He'd activated his lightning cloak, and had tried to follow Naruto with his eyes, but had just seen the same glow.

"A warning," Samui whispered.

"Not just to us, to the world," the Raikage agreed. He understood the warning; he'd be headless if Naruto had used a weapon, not a paint brush.

"A technique of such power, it actually makes me want to cower."

"I think I agree," Samui chocked out.

"His father was frightening, but this is worse," the Raikage muttered, almost to himself. "A thousand of them, all able to pull off this move. We've just witnessed Naruto transform from a Ninja into a legend."

He sensed his ninjas appear next to him. They all had wide eyes, and blue necks.

"Raikage-sama," Karui said. "What..."

The Raikage sighed. "Do you know what happens when you tickle a sleeping dragon?"

"It eats you?"

"Exactly. Some one tickled a dragon. The dragon has roared."

"Who?"

"Sir," Omoi said as he appeared in a body flicker. "Every member of the Noon Sun Clan I've come across is dead. All of them!"

Ē bowed his head.

"Those kami-dammed idiots," Samui swore.

"Will someone please tell me what is going on?" Omoi asked plaintively.

"They kidnapped a Hyūga, without permission."

He winced. "That's bad."

"They didn't know she was Namikaze Naruto's girlfriend."

"That's really bad."

"Naruto knows his father's Flying Thunder God technique."

"That couldn't get much worse."

"Naruto just tagged every ninja in my village, and he did it without using Kyūbi's chakra. It was purely him, alone."

"That's worse," Omoi finished.

Naruto shook off the effects of his clones dispersing; as he blew open the doors to a compound. Everyone inside was already dead, killed by his clones.

He walked downstairs, and into a dungeon. He could feel Hanabi near, and destroyed a chakra-nullifying gate. He rushed over and dropped to his knees.

"Knew you'd come," Hanabi whispered, her eyes locked on his. She reached out and took his hand. She moved it to her cheek. "Felt your warmth."

"How are you?" The coldness around his heart was slowly relaxing, and he felt like he could breathe properly again.

"I took out ten of them, Ebisu got one."

Naruto chuckled, "That's what I expected of you, but it wasn't what I asked."

"A few broken ribs, a broken arm, and a lot of bruises, they weren't happy that I killed their leader."

Naruto held out his hand and concentrated. He wasn't very good at the Mystical Palm healing technique, but he should be able to heal her ribs and

arm, so that he could carry her back to safety.

Hanabi moaned softly, “missed your warmth.”

“You will never be cold again,” he promised, as he finished the technique. She pushed herself up, and hugged him, burying her face against his neck.

He held her, gently, and inhaled. Violets and spring. Hanabi. After a few minutes, he picked her up and headed out.

The ninjas behind the Raikage started to part, forming a path. They were on guard, most drawing weapons.

Naruto walked down the, carrying a small Hyūga in his arms. She seemed vaguely smug. The blonde haired man looked at the Raikage, and sighed. “My apologies,” he said softly. “I let my temper get the better of me.”

Ē looked at him for a long moment. “They were operating without authorisation. Justice has been served. Please don’t do this again.”

“The next people who touch my family, their entire village gets wiped out,” Naruto said softly.

It was the softness that scared Ē more than anything. Because it spoke of confidence, confidence that Naruto could, and would do it. He nodded, and moved out of the way.

“I’ll send you a wedding invitation,” Naruto said cheerfully, as he walked down the path. “After I’ve asked her properly, of course.”

Kirābī shook his head. “That Hyūga girl’s kinda pretty, maybe we should, at the wedding, offer a new peace treaty?”

Ē watched the cloak-wearing Ninja start to jog away. He shook his head. “Kirābī, what did you sense when he did that attack?”

“What scared the Killer Bee the most, was that he was like a frickin’ ghost!”

“Samui?”

“Nothing. I didn’t even feel him paint my neck.”

“Omoi, send a message to all the Kages, let them know what happened. As quickly as possible. Samui, Bee, you’re with me, we’ll work on that treaty. I’m not having him thinking that we’re not friendly.” He paused. “And is it me, or has your rapping improved?”

