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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 1

“Idiot!” Sakura screamed and hit him on the head with her fist.

The scene had been repeated a hundred times. Naruto would say something stupid; Sakura would scream and hit him.

“If you put as much effort into being popular as you did pranks, maybe people would care about you!”

As he had a hundred times before, Naruto reached into the part of himself where his forgiveness for Sakura was kept, only to find it empty.

He frowned to himself and checked once more.

Going to be the best Hokage ever? Check.

Going to make everyone respect him? Check.

Going to have hot monkey-sex with at least three women? Check.

Going to seduce twins once in his lifetime? Check.

Going to love Sakura forever? ...

Having gone through his list, he noticed that he had two new ambitions, even if he wasn't quite sure what monkey sex involved. He also realised that his crush on Sakura had run its natural course.

And with that, he realised she was right. He should be popular. He had the damn Kyūbi in his stomach, he should be loved. And that would really help with the third and fourth thing on his list.

“You're right, Sakura,” he said, deliberately dropping the ‘chan’ honorific from her name. He stood and looked around. Sasuke was brooding as always, staring off into the distance. “Well, tell Kakashi that I had something to do, when he gets here. Later, Sasuke, Sakura,” he said and wandered off. They had no mission today, or even anything planned. It was just habit for them all to meet up, wait for Kakashi, then be sent on their way.

He wandered, automatically, to his favourite place in the world, Ichiraku's Ramen Bar, and once there, ordered a light lunch of eleven bowls of ramen. It was a testament to how hard he was thinking that it took him nearly ten minutes to eat all of them. Probably the slowest time he had ever taken. He didn't even notice Ayame looking at him worriedly.

What he needed was to make everyone know he was the jailor of the Kyūbi, not the beast itself.

He knew that there was some sort of celebration tonight, where everyone who was important would be gathered – so obviously, he hadn't been invited.

He scratched the back of his head, and then slowly started to smile. “Thanks, Ayame-chan,” he yelled cheerfully, throwing some money down, and headed off at top speed.

Once back in his tiny apartment, he sat on the bed, and went to see if he could visit his parasite. The scant few times he'd paid attention at school, he'd learned that the meditation was a way of looking inside himself – where the fox would no doubt be.

The problem with meditation was that it was more boring than listening to lectures about how Ninja's should handle themselves when not fighting.

Still, if he was going to turn over a new leaf (and get with twins), it was worth trying.

To his immense surprise, it eventually worked. As he either meditated, or fell asleep, and appeared in a dank and miserable sewer. He walked down, to find a cage at the end with a freakin' huge fox asleep inside it.

“Yo, Foxy,” Naruto yelled.

‘Foxy’ sprang at the door to the cage, and bounced off.

“I'll bet that hurt.”

“PUNY HUMAN,” Kyūbi roared.

“I need something from you,” Naruto said, about as intimidated as the Hokage faced with an angry Genin.

Kyūbi just roared in defiance.

“Okay, time for my first new Jutsu, it is part of plan ‘Make Naruto Popular’,” he announced cheerfully. “Call me when you're ready to talk.” He took a deep breath, and formed a series of hand seals. “Irritating No Jutsu!”

Fifteen clones popped into view in his mind. Each one was exactly half his size. In a matching high voice, they started to sing.

“I know a song that will get on your nerves, get on your nerves, get on your nerves. I know a song that will get on your nerves...”

With his clones busy, he dropped out of his mental mindscape (which sounded better than ‘woke himself up’), and continued to plan. He needed new Jutsus, and his irritating one was a good start. All the ninjas seemed to concentrate on getting more powerful, and coming up with different variations of the same thing. How to fricassee the enemy as flamboyantly as possible.

And it was this flamboyance that worried him. Sasuke was clearly gay. Sasuke hungered after flashy Jutsus like Sakura's mum hungered after half the Village Council. If he went for the flashy Jutsu as well, would that make him gay?

He reckoned that being unpredictable was a far better way of getting ahead in a fight, and as Kakashi was about as likely to train him as a monkey was likely to drop out of Sakura's arse, he needed to work for himself.

It was about four hours later that he felt Kyūbi trying to attract his attention. He put down his paper and pencil, and (with the help of a punch to the face) dropped into his mental landscape.

"One more time!" one of the clones said enthusiastically.

"Please," Kyūbi begged. "Please stop them!"

"Okay guys, take five," Naruto said.

"You're the boss, boss," the clones shouted, and took a seat, starting small conversations with each other.

"That is so unnatural," Kyūbi grunted. "They shouldn't be talking to each other."

Naruto shrugged. "Ready to talk?"

"You are a brat," Kyūbi sighed. "Here I am, powers that make the gods crawl, beaten into submission by a teen that can't sing."

Naruto grinned cheerfully. "Hey, if I'm happy, you're happy, right? I mean, this sewer is a representation of how I feel?"

Kyūbi's large eyes blinked at him.

"And if I'm happy, I'll eat more meat. And if I eat meat, you get the experience?"

Kyūbi nodded slowly.

"So, what I need is to demon it up tonight."

Kyūbi sighed deeply. "What?"

"I'm going to demon it up tonight, you know, flare a bit of your chakra, make a speech, and prank the village."

"And we're going to survive?"

"Ye of little faith," Naruto chided. "Of course we are. My pranks are always brilliant. This is going to be my best!"

The nine-tailed fox was quiet for a few seconds, before it nodded. “If you entertain me this evening, I’ll teach you something – as long as you promise to kill someone with it.”

“An enemy?”

“Enemy, friend, I care not.”

“Cool,” Naruto cheered. “Thanks guys.”

“No problem, boss,” The clones said and dispersed, filling Naruto’s brains with hours of singing.

“That is really irritating,” he said proudly, as he left his parasite alone.

Back in the real world, he absently created another clone. “Right, hit me.”

“Boss?”

“I need to look beaten up.”

“Gonna need a few more then,” the clone pointed out.

“Hmm,” Naruto nodded. “Wait one second.” He created four new clones, and then dropped back into his mindscape.

“Just a quick one,” he said. “Can you please not heal me right now? And are you male or female?”

“I’m beyond your concept of sex,” Kyūbi sneered. “And I will withhold my chakra for a while.”

Naruto bowed gratefully – parasite or not, there was no point in antagonising the demon to much – and popped out. “Right, hit me.”

Two minutes later, Naruto was on the floor, his jumpsuit ruined, and with bruises all over his face. “Thanks,” he croaked, as the clones popped out.

With a shudder, he walked to the window. In the distance, he could just see the gathering of the crowds.

“Show time,” he muttered to himself.

“You better know what you’re doing ,” Kyūbi muttered into his mind.

“This is a new development.”

“Yeah, well, you’ve got my interest ,” Kyūbi grunted. *“And speak in your mind, idiot.”*

“Fuck you too ,” Naruto replied, and jumped out the window, deliberately landing in some mud. He rolled around in it, and then used some of the demonic chakra on offer, and flared it massively.

The chakra was red, and actually felt kinda nice. Warm. And would possibly be useful if he was ever in Snow country.

From the distance, the faint music seemed to pause, as Naruto ran toward them. He kept the chakra up, as people screamed around him. There was a huge gathering of civilians, as they stood in front of what looked like a stage. A large orchestra had been playing on a raised stage that was highlighted by a hundred multi-coloured lamps.

“Kill the demon,” someone screamed, as they parted before him.

As expected, the ANBU arrived, with Sarutobi Hiruzen, the Third Hokage. “Freeze,” One of the ANBU roared.

Naruto smirked, copying Sasuke’s expression perfectly. “Yes,” he yelled. “Come, kill me.”

“Everyone shut up,” Sarutobi yelled. He let out some killing instinct that instantly made everyone follow his instructions to the letter.

“Naruto?”

Naruto sneered. “Naruto isn’t here right now,” he yelled. “There is only Kyūbi, the greatest of the demons, the nine-tailed fox!”

“Kill him,” a masked member of ANBU yelled.

“Idiot,” Sarutobi shouted, before punching him so hard that he flew into the distance and crashed into a fence. “Why are you trying to provoke us?”

“Because I deserve to die,” Naruto said, as sincerely as he could.

“You are lying,” The old man muttered.

“If you don’t, I will eat all your children!”

There were several screams, and the anger in the air grew.

“*Do you know what you are doing ?*” Kyūbi asked in Naruto’s mind.

“*Not now !*” Naruto replied silently.

“Again, why?” the Hokage asked suspiciously.

“Because with this human stain’s death, I shall be free!”

Complete silence covered the field full of people again.

“But the seal...” the Hokage said slowly.

“Oh yes, your precious seal,” Naruto said mockingly. “The one that your legendary hero trapped inside this human’s body.

“Let me tell you about that wonderful seal. It was supposed to be powered by this human’s spirit, by his will and determination to protect everyone. But no, you stupid humans had to insult your jailor, you had to mock him, to try and kill him, to demean and humiliate him. And every time you did, that seal got a little bit weaker, until today, when I was able to take control.

“And now, now, now you will kill me, or I will kill you, and as this body dies, I will be free!”

“Naruto would never let that happen,” the Hokage said softly.

“Oh?” Naruto sneered. Silently, he cast Sexy-Fox No Jutsu on himself, and was rewarded with a gasp. He was taller now, with deep red hair, and two cute ears on the top of his head. Unlike his normal sexy technique, he was dressed this time – it wouldn’t do for the Hokage to get a giant nose bleed.

“I’m his mother, his lover, his best friend,” Naruto whispered in his new sexy voice. “I’ve been there when you’ve hurt him. I’ve been there when you’ve insulted him. I’ve been there when he was alone at night. Is it any wonder that he loves me?

“I’ve been his friend, when you have condemned him for saving you all! And if he lives long enough to complete puberty, I’ll be there, as his lover, his mate, showing him the love that you could not.

“Now, kill me, give me my freedom.”

“Kid ,” Kyūbi said, its voice full of laughter. *“You have balls the size of coconuts. Now, let me have control for a bit, you need a good finish, before you wrestle control back from me.”*

“No killing ?”

“*This is much more fun.*”

Naruto sighed and took a mental step back.

“Come,” Kyūbi hissed, “fulfil your destiny, trust that your hero was right, that I am just tricking you. Kill me. Remove the bloodline of the Fourth Hokage from your village.”

“*What !*” Naruto yelled in his own mind.

“*Not now ,*” Kyūbi threw Naruto’s own words back at him.

The ‘What’ had been echoed around the villagers.

“Oh yes, you didn’t know,” Kyūbi sneered. “The Fourth Hokage used his only son to save you, knowing that you would never be so petty as to blame a child who was your saviour. Trusting

fool. With Naruto dead, no one will ever see the bloodline again, and you can go back to wishing that the Uchiha wasn't gay!

“But enough talk, you humans bore me. Kill me now, before I start my rampage.”

“Wait,” Sarutobi shouted, as some people started to move toward the female version of the Kitsune. “You wouldn't talk unless you had to! You would just kill! Naruto is still stopping you.”

Kyūbi sneered. “Barely, he's just hanging in there. All it will take is one more beating, one more insult, and I'll be free! Then you will all be dead!”

“All yours kid, finish the show off dramatically.”

“We are going to talk later,” Naruto muttered. “No,” he yelled. He started to shake his body, the image of the Jutsu slowly fading. “I won't let you, I won't.”

People around him were looking on in shock.

“I'll protect you,” he said quietly. “Even if you don't deserve it.” With that, he pretended to faint, while asking Kyūbi to knock him out.

Kyūbi sniggered and did exactly that.

All around the field, people were looking at each other, and gulping.

“Everything Kyūbi said was true,” the Hokage said sadly. “We reap what we sow, and not even I will be able to defeat the Kyūbi when she is freed. I will send my family away, and hope it is enough.”

“You're giving up?” Hyūga Hiashi demanded.

“Look at him,” Sarutobi said, pointing at the unconscious Naruto. “Beaten, bruised, dressed in the only clothes people would sell him, malnourished, alone, feared and hated. And at the same time, the trickster fox was in his mind, using our negligence, our inactions, our hate and our anger against us. It's a miracle we've had this long.”

“We cannot let a powerful bloodline go to waste,” Hiashi announced, “nor can we claim honour, when none exists. I have made a mistake, and I will apologise. As an apology, I will engage him to one of my daughters.”

“Wait just one second,” someone yelled from the crowd. “You're not getting this bloodline that easily! We can apologise as well!”

Hiashi sneered. “No one else here can look at him without fear.”

“Yes, we bloody well can,” the loud mouth returned.

Hiashi turned and picked the boy up, cradling him, ignoring the mud he was getting on his pristine clothes. “He will be staying with my clan,” he stated firmly. “Hinata, Hanabi, run ahead and have a room prepared.”

The two girls made their way to the front. “I-is Naruto-kun alright?” Hinata asked softly.

Hiashi nodded. “Beaten, and exhausted, but he should be fine.”

With a daring burst, Hinata moved forward and lightly stroked Naruto’s face, before she grabbed her sister and started to run.

“Hmm,” Hiashi said with a smirk. “It looks like my daughter saw what was underneath first. Her intelligence makes up for her weakness.”

“This isn’t over yet, Hyūga.”

Hiashi turned to his right. “Find the ones who hurt him, have them killed,” he ordered his guards.

“Yes!” they said eagerly, before he turned to the ANBU. “Care to help?”

“Yes,” they said as well, and vanished.

“I can send for a medic,” Sarutobi offered. “Normally, the fox protects Naruto, but alas, I fear the fox is no longer offering that service.”

“My daughters will attend to him,” Hiashi promised, before walking away.

Sarutobi watched him leave and sighed. “Not even the Hyūga clan kindness can save us.” He turned, and walked away slowly, his shoulders hunched over, leaving behind a field of shocked people.

“Yosh,” a voice yelled. “The flames of this village lay in ashes. That people cannot see a youthful man for who and what he is.”

“Lee,” a female voice said. “For the first time ever, I agree with you. Where are my parents, I want a long talk with you!”

And that was just the start of the conversations for that evening.

Alone in his office, Sarutobi took a bottle of sake out the cupboard, and started to giggle. He poured himself a small amount, and saluted the window. “Naruto, that was your greatest prank,” he said with pride.

He looked at his paperwork, shrugged, and pulled out an orange book. Before he could open it, he

stopped, and picked up a new piece of paper.

Jiraiya

For your next episode, how about a character like the sketch attached?

She's a real fox!

S.

Hiashi placed the boy down, and looked at his two daughters. “Attend him.”

“We will,” they agreed, as Hinata blushed furiously.

Hiashi walked into his office, and smirked. He'd always thought the demon boy an idiot, but tonight had proved conclusively otherwise. Naruto had been in control to start with, and he had originally thought it was just a desperate attempt to be accepted. It was only near the end that he had changed his mind.

The Kyūbi had been freed, willingly, and rather than kill, it had helped the charade. That meant that Naruto had won the demon over to his side, which offered all sorts of interesting possibilities for the future.

A ninja that could work with a nine-tailed demon? That would be a major asset, and combine that with the intelligence and flair shown today, their village, and his clan, would be safe for a very long time.

When his guards got back, he'd order them to shadow Naruto around for the next few days, just to ensure that all the villagers got the message.

And perhaps, he'd order his daughters to take the boy shopping. Anything would be better than those orange rags.

Feeling cheerful for the first time in a long time, he helped himself to a bit of sake, and thought about the very female form of the Kyūbi, Naruto had an exemplary imagination.

He absently picked up a napkin and wiped the thin trail of blood from under his nose.

Hanabi sighed as she watched her sister blush at the unconscious youth asleep on the futon.

She had no idea why her sister was interested in him; he was annoying, short for his age, and blonde - even if he did have some power.

She sighed once more, and took over washing him. Her sister seemed to be on the verge of

passing out, and the smell from the mud on the boy was starting to get to her.

She pulled out a dagger and used it to cut his clothes off, leaving him just in his shorts.

Hinata gasped.

Hanabi sighed for a third time, and decided to eliminate her sister. Without hesitation she reached down and cut the shorts off, pulling the material away.

Her sister managed to pass out with a nose bleed less than a second later. She looked down curiously. She'd never seen a male before, and clinically noted the differences between him and her. If you ignored the personality, he wasn't hideous.

As quickly as she could, she washed him, and was surprised to see the wounds heal themselves.

She covered the unconscious boy with a cover, and dragged her sister to Hinata's room, before going to bed herself, her duty done.

“So, Foxy,” Naruto said. “What's this about my dad?”

“You heard,” Kyūbi grunted.

“Do I have a blood line?”

“How the hell would I know?” Kyūbi asked. “I'm a demon, not a biologist. I fight, I fuck, I eat. What more is there?”

“Love?” Naruto asked dryly.

“See, want, take,” Kyūbi retorted. “However, I'm a demon, you're a human. So, I said I'd teach you something cool. Pay attention.”

Naruto stood to attention.

“Form these seals. Dog, dog, dragon, then focus your Chakra...”

Naruto awoke and stretched, before finding out two things. First, he was in a much more comfortable bed than he was used to, and second, he was naked.

There were some clothes to the left of his bed, so he climbed out and headed toward the bathroom he could see through an open door. After washing, doing his teeth, and cleaning his hair of the remaining muck, he felt brilliant.

He dressed and opened the door to the bedroom.

“Uzumaki-san,” a woman said. “Please follow me to breakfast.”

“It’s Naruto,” Naruto said cheerfully. “Not to ask a stupid question, but where am I?”

“You are in the Hyūga clan house,” the woman replied softly, before going quiet.

Naruto nodded and padded along after her. They entered into a large room, where Hyūga Hiashi was sat on a pillow at the head of a low wooden table. Next to him, two girls were looking at the table. He knew Hinata, obviously, but wasn’t sure about the other one.

Naruto bowed respectfully. He knew the man by reputation, but had never talked to him.

“Please, take a seat.”

Naruto pulled up a pillow and sat formally.

“You know my daughter Hinata, I believe?”

“I do,” he said happily. “Hinata-chan’s great.”

Hinata squeaked softly, but didn’t raise her head.

“This is my youngest daughter, Hanabi.”

Hanabi looked up and glared at him.

Naruto tried, he really did. The talk about decorum from Foxy-chan last night went through his mind. He tried to resist. But he couldn’t.

“Kawaii!” he yelled, and pounced from his sitting position, glomping the girl.

After a few seconds of holding the squirming girl tightly, he bounced off her, ruffled her hair playfully, and sat back down.

As seriously as he could, he looked at Hiashi, “It’s nice to meet her.”

Hiashi looked at him for a long moment, then a small smile flickered on his face.

Hanabi looked like she wanted to glare at him, but didn’t quite dare.

“Thank you, Hiashi-sama, for bringing me to your house.”

Hiashi nodded. “My daughters cleaned your wounds.”

“Thank you, Hinata-chan, Hanabi-chan,” he said formally, knowing that the chan would irritate the younger girl.

There was no response, apart from the plate in front of Hinata starting to glow a strange reflected

red colour.

Hiashi clapped his hands, and servers came out, with plates of breakfast. There was no conversation as they ate, and it was probably the finest meal Naruto had ever eaten.

“Come,” Hiashi said. “I wish to discover your skill level.”

Naruto looked surprised, but followed the older man out to a courtyard.

“Attack me.”

Naruto knew that the elder Hyūga was a skilled man, so didn't hold back.

“Your form is atrocious,” Hiashi noted absently. “I shall have a word with your teachers.”

“They never bothered to teach me anything,” Naruto replied, aware that his skills were somewhat lacking in this department. “I do have an ace I can use though.”

“Oh?”

He smiled and pulled up his Chakra, and created as many Shadow Clones as he could. Over a thousand Narutos appeared in the courtyard, all of them looking at the Hyūga.

“Indeed,” Hiashi said and nodded slowly.

“I do have one new thing,” Naruto added. “Could you please turn on your Byakugan?”

Hiashi nodded slowly, and moved into a defensive stance.

Naruto's hands flew. Dog, dog, dragon. He focused his chakra, and dived forward. He seemed to glide over the ground, staying a consistent two feet in the air, before he smacked into Hiashi with both his fists.

The man went flying back and landed against a wall. Naruto made the seals again, and dived again, but this time, he stopped before impact. He bowed to the elder.

“What, in the name of Kami, was that!?”

Naruto smiled and scratched the back of his head. “It's erm, the first part of my bloodline. It's called the Torpedo. It's one of the things I'm learning.”

“Interesting. I will arrange for you to be tutored, with my daughters.”

“Thank you, Hiashi-sama,” he said. “May I ask why?”

Hiashi nodded. “Follow me. Girls, please get ready to take Naruto shopping, he needs some new clothes.”

The girls nodded and turned, allowing Naruto to follow the man into his office. “Last night,” Hiashi said as he settled down, “you tricked the entire village.”

Naruto looked at him.

“That, in itself, was impressive, but at one stage, you had the Kyūbi working for you. That intrigued me.”

Naruto decided to be honest. “Foxy-chan isn’t that bad. She’s got a bit of a temper, but we came to an agreement. I eat more meat, I kill some of our enemies, and she’s happy to help me out. The seal is foolproof, after all, dad did it.”

“Indeed. The rest of the village has been warned by the Hokage that you desire to be normal, however, it is invertible that there will be some people who take it too far.”

Naruto nodded.

“And those that can’t forget the past.”

Naruto sighed. “I’ll try not to kill too many.”

Hiashi laughed coldly. “They deserve it if they are too stupid to recognise what happened.”

“I thank you for your hospitality, Hiashi-sama.”

“Hn,” Hiashi replied. “Your apartment is not fit for a dog. The room is yours for as long as you desire.”

Naruto bowed deeply, before he turned and walked out, heading back to the courtyard.

“Not bad, kid.”

“Thanks,” Naruto replied. *“I did pay attention.”*

“One more thing, no orange today? I have more techniques...”

“Deal!”

“Hanabi-chan, Hinata-chan.”

“You do not have the right to call me that,” Hanabi snapped, glaring at him.

“Kawaii!” Naruto yelled, and glomped the smaller girl again.

“I hate you,” Hanabi sighed from underneath him.

Naruto grinned and climbed to his feet. “Shopping,” he yelled, and grabbed both girls’ hands. He lifted each on to one of his shoulders, and ran at top speed to the town centre.

Hanabi started to pound on his back, while he was pretty sure that Hinata had passed out again.

“Hey, Foxy-chan, why does Hinata always pass out?”

“She likes you, idiot, a crush.”

“Oh,” Naruto said. *“She’s pretty and nice but ...”*

“Yeah, not exactly mate material. Kid, I’m gonna tell you the greatest secret when dealing with vixens. Be innocent, they love it, it makes them think they can mould you.”

“Innocent, got it. Thanks.”

Naruto pulled to a stop, and placed both girls down gently. He then helped Hinata to the ground and waited, while Hanabi sighed and tapped her foot.

“I’m sorry, Hinata-chan,” he said, as the girl came around. “I didn’t realise I was so rough.”

Hanabi rolled her eyes, while Hinata blushed. “I’m sorry,” Hinata whispered.

“Come on,” Naruto said excitedly. “I need a new wardrobe.”

“You get orange, and I’m gouging your eyes out,” Hanabi muttered.

“You’re so cute,” Naruto said and ruffled her hair again.

Hanabi threw a punch at him, he moved slightly, so that the punch flew past him. “If you wanted a hug, you just had to ask,” he announced, and hugged her tightly.

Hanabi just groaned as he released her.

“I have better things to do today,” she muttered. “Hinata-neesan, let us go.”

“Okay.”

The next hour was spent in various shops, as Naruto found out how the other-half shopped. Hinata was too shy to push herself forward, but Hanabi acted like the princess she was. She demanded, and received, immediate attention.

Assistants appeared and made suggestions, some Hanabi accepted, others she denied abruptly.

At the end, he had an entire new wardrobe. Hinata paid without bothering to look at the bill.

Naruto looked down at his new clothes. “Hinata-chan, Hanabi-chan, my thanks.”

“Y-you’re welcome,” Hinata whispered. Hanabi nodded at him.

“I have training now, so I’ll see you later.” Hanabi turned, and dragged Hinata away.

“Can I get these delivered?” he asked the assistant.

She nodded and took the address of the Hyūga compound.

He thanked her and took off, dashing at full speed.

“*Stop!*”

Naruto skidded to a stop.

“*Every time you run like that, I get motion sick! Listen and concentrate. Dog, Bird, concentrate your chakra, picture your destination. Then...*”

Five minutes later, Naruto took a deep breath, made the hand signals, and disappeared.

Kakashi arrived at the training ground, to find that Sakura and Sasuke were in place as always, but the brat wasn't there.

Out of nowhere, a lightning bolt hit the ground, and Naruto appeared. “Cooooooooool,” he breathed. “That was the single coolest thing ever!”

“Dead last, what the hell was that?” Sasuke demanded.

“Bloodline,” Naruto replied absently. “What's the mission today?”

“Party for village children,” Kakashi replied.

“Kakashi?” Naruto asked.

“Hmm?”

“If you pull out that perverted book of yours in front of children, I will use my new Jutsu on you all night.”

Kakashi's eye twitched.

Naruto sighed. “Irritating no Jutsu!”

As before, a group of mini-Naruto's appeared and started to sing. “Ohh Ee Oh Ah Ahh, bing bang walla walla bing bang!”

Naruto smirked as a visible bead of sweat dropped from Kakashi's chin.

“Fine,” he grunted.

“That'll do guys,” Naruto said.

“You’re the boss, boss,” one of them said, before they dispersed.

“Where’s the party?” Naruto asked.

“Village hall.”

Naruto nodded and made the hand seals quickly, and vanished once more.

Naruto was pleased that the teleportation Jutsu worked indoors as well.

He landed in a dramatic half-crouch.

The kids, all dressed in their finest party clothes, stared at him, before cheering happily.

“The entertainment has arrived,” Naruto announced. “Right, first up, we’re going to play a game! You, you, you, you, you, not you, you, you and you, over there. The rest, stay here!” The children moved into place.

Naruto walked over to the table, and ripped off a strip of the table cloth. “We’re going to play a game of catch the blind ninja,” he announced. “The team that gets me first, gets to ride the lightning with me!”

The kids all cheered loudly, as Naruto blindfolded himself and moved as the first kid dived at him.

Kakashi, along with Sakura and Sasuke, arrived at the hall, to find a blindfolded Naruto dancing around, while squealing children chased after him.

The parents were to one side, laughing and joking, then cheering as a child got close.

Finally, Naruto slipped, and all the kids dog piled him.

“Not bad,” Naruto said, from the side, taking his blindfold off. The kids gasped, and then cheered as they found they’d pounced on the floor. “Gather around, and hold hands.”

The kids moved into a circle. Naruto jumped into the middle, and made some hand seals. In a flash, all the kids vanished, appearing a few seconds later in a different spot.

“Cool!” they yelled, before cheering.

“You know what now?”

“What?”

“Food!”

There was another cheer, as the kids headed toward the tables that were groaning with different items.

Naruto headed toward the adults.

“Thank you,” a woman said.

“Which one’s the birthday kid?”

“The dark haired one in the pink dress. Natsumi.”

Naruto nodded and walked over to the kids, who were sat on the floor, each with plates in their laps. He picked up the birthday girl and sat her in his lap as he joined them.

Kakashi couldn’t hear the conversation, but could hear a lot of giggling and laughter. The two Genins next to him rolled their eyes and sat in the corner. He reached for his book, only to find a mini-Naruto staring up at him reproachfully.

He sighed and lowered his hand, wondering how the hell he was going to keep himself entertained now.

That night, Naruto sat at a table in a restaurant, eating a thick steak, while writing out ideas for new Jutsus. It was all very well having Foxy-chan come up with deadly techniques, but it wasn’t enough for him. He needed to have other things up his proverbial sleeve.

Today had been an amazing day. He’d been able to buy clothes at a real price, he’d been able to buy food that wasn’t rotten, he’d been able to walk around without being insulted and stared at.

It was brilliant, and he was sure to be nice to everyone, he didn’t want to get a reputation like Sasuke, and besides, it would be easier to be Hokage if people genuinely liked him.

He giggled as he wrote down an idea, and then another.

“People are going to think you have a split personality,” Kyūbi said into his brain.

“I do,” Naruto replied. *“You’re the all powerful one, I’m the one who has to use imagination to defeat the people.”*

“I have enough power for both of us,” Kyūbi pointed out.

“True, but relying on one thing is a bad idea. This way, I can distract them, then use your techniques. Simple.”

“Hn,” Kyūbi muttered.

As the bill for the steak arrived, Naruto realised he really needed more money if he was going to

eat well all the time.

“You can earn extra money from killing rogue ninjas,” Kyūbi told him.

“Oooo ,” Naruto said, and flashed out of the restaurant, heading towards the Hokage’s office.

“You can go straight in,” the secretary said, smiling at him.

Naruto smiled back, restraining the urge to yell at her for being a hypocrite. Sometimes, he wondered if the villagers were really worth all the trouble he was going through.

But then he remembered that there just had to be twins in the village, and if he was going to sleep with them...

“Take a seat, Naruto,” the Hokage said, nodding to the chair in front of the desk. “I’ll be with you in a few minutes.”

Naruto grinned at him, and moved to the corner, staring out the window at the village.

“Attack!”

Without thinking, Naruto turned, two kunais flying out his hands. The weapons flew, catching the assailant and sending him flying into a wall, and pinning him.

“You’re pretty short, for an assassin,” Naruto said as he looked at the boy.

“Like you can talk!”

That was the sort of answer that Naruto would have given. “Loud, too,” he added. “So why are you attacking the old man?”

“Because I want the damn hat!”

Naruto reached out and smacked the kid on the head. “Never bad mouth the hat! That is the sweetest hat in existence!”

The kid stared at him rebelliously. “It will be my hat one day.”

“Oh?” Naruto asked.

“I’m Konohamaru,” the kid replied. “The old man’s grandson.”

Naruto turned to the Hokage. “You really need to talk to your kids about their name choices,” he said.

The Hokage raised his eyebrows at him. Naruto turned back to the kid. “So, brat, what makes you think you’re getting the hat?”

“I’m being taught the short cuts to being Hokage.”

“Taught short cuts?” Naruto turned to the Hokage.

The Hokage concentrated on his paperwork.

“Then,” Naruto said cheerfully, “as I want the hat as well, there is only one thing I can do. Prove to you that there’s no such thing as a shortcut.”

As fast as he could, he pulled out a kunai and threw it at the Hokage. The Hokage didn’t even look up from the paperwork as he caught the kunai, and threw it back. Naruto tilted his head slightly, allowing it to fly past his head, and bury itself in the wall a millimetre about the kid’s head.

“That was so cool!”

Naruto blinked. Yup, that would have been his response as well.

“Train me!”

He would have said that as well.

“Please, boss!”

Naruto sighed. “On top of the Fourth’s head. Ten minutes. If you’re late, the deal’s off.”

The kid vanished, leaving behind his scarf.

“It’s bad enough that you allowed your kids to give him a silly name,” Naruto said, settling down in the chair he’d been offered some time ago. “But putting him with someone who claims there are shortcuts to your job? That’s gonna get the brat killed.”

“Hypocrite,” the Hokage muttered. “What do you want, Naruto?”

“Just popping in to see how you are.”

“Fine,” the Hokage grunted. “I take it you’re happier now?”

Naruto nodded.

The Hokage smiled at him. “I am glad to hear that. Don’t you have to get to the Fourth’s head?”

“What? Oh, no. I sent a clone. He’ll take care of the brat.”

The Hokage chuckled.

“But, he did have the right idea, though.”

“Oh?”

“Yup, I’m gonna attack you as well. But my goal is to kidnap you.”

“For what purpose?”

“The consumption of ramen. I’ll pay.”

The Hokage was on his feet and in front of his desk, before Naruto could blink. “Revenge,” the old man cackled. “Revenge is mine!”

After an enjoyable evening meal, where the Hokage could only manage eight bowls, Naruto headed back to the Hyūga compound. He paid his respects to Hiashi, before heading to bed.

The next morning, Hanabi was already gone to the Academy, leaving him with just Hiashi and Hinata.

Something was pricking at the back of Naruto’s mind. “Hmm,” he mumbled. “My Kawaii senses are tingling. Excuse me.” He made several hand seals, and then shouted “Kawaii No Jutsu!”

He flew through the nearest wall, in a parabolic arc, heading toward what ever had attracted his attention.

Flying like this was fun, he decided. “Kawaii!” he yelled.

He found himself heading toward the academy, and covered his face so he wouldn’t be cut by the glass in the window, as he burst through.

Hanabi was pleased to be back at school. After a day of Naruto’s company, she needed to be back with people who treated her as she deserved.

She ignored Konohamaru and his two friends, Udon and Moegi, and waited for Iruka-sensei. They were wittering about the training they’d had the night before, but were easy enough to ignore. When Iruka arrived, she pulled out her best glare and relaxed.

As one, every wannabe-Ninja in the room turned to the window. There was a sound, like someone shouting from the distance.

Hanabi had a sinking feeling in her stomach. It couldn’t be. It simply wasn’t possible.

“.....aaaaiiiiiii!” the voice finished, as the window nearest her exploded, peppering the far wall with glass, and she was tackled to the ground in a huge hug.

For a girl who had received perhaps three non-Naruto-hugs in her entire life, it was strange to be held so close. It was even worse that she usually ended up on her back, with the boy on top of her.

Emotions she wasn’t sure she was ready for yet pointed out that it wasn’t a bad position.

Naruto sat up and ruffled her hair. “You’re so cute!”

“Boss!” Konohamaru called.

“Konohamaru!” Naruto called back.

“What are you doing here?”

“My new Jutsu! It’s called Kawaii No Jutsu. Whenever something cute happens, I can jump and glomp it!”

“Naruto,” Iruka called. “Where were you?”

“Having breakfast with Hiashi-sama and Hinata-chan,” he said.

Iruka blinked. “You jumped four miles?”

Naruto nodded. “It was very kawaii!”

Iruka sighed.

“Boss!” Konohamaru said, “you gotta teach me that Jutsu!”

“You got it,” Naruto agreed. “Meet me in the top-secret meeting place again tonight.”

“What about us?” Moegi asked.

“Can you glare like Hanabi-chan?”

Moegi shook her head.

“Then it’s not as Kawaii,” Naruto explained.

Moegi sighed. “I meant can we learn it as well?”

“Oooo. Sure, I expected you two to tag along again!”

“Can we all learn it?” another student asked.

Naruto looked surprised. “You all want to learn it?”

With the exception of Hanabi, everyone nodded.

“How about I hire Naruto for a C-class mission to teach all of you at the end of school tomorrow?” Iruka suggested.

The kids cheered, as Naruto gave him a big thumbs-up. “Okay, guys, make sure you bring the cutest thing you have tomorrow. I’ll see you then!”

He made the hand-seals and vanished, leaving behind a stunned group of children and a gaping teacher.

Naruto arrived back with his lightning flash, making Hiashi and Hinata jump. He looked at the wall, and created some clones. “Guys, fix the wall.”

“You got it, boss,” the clones cheered, and got to work.”

“Please excuse me,” Naruto said to the others. “Hanabi-chan was being very kawaii.”

“Hn,” Hiashi said. “You invented a Jutsu so you could locate and hug something cute?”

Naruto nodded.

“Hn,” Hiashi said again, and concentrated on the food.

Naruto ate as politely as he could, and then followed the two Hyūgas out to the courtyard.

“Hinata, come at me,” Hiashi nodded.

Naruto watched as the girl hesitantly approached her father. Something was very wrong here, he knew Hinata was shy, but this was going too far.

“Harder,” Hiashi demanded, his fourth insult of the fight starting. “You are weak, a disgrace to the clan. Try harder!”

Naruto moved before he could help himself, pulling Hinata away. “What the hell was that, Hiashi!?”

“You are a guest, you will remember your place,” Hiashi roared.

“Screw that,” Naruto roared back, not backing down in the slightest. If he wasn’t going to back down to a nine-tailed demon, he sure wasn’t going to back down to a mere human. “You have some serious problems, and I am not going to let you put down Hinata-chan like that.”

“She is my daughter.”

“Could’ve fooled me. I’ve seen dogs treated better than that. What the hell are you thinking?”

“She has to be strong, or her sister will be in charge of the clan. We must have a strong leader.”

“Then teach her to become one, don’t take away everything that makes her what she is – that’s self-defeating.”

“This is how I was taught!”

“Hinata-chan is not you! She is herself, like Hanabi-chan is herself. Your priorities are so screwed around that you can’t even see what you are doing. So sit down over there, and watch!”

Hiashi growled at him, and he growled back, only he felt Kyūbi lend him some of her chakra at the same time.

Naruto turned his back on the older man. “Hinata, front and centre.”

Looking pale and nervous, Hinata slowly moved in front of him.

“Right, come at me.”

Hinata threw a weak punch at him. Naruto ignored the snort from Hiashi.

“Come on, Hinata-chan,” Naruto said with a foxy grin. “You can’t hurt me, I’m Naruto! Now, show me what you can do! I know you’re much better, I watched you in school, and you could totally kick Sasuke’s arse! Show me, come on, Hinata-chan.”

Hinata giggled, and attacked again, this time more seriously.

“Great,” Naruto praised. “Now again, come on, you really can’t hurt me, and even if you did, I’ve got amazing healing. Impress me, come on!”

Hinata nodded. “I will!” she agreed, and launched herself forward. This time her moves were fast and crisp, and he had struggled to avoid her.

“That’s great!” he cheered, as he jumped backward. “Faster, harder!”

This time he was really pushed to protect himself as Hinata flew at him, he could almost see her hands glowing, as her Gentle-Fist style blocked the flow of Chakra around his body.

She finished with a move where he couldn’t even see her hands moving, he just felt a lot of pain, and flew backward.

“Naruto-kun!” Hinata screamed, flying after him. “I’m so sorry!”

“Hinata-chan,” he whispered. “I am so proud of you. I told you that you could do it!”

She nodded and smiled shyly, looking down.

“*You are going to ruin my reputation,*” Kyūbi grunted.

“*Thanks, Foxy-chan,*” he replied mentally, before getting to his feet as he felt his Chakra paths being restored. He stood, slowly, and stumbled, before glaring at Hiashi. “There’s an old saying, ‘you catch more flies with honey than vinegar’, and if this is how you’ve been acting, trying to make your daughters strong, then that is child-abuse, Hiashi. People can only be strong as the people they have to lean against, you want Hinata-chan and Hanabi-chan to be strong, then let them

lean against you until they are ready, don't treat them like horses to be broken!"

"You have dropped the honorific. Why?"

"Because you have lost the respect I gave you."

Hiashi growled and moved forward. Naruto heard Hinata squeak next to him. "I could snuff you out in an instant!"

Naruto met his eyes. "Kill me, possibly, but you will never defeat me. I will not back down from what I believe in, no matter what the price might be."

"Hinata."

"Yes?"

Hiashi turned. "A man who cannot see his own mistakes is a man without honour. A man who cannot apologise is worse. I have acted badly, and did not see that you required different treatment. I apologise for my behaviour, and will endeavour to rectify it immediately. Please be forgiving if it takes me a while."

Hinata gaped, before she lunged forward and hugged her father.

Naruto smiled and stepped away quietly. As soon as he was out of sight, he made the hand-seals and made his way to the training ground. He needed time to think, and waiting for Kakashi was as good as way as any.

Iruka walked into the Hokage's office, and stopped in front of the large desk.

"Take a seat," Sarutobi told him, relaxing back. "What can I do for you?"

"I'd like to hire Naruto for a C-class mission tomorrow?"

"Oh?"

"Yes, I'd like him to teach his new Kawaii No Jutsu to all the children."

"Kawaii No Jutsu?"

Iruka smirked. "He invented it so that he could glomp Hanabi whenever she glares. He thinks it's too cute. This morning, he jumped from the Hyūga compound to the school in one go! Can you see the possibilities? A kid could be lost, and all he has to do is cast this Jutsu, and he can jump home! It doesn't seem to take much Chakra, even by Naruto's standards."

Sarutobi leaned back. "Do you know how many birthday requests for Ninja entertainment I get a year?"

“Erm, no?”

“Eight,” the Hokage replied. “Sometimes seven, but it’s been stable for the last ten years. Do you know how many requests I’ve had in the last day?”

“No?”

“Forty-six.”

“Erm, why?”

“It seems that word has got around that Naruto is great with kids. They utterly adore him – possibly because he’s on their level – and now that adults are regretting how they’ve treated him, and are seeing him as he really is, they want to hire him.”

Iruka laughed softly. “Good, anything that helps him keep the Kyūbi at bay is a good thing.”

“Indeed.”

Sarutobi looked to the corner. “Please fetch Naruto.”

“I will,” the shadow said, and vanished.

“So, how is this class?”

The next few minutes were spent reviewing the students, before a flash of lightning appeared, and Naruto and the ANBU member appeared.

“Hey, old man,” Naruto said cheerfully. “You called?”

Sarutobi slowly picked up his pipe, filled it, and set it alight. He took a deep breath. “Naruto,” he said slowly. “Exactly what was that?”

“Oh, bloodline,” Naruto said with a grin.

The Hokage sighed. “This is Uzuki Yugao, she is ANBU. Next to her is Mitarashi Anko.”

A shadow from the corner waved.

“You know Iruka, of course.”

Naruto nodded. “And the guy behind you?”

“Gekkō Hayate” the man introduced himself. “And I am impressed that you sensed me.”

Naruto waved at him.

“I trust these five people with my life, and with yours,” Sarutobi said. “I would like you to tell

them the truth.”

Naruto plopped down in to a chair. “Them hiding isn’t exactly a sign of trust,” he pointed out.

Anko and Hayate moved out of the shadows. Anko was a tall and well built woman, with purple hair, and a cheery grin. Her outfit pushed the borders of polite attire. Hayate was male, with bags under his eyes making him looked tired.

“So, Hayate-san and Yugao-san are together?” Naruto asked.

“How’d you work that out, kiddo?” Anko asked.

“They smell of each other,” Naruto explained. “And you’ve still not said why I should tell them the truth, old man.”

“Because I trust them.”

“Yes, and I’m glad that you do, an old man like you needs young people around him to make him feel good, but that doesn’t answer why they need to know.”

Iruka smiled faintly, watching the ANBU members and Anko smirk.

“Now I’m curious,” Anko announced. “I’ll give you some one on one training, kiddo.”

“Tell you what,” Naruto said, “let’s do a deal. You tell me why you smell of snakes and I’ll tell you my secrets. I already know that Sleepy and the Babe are together.”

‘Sleepy’ and the ‘Babe’ both glared at the nicknames, while Anko paled. She sighed. “I have a curse seal from Orochimaru, I was his apprentice for a while.”

“So that’s why the idiots call you snake-bitch,” Naruto announced. “We’re gonna have to fix that.”

“Fix it?” Anko demanded. “You can’t just fix it!”

“Course you can,” Naruto replied. “I fixed my situation.”

“What!” the three young adults demanded. It was only experience that allowed Iruka not to say it. The Third was smirking cheerfully.

Naruto grinned, it was his foxy grin. “I pranked the village! Foxy-chan and I agreed that we needed to improve my situation, so I borrowed some of her Chakra, made a dramatic speech, did a henge. Oh, and allowed Foxy-chan to add the bits about Dad and a fake-bloodline, and hey presto. I’m now living with the Hyūga.” He paused. “Or was, dunno.”

“Naruto,” the Hokage sighed. “What did you do?”

“I kinda called Hiashi-sama a child abuser,” he admitted, his hand going behind his head and scratching the back of his neck. “He was training Hinata-chan, and calling her useless.” He huffed. “Hinata-chan has low confidence, that’s all. So I told him he was being an idiot and persuaded Hinata-chan to fight me instead. She knocked me flying,” he finished proudly.

“Anyway, at the end, Hiashi-sama apologised to Hinata-chan, so at least they’ll be all right. I left then. Anyway, I think that he’s upset with me, because I also kinda dropped the sama, when I was annoyed at him.”

Anko suddenly vanished, and returned a few seconds later with Hinata’s sensei. She was a beautiful young woman, with incredibly black hair, and amazing red eyes.

Iruka laughed as the smaller boy was suddenly pounced on by Yūhi Kurenai. She gave him a big kiss on the cheek, and then ruffled his hair.

Naruto blinked, and then muttered something that sounded like, “Older woman are cool!”

“Kurenai?” the Hokage asked dryly.