Kirābī grumbled. He pulled out a book and handed it over to the Raikage. Ē looked at it. “A rhyming dictionary?” he asked in disbelief. He opened it and chuckled at the inscription.

Bee – man, I think your rapping rocks! But I get the impression others don’t. Found this in Rain, and thought of you. Love, N.

Ē chuckled the book back and smirked. He was going to have to get the brat an ever more extravagant wedding gift now. After all, it was quite possible the boy had saved his sanity!

Naruto entered the camp at the Valley at the End at the same tired as the other Jounin from Konoha appeared. They all stopped, as they saw him carrying Hanabi.

“Sakura-chan,” he called. “She needs some help.” He placed her on the bed Ebisu had been on earlier.

“Second degree burns, three broken ribs, and a broken humerus, all showing some signs of basic healing. Also, severe chakra exhaustion.”

Naruto nodded. “I mainly healed the bones; I didn’t want to make the damage worse.”

“Not bad for an idiot,” Sakura said with a slight smile, her hands already glowing the healing green.

“As for the exhaustion, she took out ten Jōnins on her own.”

Kakashi whistled, and sat down. “So, who took her?”

“The Clan of the Noon Day Sun,” Naruto said. “They were operating without Ē’s permission. It won’t happen again.”

“Aww, but I wanted a fight,” Anko complained.

Naruto chuckled. “There’s a bandit camp five miles that way,” he pointed.

“Woohoo,” she cheered. “Come on, Gai, mini-Gai,” she called, and dashed away.

“Yosh!” Lee cheered and followed her, Gai next to him.

“Now, if no one minds, I think I’ll pass out,” Naruto finished. He sat down, rolled to his side, and was out before he finished moving.

“What the hell!” Kiba demanded.

Ino moved over to him. “Chakra exhaustion. And I truly mean that, he’s down to something barely above enough to keep his heart going.”

“What did he do, Hanabi?” Kakashi asked, looking up from his orange book. No one had actually seen him get it out.

“You’re fine, you just need sleep,” Sakura said to Hanabi. “Take this, it will send you to sleep for around eight hours. You’ll be fine, afterward.”

Hanabi struggled to a sitting position. “It’s not fair for me to tell you how he did it,” she said slowly. A small smile appeared on her face. She stood, and made her way over to Naruto and Ino. She moved Naruto on to his back, and settled down next to him. She took the pill. “However, as a marriage proposal, it was more than adequate.” A second later, she was asleep.

“What!” Ino, Hinata and Sakura yelled.

“Wake her up,” Ino demanded to Sakura.

“I can’t,” Sakura replied. “I’ve just put her into a medical coma with that pill!”

“Damn it!”

Neji chuckled. “Don’t worry,” he said. “That wasn’t a real proposal; Naruto is planning on doing that later.”

“You knew?” Hinata, Ino and Sakura turned to him.

Neji nodded. “Hanabi came to Tenten-chan around six months ago, asking about Naruto. Tenten answered her questions, and asked her why him. She replied that he was warm, and she was fed up of being cold.

“So, Tenten gave her some advice. Never hold back, and just go for it. She did so, finding that she even liked Ramen – mind you, compared to what we were raised on, it’s actually delicious.”

Hinata nodded as well.

“The Jōnin training was not expected, so Hanabi paused for the Hell that is his idea of training. When it was done, she continued, until the night before this mission, she pulled off a flawless ‘virgin on seduction mission’ routine.”

Ino swore loudly.

“What did I tell you?” Sakura said smugly.

“Shut it, forehead.”

“I’d like to know,” Kakashi said, raising his hand.

“Not to hang all over him, to treat him like normal, and just spend more time with him.”

“I was trying,” Ino protested.

“Oh?” Sakura smirked. “What happened at Christmas?”

“He wanted to go do something silly in Spring that involved wooden planks!”