“Yeah,” Anko added, “that’s normally my greeting.”

As Kurenai climbed off of Naruto, the boy turned to Anko, stood and grinned. “Hi, I’m Naruto.”

Iruka blinked, before he allowed himself to laugh. The Hokage and Hayate both sniggered as well.

“You little brat,” Anko said, respect in her voice. She pounced on him and went to kiss his cheek as well. Only Naruto turned his face, and got the kiss on his lips.

Anko let him go and stepped back.

“All right!” Naruto cheered, jumping in the air. “First kiss on the cheek with one hot woman, first on the lips with another. Damn, life is great. So, old man, you got some bad news for me now, right?”

“Hmm?”

“Please,” Naruto said dryly, “I don’t get things like this happening without a major down side, so I’m ready for it. Damn, but it was worth it, whatever it is. So, that bloody cat for a month? Track down this traitor? Listen to Sakura whine about the Sasuke for ten minutes? Hit me with it, I’m ready!”

Iruka smirked at the list of priorities, and the weights between them.

“No,” the Hokage said slowly. “No mission, although you could perhaps finish telling the nice people the story.”

“What else is there to tell?”

“Details, Naruto, details.”

“Pfft,” Naruto said expressively. “Fine,” he looked at Kurenai. “To bring you up to date...”

“Hey,” Anko protested. “You’re just telling her?”

“First kiss,” Naruto pointed out with a grin. “Definitely worth a story.”

Kurenai grinned back.

“Anyway, my little speech the other night was faked. It was a version of my Sexy No Jutsu and I borrowed some of Foxy-chan’s Chakra. Oh, and allowed her to reveal about dad. Clear?”

“Not even close,” Kurenai replied. “In fact, I have one question.”

“Shoot.”

“What the hell!?”

Naruto dropped back into his seat. “Okay, my life sucked. Everyone hated me, and no one would tell me why. I went through all sorts of things, especially on hunt-Naruto-night. I found out about Foxy-chan when Mizuka-traitor tried to kill Iruka-sensei.

“So, the other day, Sakura said that if I put as much energy into making people like me as I did pranks, perhaps they would. And she was right. So that’s what I did.”

There was a stunned silence from the gathered shinobi.

“Foxy-chan?” Hayate asked, coughing slightly.

Naruto looked at him, and then frowned. An expression of deep thought took his face. Everyone went quiet as the boy seemed to be wrestling with a complex idea. After a few minutes, his face cleared, and a look of joy appeared on his face.

“Woohoo,” he yelled, and pounced on Anko, stealing himself a kiss before she could react. He bounced off her and tried for Kurenai, who simply moved out the way. The miss didn’t dampen Naruto’s mood. Instead, he did a little dance on the spot.

“Naruto?” Iruka asked with a sigh.

“I’ve found it, the trick to being a ninja! I’m on the right course!”

“Oh?” the Third asked curiously.

Naruto nodded eagerly. “Kakashi’s not really a complete pervert. Anko-san might dress like a lady of the night, but she’s not.” Anko blushed slightly at this. “Iruka-sensei is not a calm and polite teacher. You’re not an old-man, old man. Hayate-san’s famous cough is fake. I don’t

know Kurenai-san and Yugao-san enough yet, but I'll bet they are the same."

"And the point?" Iruka asked.

"I'm on the right track! I've been telling Foxy-chan that she can have all the powerful moves, but that I'd need distracting ones. You all have something to make people underestimate you, despite your prowess as brilliant fighters. So by not focusing on just becoming more powerful, I'm going the right way. You better keep that seat warm, old man, because I'm still gonna take it. Dattebayo!"

Hayate clapped slowly. "Most Genin don't recognise that for years."

Naruto grinned foxily. "Wanna see my second Jutsu? This is the one that I used to persuade Foxy-chan to help me."

"Sure," the Hokage said, before anyone else could do anything.

"Irritating No Jutsu!" Naruto yelled happily.

Five mini-Naruto's appeared, and in an off-key voice, started to sing. "Ag-a-doo-doo-doo, push pineapple, shake the tree. Aga-doo-doo-doo, push pineapple, grind coffee."

Five different weapons flew from various shinobi – including the Hokage – and hit the clones, dispelling them.

"That was..." was as far as Kurenai got, before the smoke blew away, to show ten-quarter size Naruto's.

"As we were," one of them cheered.

"To the left, to the right, jump up and down and to the knees. Come and dance every night, sing with a hula melody."

More weapons flew toward the clones, but as before, as each one fell apart, two more, half the size, took their place.

Naruto looked proud, and started to sing along.

"I'll give you your first real kiss if you shut them up," Anko begged.

The clones vanished with a poof.

Anko sighed, but there was a smirk in her eyes.

"Later," Naruto promised. "If I'm gonna pass out, I'll do it in private."

"That," Kurenai said, "is really irritating."

“Yep, Foxy-chan managed to last four hours before she gave in.”

“You know who would love this?” Anko asked.

“Who?” Naruto asked back.

“Morino Ibiki,” Anko said. “He’s the head of the ANBU Torture and Interrogation Force.”

“Cool,” Naruto said.

“How did you make the Shadow Clones do that?” Hayate asked.

“Well, I channelled the Chakra so that instead of dispersing, it just splits. And each one retains my personality, so I figure that eventually they’d get so small that they’d be able to crawl inside someone’s ears and sing there. And by that time, they’d be so desperate they’d stab themselves in the head to avoid it.”

“That’s it, I’m having his virginity later,” Anko announced.

Naruto looked up at her, before blood flooded out of his nose and he passed out.

“Still got it,” Anko cheered.

Iruka laughed softly.

Kurenai shook her head, an amused smile on her face. “So, what the hell is going on with Kakashi?”

“Huh?” Anko asked.

“Naruto, he was polite to us, to Hiashi, but not to Sakura, Sasuke or Kakashi. Something is going on there, because he clearly doesn’t have respect for them.”

“Hmm,” the Hokage agreed. “Hayate, if you wouldn’t mind?”

“Okay,” the ANBU member said and vanished in a swirl of leaves. He returned a few seconds later with Kakashi, and to the surprise of most, Hyūga Hiashi.

The man looked around, and then frowned at Naruto.

“Blood loss,” the Hokage said. “Anko expressed her pleasure at a new Jutsu of his.”

“Hn,” Hiashi said. “Are you sure that this...” he paused, “man, is the correct sensei for Naruto-kun?”

The Hokage, the respected head of the hidden village, gaped at the Hyūga.

Hiashi’s lips flickered into a smile for a brief second. “Naruto-kun has earned my respect. My

question remains.”

“Kakashi?” Sarutobi asked. “Exactly why has Naruto stopped referring to you as a Sensei?”

“Hmm?” Kakashi asked, his orange book in his hands.

That was a mistake, as Hiashi had the book out of his hands before he could move.

Everyone blinked, as Hiashi and Kakashi had a staring contest. One that Kakashi backed down from. “Naruto-kun did not back down, even when I threatened to kill him,” Hiashi said softly. “This is a boy who has many aspects to his personality, but above all else, he cares. I will not have him killed because Kakashi spends more time with the Uchiha and the Harpy than Naruto-kun.”

Everyone turned to the Jounin. His eye was looking slightly down. He sighed. “The fox killed my sensei. I’ve tried my best not to let it get in the way, but every time he does something, it reminds me of the fox inside him!”

The Hokage sighed softly.

“I will train him personally,” Hiashi stated firmly.

“Denied,” Sarutobi said instantly. “Naruto needs to learn more than your style of fighting.”

“Kyūbi is already teaching him more than that,” Hiashi said. “His Teleportation Jutsu, his Torpedo Jutsu.”

“Torpedo Jutsu?” Kurenai asked.

“Yes, he glides along around two feet of the ground, and hits with incredible force. It threw me against a wall, and he could have hit me again while I was recovering. He told me that he had a partnership with the fox, that she was teaching him the finishing moves, he was teaching himself distraction, he just needs a good grounding in the other skills.” Hiashi turned to Iruka. “We will be having a talk about the standards of the school. To allow a student with Naruto-kun’s skills to graduate is a telling rebuke to our society.”

Iruka nodded slowly. “Many of my colleagues could not look underneath the underneath.”

“They will learn, or they will die. Konoha has no need for bigots.”

“You know,” Anko said, “today has been full of fun.” With the tension neatly broken, Hiashi sighed and relaxed slightly.

Before anyone could say anything, the door swung opened, and two guards entered. “Hyūga-Sama, Hokage-Sama, a council meeting has been called.”

Hiashi merely sighed. He turned and walked over to Naruto, picking him up. He looked at the

others in the room. “Follow,” he ordered.

“Not one for words is he,” Anko whispered to Iruka, as they followed the man to the next building, where the council chamber was.

“Why am I here?” Hiashi demanded, his arrogance and power on full display. “The Hokage and these honourable Ninja were in an important meeting concerning the future of this village.”

“Ahh, Hiashi-san,” one of the council members that Iruka didn’t recognise greeted him. “We are here to listen to a request from Uchiha-san.”

In the middle of the hall, in a spotlight, stood the last loyal Uchiha.

“I’ve not got all day, speak, boy,” Hiashi demanded.

Sasuke glared at him. There was a well-known enmity between the two clans.

“I demand that, as the last Uchiha, the Kyūbi be removed from the idiot and placed inside me, so that I may use the power as demanded.”

There was an absolute stunned silence that greeted the request.

“Denied,” Hiashi spat. “Guards, take this idiot to the hospital. He is not to be released until he is sane, no matter how long that may be.”

“What?” Sasuke yelled.

No one on the council said a word to defend him, not even the most fervent of the Uchiha supporters. To want a demon placed inside you was madness, pure and simple.

Sasuke was knocked out by an ANBU member and dragged away.

“While we are here,” Hiashi said, “Naruto-kun is under my personal protection. He has gained my respect, and I will not have any council members plot against him. Try it, and you will die. Now that this waste of time has concluded, Honoured Shinobi, Hokage, shall we continue our conversation?”

“Yes,” the Hokage agreed. They all swirled away back to the Hokage’s office.

“Why is Naruto still out?” Kurenai asked.

“I’m keeping him out,” Hiashi said, “I will tell him what we have agreed later. With no parental figure around, I am acting in loco-parentis. Now, with the idiot out of action for a while, I suggest that team seven be broken up, and that Naruto trains with each of the other Genin group in the mornings, and with me in the afternoons.”

“What about missions?” the Hokage asked.

“He can do the D-rank missions on his own,” Iruka suggested. “And join the other groups when they go on better missions.”

“Hmm,” Sarutobi mused. “Group training could be wise. Having a general specialist could be useful.”

“I’m going to help train the brat,” Anko announced.

“We will as well,” Yugao added, speaking for her boyfriend.

“He’s welcome in my team. Hiashi-san, Hinata was much improved today.”

“Hn,” Hiashi agreed. “Naruto-kun made a strong statement to me this morning. Naruto-kun?”

The boy slowly opened his eyes. “Why did you keep me out?”

“You will have to learn that people do care about you, and that there will be times when we can achieve more without your unique brand of diplomacy.”

Many emotions flittered over Naruto’s face, before he seemed to realise that he was still being held by the man. “Hiashi-sama?”

“The honorific is back?”

“You apologised, you showed that you are worthy of respect.”

“As are you, Naruto-kun.” He let the boy down. “Now, we have agreed that Team 7 is disbanded, until Kakashi can act like a real Sensei, and the Uchiha is out of therapy.”

“Wait, why is Sasuke in therapy.” He paused, “and why did it take this long to get him in it?”

“He requested that the Kyūbi be removed from you and put in to him.”

Naruto collapsed on to the floor, tears streaming out of his eyes as he laughed and laughed.

“F-f-foxy-Chan just said that it would be a great idea, as they both like boys, and that it wouldn’t take her long to take control anyway.” Naruto trailed off into howls of laughter, his eyes flickering with red.

“Well,” the Hokage said dryly, “I’m glad that Kyūbi is amused.”

“I’m more impressed that anyone has the guts to call Kyūbi foxy-chan,” Kurenai muttered.

Naruto sat up and giggled. “Foxy-chan has a wicked sense of humour. Anyway, what about Pinky?”

“Pinky?” Anko asked.

“Sakura, the pinkette that’s always attached to Sasuke. Hey, here’s an idea, why not put her in as well?”

“Naruto!” the Hokage sighed. “We will give her some options as well. We want you to train with one of the other Genin teams in the morning. In the afternoon, the people in this room have volunteered to train you into the ground, and fix the mistakes made at the Academy. You will continue to work on your own Jutsus and the Kyūbi’s.

“As for missions, I have one request from Iruka for the school tomorrow.”

“Woohoo,” Naruto cheered. “Great.”

“And loads of party requests.”

“That’s better than the damn cat,” Naruto cheered again. “And more important missions?”

“When everyone agrees, you will accompany one of the other teams.”

“That’s great, old man,” Naruto said cheerfully. He paused, before a smirk appeared on his face. “My Kawaii senses are tingling! Kawaii No Jutsu!” With a crash, he jumped through the wall heading in an arc toward the far side of town.

“Well, I better follow him,” Anko said, “I still owe him a kiss.”

“I think,” Hayate said, “That I’ll turn up at school tomorrow, I have a sudden urge to learn that Jutsu.”

“What time?” Kurenai asked. “I’d like to learn it as well.”

“Four,” Iruka said. “And now that I have the answer to my question as well, I’m happy to leave you honoured gentleman to your discussions.”

“I will leave as well,” Hiashi announced. “Iruka, I believe a staff meeting is in order with your other teachers. We shall have it now.”

Iruka felt several beads of sweat drop down his back.

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 2

“Yo!” Naruto called. “This team Gai?”

“Yosh!” a green spandex wearing boy shouted. “The flames of your youth have brought you to us.”

“They have?” he asked.

“They have,” a new voice said. “Lee!”

“Gai-Sensei!”

“Lee!”

Behind the two now-hugging men, a sunset appeared, highlighting the spandex wearing duo.

“Cool,” Naruto murmured. “They do this all the time?”

“At least six times a day,” a girl muttered.

The two finished.

“Your flames of youth shine brightly,” Naruto yelled. “It is reflected in your eyes!”

The man and mini-man burst into tears and hugged each other tightly, the sunset appeared again.

“Got it!” Naruto cheered. “Thanks guys, you can stop now.”

Everyone in the clearing in the forest stopped and looked at him.

“Sunset No Jutsu,” he shouted, as his hands flew through different patterns.

Behind him, a sunset appeared, flooding the clearing with a dull light.

“Hmm,” Naruto said slowly, his hands started to move again in a different pattern. “Let me try that again.”

“Sunlight No Jutsu,” he screamed.

This time, a bright light appeared behind him, sliding him into a shadow, and brightening the surrounding area massively.

“Yeah,” he cheered and danced on the spot. “I gotta teach that to some people later!”

“Why?” the girl asked.

“Tenten, right?”

She nodded.

He flashed her a foxy grin. “Which makes you the mysterious cousin?”

“Hi, Naruto-kun,” Neji said wryly.

Naruto looked at him blankly.

“You had a chat with Hiashi-sama yesterday? Well, he came and apologised to me last night.”

“Hiashi-sama is a great man,” Naruto agreed. “He doesn’t let pride get in the way of an apology.”

“Anyway, I am Neji.” Neji continued. “The two hugging are Gai and Lee.”

“Gai-Sensei,” Naruto said with a smile. “Mini-Gai.”

“Now that we’re introduced,” Tenten said, “can you answer the question?”

“Oh, yeah. Can’t you see how useful it is? It’s going to revolutionise things!”

“How!” Tenten demanded.

Neji smirked. “Prepare to hear something so obvious that everyone else has missed it for years. Go on, Naruto-kun!”

“It’s night,” Naruto said eagerly. “We’re under attack, suddenly, we cast Sunlight No Jutsu, and we can see everybody, they’re confused, we attack and we win! Or it’s night, and we’re entering an enemy camp. We cast the Jutsu, everyone wakes up confused, and without problem, we rush in and kill them all!”

Gai, Lee, and Tenten gaped at him, while Neji’s smirk only grew.

“Yosh!” Gai said reverently, before sprinting off so fast it looked like he was teleporting.

“Gai-Sensei will return anon, or I will run a thousand laps around the city!”

“Can you do that?” Naruto asked.

“I will prove it! Yosh!” Lee shouted, and sped off.

Naruto grinned and sat down. “I need a hat.”

“A hat?” Tenten asked, looking bewildered.

“A cool hat,” Naruto agreed.

“Don’t ask,” Neji said, “you’ll never understand his logic.”

Naruto grinned. “That’s my secret.”

Gai arrived back, with the Sandaime, and some ANBU members in tow.

“Hi guys,” Naruto waved. “Old man.”

“Naruto,” the two ANBU said, waving back at him.

“Another new Jutsu, Naruto?” Sarutobi asked.

Without standing, Naruto yelled “Sunlight No Jutsu.” As before, bright sunlight appeared from behind him, flooding the area with light. “I’m sure you can see all the benefits.”

“Naruto,” Hayate said slowly. “You got the idea from watching Gai and Lee?”

“Sure, it was their minor Jutsu; I just tweaked it a bit.”

“He got them to do it twice,” Neji said, “he seemed to dissect it, pick up the pieces, and come up with a new Jutsu on the spot.” Neji stood, and put his hands through a couple of seals, before calling “Sunlight No Jutsu!”

As had happened for Naruto, a bright sunlight appeared behind him.

“Yeah,” Naruto cheered. “Way to go, Neji! That was brilliant! Hinata-chan said you were a genius, and you really are!”

Neji blushed faintly. “Thank you, Naruto-kun.”

“You guys get that?” Naruto asked the ANBU.

“We can use it?”

“Of course, Sleepy, what’s the point of inventing a Jutsu then keeping it to yourself when it can help everyone? I mean, there are a couple I’ll keep to myself – the ones that can kill, but ones like this? The more people who know it the better.”

“Thank you, Naruto-kun,” the other ANBU member said, bowing faintly.

“You’re welcome, Babe,” Naruto said with a large grin.

“Brat,” the woman muttered. “Has Anko fulfilled her promise yet?”

“Nope,” Naruto pouted. “I had a massive outbreak of morality, and put it off for a bit. Damn stupid morals.”

“And that had nothing to do with protecting her, did it?” Hayate asked dryly.

Naruto put on his most innocent face. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Yugao moved over and ruffled his hair. “Come to the ANBU compound tonight, we’ll feed you and show you around.”

“I will,” Naruto promised. “See you at four?”

“Absolutely!” The two ANBU members vanished, leaving only a smiling Sandaime.

“I’m very proud of you, Naruto,” he said, and then vanished himself.

“Yosh,” Gai said, “your youthfulness does you great credit. So, you are here to train with us?”

“Yup,” Naruto agreed, jumping to his feet.

“Where is my most youthful student?”

“Running,” Tenten sighed.

“A jog will do us all good,” Gai agreed.

Naruto grinned and started to run with the others. He always had stamina to spare, so he found it quite fun.

“Naruto, why don’t you run with Lee, it may be more challenging!”

Challenging was an understatement. Naruto had to push himself to keep up with the speeding boy. It was only through application of will that he kept going. It was an almost impossible task, but he refused to back down from it.

Eventually, the two boys collapsed in front of the others.

“You won, Lee, well done,” Naruto said.

“Won? My youthful rival, it was clearly a draw!”

“Nope, you’d done ten laps before I started, so you win.”

“Your youthfulness does you proud, Naruto,” Gai said. “It is important for a Shinobi to be as fit as they can be! Next time, we will practice for real!”

Naruto nodded. “I will work harder,” he promised. He looked at his watch. “Eek, I’m late for my class!” He made the hand-signals and vanished.

“Neji, what the hell!” Tenten shouted. “Since when have you showed emotion, smiled, in fact, what the hell!”

Neji smiled. “Last night, I was called into Hiashi-sama’s office. On his desk was a house of cards. He looked at me, and said, ‘A tower of cards is like life, Neji’. It was the first time he had said my name in an informal way. He then pulled out one card from the bottom, and the house remained standing. ‘If you take out one card, it can remain standing. This card is finding out about Naruto’s parents.’ He took out another. ‘This one was finding out something else about Naruto-kun. The house is still standing Neji, but it is weak.’ He then looked at me directly, and pulled out another card. The whole house fell down. ‘This is Naruto telling me to my face what none have ever dared to do. I have apologised to Hinata and Hanabi, and now I will apologise to you.’”

Tenten gasped.

“Hirashi-sama then ordered me to show my seal. He then walked over, placed his hand on my forehead, and removed it.” Neji revealed his forehead, showing that it was indeed clear.

Tenten looked stunned.

“Yeah,” Neji agreed. “After that, he explained what really happened to my father, and gave me a letter, and for the rest of the night we talked. Things are a lot better between us.”

“And fate?”

“Fate has an enemy, chaos, and Naruto-kun is an avatar of chaos. He does what he feels is right, regardless of anything else. He created chaos in Hiashi-sama’s mind, and his house of cards fell down. I am free, because fate cannot touch me when Naruto-kun is around.”

Neji looked down. “Oh, Tenten?”

“Yes, Neji?”

“Do you maybe fancy getting dinner sometime?”

Tenten blinked, and then slowly flushed. “Yes,” she squeaked.

“You think we should get to the school?”

Tenten shot to her feet, and they both sprinted off.

There was a large crowd of people sat on the grass outside the school building; a lot of parents were with their kids. Standing around the outside of the group was a number of shinobi, including more than a few ANBU members.

They joined up with some of their friends, and waited.

Iruka-sensei made his way to the front. “Well,” he said with a slight smile. “There are more people here than expected. To begin with, we’ll start with a demonstration. Hanabi, will you do the honours, please?”

Hanabi sighed deeply and moved next to the teacher. With a resigned look, she opened her arms wide, and then slowly glared.

From the distant, in the direction of the Hokage's tower, came out a shout. Everyone turned to watch, as a small dot got ever closer.

“KKKkkkkkkkkaaaaaaawwwwwwwaaaaaiaiiiiiiiiiiii!”

Naruto landed with a thump and bounded into the girl, hugging her tightly.

There was a large round of applause, as Naruto jumped to his feet and lifted Hanabi up. “Wave,” Naruto said.

Hanabi looked like she'd rather eat broken glass, but did as she was told.