“I went, after you said no,” Sakura said. “Had a blast, there was nothing better than a day of skiing, then a hot tub. And so many cute guys who didn’t care that I was a ninja. And of course, staying in the palace was fun!”

“So I made a mistake, forehead,” Ino complained. “But we were getting closer, but then he took that tart…”

“Hey,” Hinata protested firmly, interrupting Ino’s rant. “Hanabi is not a tart!”

“Sorry,” Ino muttered. “He took her, on that damn training trip, and then whenever I tried after that, she was around.”

“You lost,” Sakura said. “Accept it, the idiot’s gone and made a promise.”

Ino pouted and sat down in a sulk.

“Okay, Kiba, Neji, improve the camp, I guess we’re here until they wake up,” Kakashi said. “Patrol at one mile, let’s hope that what ever Naruto did, Cloud aren’t hunting them.”

“He said that the Raikage was cool,” Kiba pointed out.

Hinata pulled out a blanket, and covered her sister and Naruto. She had a strange look on her face. “Kiba, you got the camp?” Neji asked.

Kiba’s eyes went to Hinata, then Neji. “Thanks,” he mouthed. “Yeah.”

Neji put his hand on Hinata's shoulder, and pulled her away. They walked to a clearing around half a mile away.

"Talk," Neji said.

Hinata looked down. "I'm feeling jealous," she admitted. "And upset that I am feeling that way."

"You need to let it go," Neji pointed out.

"You know, before Father changed, she always got everything, and now she has Naruto-kun."

"You know why?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Because she was herself. She never tried to be anything else. She was like Hinata, when she was with Kiba."

Hinata looked up.

"Tenten is a part of my life, an irreplaceable part. Hanabi is making herself the same with Naruto. You and Kiba are finding that about each other. The thing is, things need to fit together for that to work. You and Naruto never fit."

"I guess," Hinata sighed.

"Did you know that Naruto was the one that gave Kiba the courage to ask you out? He had a crush on you for years?"

"Kiba? Crush on me?"

"Naruto, and I, felt that the two of you would work better, and you know what Naruto is like when he decides to help his friends."

Hinata smiled and nodded.

"You've been letting your crush go, Hinata-chan," Neji continued, "release it now."

Hinata took a deep breath, and smiled, a little shakily. "I had my chance, but I ran away," she admitted. "I think I knew, deep down, that it wasn't right. It's hard, though."

"Now, why don't you go and help Kiba?"

"Thank you, cousin." She bowed to him, and scampered off.

Neji shook his head.

"That wasn't bad," Kakashi said, he was upside down, hanging from a tree, reading his book.

"You were there all the time?"

Kakashi nodded. "I still have a few tricks you youngsters don't know."

"So it seems."

"I always thought Naruto would go for someone like Kushina, and perhaps Hanabi is, in a way. Sure, she's not a Tomboy."

Neji actually laughed. "You never saw the tantrums with the branch house when she was made to put on a dress. If it wasn't training, she wasn't interested, growing up."

Kakashi slowly smiled. "That's good to hear."

"Come on, you pervert," Neji said, and headed back to camp.

Naruto opened his eyes, and looked down. Hanabi was draped over his chest, his arm around her, a blanket over them both.

"Morning," Hanabi whispered.

"Feeling okay?"

She nodded. "Sakura did her stuff."

"She's the best," Naruto agreed. "Don't tell her I said that, though."

Hanabi did her little smile, and he hugged her tighter.

"I heard it though," Sakura's voice came through the early morning dawn.

"Damn," Naruto pouted. "Now you'll be the like the hag."

"If it wasn't for the fact you had someone sleeping on you, I'd punch you home for that."

Naruto chuckled and sat up, pulling Hanabi with him.

She simply shifted and turned, sitting in his lap.

"I'm guessing everyone knows?"

"Yup. Hanabi made it clear."

"How's Hinata?"

"Fine. She's sleeping the other side of the clearing, next to Kiba."

"Good," Naruto sighed.

"You going to tell me how you got her back?" Sakura asked.