“She's so kawaii!” Naruto said, ruffling her hair. “Right, everyone bring something kawaii?”

All the students nodded.

“Now, I need a volunteer,” he said, adopting a thinking pose.

All the students raised their hands eagerly.

“Hmmm,” Naruto said. “I think I'll pick... you!”

Everyone turned as Naruto pointed over the heads of the children, to a surprised looking Kunoichi, who was snacking on a stick of dango.

“What?” she blinked.

There were some rumblings from the adults. Naruto, who had been making his way toward her, paused. “Haven't we learned that things are rarely what they seem?” he asked, in a mildly rebuking voice.

The rumblings were replaced with an embarrassed silence.

Naruto grabbed the purple-haired Kunoichi and pulled her to the front, despite her attempting to get away from him.

“I want you all to welcome a very good friend of mine,” Naruto said, “Special Jounin Mitarashi Anko.”

“Hi, Anko-Sensei,” the students said in unison.

Anko looked uncomfortable.

“So, have you got your Kawaii item?” Naruto asked.

“I didn’t expect to be doing this,” she hissed.

“Which is why I came prepared,” Naruto said happily. He opened a piece of paper, and tapped it. A cute, furry, plushie mongoose appeared. Its fur was dark red, and it had two eyes and a goofy looking grin.

“Kawaii!” Anko yelled and pounced on it, before blushing furiously.

“Now,” Naruto said with a wide smile. “Does anyone know what makes a mongoose famous?”

The students all shook their heads.

“They can kill snakes!”

The students all looked impressed.

“And what’s more,” Naruto continued, seeming to ignore the fact that his words were clearly aimed at the adults. “Anko-chan has something in common with the mongoose. She’s been training really hard for years so that she can be ready to kill a snake that betrayed us.

“But that’s a different story, and I’m not here to tell stories, I’m here to tell you how to glomp from a distance.

“So, what I think we need next is a wall.” He made some hand-seals, and created some Shadow Clones. Well, a few was perhaps an understatement, as around a thousand appeared.

“A wall please, guys.”

“You got it,” they shouted, and got to work. Each Naruto hinged themselves in a large block, and then jumped on top of each other. It was another example of the chaos that Naruto could cause, and Neji couldn’t help smile at it.

“Right. Everyone got their item in front of them?”

Most of the students nodded. Some of the ninja’s took out different items, including Kakashi, who placed his infamous orange book carefully in front of him.

“Step one. All we need is a tiny bit of Chakra, far less than say a normal clone, and make these signs. Dragon, tiger, rabbit, rabbit, tiger.”

Naruto did all the hand signs slowly, so that everyone could see. “Then, all you do is concentrate on the item you think is cute, and let the Chakra flow into it. Watch Anko-chan.”

The woman shook her head and sighed. With a rapid movement, she made the signs, and concentrated. A light blue Chakra dripped out of her hands and onto the item.

Naruto clapped happily, and then looked at the kids. He walked around, watching them. One of

Naruto's clones appeared next to Neji, and wandered over toward Kakashi.

"Now, for the fun part," Naruto said as everyone finished. He picked up the Mongoose, and walked around the wall. He returned a few seconds later empty handed.

"Anko-chan, this time, you need to channel the Chakra around your body, and make the same seals."

She nodded, her hands flashed.

"Now, shout 'Kawaii No Jutsu!'"

"Kawaii No Jutsu," she yelled, and rocketed into the air, with a shocked look on her face. She cleared the top of the wall easily, and landed. She walked around the side, holding the mongoose.

Naruto cheered her, and there was a round of applause, which caused Anko to flush.

"You can also use 'Valuable No Jutsu', Kakashi," the clone said, before dispersing.

Kakashi's one eye looked surprised, before he nodded slowly.

"Okay, Hanabi-chan, you helped earlier, so you get to go first. Where's your special item."

The girl looked slightly embarrassed and shrugged.

Naruto sighed and reached into another seal. He pulled out a plushie fox and handed it to her. The only sign she accepted it was the faintest of blushes. She rapidly performed the first set of seals, before allowing Naruto to take it away.

She stood, and made the hand signals. Her hands were precise, but far slower than Anko's. "Kawaii No Jutsu!" she screamed.

She took off, clearing the wall easily.

Naruto cheered her as she walked back, actually cuddling the small fox. "You're dismissed Hanabi-chan, your dad's over there."

She gave him a hint of a smile, and walked off. Hinata gave her a hug, before Hiashi-sama lightly patted her back.

"Konohamaru Corps," Naruto yelled.

"Boss!"

"You three are up next!"

"Cool. We'll do it, you'll see, kore!"

Naruto grinned, and sent a couple of clones to round up all the remaining items.

“Go for it!” he ordered.

Three different voices yelled the same thing, and three kids flew over the wall, screaming in pleasure.

From there, Naruto walked around and made sure that they could all do it.

As he finished, the Hokage arrived, looking regal in his hat and robes.

He raised his hands, and everyone went silent.

“I hope you all understand the benefit of this Jutsu. If you are ever lost, or in danger, you can use this to return to safety. However, as with every Jutsu, it should be used sparingly. Unless you happen to be the jailor of incredibly powerful demons, of course.”

Naruto grinned and waved.

“I would like to thank Naruto-kun for giving up his time.”

“Yeah,” Konohamaru yelled. “Thanks, boss!”

Naruto bowed to them, giving them all his foxiest grin.

“And Iruka-sensei for organising this.”

There was a lot of applause for the Sensei.

“Thank you all for your attention this afternoon, it’s been fascinating to watch, as well as educational, as once again we have been forced to open our eyes and examine ourselves minutely.”

The Hokage smiled benevolently, and then vanished.

Neji looked as Naruto walked up to Anko and took her shoulder. There was a flash of lightning, and they were gone.

“Wow,” Tenten muttered, as the Henged Naruto’s all dispersed.

“Told you,” Neji said proudly. “Chaos. So, food?”

Tenten shook her head. “Let me go get changed first.”

“I’ll pick you up in an hour.”

Naruto arrived in the ANBU headquarters, next to Anko, and looked around eagerly.

His look was interrupted almost immediately as a red-eyed Kunoichi dived on him, and then pressed her lips to his own. Naruto opened his mouth in surprise, to find Kurenai's tongue press inside him.

It was at that moment that Naruto realised he was getting his first ever real kiss, and he enthusiastically returned it, trying to copy the older woman to the best of his ability.

Kurenai slowly pulled back, and smiled at him. "That was for what you just did for Anko."

"I didn't do it for that," Naruto protested.

"That's why you got kissed," Kurenai said.

"Oi, you tart," Anko protested loudly. "One, I'm quite capable of thanking him myself, and two, I had dibs on his first kiss."

"You snooze, you lose," Kurenai smirked.

"So, brat?" Anko snorted.

"Real women are so cool," Naruto sighed in pleasure.

"We're ruining him for girls his own age," Kurenai grinned.

"Ruined," Naruto agreed cheerfully. "The girls are so concerned about stupid things that it makes actually talking to them impossible. But before I say something stupid and ruin the moment, let's get on with the tour!"

"Anko, Kurenai," a soft voice greeted them.

They turned to find a scar-faced man. "This is Ibiki, Naruto," Anko said.

"Torture guy, right?"

"Correct," Ibiki said, looking amused. "Doing one at the moment. Tough one, he'll talk soon though."

"What he do?" Naruto asked.

"He's a Cloud Nin, we caught him spying," Ibiki said.

"He also likes to kidnap female academy students for his fun," Anko added. "We found him outside our academy, and Cloud have a history of wanting the Hyūga eyes."

"What, he was waiting for Hanabi-chan?" Naruto asked.

Kurenai and Anko nodded.

“You gonna stand for this, kid?” Kyūbi asked, her voice harsh.

“Hell no,” Naruto replied as he walked over to a wall and pulled a sword from the wall. *“Where is he?”*

“We can’t kill him, yet,” Ibiki pointed out.

“We can have him talking in minutes,” Kyūbi promised.

“I’ll have him talking in minutes,” Naruto repeated the promise coldly.

“Give him a shot,” Anko suggested.

Ibiki shrugged, and turned, leading the way down the stairs. There was a window, through which he could see a prisoner who was staring defiantly forward.

Naruto stormed in.

Anko, Kurenai and Ibiki watched with interest, they were quickly joined by most of the ANBU members.

“Anko,” Ibiki said, *“Why did you make up the story about the girl?”*

“Pushing his buttons,” Anko replied. *“I wanted to see what he would do to people who threaten the people he loves.”*

“Yeah,” Kurenai agreed. *“Genin’s are normally passionate, but this one is interesting.”*

“Said the woman who kissed him,” someone muttered.

“Shh,” Anko said irritably. *“I want to listen.”* It was testament to her reputation that everyone went dead silent.

“So they’ve sent a kid,” the prisoner spat.

“You will tell me everything,” Naruto said coldly.

The prisoner rolled his eyes.

Naruto absently made the hand seals, and whispered, *“Irritating no Jutsu.”*

“He’s gonna sing to them?” Ibiki asked dryly. *“It’s a nice idea, but it won’t work on a Jounin.”*

“I said quiet,” Anko growled.

Two half size clones appeared, each with a sword in their hands. They moved over to each other, and stabbed each other.

The prisoner sniggered, but then looked confused as the two became four, each quarter sized. Each of the four then stabbed each other again, becoming eight. This continued, through sixteen, thirty two, sixty four. Each time they sped up, splitting faster and faster.

“Stop,” Naruto said. They could no longer see the individual Narutos, they were far too small. “There are now over four million clones, all microscopic.” A faint mist moved from the floor, over the Jounin prisoner’s clothes, and into his mouth and nose.

The Jounin’s eyes were massively panicked, as he yelled and screamed, and tried to blow the mist away.

Naruto didn’t move, just stared. Suddenly, the Jounin’s legs stopped moving.

“My clones have just disabled your legs,” he said absently. “They control your body. They can restore it, they can do anything. So, what they are going to do now is stimulate the pain centres.”

The prisoner suddenly screamed, the sound was piercing.

He stopped.

“The cool thing is,” Naruto continued, “that we’re just stimulating the pain nerves, so there is no actual damage. I can keep this up for years, and as I do, I’ll slowly start to learn some really interesting things, some of my clones are already trying to change your genetic makeup.”

“Please,” The prisoner begged.

“Not yet,” Naruto whispered. “Why don’t you feel like it is when you are totally paralysed?”

The man’s head fell backward.

“You can’t breathe, you can’t blink, you can’t do anything except feel your body die,” Naruto continued. He snapped his fingers, and the man’s head came up, his eyes panicked.

“I control your soul. I control you.”

“I’ll talk,” the man screamed. “I’ll answer anything.”

“You have nothing I want to hear,” Naruto whispered.

“No!” the man screamed hysterically.

Naruto sighed. “Please lie to Ibiki, I want to finish the job. The clones will last until I dispel them.” He turned and walked out.

Ibiki placed a hand on his shoulder, then walked in to the room.

Naruto sat down, and then put his head in his hands.

Kurenai walked over and knelt next to him.

“This is what being a ninja is like, right?”

They all nodded.

“Torturing, killing, lying, deceiving, this is the stuff they don’t make clear in the Academy.”

“You did what you had to,” Anko said, as she dropped down as well.

“Listen to her,” Yugao said, as she dropped down as well.

“Just think about Hanabi-chan, used and abused, discarded,” Anko said.

“Does the end justify the means?” Naruto asked.

“We are Ninja,” Anko said. “We do not always do what is right, we do what is necessary.”

Naruto nodded slowly. “Thanks Anko-chan, Kurenai-chan,” he paused and grinned, “and thanks, Babe-chan.”

“Idiot,” Yugao said fondly. “Come on, let’s get the tour out of the way before we eat, then we’ll teach you some cool things.”

“On one condition,” Hayate added. “You show us the torpedo Jutsu.”

“Deal! Oh, how do you identify missing ninjas when you are out of the village?”

Anko moved over to a bookcase and pulled out a book. “The bingo-book,” she said as she chucked it at him. He glanced through it and grinned.

Naruto sat at the top of the Hokage monument and watched the sun slowly set.

Life was good.

No one had tried to kill him; no one had even hit him for being an idiot. And the only slight downside was the behavioural training from foxy-chan. Every time he said something stupid, she added an hour to the time until she would next teach him a new Jutsu.

It was cruel. It was inhumane. It was irritatingly effective.

He was on a mission now to try every different food possible. He still loved ramen, but perhaps

not to obsession – not when there were so many other foods out there that were just as nice.

As the sun set, he made the hand signals and went back to the Hyūga compound.

“Naruto-kun,” Hiashi greeted him. “I have some bad news for you.”

“They’ve declared ramen a narcotic?” he gasped.

Hiashi smirked briefly. “No. Sadly, the council has agreed that the Uchiha is sane, and as such, has been released.”

“What!”

“That was my reaction as well. A nurse named Kabuto approved it before I could do anything. You are going on a mission tomorrow, a C-class mission, so that the Uchiha can prove his worth.”

Naruto sighed and nodded formally. “Thank you for letting me know, Hiashi-sama.”

Hiashi smirked again. “A good response. You may now give your honest response.”

“This sucks!” Naruto said. “Thanks, I was having trouble holding that in. My lessons with you, Iruka, Anko-chan, Kurenai-chan and the ANBU are great. I have Foxy-chan teaching me stuff all night, and now I have to stop that to escort Sakura and Sasuke through a training mission!” He took a deep breath. “Maybe there will be people in the bingo-book,” he mused.

“It is indeed possible.”

Naruto bowed formally. “I will rest, and be ready for tomorrow.”

“Before that, there is a get together tonight, to,” Hiashi paused and looked at a scroll in front of him, “facilitate the re-integration of Uchiha Sasuke in to the Genin teams,” he quoted. “You, as well as the rest of the Genin teams of your year, along with Gai’s, will be there, it has started already, at your second favourite restaurant.”

“Yay,” Naruto said dryly. “Are the council at least paying?”

“Yes.”

Naruto grinned. “Right, we’re going to see how much Foxy-chan can help me eat.”

“I will expect to hear the screams of horror from the council when they get the bill.”

“Thank you,” Naruto said, bowing formally.

“Get going, Naruto-kun.”

Naruto made the hand seals and vanished. He arrived, to find he was expected, as he was quickly

guided to the table. Teams eight and ten were already there, along with Team Gai, and the Senseis. Sasuke and Sakura were sat near the end, with Sasuke next to Ino as well as Sakura. Kakashi was reading his bright orange book.

“So,” Naruto said cheerfully. “Who died?”

Everyone looked at him.

“Tough crowd,” Naruto muttered. “Oi, waiter!”

“Naruto-sama?” the waiter asked.

“You do know the council is paying for this?”

The waiter nodded.

“Good, right, my hungry looking friend here,” he pointed to Kiba, “would like steak, lots of it. Bring it on two plates. The cutie of a Hyūga would like a platter of sushi, heavy on the tuna, followed by a cinnamon roll.

“Shino over there would like a salad, plenty of tomatoes, and a side dish of honey. The one asleep would prefer some soup of the day, so that he doesn’t have to chew. The gorgeous gal with the enchanting red eyes would prefer the chicken, with mushroom and cream sauce. Gai and Mini Gai will prove their youthfulness with a test of courage – the hottest curry you have, with extra seasoning. The cute lovebirds of a Hyūga and the knife wielding Kunoichi will have a combo platter.

“The dude who looks like he needs a smoke has no taste buds left, so give him plate of chilli, and he’ll do fine. I’d hate to guess what the other four want, so you can ask them yourself. Choji and I will start with a steak, then the sushi, then the curry, then the chicken, and finally we’ll finish with the pie. To wash it down, we’ll have four bottles of red, four of white, three bottles of sake, and one bottle of champagne for toasting. Got all that?”

“Yes, Naruto-sama,” the waiter said with a large smirk. “Drinks will be right over.”

Naruto jumped on to the table. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” he called.

Everyone in the restaurant looked at him, as silence filled the room.

“The council has ordered us to enjoy our evening out, at their expense, so to compensate you for the noise you’ll no doubt hear, tonight’s drinks are on the council, please order what you like!”

There was a cheer, as well as many people thanking him by name.

He grinned and bowed to them, before dropping down. He moved over and inserted himself between Hinata and Kurenai. “Hi Hinata-chan, Kurenai-chan,” he greeted the two girls.

“Naruto-kun,” Kurenai said, giggling.

“Come on people,” Naruto said, “talk, the atmosphere in here is deep enough to kill a duck! Look, so Sasuke’s out of the psychiatrists, and obviously hasn’t changed, who cares? Sure, I have to give up training with all of you, but it’s only for a week or two, and with any luck I can use it to try out some of Foxy-chan’s moves!

“So, Choji, how’s the new Jutsu going?”

“I think I love you,” Choji muttered.

“Sorry, not the Uchiha,” Naruto grinned back. “I’m straight.”

“I am not gay!” Sasuke roared.

“Of course you are,” Naruto said with a grin, turning to him. “There is no way a straight man could ignore Pinky and Blondie hanging all over him.”

“Screw you, idiot,” Sasuke muttered.

“Hey,” Naruto exclaimed, “this is a perfect time to try out my new Jutsu, and break this weird atmosphere.” He made some hand signs, “Homo No Jutsu!” he cried.

In the middle of the table, five Narutos appeared. The first was dressed in leather chaps, and had a moustache that matched his long hair. The second had a bare chest that glistened with oil, and was wearing tight jeans. The third was in a tight fitting sailors uniform, complete with a formal shirt. The fourth was in a ninja uniform that was at least two sizes too small for him, and the final was just wearing a swimming costume.

Two of the clones turned to each other and started to dance, before shooting hot looks at Sasuke.

Hinata was the first to go, blown backwards by the force of her sudden nosebleed.

Naruto tweaked the Jutsu a bit, so that he looked to be in his early twenties – well, early twenties if he hadn’t suffered malnutrition growing up.

Kurenai was the next, passing out from blood loss.

Everyone seemed to be looking at Sasuke.

“Oh, Sasuke-chan,” one of the Naruto’s breathed, blowing him a soft kiss. As nothing happened, they Henged into random men, and kept as they were.

Sasuke banged his head on the ceiling, as his nose exploded violently.

“I knew it!” Naruto cheered as he dispelled the clones. “And thank Kami he doesn’t fancy me!”

“Wow,” Kiba said with a smirk. “Just, wow, Naruto. You made a Jutsu to prove Sasuke was gay?”

Naruto nodded. “I figured he was always so uptight because he was stuck in the closet, now he can be happy.”

Ino and Sakura looked completely shocked, as if their entire world had been ripped out.

“Oh oh,” Neji muttered.

“Back of, forehead,” Ino said slowly.

“I saw him first, piggy,” Sakura said back, just as slowly.

“I was nicer to him at school!”

“He always asked me out!”

“Why, so he could play tic-tac-toe on your forehead? You had your chance, you blew it!”

“Naruto-kun likes me more! He will be mine! And at least I don’t eat at a trough!”

“No way, Naruto-kun is mine!”

“Oh, crap,” Naruto muttered.

Kiba smirked, “good luck.”

“Aww crap,” he muttered again. He shrugged and quickly woke up Kurenai so that she could protect his left side, and then Hinata.

“I’m sorry, Hinata-chan,” he said softly, “my clones didn’t mean to accidentally kick you.”

“*Accidentally kick you?*” Kyūbi demanded, her voice full of laughter. “*Brilliant, kid, brilliant.*”

Naruto sent her back a mental smirk. Sasuke was back at the table, his head in his hands.

“So, Gai, Mini-Gai, I take it you liked the show as well.”

“Why would we, my youthful friend?” Gai asked blankly.

“You mean you two aren’t gay?”

“No, of course not!”

“But you wear spandex, spend half your time hugging other men, and have bushy eyebrows – they are all signs...”

“Signs for a lesser man, yes,” Gai agreed. “But for us, no one could mistake our flames of youth for anything but extremely youthful vigour.”

“Gai-Sensei!” Lee cheered.

“Naruto-kun is right,” Sakura cried. “He always is!”

“Save me,” Naruto pleaded to the table.

Two kunais appeared in the table in front of the two girls. “You talk to Naruto this evening, the next ones don’t miss,” Tenten threatened.

Sakura and Ino paled.

“Thanks guys,” Naruto said, as the first drinks arrived.

Sakura was heading toward the main gate, talking to Ino about Naruto. It was easy enough to do, her mental mindscape simply substituted black with blonde, and Sasuke with Naruto, and nothing changed.

Simple.

“Ahh, girls,” a new voice said. In front of them were two real female ninjas. The sort that she, and Ino, kind of, aspired to be. One, Kurenai-sensei was leaning against a post, nibbling on a stick of dango, an amused look on her face.

The other was scary. It wasn’t the outfit, although that was enough to make Sakura want to stab her. How dare she have such big boobs, and to wear such a small amount of clothing? She had long purple hair that neatly framed the dark eyes that were the source of her fear.

They screamed violence and pain. And possibly torture.

Sakura could feel Ino freeze beside her.

“I’m Anko,” she introduced herself. “And my dear friend Kurenai-chan was just telling me that you’ve both decided that you like our little Naruto-kun.”

Sakura growled. How dare this hussy claim any sort of association with Naruto-kun.

Anko’s eyes looked amused, and Sakura tried to hide a wince.

“Naruto-kun,” Anko drawled, “is interesting. Hard working, fun, dedicated, powerful, full of stamina, loyal, kind, and absolutely fucking ruthless to anyone who even hints at hurting someone he likes.”

Sakura nodded.

“As such, Nai-chan and I have ensured that when he grows up a little more, and the Kyūbi is working on that, that he comes to either of us first. Or maybe both, that could be fun.”

“Anko,” Kurenai-sensei chided playfully.

“Why? You’re both, like, way older than him!” Ino blurted, before looking horrified.

Anko sniggered. “Like, way older? What marvellous language skills. Age is irrelevant, we’re all adults here, and finding a powerful ninja with personality flaws that we can handle has been difficult. But you don’t need to know why, all you need to know, is that if you make a move, Pinky, on our little Naru-kun, when you get back, I’m going to,” as she spoke, two snakes slid out of her coat sleeves and reared up, “tie you to the flagpole and charge villages a Ryō to use you as they see fit.” The snakes vanished. “Toodles,” Anko finished cheerfully, as she grabbed Kurenai-sensei and they both swirled away.