"I'll tell everyone when we get back," Naruto replied.

"That means that you did something outrageous," Sakura pointed out. "It was much easier when you were a kid and shouted everything."

Naruto chuckled.

"You two get some more sleep," Sakura ordered. "We'll be up in two hours."

Naruto laid back, Hanabi moved as well, so that she was on top of him. "Thank you," she whispered, "for saving me." She kissed him.

He heard Sakura move away, and kissed her back.

The journey back to Konoha was relatively slow, with lots of conversations. The most amusing was Anko flirting heavily with Kon and Udon. When Moegi had sniggered, Anko had flirted with her as well, which she was not prepared for.

Anko had tried it on Hanabi as well. Sadly, for her, the Hyūga had been unflustered, and shown that shyness was not a trait she shared with her sister.

Naruto had needed to move fast to stop some personal details getting out.

It was only with his hand over her mouth, that he realised that Hanabi was teasing him. It was like the final piece of a jigsaw fell into place. He created a clone and sent it on ahead, on an urgent mission.

The gates to Konoha appeared, in the distance, and they all jogged that little bit faster, happy to be home. Standing in front of the gates, was the Hokage, accompanied by the Kazekage. The council were on the gates behind them. To each side, along the walls, were hundreds of ninjas and thousands of civilians.

"Hag, Gaara," Naruto greeted them cheerfully. "One Hyūga, returned in one peace."

"Jōnin Hanabi, welcome home," Tsunade said formally.

"Hokage-sama," Hanabi replied.

"Your bravery in allowing your team mates to retreat and survive has been noted."

"It wasn't that quite brave, Hokage-sama," Hanabi admitted. "I was pretty sure they'd want to breed Byakugan users; and that as soon as word got out, Naruto-kun would save me."

"Self sacrifice is always to be applauded, especially when the results could be worse than death. Please join everyone, bar Naruto, inside the village. Ebisu, Kon, Moegi, Udon, welcome back. We'll debrief fully tomorrow."

Hanabi frowned, and moved away with the others, leaving Naruto standing in front of the two Kages.

He scratched the back of his neck.

"Do you know why we have treaties?" Tsunade asked, her voice icy.

Naruto shrugged. "So that civilians think that everything is nice and pretty, and that we live in a world where everyone keeps their word, and that the illusion that a peace of paper signed by one person can bind a whole village is upheld?"

There were several snorts of laughter from the gathered ninja. Tsunade turned and glared at them. "You try," she said to Gaara.

"He is right," Gaara said with a shrug. "However, that doesn't take away the fact that we still follow them."

"Cloud broke it first," Naruto pointed out.

"That does not mean you threaten a Kage," Tsunade yelled. "He was willing to help you; you did not need to invade a Village on your own!"

He saw a lot of people look at Hanabi. She ignored them.

"I was sending a message."

"You were willing to start a war, for a message?" Tsunade yelled. "Right, that's it. You and me, right here, right now. Gaara, you judge."

"Have you gone senile, hag?" Naruto demanded. "I did the right thing!"

Tsunade launched forward, at full speed. "I've been waiting to do this for years," she yelled, as her fist smacked into the log that Naruto had swapped with.

"What the hell!"

"Fight," Tsunade roared. A kick smacked in to his guard. His feet were driven into the ground. He hopped back and out.

"No summons," Gaara shouted. "Everything else goes. You stop when I say so."

Three fireballs, two water bullets, were followed by a yell, "Painful Sky Leg!"

Naruto realised she was serious, sent a combination out to cancel the five projectiles. He snarled, filling his body with Chakra, and caught the axe kick. It pushed him further underground, so he allowed himself to sink down, burrowing underneath his Kage, before exploding out.

A punch he didn't even see smacked into his chest, sending him flying. He circled in the air, landed on his feet. He created some shadow clones, and charged forward, moving at near top speed.

Tsunade weaved through the barrage of techniques his clones launched at her, and aimed to decapitate him, her hands glowing with chakra blades.