Sakura couldn’t move.

Ino was breathing hard next to her.

They didn’t move for several minutes.

Naruto arrived at the main gate with his normal lightning show, bang on time. He was dressed for the mission, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, and some thick boots. He looked like a civilian, apart from the slightly unusual wrist bands. His forehead protector was in his pocket.

“Naruto?” Kakashi asked slowly. “What are you wearing?”

“Did you say something, Kakashi?” Naruto asked innocently.

Kakashi grumbled.

“What the hell are you wearing,” Sasuke demanded.

“Here’s the deal,” Naruto said. “You walk with Kakashi and Sakura, and I’ll walk with the drunk. That way, we can all just get along nicely. Right, drunk?”

The grey haired man sniggered. “I like you, kid.”

“Good, let’s monkey!”

Sasuke went first, Kakashi didn’t seem to want to be near him. Sakura went with Kakashi, shooting long glances at Naruto – that slightly freaked him out.

There were about two hundred yards down the road, when a terrified scream ripped through the air.

Naruto smirked. "Looks like the council has just got last night's bill," he cheered.

Kakashi shot him another long look, but didn't say anything.

If one thing had been proven last night, it was that older women were amazing kissers.

Naruto soon found that Tazuna, the bridge builder, was quite a lot of fun, and they had a good time, chatting about anything and everything as they passed the time.

Their fun lasted several hours, despite the glares and looks from the other three, before, almost from nowhere, two ninja's jumped out of a puddle. A large chain shot out at Kakashi, the two ninja's heaved, and Kakashi seemed to split into two, with a burst of dramatic looking blood.

"Kakashi-sensei," Sakura yelled.

"Hmm," One of the ninjas grinned. "A man down, eh? We'll just take care of you two first." The moved together and launched a Jutsu Naruto had never seen before. Sasuke had already started to move, his speed impressive, as he threw several Shuriken at them.

The two ignored the weapons as they released the Jutsu, throwing both Sasuke and Sakura into a tree.

The two smirked. Next to him, Tazuna was breathing heavily, looking around fearfully.

"Sorry, kid," one of the two said. "But as we're killing the old man, you have to die as well."

Naruto smiled. "It's okay, the third ninja we hired, who is behind you, will stop you."

The two ninjas turned, their hands going to their weapons.

Naruto jumped forward, a sword flashing out of his left wrist band, beheading the first in a single sweep, before changing the swing, and placing the blade deep inside the second ninja's stomach.

"Flawless, kid, flawless," Kyūbi praised in a proud voice. *"I'm going to show you a new move for that one."*

"Yay!" Naruto cheered. He pulled out a couple of scrolls and dumped the first head in to the scroll. It wasn't worth much, but would double his pay for this mission! He'd be eating well for a month.

"I'm impressed," Kakashi said slowly, as he appeared next to them.

Naruto looked at the second Ninja. "Torture No Jutsu," he whispered. Streams of minute clones flew out of his mouth, and in to the now-panicking Ninja's mouth. After a few demonstrations, the remaining 'Demon Brother' was happy to spill his guts about everything that was up ahead, including the name of a fellow ninja - Momochi Zabuza.

When he had finished, Naruto dispelled his clones, and then cut the ninja's head off – to the happy sighs of Foxy-chan.

“Kakashi!” Sakura shouted as she got to her feet unsteadily, before she saw Sasuke, and called his name as well. Sasuke woke with a groan, and walked over. They both looked at the beheaded corpses, a green tinge to their faces.

“It was so cool,” Naruto said happily, “Kakashi appeared from nowhere and beheaded them with a single move!” He tried to ignore the disbelieving look from Tazuna.

“Idiot,” Sasuke muttered, nodding to himself.

Sakura looked doubtful.

“So,” Kakashi growled, for the benefit of the two that had just woken up. “Want to explain why the Demon Brothers were after you?”

“Please,” Naruto sighed. “Haven't you been paying attention at all? His country is broke, it can't afford full ninja's, and this Gatō guy's raping everything in sight. So, let's get going, we can't back out on our first mission, right, Sakura, Sasuke?”

“Right, Naruto-kun,” Sakura agreed obediently.

Naruto hid a shudder as they started to move again. Naruto again playing the civilian, until they had taken a boat in to Wave country, and Kakashi shouted “Get down!”

Naruto tripped, dragging Tazuna down with him. A huge sword flew over their heads, landing in a tree, where a man with no eyebrows crouched on it.

Zabuza really was here, and he was worth a fortune!

“Protect us,” Naruto cried, grovelling on the floor, and absently wondering how much it was going to cost to get the stains out of his jeans.

“Sasuke, Sakura, protect the clients,” Kakashi snapped, as he undid part of his mask.

“Ahh,” Zabuza sneered. “The infamous copy-cat ninja. Master of a thousand stolen Jutsus. I'm honoured that you bring out the Sharingan already.”

“What are you playing at, coward,” Sasuke whispered to Naruto.

“Look underneath the underneath,” Naruto whispered back. “Just do as you're told.”

A thick mist followed a shout by Zabuza, that seemed to freeze him in place. Sasuke and Sakura didn't seem to be faring any better. A small burst of warmth from Foxy-chan freed him, and he braced himself, so that he could react if needed.

Zabuza headed toward them intently, only to suddenly fall apart as Kakashi rammed a sword through him. It was a water clone.

Naruto breathed a sigh of relief, as the freezing effect vanished, allowing his team mates to move again. As the two ninja's fought, the fog slowly started to disperse.

Naruto thought desperately, trying to come up with a decent plan, but nothing seemed to come to mind. Sure, he could use any number of Kyūbi's techniques, but they needed him to be close, and he wasn't anywhere skilled enough to get close enough, and have the time to do any of the moves.

What he needed was a distraction. A distraction that would stop both men long enough for him to act. He didn't even know what would distract Kakashi.

Wait, yes he did. Kakashi was a pervert, so it was obvious. He'd just have to take it up a notch.

He carefully made the signs for his clones, and smiled as two were created in the distance.

"Can you walk on water?"

"What?"

"Water, can you walk on it?"

"No..."

"Then exactly how are you going to get close to him?"

Naruto paused. He hadn't thought about this. The two ninjas were fighting on water, and if he teleported into place, he'd instantly sink.

"I'll help this once," Kyūbi said with a sigh. *"Use your torpedo, and I'll throw some Chakra at it so that it is faster."*

"Thanks, foxy-chan," Naruto said, as he made a hand signal to his two clones. Both of them used his Sexy No Jutsu, his new and improved version, this time complete with visible breasts, and skimpy knickers. The two walked over, as Naruto moved one leg underneath himself, preparing.

"Kid, do it now!"

"Gotcha!"

"Zabuza-kun," One of the two clones called, before the transformed Naruto turned and started to kiss her twin.

Zabuza and Kakashi both stared in disbelief, as the two clones made out in front of them.

Naruto charged forward, moving as fast as he could. He made the hand signs, before his sword

arrived in his hand. He skimmed across to Zabuza with such speed that he couldn't keep up. It was only when stabbed his sword through Zabuza, who staggered backward, landing close to a tree, that he realised it had worked.

The clones dispersed, leaving Naruto with the weird feeling of having been involved in a lesbian kiss with himself. It was something he'd have to examine later.

Kakashi looked on in shock.

Two senbons flew through the air, hitting the fallen ninja in the neck, as a Hunter nin appeared. "Thank you for your help," the hunter called.

"Finish him!" Kyūbi roared in his mind.

Naruto jumped forward, his sword swinging out as he decapitated Zabuza. "Sorry," Naruto said cheerfully. "But he's my kill, and I need the cash."

"Zabuza-san!" the Hunter cried, tearing his mask off, revealing long black hair and an exceptionally pretty face. He – Naruto thought it was a he, but wasn't completely sure – seemed devastated. "I failed you. I have no reason..."

Naruto sighed and his stomach reminded him he was hungry. He moved closer and whacked the boy on the back of the neck, moving him into unconsciousness. The hunter fell to the ground, and Naruto bent over him, and surreptitiously felt between the hunter's legs. With a sigh of what might have been regret, he found that it was indeed a male.

He picked him up and threw the male to Sasuke. "Carry," he ordered.

"Why?" Sasuke asked.

"Just do it," Naruto said with a long suffering sigh. "I'm tired. And that face isn't in the bingo-book."

Sasuke growled, but picked up the unconscious boy.

"Naruto-kun," Sakura said slowly. "You just killed an A-rank missing nin!"

Naruto nodded. "I'm going to eat well for a year with this bounty," he said cheerfully.

"Great work, kid. But I think we're going to have to train you harder so you can have the fun of a full fight as well!"

"Okay."

That evening, they sat around a fire, a couple of rabbits roasting over the flame. The Hunter-nin was still unconscious.

“Naruto-kun,” Sakura said. “What has happened to you?”

“I’ve found my nindo,” he explained slowly. “I fight to protect the people I love, the people who have been there for me, who have helped me. I have no inheritance to rely on, and while I own land, the buildings were destroyed by Foxy-chan, so I have to look after myself. Zabuza was worth a fortune, so I’ll be able to eat well for years.”

“But you killed him!” Sakura said.

“How else would I get his head?” Naruto asked.

“Don’t you feel bad?” she asked.

“Oh, that’s what you mean,” Naruto said. He scratched the back of his head. “I’ve spent a lot of time recently with Anko-chan and Ibiki-san, not to mention some of the other ANBU members. They’ve helped me gain some perspective on the whole death thing. Ibiki-san gave me these,” he added, holding up his hands and showing his wrists.

“We are Ninja, we kill. Sometimes we do it for good reasons, sometime we are little more than tools, doing a job that allows us the freedom we enjoy. The first time I nearly killed someone, I was upset, but my friends helped me.

“And now? Now I have foxy-chan inside me, and she likes killing more than anyone else, and she’s been purring happily because of the three I killed today.”

“Wait, three?” Sasuke demanded.

“Oh, yeah, I lied earlier,” Naruto said with a shrug. “Anyway, it’s late. Get some sleep, I’ll take the first watch.”

Naruto awoke first, and let Sakura get an extra hour of sleep as he watched the dawn in silence. Before anyone else was awake, the Hunter nin woke up.

“Hi,” Naruto said, as he dropped next to the boy.

“Please kill me,” the boy replied, his voice empty. “Or let me out of here, so I can kill myself.”

“I’m guessing you’re not a Hunter nin, then?” Naruto asked.

He shook his head. “I was Zabuza’s tool. I failed him. I have no purpose.”

“Okay,” Naruto said slowly. “What’s your name?”

“Haku.”

“So, do you think that Zabuza would want you to give up and die?”

Haku shrugged. “This way, I can try and redeem myself in the next life, with him.”

“What did he do to deserve your loyalty?”

“Why?” Haku asked.

“If I’m convinced, I’ll do it,” Naruto lied. He listened to Haku’s life story, about how he had discovered his blood line, and watched as his father had killed his mother, before he had killed the man himself.

Haku’s description of living on the streets as a penniless, hated, orphan reminded Naruto of his own life, and he decided that he would help the boy out.

Haku explained how Zabuza had saved him, taught him, and given him a purpose, and as he had failed that, he had no purpose left. He looked at Naruto, and finished with, “I wanted to protect the person important to me... I wanted to work for that person, I wanted to fight for that person... I wanted to make that person's dream come true... That was my dream... And now my dream is over, because I failed.”

Naruto looked at him for a long moment, before punching him as hard as he could in the face.

Haku looked back with wide eyes, before spitting out some blood.

“You coward,” Naruto spat. “Something bad happened, so I’m giving up! Let me die so I can run and hide,” he whined mockingly. “Who cares that death is the easy way out, and that you will never find anyone else precious to you!

“God, you people are so alike! Take the sleeping git over there – his entire clan was killed by his brother, who then put him under a bloodline curse for what seemed like two days. Does he dedicate his life to something worthwhile? Hell no, he dedicates it to something as self-defeating as revenge!

“My childhood was probably worse than yours, and his, and you know what I do? I fight for the people who I love, and you know what? If they all died, I wouldn’t give up, I’d keep going, because that is my way! I never back down from what I think is right.

“Now, you, my androgynous friend, are not going to dishonour your precious person’s memory by killing yourself, you are going to live, you are going to find someone new to care about, and you are going to have a long and happy life. Understood?”

Haku looked at him, his mouth open.

“And until you find that person, you will guard Sasuke and Sakura with your life, understood?”

“I do,” Haku agreed slowly.

Naruto reached down and untied the boy, and then gave him his weapons back.

“Aren’t you afraid that I will attack you?” Haku asked.

“Why would you do that?” Naruto asked.

Haku shrugged. “Revenge? You did kill Zabuza.”

“Shit happens,” Naruto agreed. “If he hadn’t attacked, I wouldn’t have gone out my way to look for him.”

The poverty of the rest of Wave country was shocking. Kids in rags ran through areas that made the seediest slum in Konoha look like the Uchiha compound.

Naruto sighed to himself, and then swore that he would do whatever he needed to so that he could help these people. He happily spent the evenings with Tazuna’s family, his daughter, Tsunami, and his grandson, Inari.

Tsunami immediately attracted his attention by being both older and gorgeous, so it was fun for him to flirt with her. He tried very hard to ignore the looks Sakura was giving him. He did find it ironic that a few months ago, he would have killed for her to pay him that sort of attention.

Of course, that was before he found out about real women.

As for Wave itself, the first thing was obvious. The bridge needed workers, and he was a one man workforce, so while Kakashi trained the original him, he sent hundreds of clones to help build the bridge.

He was learning a great deal about how to build large structures, and started to get interested in the theory behind it, which led to some tutorials on the basics of architecture.

Sadly, it was a subject that would take a lot more time than he had available to master.

His lesson with Kakashi, Sasuke and Sakura were more useful, as after a day of trying, he mastered tree climbing, then water walking. Haku was more of a useful teacher, as he actually explained what was needed.

Haku was friends with Sakura, and Naruto had the distinct impression that was because Sakura thought Haku was female.

On the fifth morning, it was his turn to spend the day guarding Tazuna with Sasuke. Sasuke was sitting on the far side of the bridge, watching the jeans-wearing horde. At the end of the shift, he sidled up to Tazuna. “You know,” he said to no one in particular. “It’s a shame that someone doesn’t hire me to get rid of Gatō. Maybe for a share of the profits.”

Tazuna froze. He coughed. “Naruto-kun?”

“Yes, Tazuna?”

“How would you like some work on the side?”

“Oh?”

“If you take out Gatō, you can keep half of what you find, the other half belongs to us, as that’s where a lot of his money comes from.”

“A fifth,” Naruto bartered.

“That’s not how it’s supposed to work,” Tazuna pointed out. “You are supposed to ask for more, and we come to an agreement.”

“Oh,” Naruto said slowly. “In that case, a sixth.”

“You know what, I think I’ll just shut up,” Tazuna sighed. “Yo, Jimbo!”

A tall and thin man wandered over to them. “What’cha want?”

“When’s Gatō due back?”

“He arrived a few days ago. He’s on his flagship.”

“Which one is it?” Naruto asked.

“The biggest one in the harbour, the big harbour a few miles down the coast.” He pointed to the right.

With a clap, all the clones vanished, leaving Naruto with a brain-meltingly useless burst of knowledge. “Going for a walk,” he yelled cheerfully to Sasuke. “Catch ya later. Tell Kakashi I’ll be back soon.”

The two builders watched him walk away, whistling a jaunty tune.

“You know,” Jimbo said softly. “That is possibly the most dangerous person I’ll ever meet.”

“Because he looks the most innocent?”

“Aye. A thousand workers, all independent, boundless energy, and so many clever questions. It’s weird how they always vanish after they get an answer, but another soon replaces them. Anyway, if I hadn’t seen the clones, I would have sworn that he was a civilian.”

“That’s the way he wants it.”

“Aye, I’ll get back to work now.”

“*What’s the plan, kid?*” Kyūbi asked.

Naruto looked down at the docks, and at the huge ship that dominated the dock. *“I was thinking of waiting until it was dark, running over the water, climbing the side of the ship, killing everyone, taking any gold, then sailing the ship back to the bridge, and hiring it out to someone, so that I get to have my own pirate ship whenever I need to take a break.”*

“Have I ever told you that I love you?”

Naruto snickered and settled down for a nap.

When he awoke, it was after midnight, and a cloudy sky meant that the moon wasn't visible. He moved cautiously down to the beach, and then pumped chakra into his legs as he sprinted across the water. He knew if he slowed down, he'd get very wet.

It was pretty easy to climb up the anchor. He paused before the deck, seeing how many people were out and about. There appeared to be three guards, and that was it. The arrogance was mind-blowing, but then, who in their right minds would attack Gatō?

“No one,” Kyūbi suggested.

“Hn ,” Naruto agreed, as he slid behind the first guard and covered his mouth, while stabbing him in back. *“Shhh,”* Naruto whispered, as the man whimpered before obediently dying.

Naruto eased him to the ground, and then padded silently to the next guard and repeating the process. The third guard had his throat slit, before he knew what was going on.

“How many do we have left?”

“There are ten asleep, below the main deck, and one who seems quite skilled next to the biggest room up front.”

“That'll be Gatō's main guard then,” Naruto mused. *“How about we send a few hundred clones to kill the ones asleep, and we take on the skilled on?”*

“Deal,” Kyūbi agreed.

Naruto made the hand seals, and ordered his army to have fun. *“Remember, no fire Jutsus, I want this ship!”*

“Aye aye, captain,” the clones whispered, and took off.

Naruto created a few more clones. *“Make sure no one leaves the ship,”* He ordered them.

They saluted, and hinged into barrels.

Naruto walked to the door that had the skilled ninja in it, and opened. *“Hi, I'm here to kill you,”* he announced.

The ninja was already on his feet, a sword in his hands.

“What?” he asked.

“I’m Naruto,” Naruto introduced himself. “Not in the bingo-books yet, but I am the container of the Kyūbi No Kitsune, the all powerful nine tailed demon. I’ve been hired to deal with Gatō, and I have the crew being killed at the moment, the guards are dead, and that just leaves you.”

“Right,” the ninja said slowly.

“Can I have your name please?” Naruto asked. “I need to see how much you are worth.”

“It’s your unlucky day, kid,” the Ninja said, “the name is Fujū, tell it to the death god when you meet him.”

“I had kinda hoped that my introduction would scare you off,” Naruto admitted. “Oh well.” He made a couple of hand signals, and teleported behind the Ninja, thrusting his sword out.

The ninja barely moved in time, diving forward. “What the hell!”

“Bloodline,” Naruto explained. “Here’s another one,” he said, as he cut his own wrist, then showed it as it healed up. “Look, we don’t have to do this. You’re an earth specialist, and we’re in the middle of an ocean. You’re not worth that much money to me, so walk away, and we can meet up later.”

“Don’t pity me, brat,” Fujū spat. “I’ll crush you! You can’t stand up to me, and your mind games won’t work!”

Naruto shrugged, and made the seal for his torpedo Jutsu, flying along, parallel to the wooden floor, and throwing Fujū backward. He followed it up immediately, as the shocked Ninja tried to block. As he bounced off, he threw a spin kick, that was easily blocked, but Fujū failed to block the follow up stab to the leg.

Fujū growled, and attacked, his Taijutsu was far better than Naruto’s, so he concentrated on blocking and dodging, Naruto suddenly launched his Torpedo again, before instantly teleporting behind him once more, this time managing to punch Fujū in the back of the neck.

He didn’t pause, his hands flashed through a series of signs. Dragon, dog, dog, dog, he focused his Chakra into his hand, and punched forward as hard as he could.

The chakra flew from his fist, just as Foxy-chan had taught him, catching the ninja in the back of his head. There was a pause, before Fujū’s head exploded.

“*Flawless Victory*,” Kyūbi crowed. “*Fatality!*”

“*Ewww*,” Naruto responded. “*We need a cleaner move than that! And I can’t keep his head in a seal if it’s gone!*”

“True,” Kyūbi agreed, as she started to purr happily.

Naruto sighed and sealed the rest of the body, before he walked out the door, to find his clones standing around in a circle. In the middle, was a short brown haired man wearing dark glasses, and pyjamas.

“This is Gatō, captain,” one of the clones said. “He wanted to talk to you.”

Naruto nodded.

“He’s willing to strike a deal. He’ll sign over his businesses to you, in exchange for you not killing him.”

“Deal,” Naruto said cheerfully. “Let’s go sign some papers.”

Gatō look relieved, and quickly entered the luxurious cabin. The clones all followed, each holding a sword, each glaring at the man, reminding him not to try anything.

A few minutes later, Kyūbi informed him that all the information they needed was there. “Let him loose, boys,” Naruto ordered.

Gatō ran out the door without a second look.

“Query,” Naruto said to his clones. “Do you guys qualify as me?”

“Nope,” One of them said. “We’re like your creations, like grown children. We know how you think, but we’re not you, exactly, the moment we were created we were different.”

“Good,” Naruto said, as a scream filled the air. “Then I won’t feel guilty about him being killed by one of us out there.”

All the clones shared his grin.

“Captain,” one said, as he entered the room. “Gatō seems to have been transferring his funds, as there is a shit load of money down in the cargo area.”

Naruto looked at the papers in front of him. “Gatō was going to meet several hundred thugs at the dock tomorrow. Wonder what they’ll do when they’re met with an army of us that out numbers them five to one. Right, it’s time to put that book on how to sail a ship to work.”

“Aye aye, captain,” the clones shouted.

Tazuna couldn’t concentrate on the bridge. Naruto hadn’t been seen since he had gone for a walk the day before, and Kakashi was looking very suspiciously at him.

The pink haired Genin, along with the other two were helping a little, more through boredom than

any real desire to help.

In the distance, a large ship appeared. Tazuna covered his eyes and stared.

The ship slowly sailed closer, and Tazuna could just make out a sea of blonde hair. He grinned. “Jimbo, go fetch everyone, quick!”

“Aye, boss,” he agreed, taking off without hesitation.

“Exactly what is Naruto doing on that boat!?” Kakashi demanded.

“It’s a ship. And sailing it?” Tazuna offered.

Kakashi growled.

“I might have hired him to deal with our little problem,” Tazuna muttered.

Kakashi sighed again, as the ship drew closer, before it span to the right, and dropped anchor. The now-clearly-visible blonde crew saluted, and dispersed in small groups, leaving one Naruto to jump over the side and walk to the shore.

Tazuna moved as fast as his old body could carry him to the far side of the bridge, to welcome the boy.

He was met by most of the townspeople. “Look,” Naruto called. “I have a hat!”

He was wearing a broad rimmed black hat, with each side curled up. “How do I look?”

Tazuna laughed softly. “Like a captain, kid” he said. “Like a captain.”

“So,” Naruto said, looking at the crowd slightly embarrassedly. “Gatō suffered an attack of morality, and well, he wanted to make up for everything he had done to you, so he’s signed off all his business to you guys, and made a donation of all his money.”

Complete silence met his announcement.

“He wanted to ensure that this wonderful country lives up to its potential.”

“And Gatō himself?” Tazuna asked.

“Came down with a slight case of death,” Naruto admitted. “But he decided to help the local shark economy with his death, so it’s all good.” He handed a scroll to Tazuna. “Open this somewhere secure and enjoy. Oh, Gatō’s thugs all decided to retire as well. In unrelated news, the dock will need a bit of cleaning up.”

Tazuna’s daughter was the first to react; Tsunami burst from the crowd, and pounced on him, kissing him firmly.

Naruto struggled to keep his balance, as he kissed her back.

“Thank you, Naruto-kun,” she said softly.

He grinned at her, and pulled a pearl necklace out of his pocket. With a practised movement, he put it around her neck, and closed the clasp. He gently kissed her lips. “Don’t forget me, Tsunami-chan,” he whispered.

Naruto looked at Tazuna. “I’ve got your mission fee, so we’re out of here. Inari, stay cool!”

“Do you have to go?” Inari asked. “I don’t even mind you kissing mum!”

Naruto dropped to his knees in front of the kid. “Sadly, I do,” he said gently. “But I’ll be back, I never forget my friends, that’s my nindo.”

Inari nodded and hugged Naruto.

“Tazuna, see if you can rent out my boat, I’ll let you know when I need it.”

“Will do, thanks, Naruto, for everything.”

Naruto winked at him. “Catch you on the flip side.” The boy walked over to his team. “I’ve got a hankering for some Ramen, let’s fly!” He took off at top speed, the other ninja’s following him.

“So,” Tazuna said. “The Great Naruto Bridge?”

“Tazuna,” one of the village elders asked. “What was that!?”

“I kinda hired the kid, Uzumaki Naruto, to kill Gatō, I offered him half of everything that Gatō had, but he only wanted a sixth, the rest is in here.”

“Let it be known throughout the land, that today and every year on this date, there will be a national holiday, in honour of the hero of the Wave, Uzumaki Naruto!”

The cheer of the crowd could probably be heard in Konoha.

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 3

Naruto forced the pace on the way home, not wanting to answer any questions several times. So it was a tired group that finally arrived at the gates, and headed for the Hokage tower.

The fact that they had a fourth member attracted some attention, and Anko, Kurenai, Hayate, Yugao and Iruka joined them in the Third's office.

The Sandaime sighed and poured out some sake. Kakashi was the first to move, draining his and asking for another.

Anko smirked. "Come on, brat, tell the story."

"Do you like my hat?"

"It suits you pretty well, but I think there's a better one out there for you," Kurenai replied.

Naruto sighed and took it off. He sealed it for future use. "It's a sweet hat, so I'll save it for when I'm at sea." He took a deep breath. "Well, it started nice and simple. Tazuna-san and I had a nice chat, before the demon brothers hid in the stupidest place imaginable – a puddle on a dry day. They pounced out, and Kakashi pretended to be dead. They incapacitated Sakura and Sasuke, so I tricked them and killed the first, before using my torture Jutsu on the second, then killed him as well."

Naruto pulled out a scroll, and dropped two heads on the table.

"Why is no one surprised that he has a torture Jutsu?" Kakashi demanded.

"You didn't know?" Kurenai asked. "Don't you pay attention to your students?"

Kakashi glared at her.

"Get on with the story," Anko encouraged.

"As we were forewarned we continued."

"Wait," Iruka interrupted. "There was nothing in the mission specs about ninjas."

Naruto shrugged. "We couldn't turn back, Wave needed us, and besides, if the fit had hit the shan, I've got the ultimate back up purring in my stomach. So, we continued. A few days later, Kakashi spotted Momochi Zabuza's sword flying toward us. We all hit the deck, while Kakashi fought him."

Iruka groaned under his breath. "The procedure when an A-class missing ninja is on the case is to call for back-up, not engage."

Naruto shot him a foxy grin. “Anyway, as they were fighting, I distracted them, and Foxy-chan took care of my transportation, while I stabbed him with my sword. Haku tried to save him, but I wasn’t letting my lunch money get away, so I cut his head off.” He placed a scroll down on the Hokage’s desk.

The Hokage sighed deeply. “Do I want to know?”

“Actually,” Naruto said. “It did feel weird. Anko-chan, do you mind if I kiss you?”

Anko shrugged. “Go ahead.”

“Sexy No Jutsu,” Naruto muttered, changing into his female form – careful to keep his clothes on this time. He didn’t want to be hit. He walked over to Anko and kissed her slowly.

Kissing as a girl was very different. It was softer, gentler, but carried the same passion. The way his chest pushed against Anko’s was exciting, as was the way he could feel her heart beat faster.

He slowly broke the kiss.

Anko slowly stroked his cheek. “This isn’t a henge,” she muttered, as her hand slipped down and groped his bum. “You are really female.”

He nodded, “Of course, what good would it be otherwise?” He turned around, to see all the men, with the exception of Haku and Sasuke unconscious.

“Perverts,” he muttered with a roll of his eyes. He cancelled his Jutsu and sat back down. “Kissing as a girl is different to kissing as a boy,” he explained to those who were conscious. “It felt weird when the clones I used to distract Zabuza dispersed, and I felt like I’d been kissing myself.”

Kurenai pulled out a jug of water and unceremoniously woke the men.

“That’s an S-class forbidden Jutsu, Naruto,” the Sandaime pointed out.

Naruto shrugged. “I refuse to stop using a valuable tool just because you’re a pervert.”

“And,” Yugao added, “if Naruto is willing to let us study him, it has many advantages, it’s not actually a henge!”

“And she’s a great kisser,” Anko added cheerfully. “Almost as good as Kurenai!”

It was only by begging foxy-chan for help, that Naruto was able to avoid passing out due to blood loss.

“Still got it,” Anko said happily.

Kurenai sighed, looking amused. “And how would you know that, Anko-chan? You can wake

them up this time.”

Anko smirked and sent some snakes to get the boys’ attention.

Order was restored shortly afterward.

“Anyway, we picked up Haku then, she was in a tight spot, basically, Zabuza had saved her, and she was dedicated to him. We had a talk, and I hired her as a body guard for Sakura and Sasuke, and we arrived at Wave.

“The place was a dump, no child should ever have to live like I did, as we knew that Gatō was behind all of this, I had a chat with Tazuna, who agreed that I could take my fee for dealing with the problem out of the money I could get from Gatō.

“That night, I jogged out to Gatō’s ship, climbed on board, killed the guards, sent some clones to kill the crew, killed some guy named Fuja.” Naruto paused, and moved to one side, releasing the seal that held the body. “I kinda used a new Jutsu on him, and it fried his head, so I wasn’t sure what to do?”

More sake was taken by the Hokage. “Just finish the story,” he said.

“Okay. When I’d finished with Fuja, my clones had persuaded Gatō to make up for his actions, and Gatō signed everything over to me, before I let him go. One of my clones then killed him. I took his ship, sailed it to the port, allowed my clones to wipe out the bandits waiting for him, before we sailed it back to the bridge and I gave five sixths of the money to Tazuna to make Wave as good as it should be, so that the kids will have a great future.”

He pulled out another scroll. “That’s the Village’s cut,” he said. “Ten percent.”

The Hokage moved it to one side.

“Then we left and came back here. Haku’s going to stay with Sasuke for a while, you should see about hiring her as a Leaf ninja, she’s got a cool bloodline.”

“Thank you, Naruto, your money for the nins will be available in a week, after the villages offering the bounties pay us.”

“Yeah, about that,” Naruto said, scratching the back of his head. “Can you give Zabuza’s bounty to Haku? I only killed him because I needed to get a better flat and eat better, but with Gatō’s death, that’s not really needed, and she deserves it more.”

“I will,” The Hokage said. “Kakashi, please stay behind. Good work, team seven. Dismissed.”

“Sakura, we’ll see you later,” Naruto said, as she grabbed Haku and Sasuke’s shoulders, teleporting them to the Uchiha clan estate.

“Okay,” Naruto said, before they could say anything. “Sasuke, Haku’s a guy. Haku, Sasuke’s

gay. That's all the secrets out the way. Catch you guy later."

"It's all so easy for you, isn't it?" Sasuke sneered.

"What?" Naruto asked in bewilderment.

"Did you ever think about what it's like to be me?"

Naruto nodded. "Yes, I thought your lubrication bill must be horrendous to get that stick up your arse every morning."

Sasuke glared at him again.

"You are nowhere near as cute as Hanabi-chan."

"Look," Sasuke said, "ever since my family died, all I've had is people tell me how heroic I am, and that I am the greatest."

"Which you suck up with a straw..."

"Naruto! Look, it's not been easy for me either, right? I've had two goals, killing that man, and restarting my Clan, only girls don't do it for me. They scare me shitless, especially Sakura and Ino, and so I've had to concentrate on getting better to kill my brother – that's been my only dream."

"And it was going okay. Danzo was on my side, as were the two advisers to the Hokage. It was them that told me to ask for your demon, and they're the most powerful people in the village."

Sasuke glared at him harder, "and then you fucking ruin it, showing everyone I'm gay! You're a bastard, Naruto."

"*Kyūbi*," Naruto said slowly, "*Did I remember my angst proof underwear today?*"

"Yes."

"*Excellent.*"

Sasuke suddenly sighed before he collapsed down. "It doesn't matter," he whispered. "The council won't let me have a relationship with a guy! They want children!"

"Do I have to think of everything?" Naruto asked the ceiling. "You can adopt a baby, and when we kill Itachi, we'll take his eyes, and implant them in the baby – problem solved."

"You're going to help me kill him?" Sasuke asked in shock.

"As long as you stop being a dick," Naruto said.

For the first time in more years than Naruto could remember, Sasuke smiled. A tiny genuine smile. “Dead-last,” he muttered.

“Bastard,” Naruto replied traditionally. “Hey, Haku, I said you were female back there, because your clothing is fruitier than Gai’s eyebrows. You want to be known as male or female?”

“Female,” Haku said, a faint blush on his face. “I prefer kimono’s anyway.”

“I’ll teach you my Sexy No Jutsu, in case you ever need to prove it.”

“Thank you.”

Naruto yawned. “Right, I need sleep. I’ll spread the word that you swing both ways, Sasuke, and that you’re staying with Haku – the idiots on the council will come to the wrong conclusion, and everyone can be happy. See you tomorrow.”

Anko sniggered as the pink haired girl sighed and walked out of the Hokage’s office. “A Genin takes out Zabuza, Gatō, Fuja, the Demon Brothers, saves a nation, and recruits a new ninja. We’ve taught him well.”

“That we have,” Hayate agreed proudly.

“He’s my student,” Kakashi pointed out.

“Bollocks,” Anko replied. “We’ve taught him far more than you. I can’t wait to tell Hiashi all this.”

“I’ve taught him,” Kakashi protested.

“Taught him what?” Kurenai demanded. “Over the past few months, I’ve spent all my spare time teaching the poor guy how to read properly. Anko’s been teaching him history, and explaining why it’s important. Iruka’s been working on the basics of Chakra control, Hayate and Yugao have been fixing his basic weapon skills, while Hiashi has been fixing his basic fighting skills.

“He left school with nothing, and he’s repaid us by working his arse off every free moment he has, and he’s been so grateful for everything. In return, he’s shared everything he’s come up, and a lot that the Kyūbi has, it’s a huge resource having an ancient demon willing to help Naruto-kun out.

“So what did you teach him?”

“Erm, tree climbing and water walking,” Kakashi replied.

“And for the other four days? He would have mastered that in a day! Now that Iruka taught him how to actually feel Chakra – before he was just throwing a huge amount at any problem and blasting through it.”

“Well... The bridge needed building, and he was helping with that, well, his army of clones were.”

“So you allowed him to do non-ninja things rather than teach him. What did you teach the Uchiha?”

Kakashi looked down.

The Hokage sighed. “Kakashi, I can’t allow you to jeopardise Naruto’s future. I’m placing Haku on your team, as Naruto’s replacement. Naruto is going to continue to train with all the teams, so that we have a big hitter who can work with all our teams.”

“Naruto’s going to be a legend,” Kurenai said happily.

“Truka,” the Hokage said, “will you please attempt to re-teach Naruto some of the rules we follow, including the ones on freelance work, and why we don’t do it!”

“I’ll try, but Naruto will follow them right until they get in the way of something he considers more important, they they’ll fly out the window.”

“Thank you,” The Hokage agreed. “Now, Kakashi, I think we’ll need a full report, not the extended highlights that Naruto gave us. And then we’ll have a very nice chat about procedure, and why we aren’t too proud to ask for backup.”

“Yes,” Kakashi agreed softly.

Naruto arrived back in the Hyūga compound, to find that Hiashi, Neji, Hinata and Hanabi had just finished dinner.

“Kawaii,” Naruto announced his return by pouncing on Hanabi. For the first time, Hanabi gave him a brief hug back.

“Hiashi-sama,” Naruto said, as he sat down. “Do you know anyone who can help me with money?”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, Tazuna – the bridge builder who hired us for escort journey – asked me to kill Gatō – the infamous merchant, and I took a commission from some of the cash he had on his boat. I’ve given the Hokage the normal share, but I don’t know what to do with the rest.”

“How much is it?” Neji asked.

Naruto shrugged. “No idea, I just separated it and bunged it in a storage seal.”

“Naruto-kun,” Hinata said softly, “you need to know how much you have before you can make any

decisions.”

“Agreed,” Hiashi said. “Get it out, and we’ll see.”

“Here?” Naruto asked in surprise.

“Yes.”

Naruto shrugged and pulled out the seal. He cut his thumb on his teeth, and used the blood to unseal it. The money started to pour in a great rush, diamonds, emeralds and sapphires sparkled in the golden shower.

Naruto moved on to the table to avoid being buried. With a shake, he closed the seal. “There,” he said.

Hiashi, Hinata, Neji and Hanabi all looked stunned. “Is that a lot?” he asked innocently.

The Hyūga’s nodded in unison, before their eyes lit up.

“Hanabi, the jewels, Hinata, Neji, the gold, I’ll take the paper.” Without protest, the four of them started to work, happy smiles on their faces.

Naruto had never seen them so happy. He figured it was to do with the money, so he jumped on to the ceiling, and took a nap.

“Naruto?”

Naruto opened his eyes and stretched. The floor below was clear, with all the money in neat chakra-reinforced piles.

He released his Chakra and fell to the floor, somersaulting on the way so that he could sit on the table. All the Hyūgas looked happy.

“Have a good time?”

They all nodded in a display of family unity.

“Well, Naruto-kun,” Hiashi said with an amused look. “You could retire today, buy a large mansion, hire the best ramen chef in the world, and eat ramen for every meal for every day for the rest of your life, and hardly make a dent in this.”

“Tempting,” Naruto said thoughtfully, “but foxy-chan would kick my arse for being lazy, and I’d never be able to protect you guys, so no. Hey, I have some land, so I can afford to build my own place?”

“Easily.”

“Cool,” Naruto breathed slowly. He created two clones. “Go and have a look at our land, and make some plans for what we want to build. Come up with some rough sketches we can give an architect,” he told the first. “You, go and send a message to Tazuna, offer Wave the contract, tell them I’ll help with the work.”

“Aye aye, captain,” they saluted, before running out the door.

“Now that’s sorted,” Naruto said cheerfully. “Neji, you have ten Ryō on you?”

Neji nodded.

“Swop,” he said, offering him a scroll.

“What is it?”

“Give it to Tenten-chan, say you bought it for her.”

Neji smirked and shook his head. “I’ll be back later,” he said as he walked out as well.

Naruto turned to Hinata, and walked up to her. The girl turned bright red, as Naruto took her hand and quickly attached a gold bracelet. He took a second to admire it, before grinning. Hinata passed out gracefully.

He somersaulted backwards, pouncing on Hanabi, knocking her to the floor, where he attached a gold locket around her neck.

Hanabi looked at it, and flushed slightly. “Thank you, Naruto-kun,” she whispered.

Naruto threw a box to Hiashi, “you don’t get the personal touch.”

“This is not necessary, Naruto,” Hiashi pointed out.

“I picked out gifts for all my favourite people,” Naruto said firmly. “Refusing would be an insult.”

Hiashi sighed and opened the box, before putting the signet ring on his left hand. “Thank you.

“Anyway, as for the businesses that you now own...”

Neji sprinted over the roof tops, aiming for his girlfriend’s bedroom. Being a ninja really helped in these situations.

He knocked on the window, which was quickly opened. “Hi,” he said.

“Hey,” she greeted him. “Wanna come in?”

He nodded, and swept through.

Tenten relaxed back on her bed. “What brings you here?” she asked curiously.

“You know how I promised to never lie to you?”

She nodded.

“Well, Naruto got this for you, and sold it to me for ten Ryō so that I could say I got it for you.”
He held the scroll out.

Tenten bounced to her feet and opened it. “It’s a sealing scroll.” She released it, and jumped back in shock. “On my stars,” she squealed. “That’s Kubikiri Houcho! One of the swords of the Seven Swordsmen of the Mist. How did Naruto-kun get it?”

“I think he killed the owner.”

Tenten was admiring the giant carving knife reverently, before she carefully placed it on the floor. “I am going to have to kiss him for this.”

Neji rolled his eyes and sighed.

“However,” Tenten continued, her voice gaining a purring sound, “you get the main reward as that’s what Naruto wanted.” She grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled him back on to her bed.

Before he lost his mind to his girlfriend’s demanding kiss and aggressively wandering hands, he swore that he would follow the path of chaos for the rest of his life.

Naruto was up and about bright and early. He hadn’t agreed a schedule with his teachers yet, so took the first few hours of the day to get a few things done. His first stop was the Uchiha compound, where he slipped in easily. Sasuke and Haku were sat at a table in silence, eating some breakfast.

“Morning,” Naruto said cheerfully. “I’m here to change Haku’s mission.”

“Git,” Sasuke mumbled.

“Naruto-kun?” Haku asked softly.

“Right, your job is twofold. The first part is to pose as Sasuke’s girlfriend, and protect him from the fan girls that will come back when I announce the updated sexuality – and that includes Sakura. You’re possessive, okay?”

Haku nodded firmly.

“The second is the same as before, bodyguard to Sasuke and Sakura. That may change in the

future, as I have many people who will need protecting at the same time. In return, I have a Jutsu for you.”

“Oh?” Haku asked, looking up curiously.

“You got a training ground, bastard?”

Sasuke nodded, and stood, preceding them through the house and into a courtyard.

Naruto walked up to a training dummy. “Right, channel your ice into your hand, then make these seals – dragon, boar, dragon, dragon, then punch forward, and at the same time...”

It took Naruto another few minutes to explain the rest of the procedure, but it was soon time for Haku to try it out.

The androgynous boy’s hands flashed in a silver glow, before he punched forward. The dummy froze completely. Naruto jumped forward, throwing a kick into it. The dummy shattered into a million parts that tinkled on the ground.

“Wow,” Haku whispered. “I mean, just wow!”

Even Sasuke looked impressed.

“Naruto,” Sasuke started, before he stopped and took a deep breath. In a thin voice, he said, “I’d appreciate it if you ever come across a Jutsu I can do, if you could teach it to me.”

Naruto looked at him for a long moment, before he nodded. “I’ve got more things to do this morning, so I’ll catch you at the bridge at ten, when Kakashi shows up.”

Both boys nodded, and Naruto made the hand signals, so that he could teleport away.

His next stop was his favourite Ramen stand in the world. The old man and Ayame were still opening up.

“Ayame-chan, how about a kiss?” he asked with a foxy grin.

She looked at him, up and down slowly, “excuse me?”

Naruto waved a folded piece of paper. “I have something for you, but I want a kiss before you get it.”

Teuchi was looking on in amusement.

“It might not be worth a kiss,” Ayame said. “I don’t want to be tricked.”

“Ahh, but I don’t lie,” Naruto said. “And I think you’ll agree that this is worth a simple kiss.”

“Fine,” Ayame sighed, amusement dancing in her eyes. She leaned over and pecked him on the lips.

Naruto sighed happily, and gave her the scroll.

She grinned and unrolled it, before going white as she read it.

“Ayame?” the old man asked.

“N-N-N-N,” she stuttered.

Teuchi yanked the paper out of her hands and stared at it. He reached out and smacked himself on the back of the head, and then read the paper again.

“You can’t do this,” Teuchi said forcefully.

“Yes I can,” Naruto contradicted him cheerfully. “You heard the deal, I get a kiss from Ayame-chan, she gets the paper. You now have the paper, so there’s nothing you can do about it.”

“I love my daughter, but one of her kisses is not worth a stand in the middle of the market place! This is the best spot in Konoha!”

“I think you’re very wrong,” Naruto said. “Look, I came in to some money recently, and along with that, I got a few businesses, including that spot. As I’m not going to have money problems, I need to share the wealth with my friends. You two kept me alive at times, and I certainly value my life higher than anything I could give you, so you will smile at me, say thank you very much, and prepare to move, okay?”

The two looked at him in shock, before Teuchi slowly smiled. He bowed his head in a gesture of deep respect, and said thank you.

“I’ll be here at lunch for some ramen,” he promised, as he turned.

“Naruto-kun, wait,” Ayame yelled, as she jumped over the counter. He turned to face her, as she grabbed him, wrapped her arms around him, and pulled him in for a kiss, her tongue pushing straight in to his mouth.

He kissed her back eagerly, his hands roaming her back, although keeping to the safe spots.

Ayame broke the kiss. “Thank you, Naruto-kun.”

He smiled at her. “It’s nothing, I promise.”