Naruto dodged closer, catching her forearms with his own, and kicked her knee, hard.

Tsunade rolled back, her left hand healing her knee, even as she arrived back on her feet. She span forward again, this time as fast as he had ever seen her move, and he was hard pressed to keep up with her.

He ducked the first swing, danced to the side of the second, and then allowed the third to skim past his chest, allowing himself to be cut, knowing his healing would handle it. He snapped his arm down, breaking her elbow.

She grunted, and kicked him back, giving her enough time to start to heal. His clones attacked, distracting her, giving him enough time to throw a couple of wind bullets at her.

He hadn't had a fight like this since Madara, and felt the same rush shoot through him. Tsunade clocked two of his clones, finished healing her elbow, and dealt with the others.

"Wind Release: Rasenshuriken," Naruto yelled, coating his hand in chakra before releasing one of his most deadly techniques.

He deliberately held back a little, giving Tsunade enough time to escape.

"Damn it, brat, stop holding back," Tsunade yelled, as she attacked so fast that he started to wonder if he needed to go into Sage mode.

He blocked the first punch, feeling the bones in his hand shatter, stopped the follow up kick with his arm, and felt it snap, then didn't get out of the way quickly enough for the next kick.

In desperation, he encased himself in chakra. Despite that, he still felt two of his ribs break.

With one handed seals, he launched a series of attacks, straight at Tsunade, no longer holding back. He needed the time to heal.

His ribs popped first, as he used his bastardised Mystical Palm technique there. It wasn't anywhere near as neat as Tsunade, but he could overpower it, to the same clumsy effect.

His other hand was next, followed by his arm.

Once again mobile, he dodged the next series of attacks. There was going to be only one to stop this without killing either of them. He hadn't recovered enough Chakra to continue to fight like this indefinitely.

"Hidden Mist Technique," he yelled, coating the area with mist. It wouldn't last long, but it was the distraction he needed.

He pulled a scroll out of his pocket, and threw it high into the air.

"Wind Release, Great Breakthrough," Tsunade yelled. His mist dissipated almost instantly, the wind blowing it away, under his now descending scroll.

There was a strange silence, as everything seemed to go into slow motion. This was the first time he'd used this in a one on one battle.

He could see the shocked look on Kakashi's face, as he started to drop to his knees.

He could see the word "Youth" start to form on Gai's mouth.

He could see Hanabi smile in pride at him.

The scroll exploded. Kunai flew toward the ground. Even before they had landed, he yelled out the name of the technique.

"Flying Thunder God!"

Everything seemed to slow down ever more. He shot past Tsunade, her hand was moving so slowly, and tagged her, he chose his next destination, landed on the first Kunai and moved off again, flying past her and tagging her knees, he continued, forty times, her hand had moved an inch.

He stopped going for Tsunade, and quickly bounced to each kunai, picking them up as he went, until he had the last one, and he let the technique drop.

He had hardly any chakra left, but that was far more than when he'd used it the first time, against an entire hidden village.

Gaara coughed in to the silence, as Tsunade stood, frozen.

"Winner. Naruto."

Tsunade looked down at herself, and the blue paint that was slashed all over her. She looked at him. "You did it," she whispered. "You did it!"

He nodded.

She slowly smiled, and rushed over to him, this time with no intent to do violence. She pulled him into a huge hug.

There was a cheer that started from Kakashi, and was quickly taken up by the other Jounins, and then the Chūnins, the Genin and civilians.

Tsunade broke the hug; Gaara was next to her, holding her hat.

She faced the village. She made a cutting gesture with her hand. The cheers silenced.

"Honoured Council Members, Shinobi, Civilians," she shouted, her voice easily reaching everyone. "I give you Uzumaki-Namikaze Naruto, the official Rokudaime Hokage of the Village Hidden in the Leaves!" She took the hat from Gaara and placed it on his head.

He looked at her, his mind seemingly locked. He couldn't believe it.

"If you think that I'm dealing with the paperwork from your excursion into Cloud, you've got another thing coming," Tsunade said, before she kissed him on the forehead. "As soon as Cloud sent a message with your warning, I knew it was time. Everyone agreed, well, nearly everyone. Fortunately, Gaara was already on the way here."

He slowly smiled at her. He looked up at the cheering village; even Kakashi had abandoned his usual cool demeanour, and was cheering with everyone else.

He felt a tear fall down his cheek.

"Congratulations, Hokage," Gaara said softly, and shook his hand.

"Thank you, Gaara, thank you," he whispered.

Tsunade watched with a broad smile, as Gaara shook Naruto's hand.

She was so proud, she could barely stand it. Watching the rapturous reception from the village warmed her heart. Konoha had been through some tough times, but it was that much stronger because of it.

She'd wanted to retire for years, but she wasn't giving the job to anyone but Naruto and he had needed to grow up a bit more first.

And he had, she'd planned on doing this in a few months time, but the message from Cloud had changed everything. She could still remember the way her heart had sped, as she'd read the kanji. Hiraishin. The Flying Thunder God, the legendary technique of his father.

She'd known then, it was time. Konoha would be in good hands, and she could retire to meddling happily, and, as she looked at the approaching Hanabi, with hopefully many grand children to spoil.

She looked at the small Jōnin, with her expressionless face, and slim figure, and wondered what Naruto saw in her. Why her, over a lot of other girls, if the Naruto Fan Club numbers were to be believed. The blonde was tall, well built, and had a personality that attracted people like moths around a flame. Rumour had it that most single ninja wouldn't have minded a shot at him, but he had ignored all their hints. And that didn't mention some of the Daimyo's from around the Countries.

So what was it about this Hyūga that had caught him so?

She felt something touch her hand, and looked down. Naruto was touching her, and her vision suddenly shifted.

She could see so much, so clearly, and realised she was seeing from his perspective. She made a mental note to study his eyes later, as this clarity had to be close to a blood line technique. She concentrated on the Hyūga, and had to hide a gasp.

The smile, the look, and the way she walked. The girl was beautiful, and clearly absolutely head over heels in love with him.

Her view shifted, and it was gone, it was just a pretty girl walking toward a handsome man.

She paused in front of Naruto, even as the noise died down, as people craned to listen to her.

“Hokage-sama,” she whispered, the respect in her voice absolute and total.

“Hanabi-chan,” he whispered. He dropped to his knee in front of her. He held out his hand and caught a small box. Tsunade glanced over, and saw a smiling clone that had thrown it. “I love you. Marry me?”

“Hai,” she said simply.

Naruto yelled, and pulled her into a hug, swinging her around, as the cheering reached a new level, and the others, lead by a crying-her-eyes-out Tenten crowded around to congratulate the new Hokage and his future wife.

Tsunade moved back a bit with Gaara.

“I think,” Gaara said softly, “that the world is going to have a new dawn of peace for a few years. My council authorised the last treaty after he killed Madara. They’re going to be insufferably smug now.”

“Just imagine him at the next Kage conference,” Tsunade said with a smile.

Gaara looked at her for a long moment, and then his face cracked, and he started to laugh and laugh.

Three years later, Ninjas from the Village Hidden under the Moon broke into the Hokage Mansion, and assassinated the sleeping Hokage and his Hyūga wife.

Unfortunately for them, only two people knew that Naruto had kept his apartment, and that he, and Hanabi, always slept there. Those people were Naruto and Hanabi.

The Ninjas were caught.

A month later, the Village Hidden under the Moon ceased to exist.

There were no further attempts to touch Naruto, Hanabi, or their children.

Hanabi became the first female ninja with two entires. The first, gave her an S-rank, with paragraphs dedicated to her chakra rope techniques. The second, simply pointed to Naruto’s entry, and remarked that he had personally invaded Cloud to ensure her safety, and that he had completely destroyed Moon. The implication was not lost on many.

As for Naruto, his entry in the bingo books ended with a few words. “If, after all this information, you are considering fighting him, just don’t. If you do, then on your own head be it.”