“No, it’s not, and you know it.” She grinned. “My first kiss might not have been worth the spot, but when I tell my friends later, I’ll talk about my second one.”

He laughed and pecked her on the cheek. “I’ll see you later, Ayame-chan.” He made the familiar

hand-seals and teleported away, heading for his next destination.

He arrived outside Ino's parents' flower shop, and entered quickly. To his good fortune, Sakura was already there, talking with Ino. "Hey," he said cheerfully. "You heard the latest gossip about Sasuke?"

The two girls turned to look at him, their eyes wide. "What's that, Naruto-kun?"

"Turns out he's actually bisexual, as he does like girls as well. He asked Haku out last night."

"That bitch!" Sakura yelled after a second, where the light in her eyes changed, and the fan-girlitis faded from her view of him. "Sasuke-kun should be mine. Out of the way, Naruto!"

"Me first," Ino said as they barged past him.

Naruto shook his head and smirked as the two girls disappeared into the distance.

"Sometimes, having a daughter isn't as fun as I thought it would be," Yamanaka Inoichi, Ino's dad, sighed.

"Don't worry about it," Naruto said as he leaned against the counter. "Far better they chase after Sasuke than me."

"Indeed, I've heard that your tastes are a little more refined."

"I like women who don't play stupid games, who demand that I act like an adult, and are sure in themselves. I find it as sexy as hell."

Inoichi laughed softly. "That it is, Naruto. Is there anything I can do for you?"

Naruto shook his head. "I just dropped by to distract those two. Let them have a few more weeks of being kids, before they find out what real life is like."

Inoichi nodded. "I heard about your mission. Congratulations."

"Thanks," Naruto said brightly. "It was fun, but now I have to train twice as hard. I couldn't really fight anyone in a straight fight, I beat one guy because he was on a ship and he was an earth user, the others I just overpowered with numbers. While I have no wish to fight fair, those tactics wouldn't work against a better class of enemy."

Inoichi smiled. "Wise words."

"Anyway, I've still got some errands to run this morning. Bye." He made the hand signs again and vanished with his lightning. He appeared in a living room. With a grin, he cast his latest Jutsu on himself. "Chibi No Jutsu," he whispered, and the whole room seem to grow, as he shrunk to his six year old size – complete with one missing front tooth.

He ran through the half-open door, and pounced on the two sleeping Ninjas.

Hayate almost leapt out of bed, as Yugao sat up, holding the covers to her chest. Naruto grinned and snuggled into her, giving her a large hug. “Hiya Unky Haya,” he lisped cutely.

Yugao squealed and her hug tightened.

“Naruto,” Hayate sighed, as he got back under the covers.

“He’s a gwumpy gus in the morning,” Naruto whispered conspiratorially to the woman holding him.

“He gets better when he’s not surprised,” Yugao replied dryly.

“Oh, I gots you both a pwesent,” he said, continuing his lisp. He reached into his pocket and pulled out two boxes. He chucked one to the playfully scowling Hayate, and offered the other one to Yugao. She opened it and gasped.

“I can’t accept this.”

Naruto looked at her, his eyes wide, as he made his bottom lip quiver. He looked up at her, his eyes bright. “But,” he whimpered.

Yugao managed to hold out for two and a half seconds, before she was defeated by the look. She took out a slim gold watch, and put it on her wrist. Hayate was putting on a thicker matching watch.

“Thank you,” he said.

Naruto grinned at him and stood, before bouncing off the bed.

“Naruto,” Hayate called. “Why the small version?”

Naruto smiled innocently at him. “Because I’m too old to be jumping into bed with adults and it be innocent.” He paused. “I might flirt a lot, but I would never get in the way of a relationship.”

“We know,” Yugao said gently.

“I’ll see you later,” Naruto said cheerfully. “I’ve got more pwesents to give out.” He made the hand signs and vanished, cancelling his Jutsu at the same time.

Kurenai was in the shower, so he left her present on the corner of a table, with a simple card on the side. The card just had a small grinning fox printed in one corner. He knew Kurenai would appreciate the gesture.

The Sandaime Hokage sighed in pleasure and leaned back in his chair, blowing smoke at the

ceiling.

Today was starting out to be a fine day.

The door opened, and his son entered, dropping down in the chair in front of him. “What have you found, Asuma?” he asked, after a suitably long pause.

“Okay, Kawaii No Jutsu,” Asuma said, before he paused. “Wait a second, are you smoking Kika Island tobacco!?”

The Hokage smirked. “I am.”

“But that stuff is impossible to get hold off. They don’t sell it to anyone! Not even the Fire Lord could get some!”

“The Fire Lord hasn’t got the friends I have,” he smirked. “It was a bribe from Naruto this morning.”

“A bribe?”

“Yes. He wanted me to put Haku on Team 7.”

“Didn’t you say that you were going to do that last night?”

“I did,” he said smugly. “So I was willing to be bribed. And this is the result. A priceless bribe for no gain.”

“Can I try some?” Asuma begged. “Please, dad?”

If there was one thing that was going to help their relationship, this was it. He handed another pipe over.

Asuma lit it expertly, and sighed deeply in pleasure. “Thanks.”

The Hokage smiled lightly. It was worth it. Just.

“Anyway,” Asuma said as he relaxed back. “Kawaii No Jutsu. At first I couldn’t understand it, it didn’t make sense, but then I remembered who his dad is. The Jutsu is a slimmed down, childish version of the Hiraishin. That’s why it works with so little Chakra. It uses some to lighten the body, but that is automatic, and the rest is used for direction and jumping.

“It’s bloody clever, but we’re not got a clue how to make it into a full Hiraishin. Which is probably a good thing. I think that the reason that the Fourth used special weapons was to stop others from working out how it went. It was a good distraction.

“Interestingly, the amount of chakra used has a base point for up to a five mile radius, from there, the amount needed is exponential. Jounin should be able to manage forty miles, Chunin ten miles,

and everyone else five miles.”

Sarutobi raised his eyebrows and took another puff of the fine tobacco.

“So, next I got a few friends, and we looked at that body he bought back from Wave. Every single organ in the body showed the results of large electrocution. It was like he was hit with controlled lightning. I suspect that only someone with a lightning element affinity could even attempt it. Same with his lightning teleportation I’ve not got a clue how it works, or what the limit is.

“Sexy No Jutsu is interesting, and from what I can tell, Naruto didn’t realise he was supposed to make a henge, so he just turned himself completely. Insanely logical, really.

“Sunlight No Jutsu is just embarrassing. Every single Jounin should have seen the possibilities of Gai’s stupid Jutsu years ago. Gai himself needs a chat with Naruto, as Gai is wondering if his flames of youth are diminishing. He’s proud of Naruto, but is experiencing some self doubt.”

“Thank you, Asuma,” the Hokage said thoughtfully. “That was a worthwhile use of your time.”

“Interesting, too. You know that he is more at home with the Jounins than with the other Genins? We all like teaching, and having a sponge like him who wants to learn everything and anything is a lot of fun. Seeing him flirt with Kurenai and hold his own with Anko is great. The betting pool is huge.”

“Betting pool?” the Hokage asked, reaching into a drawer for his wallet.

“About a quarter of the money is on Naruto getting Anko, another quarter on Kurenai. A third says that the Genin’s get their heads out of their arses, and he goes with one of them, about fifteen percent has him going for a civilian, with the cutie from the Ramen stand a favourite.”

“One hundred thousand Ryō on Naruto getting both Kurenai and Anko,” the Hokage said after a moment’s thought.

Asuma blinked, before he slowly nodded. “Oh yes,” he agreed. “I forgot that Anko’s been chasing Kurenai for years.” He sniggered. “Lucky brat.”

The Hokage just smiled, and his son went silent, as the two men sat in silence, enjoying the finest tobacco the elemental countries had to offer. The Jounin meeting wasn’t due to start for an hour yet.

Naruto arrived at training ground seven bang on time. And traditionally, Kakashi wasn’t there yet. With nothing to do, he decided to flirt with Haku. It would irritate Sasuke, and help the appearance that Haku was female.

Sakura was glaring at Haku, which suddenly gave Naruto a wicked idea. “Hey, Haku-chan,” he called. “Want to go on a date?”

Sakura, for the briefest of seconds looked shocked that Naruto wasn't asking her out.

"I'm sorry, Naruto-kun," Haku said gently, "but I am already dating Sasuke-kun."

"But I'm more fun than the stuck-up bastard," Naruto begged.

"Bite me, dead last," Sasuke muttered.

Unable to contain himself, Naruto replied. "I believe that's now Haku-chan's job."

Rather than blush, as he hoped, Sasuke just smirked. "Quite, and I got there first."

Naruto sighed. "Are you sure?" he asked Haku. "Your duties as his girlfriend will include sticking that stick up his arse every morning."

Haku giggled cutely.

"Well, if I can't date you, at least show me that you've been practising?"

Haku slid to his feet. "I have, Sasuke-kun and I practised this morning."

Naruto created a clone and stepped out of the way.

Haku's hand flew through the signs as he pushed forward. The clone was instantly frozen, and he punched the clone with an uppercut, who shattered, before poofing away.

"What the hell was that?" Kakashi asked, from a corner of the training ground.

"A new Jutsu Naruto-kun taught me," Haku said softly.

Kakashi sighed. "Well, we'll be quick today. I have a meeting I can't be late for. Naruto, you are off team seven. Haku you're in."

"What?" Sasuke demanded. "How the hell can I help keep the idiot alive if we're on different teams?"

Naruto blinked, a sudden feeling of warmth shooting through him. Perhaps, just perhaps, Sasuke was changing, a little.

"Naruto will still train with us, occasionally. But he will also train with the other Genin teams, and keep up his remedial lessons."

Naruto walked over to Sasuke and nodded to the far side of the bridge, ignoring the others. The two boys walked off together. "I asked the Hokage to do this. As a team, we don't work. We have two leaders, me and you. And while I respect you - a little, I don't want to constantly bat heads with you over which one of us is top."

Sasuke nodded slowly. "I could let you lead," he whispered.

"Look, I don't want some nice guy act from you; I want the bastard that's my best friend. With both of us here, we won't get the attention we need. So, you train your arse off in a situation that suits you, while I do the same in one that suits me. And you prepare for when we go and kill Itachi. Oh, and try and encourage Sakura to be useful - that's the cost of me backing out so you get what you need."

"I'll see what Haku needs, and I won't let Kakashi play favourites again. We will be a team, the best team. The most powerful."

Naruto grinned at him. "That sounds like someone's been talking to Haku."

"He said something to me. Divided we fall, united we stand. He then created an Ice Clone, and the two took me out in a spar in seconds. With someone protecting his back, Haku is great. It was bad for my ego, but he has a way of talking to me, I guess. Anyway, the point is, if I have powerful people with me, I'm going to be even harder to beat."

Naruto nodded and grinned. "You're finally learning something. And just think how cool it will be to show up with Itachi, and be happy, fulfilled, and stronger than him? You'll have beaten him in every way."

"But he said that I needed to hate to beat him!"

"Bollocks," Naruto replied instantly. "Here's an idea, let's take advice from a maniac who killed everyone you loved! He said that so that you'd be stuck in some tosspot avenger role, never learning where real strength comes from!"

"It is only when you fear you could lose everything that you find the strength to persevere."

"See, you turning up to kill him not through hatred, but because it needs to be done – and because you need his eyes, not for yourself, but for your son or daughter – will completely invalidate everything he's done."

Sasuke's eyes gleamed.

"My advice, is find out today what Haku can do. I'll bet he's far better than both of us. After all, he's been trained by Zabuza practically all his life!"

Sasuke grudgingly nodded.

"Anyway, I've got things to do."

"Naruto," Sasuke called. "Stop by later?"

Naruto flashed him a grin, and vanished.

The Hokage's office had automatically been expanded – seals supporting the ceiling – so that all his trusted Jounins could sit down.

As the Hokage was about to start, Anko stumbled in.

“Anko?” The Hokage asked, as the woman looked irritated, amused, and slightly embarrassed.

“Anyone else get a visit from Naruto this morning with a cool present?”

All the people involved in training Naruto raised their hands.

“Yeah, me too. Little bastard pounced on me while I was asleep. I elbowed him in the face, and we struggled, before the damn brat cheated.”

“How?” Kurenai asked curiously.

Anko pouted. “He kissed me, bleeding lip and all. And you know how I feel about a little blood play. Anyway, next thing I know, fox boy had my arms pinned over my head, was writhing away playfully, and then he got my gift out.” She pointed to an item on her belt proudly. “Aren't they beautiful?”

“Solid gold handcuffs?” Asuma asked doubtfully.

Anko nodded. “He handcuffed me to the bed, I was figuring he'd finally got over his silly morals, when he kissed me lightly, said, ‘hope you like your present!’ and vanished!

“After I finished swearing at him, it took me ages to get out.”

“Why didn't you just break the bed?” Asked a highly interested Kakashi, whose infamous book was not under his nose.

Anko shot him a look that questioned his sanity. “Because it's a chakra reinforced bed. It wouldn't be much fun if you were having fun and accidentally broke out of my restraints, would it?”

The Hokage coughed politely. “As fun it is to hear how one of my special Jounins was defeated by a Genin and a pair of handcuffs, I did call you all here for a reason.”

“I preferred hearing about Anko and Naruto,” Kakashi muttered, to some agreement from the other males.

A wave of killing intent filled the room. “Now that I have your attention,” the Hokage snarled, “I was going to do this the nice way, but I'm tired and I've just realised that I was scammed this morning.

“Tbiki, you've got the first round of the Chunin exams in a month's time. Anko, you've got the second. Pile on the pressure so that we get as many to quit as possible. The stronger we make the

test, the better we will look to our enemies.

“Those of you with Genin groups, I’ll ask you in three weeks time if you want to nominate your teams, and no, Gai, I don’t want to hear about Youth.

“Those not on missions, work on the defences, we’re always the most vulnerable when we’re open. Questions?”

No one said anything.

“Right, as of this morning, Naruto is no longer a member of Team Seven. He now has my permission to join up with the other Genin teams, and to train as he has been with Anko, Ibiki, Kurenai, Hayate, Yugao, Iruka and Hiashi.”

“If anyone else wants to help, there’s plenty of fox boy to go around,” Anko added cheerfully. “The boy throws himself into everything he can, and he’s got so much Chakra it’s beautiful, and that’s without the Fox teaching him stuff.”

“Speaking of which,” Kakashi interrupted. “Naruto taught Haku a new move this morning, and this one is deadly. Haku has a lot of control over the ice element, and this move pushes it. She makes a few seals, and pushes forward. The victim is instantly frozen solid, and then Haku follows it up with a punch, shattering the victim into a thousand pieces.”

“I’ve got to get fox boy to teach me something like that,” Anko almost moaned in pleasure. “As much as I hate the Kyūbi, having an all powerful nine tailed demon helping us out makes up for a lot of it.”

“Anko,” Kurenai sighed, she was playing with a golden hair clip. “That sound is disturbing, whether it’s to do with sex or violence, both of which Naruto-kun is a little too young for.”

“Bollocks,” Anko snapped back. “Any man who can become the hottest chick I’ve seen, and then kiss me like a chick, is not too young for some fun and games.” She paused, “I wonder if she’d be a virgin every time she changed, and I could take it again and again.”

A couple of men collapsed from blood loss.

“Only three?” Anko asked. She sighed and shook her head in disappointment.

“Anko,” the Hokage sighed. “Do you have to do this every meeting we have?”

She nodded. “Yes, definitely. The only time I didn’t was because Yugao, Hana and Kurenai had me fucked silly the night before.”

“Yay,” Anko cheered, as another four of the males fainted. It was her goal in life to get Gai to faint, but he was too innocent, and even now, all he was doing was muttering about youthfulness.

"Anko," Tsume muttered, "could you not use my daughter's name like that while I am around?"

"Get out of here, the lot of you," the Hokage said. "Take your fallen colleagues with you, and next time, could we please not act like children?"

"No deal, old man," Anko said.

She was suddenly held against a wall by an extremely annoyed Hokage. "I allow Naruto to call me that because I have known him all his life, and because it is his way of showing me the greatest of respect. I will not accept it from others, understand?"

Anko looked at him for a long moment. "Where the hell have you been for the last ten years, professor?"

The Hokage looked surprised.

"You've spent so much time dealing with crap, you forgot who you are."

Kurenai moved over. "We've been pushing you because we want our boss back, not some old man who is a shadow of his former self."

The old man looked around, to see most of his Jounins nodding in agreement.

"Hayate?" the Hokage said softly.

"Professor?"

"Many years ago, I disbanded a training organisation named Root. It was lead by Council Member Danzo, and it tried to brainwash our young into following him, and him alone.

"I've been aware for some time that they are still in operation. I believe it is time I did something about it. Lead the Jounins. I want Danzo's head on my desk by the end of today."

Anko cheered happily.

"Right," Hayate said, "as the boss is back, he can look over our plans. Ideas, people."

Naruto frowned as he couldn't find any of the people he normally trained with, so he went to see the Hokage.

He was a little surprised to find everyone together, pouring over maps and blue prints.

"Please tell me that you're not planning something secret," he groaned.

"Why?" Hayate asked.

“Because I won’t have been the only person to notice that you’ve all been gone this morning.”

The Jounin – those that weren’t wearing masks – looked slightly embarrassed. “What are you planning anyway?”

“Eliminating a problem in Konoha. There’s a group call Root lead by Danzo that the Hokage disbanded many years ago. They’re still going, so it’s time for Danzo to pay,” Hayate explained. “The Hokage has allowed me the honour of being in charge.”

“Cool,” Naruto said. “Way to go Sleepy. So what’s Root all about anyway?”

“Basically, Danzo tried to make super loyal soldiers with no personality, loyal to only him, and we think he wants to rule Konoha.”

“Gotcha, so it’s a case of cut of the head and the body dies?”

Hayate nodded.

Naruto stared at the plans for a full invasion of the Root compound and rolled his eyes.

Anko groaned and started to bang her head against the table.

“Anko?” Kakashi asked.

“We didn’t look underneath the underneath,” she mumbled.

“Naruto-kun,” Kurenai said softly, “what have we missed?”

“You mean apart from thinking that you’re Samurai, not Ninja?”

Everyone in the room went quiet.

“Right, Hayate, stand here,” he pointed to a spot. “And ready your sword. Swing one second after you see the lightning. Everyone else, put this room back to normal and hide.”

Naruto made some hand signs and vanished, appearing outside Danzo’s council rooms. He knocked politely. The door was opened by a masked ANBU member.

“I’ve got a message for Danzo-sama,” Naruto said politely.

“Let him in.”

Naruto walked into the room, and looked at the old man. Despite the fact he was missing an arm, he held an aura of power around him. Naruto bowed formally. “The Hokage politely requests your presence.” There were two other people sat at his desk, Koharu and Homura, they’d often tried to keep him away from the Hokage when he was younger. And they’d obviously had a hand in making Sasuke such a git. The Hokage needed advice from people that Naruto trusted, not self-

serving wretches like these.

“Oh?” Danzo asked. “That’s the third time this week,” he grumbled. “Do you know what it is about?”

Naruto looked around conspiratorially. “I think the old man’s getting ready to retire,” he said.

“Really? Well, we wouldn’t want to keep him waiting, would we?”

Naruto looked around again. “How about I take you and your advisors via the lightning?”

Danzo looked interested. “You can take others?”

Naruto nodded. “It’s harder, but I can do it. I’ve wanted to share the technique, but no one else has been able to do it.”

“That is very rare, but it is good to see the young dedicated to Konoha.” Danzo stood, and moved in front of his desk, the two advisors flanking him.

“Please place a hand on my shoulder,” he said, as he started the hand signs slowly. They vanished, and arrived in front of the Hokage’s desk. Without hesitation, Naruto ducked and thrust both his hands out, one to each side. His swords launched into his hands, and in to the unsuspecting stomachs of the Koharu and Homura. At the same time, there was a slight crack of a sword breaking the sound barrier, followed by a thump as Danzo’s head landed on the Hokage’s desk.

Kakashi and Gai both moved forward and ended the lives of the two disembowelled council members.

“Well, that was fun,” Naruto said cheerfully. “I’m going to see if my favourite Ramen stand is open in its new location.”

The Sandaime looked at his Jounins and sighed. They were all hanging their heads in embarrassment, which looked amusing from Ibiki.

“What have we learnt today?” he asked. The good thing about being the boss was that he didn’t have to admit that he hadn’t thought of something so sneaky, and he could use it as a training exercise and keep his reputation intact.

He would, of course, reward Naruto later.

“Not to forget that we are Ninja,” Asuma sighed.

“And that all plans should be run through the brains of a child to check they’ve not got massively obvious holes in them.” Kurenai added.

“That the power of youth shines brightly in Naruto.” Gai cheered.

“That we can be glad he’s on our side?” Akimichi Chōza added cheerfully.

“That maybe Anko and Kurenai have been telling the truth,” Inuzuka Tsume said thoughtfully.

“Quite,” the Hokage said. “Direct confrontation should always be avoided. Babe-chan... Sorry, Yugao, could you please go and fetch Hiashi?”

The masked ANBU member nodded and vanished.

“Babe-chan?” Tsume asked.

“Naruto’s fault,” Hayate explained. “He calls me ‘Sleepy’ and Yugao ‘Babe’ when we’re in ANBU masks.”

Some of the Jounins snickered.

“Oh, speaking of which,” Hayate continued. “Another new Jutsu popped up this morning when Naruto was delivering our presents. This one turns him in to the single cutest thing I’ve ever seen. It was all I could do not to pounce on him screaming Kawaii myself.”

“Oh?” The Hokage asked.

“Henge,” Hayate muttered.

“KAWAII!” Tsume yelled, at the gap-toothed smiling child. She was in the air to glomp him, when Hayate cancelled the Henge.

Tsume managed to stop in mid-air, and only looked faintly embarrassed.

Yugao appeared back, with Hiashi. He looked at the Jounins, the dead council members, then at Danzo’s head. “I’m going to love this story,” he said slowly.

When Naruto arrived in the main market place, he found that Ayame was still moving bits and pieces, while her old man was setting things up.

Five minutes later, with the aid of several hundred clones, they were moved and ready, and both his friends were inundated with hungry patrons.

Naruto smiled to himself. Life was good.

The Third Hokage stood in front of a cloth covered table, as the council entered the room.

“I’m glad you could make it,” he said cheerfully.

“What about Danzo?” Tsume asked.

"Why, he's already here," the Hokage pointed out, as he whipped off the cloth, showing the heads of his two ex-teammates and Danzo.

He had mourned the memory of his friends earlier that day, but he found he was more upset about the memory of how they had been, rather than how they were before Naruto had introduced his sword to their stomachs.

"As you can see," the Hokage continued in the silence, "Danzo was found guilty of running an illegal operation in Konoha, and was sentenced to death. Sadly, my two advisors were killed during the sentencing.

"Now, as I have everyone's attention, it's time to talk about the role the civilian council play in our lovely village.

"The clan leaders do, of course, have other responsibilities, but I was unsure as to what the civilian council actually does."

Some brave individuals tried to interrupt, but he wasn't in the mood for interruptions, so he flooded the room with just how peeved he was at the moment. Extremely.

"I was stunned to learn just how much the civilian side of the council gets in remuneration for your many duties, and while I'm sure that it is a fair scheme, I tried to find out what you actually do.

"You can imagine my surprise when I found out that you were supposed to do a lot more than you actually are.

"So, I thought I'd be nice, and let anyone who didn't want to fulfil the work they are supposed to do, quit."

Several people started to raise their hands.

"After you've paid back the money you received under false pretences," he finished.

The hands shot down.

"How wonderful," he remarked, and nodded. Hiashi clapped his hand, and several Jounins entered, each carrying stacks of paperwork, which they quickly handed out.

"So you know," he said to no one in particular, "the punishment for getting paperwork wrong is death."

There were some gasps, but no one seemed willing to actually face him. Which was good, as Naruto had pointed out earlier, they were Ninja, not Samurai, and it was about time these civilians realised that their power was what he gave them, and not an ounce more.

He smiled to himself. He was the first Kage in history to defeat paper work. He was, indeed, the

Professor.

A few weeks later, several men with white eyes were talking together. “He has gone too far,” the first said. “We cannot have unmarked slaves wandering around.”

“Agreed,” the second said. “The removal of the seal from Neji, as well as the improvement of Hinata and Hanabi is bad for the Clan.”

“So what shall we do?” the third one asked.

“We will remove Hiashi, and his family, and return our Clan to greatness.”

“How? We cannot kill the demon brat, the rest of Konoha would not stand for it, no matter what excuse we give.”

“He is scheduled to meet with the insect clan tomorrow evening. We will poison Hiashi and his family, and then ensure that they are taken out while the slaves see what happens to those who think they can flout Clan tradition.”

“I will call a meeting of the slaves. Once again, the Hyūga clan will be feared and our place will be assured as the strongest Clan.”

Naruto knocked on the Aburane clan gates. They swung open silently. Two people approached him. One was Shino, his old classmate, and one of Kurenai-chan’s Genins. The other, he presumed, was Shino’s father.

This presumption was soon proved correct. “Naruto, welcome. This is my father, Shibi.”

Naruto bowed deeply. “An honour, Shibi-sama.”

“Your words are correct,” Shibi noted. “However, for the purpose of this evening, please utilise the non-formal method of addressing me.”

Naruto grinned at him. “Do I need to send a clone home to get me a thesaurus?”

A flicker of a smile flew over his face, for the briefest of seconds, illuminating his eyes.

“Come,” he said. “A wonderful meal has been prepared.”

“I can’t wait,” Naruto said eagerly, as he looped an arm around Shino. The boy jerked a little, then relaxed as Naruto let him go again, the slight hug over.

Naruto knew that the boy wasn’t used to human contact, people disliked him because his bugs lived inside his skin. As far as Naruto was concerned, that was nothing compared to having a fox

live inside you.

They sat down at a large wooden table, at the top end. Naruto was opposite Shino, with Shibi next to them, at the head. Silent serving staff moved around, bringing out the first course, and the drinks.

Naruto frowned. "I was under the impression that your hives generally eat with you?"

"When we are entertaining, we have found that most people prefer not to see our friends crawling over food."

Naruto shrugged. "I once ate some meat with maggots on it, I was so hungry. A few bugs aren't going to bother me. You said we were being friendly, so let's relax."

Shibi clapped his hands, and two large plates of honey were brought out. A long trail of insects quickly started to drain from each of the men, into the honey, before they trailed back.

"Cool," Naruto noted. "So, as we're being friendly. Why the invitation?"

"It was logical," Shino said. "You have been changing the village, and you have not been following the path of logic, yet you are accomplishing things."

"Not following logic?" Naruto demanded playfully. "I'll have you know that I'm extremely logical. It's everyone else who is insane. And if I had my sweet hat, you'd understand."

Shibi blinked. "You wore a pirate hat?"

"It was close, but not close enough," Naruto agreed. "A sweet hat is all that stands between me and greatness."

"But that is not logical."

"Nor is dancing in the rain, but that doesn't stop it from being fun."

"So your purpose is fun?" Shibi asked.

"No," Naruto said, shaking his head. "What do your hives want?"

"To live, and to breed the next generation," Shino replied.

"Is that what you want as well?"

"What else is there?"

"Life, my friends, life. The purpose of life is simple. Progeny is a part of that, sure, but the biggest thing in life is the ability to look back when you are about to die, and know that you have lived!"

“I wake up each morning excited about the new things I am going to learn, about the experiences I am going to enjoy. And even if things are bad, I’ll keep going, because it can’t rain forever, and if, as a Ninja, I die young, I’ll still be able to say that I lived every damn day I could!”

Shibi and Shino looked at each other. “Your words are not what we expected,” Shibi admitted. “I am not sure how to respond.”

“You don’t need to,” Naruto said, “my life is suited for me. I think that everyone should try it, but it might not suit you. You have a simple outlook on life that works for you, why change it?”

“Because change is good?” Shino asked. “It can flush out the decay and leave you ready to rebuild.”

Naruto winked at them, before he frowned. “That’s not right,” he muttered. “Excuse me.” He made a clone, and muttered “Kawaii No Jutsu,” under his breath. He vanished out the roof window.

“Hi,” The clone said cheerfully. “You can call me Eleven.”

“Eleven?” Shibi asked.

The clone nodded. “Naruto’s got a lot of decent clones out and about today. One of us is reading in the library at the moment. Another is... well, I’m not allowed to tell you that, I don’t think. We’re all very protective of the people we love.”

“A clone is not supposed to be able to hold a conversation,” Shibi pointed out calmly.

The clone took a bite of the food. “Mmm,” he murmured. “Yeah, so Foxy-chan told Naruto. Problem with the boss is that he decides which rules he follows and which he doesn’t. He prefers intelligence, so he makes us with intelligence.”

“You said that one of you is in the library, why?” Shino asked.

Shibi smiled. “One of the secrets of the technique he uses, is that when a clone disperses, the original gets all the information the clone picked up.”

Shino nodded slowly. “So you could create a thousand clones and use them to read the whole library?”

Shibi looked at the clone and raised his eyebrows.

“Before Naruto, the record for clones was eight,” Eleven said. “And that was pushing it. It was when we were building the bridge that Naruto found out that things aren’t as they seem.

“To draw an analogy, you talk to your hives, correct?”

Both bug uses nodded.

“And the hives can tell you what they know, through one voice?”

Again, dual nods.

“Now, what if you had a hundred hives, all talking at once?”

“So you are saying that after a certain number, the data dump is just too loud to be useful?”

“Exactly,” Eleven agreed. “Two or three is a maximum. I think Naruto likes it that way. It means that he has to work for everything himself. It makes him self-reliant, and that’s something he’s proud of.”

“He does use clones all the time,” Shino noted.

Eleven nodded. “He has a goal, we think he’s insane, but then, that’s why he’s the boss. He wants to be able to create a thousand clones with Jounin level chakra.”

Both Father and Son frowned. “Why?”

“Can you imagine anything more terrifying than appearing to have the upper hand, when you are suddenly outnumbered, with a thousand clones, all of whom have Naruto’s skill, and the ability to use Jutsus like Jounins?”

Shino whistled softly.

“Exactly,” Eleven said cheerfully. “I’m the eleventh special clone he has created. I’ve been created fourteen times, and I’m only Chunin level. His maximum is fifteen Chunins at the moment, so he has a long way to go. But like everything, the best way forward is to practice, and the more time Naruto creates clones, the easier it gets.”

“Can I ask you a question?” Shibi asked.

“Shoot,” the clone said, digging into the food.

“What is it like, being a clone?”

“Hmmm,” Eleven said thoughtfully. “It’s weird. I’m not human, but I’m sentient. The only analogy I can give is a basic understanding of your hives. Naruto is the queen, and we’re all the workers. We’re incapable of betraying him, as we are created from him, and we know him inside and out. And that’s not just because we’re dependent on him.

“Naruto isn’t right, we all know this, but his wrongness is just exhilarating. He doesn’t accept obstacles; he sets his eyes on a target and goes for it, and just because the root he takes is as straight as a corkscrew, doesn’t make it any less effective.”

“Thank you,” Shibi said. “This is fascinating.”

Eleven frowned. “Naruto will be back shortly, they were lucky they didn’t touch her, we’d tear them apart limb from limb while there were still breathing.”

“What are you talking about?” Shino asked.

“A load of level ones have just dispersed, so I got a view of the whole thing.”

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 4

Hanabi finished getting changed into her work out gear, and shot herself a quick look in the mirror.

She smiled at herself. Her life had turned around recently, and she realised that for the first time in as long as she could remember, she was happy.

Her father had changed his attitude with the same single mindedness that he dealt with everything else in his life. Her sister now fought properly. If there was one thing, more than anything that she had detested about Hinata it was the way she would never go all out.

Only by testing themselves, could they get better, and with Hinata not doing so, they were all weaker.

Neji was now like the brother she had always wanted. Standoffish, cool, calm, and always there when she wanted him, but not when she wanted to be alone – and he wasn't irritating.

Which lead her mind to the other person. The catalyst. Uzumaki Naruto.

She had no idea what she thought about him. He was confusing. He didn't follow any attempt at logic. He did the impossible with flamboyance and flair, and just grinned if called on it.

She shook herself, and banished the thoughts to the back of her mind. It was time for fun.

Out in the courtyard, her father and Neji were already sparring, with Hinata sat to attention, watching closely.

Her father was explaining a move, and then attacking Neji, forcing him to try and use it.

She joined her sister, who quickly filled her in on what she had missed.

All four doors to the courtyard opened, and all the Branch members marched out silently.

“What is the meaning of this?” Hiashi demanded.

The last to enter were the main house, all those not on duty elsewhere, lead by the three elders.

“Hyūga Hiashi,” Haruka said. He was the head Elder, and Hanabi despised him. “You have bought shame on our Clan. The punishment is death for you, and your family.”

Hiashi growled, his hand going to his waist, where his sword was attached.

There was a soft sound of beeping, as an alarm went off. “Any second now, the poison we placed in your food will kick in. You have no chance to defeat us. If you attack, the Branch will be

forced to defend us, much as the slaves might not want to.”

Neji coughed, and went down on one knee, an expression of pain on his face. Next to her, her sister moaned, but tried to stand.

“Hiashi-sama,” Neji said, as he struggled. “It was better to live a few weeks free than a life time as a slave.”

Hiashi was staring at the elders with hate in his eyes.

“The poison won’t kill you,” Haruka said. “It merely disables you, so that we may give you a public execution. You are, after all, a Hyūga, and it is not befitting you to die of poison.”

Hinata toppled over, soon followed by Neji. Only her father seemed to be fighting it.

Hanabi climbed to her feet and stood in front of her family. “I did not eat the meal,” she said, feeling her determination arise. “And I will not let my family die.”

Hiashi collapsed to the ground.

The Elders all rolled their eyes. “There are three of us, child. All with decades of experience. Not to mention the slaves.”

Hanabi nodded. She had no chance of beating them in a fair fight. Therefore, the only logical thing to do was not to fight fair.

She smiled at them, pitying their fate.

“What is the meaning of that smile?” Haruka demanded.

“You didn’t think things through,” Hanabi said sadly. “As such, you will die.”

“How?”

“I will call forth the most powerful Jutsu a Hyūga ever possessed.” She spread her arms wide and glared.

Nothing happened, and the Elders looked confused.

A second later, she was being hugged by Naruto. She hugged him back and relaxed. Her family was safe now.

“Hanabi-chan,” Naruto said softly, “exactly why are three people I care about on the floor?”

“They’ve been poisoned by those Elders for removing Neji’s seal. The main house has subjugated the Branch house for years with the Caged Bird Seal, which means they have to follow orders given by us. Father has been trying to work out a way to remove it without causing problems in

the future, Neji can look after himself, but the others aren't as good. As such, those three ordered all of our deaths as an example.”

Naruto gently placed her down and turned. Without a sign of effort, over a thousand clones appeared, each one with a sword at the neck of a Hyūga, with the exception of the three Elders.

Hanabi smiled. Just like that, he had stopped the Branch house from being forced to participate. If they wanted to, they could probably fight, but not one of them was going to give up the chance of freedom.

She wasn't sure about the Main Branch, but then, most of them that were present didn't bother practising like her family. They were lazy, relying on the branch house and their use of the seals. The ones who weren't were the ones who were career Shinobi, in ANBU, and as Jōnin.

“Naruto,” Haruka said forcefully.

“Three people I care about are unconscious. Worse, you have threatened their lives. You have threatened Hanabi-chan's life. It appears that I need to make an example of what happens when people threaten the people I love.

“I want everyone here to watch. I want you to see what I can become. I want you all to tell everyone what happens here today. Kyūbi is locked inside me, I am the jailor, and like every jailor, I have the key.

“You spit at me, and I can accept it, but you try and harm the people who mean more to me than life, and I cannot accept that. I will not accept that.”

Hanabi didn't move as Naruto stepped away from her, and red chakra exploded from his body. It was different to before, at the Fair, as this seemed tightly controlled.

His body curved, his hands becoming claws, his teeth growing. His shirt bulged with muscles that hadn't been there moments before.

He tensed, and then vanished. The elders didn't have a chance, as experienced as they were, they were old. Their reflexes dulled by years of retirement.

Naruto appeared to have released the Kyūbi, and it was devastating.

He didn't need weapons, his claws seemed to be sharp enough to cut steel, and he used them with vicious ability.

The Elders collapsed, one with his head removed, the others through wounds that bled in the lights surrounding the courtyard.

Naruto was in front of her again, breathing heavily, his eyes silted and red.

She reached out, unsure as to why she was doing so, and took one of his hands in hers, feeling the

sharp claws.

“Thank you, Naruto-kun,” she said clearly.

Before her eyes, he reverted back to the familiar form of Naruto, a sad look in his eyes.

“I don’t like doing that,” he said softly. “But sometimes we have to do things we don’t like, and that is the least thing I would do to protect you.”

Hanabi knew that the ‘you’ was aimed at her family, but she decided to take it personally.

“Thank you,” she said once more, and hugged him tightly, ignoring the blood on his clothes.

He stroked her back. “I’ve got to get back to my dinner. You got it covered here?”

She nodded, pleased that he thought enough of her to leave her alone. With a wink, he vanished in his usual lightning storm. She grinned as she realised he’d left all the clones guarding the main branch.

She put her hands on her hips and turned. “Right, someone get the antidote to release father, you main house gits can keep your arses where they are, until Father decides what to do with you.”

The branch house members were smiling.

Naruto arrived back at the Aburane clan compound. Eleven nodded at him. “Anything for me to do, boss?”

Naruto nodded. “Send the word out that I want a seal expert here yesterday. I think we’ve got a few working for us, call them in.”

“Will do. You look like shit, boss, you need to get some sleep.”

Naruto nodded. “Did you have to eat my food?”

“With how good it tasted, yes.”

Naruto waved a hand. “Get.”

The clone jumped out the sunroof, and vanished.

Naruto sank down. “I’m sorry about that. You’ll have to wait until tomorrow to hear what happened. I’m sorry to leave you like this, but I need to sort through what I just did.”

“There is blood on your clothing and under your nails. I understand,” Shibi said.

Naruto nodded and called the lightning to take him home.

Once he was inside, he showered, before he climbed into bed.

“You okay?”

“No, not really.”

“So, now you know what you are capable off.”

“You are supposed to help me, say that it wasn’t really me.”

“Yeah, so humans tell me. That’s crap. I tell you the truth. That was you, making a visible point to people who mess with those you deem worthy.”

“I guess. I just, well, tore them apart with my claws. That’s a little basic.”

“It made your point, didn’t it?”

“Hn. Yeah, it did. Hurt like anything, though.”

“You forced a transformation for the first time. You took around a thirty-sixth of my power, which is pretty impressive for a first time, and you proved a point.”

“I think it was a bit foolish.”

“Probably, but then, with the money you got from Gatō, you’ve already announced yourself on the stage, and if the worst comes to worst, we can use the escape Jutsu and get the hell out of there.”

“True. Thanks, Kyūbi.”

“What, no Foxy-chan?”

“Not tonight. Now, I just want to sleep.”

“Before you go, I’ve been bored.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, so I’ve been looking at why you’re a short arse. In short, I can fix it.”

“Cool.”

“Gonna take years, but a bit of chakra to the right points – your clone found it was called the Pituitary gland – and we can get you to a normal teenagers size.”

“Sounds good.”

“Damn right, although you’ll no longer be able to hide in flower pots.”

“Hah, ha, ha. You’re a regular comedian.”

“I’ll be here all week, catch Elton John, his show’s great, don’t forget to tip your serving staff.”

“Who is Elton John?”

“... Just go to sleep, kid.”

Hiashi woke with a jerk. About the last thing he expected to see was the Hokage sitting next to his youngest daughter in the General Hospital.

He looked around, to see his eldest daughter and nephew in beds next to him.

“A nasty poison,” the Hokage said casually. “But not fatal. Once the antidote was applied, it was only a matter of time before you woke up.”

Hiashi eased himself into a sitting position. “I can’t help but notice that I am alive and intact,” he said thoughtfully. He looked at Hanabi, “as are Neji and Hinata. And as the last thing I remember was my youngest daughter promising to end their lives, I have come to the conclusion that you succeeded.”

Hanabi smiled and nodded.

“And she wouldn’t tell me what happened,” the Hokage added. “She wanted to wait until you were awake.”

“With all the talking, it would be difficult for us to sleep,” Neji muttered as he helped himself into a sitting position as well.

Hinata awoke with a gasp, and then looked around in shock.

“Hinata-chan, we are about to hear what happened,” Neji said.

Hanabi smiled. “I utilised my most powerful Jutsu.”

“A Jutsu,” the Hokage added, “that beheaded one of your elders, and left claw marks on the other two.”

“I have no knowledge of a Jutsu that would do that,” Hiashi said thoughtfully.

Hanabi’s eyes flashed in amusement, and Hiashi realised his daughter was teasing them.

“It’s a Jutsu that only I can use,” she said. “I call it, Glare No Jutsu.”

Neji suddenly started to snicker. “You summoned Naruto-kun?”

Hanabi poked her tongue out at her cousin. “Sure, ruin my fun. Yes, I called Naruto. He wasn’t happy about you three being out of it, so he decided to make an example of the idiot elders. He unlocked Foxy-chan and let her kill them.”

Hiashi shook his head slightly, as the Hokage groaned. “He released the Kyūbi?”

Hanabi nodded. “It was beautiful,” she sighed. “He glowed this amazing red colour, then he transformed, muscles bulged everywhere, and he took off, faster than I could see, and a head was on the floor. They didn’t stand a chance.

“He did it because he loves us. He wanted to make a point that anyone who hurts one of his precious people will be treated like that.”

Hiashi smiled faintly. “We owe him,” he murmured to himself.

There was a familiar burst of lightning and Naruto appeared in the room. “Good, you’re all awake. Everyone okay?”

Three forms of yes echoed through the room. Naruto opened the door, and grabbed a passing doctor. He hauled him in easily. “How’s Hiashi?”

The doctor sighed and looked at the chart, and then examined the patient. “He’s fine.”

“Good enough to be yelled at?”

The doctor nodded.

“Thank you,” Naruto said, and bundled the man back out of the door, shutting it firmly.

“Naruto-kun?” Hiashi asked warily.

“Exactly why did you not ask for help with your little seal problem?”

Hiashi blinked. “I am the Head of my Clan?” he said pointed out, not sure what Naruto was getting at.

“So am I,” Naruto replied. “So is the Hokage, and many other people in this village. It doesn’t stop them from asking for help when needed. I asked you for help with the money I had left over, and with a load of other things.”

Hiashi nodded.

“And the businesses we went through. You do remember them, right?”

Hiashi nodded again.

“And how many seal experts do I have employed?”

“Two,” he replied instantly.

Naruto looked at him.

Hiashi closed his eyes and contemplating banging his head against a wall. The solution to his problem was simply to have asked for help. Naruto would have brought in the expert, and the Caged Bird seal could have been replaced with something neater.

“Let’s hope we never have this discussion again,” Naruto said with a grin that Hiashi knew was down to him being able to use Hiashi’s own teachings against him. “I’m glad everyone’s okay.” He winked at Hanabi, and vanished in his lightning.

Hiashi noted the fainted blush on his youngest daughter’s face and smirked to himself. “What is it going to take for this not to get out?”

“What happened last night?” the Sandaime asked in amusement.

Hiashi waved his hand. “No, the telling off I just received.”

“Nothing but the finest tobacco.”

Hiashi grumbled to himself. “Deal,” he muttered.

“What are you doing?”

Naruto slumped to his knees. *“Trying a new technique.”*

“Oh?”

“Yeah, I want to chain things together.”

“What do you mean?”

“I want to do a clone then a henge in one movement, not several.”

“Why would that be useful?”

“It wouldn’t be, but it would be unpredictable. I do a series of hand signs that look like something complicated, when all I’m really doing is setting up a series of simple things.”

“You’re missing a wolf sign between each one.”

Naruto sighed. *“Don’t tell me, I didn’t ask, right?”*

Kyūbi sent a mental grin at him. *“That, and I was having a fox-nap.”*

“In that case, I’m going to bed. It’s been a hell of a day.”

“Bed at eight? You are getting old.”

Hanabi knocked on the door to her sister’s room.

“Come in.”

She opened the door. Her sister had changed from her training ground clothes, into a kimono for the rest of the night. As always, she was immaculate. “Naruto saved our family.”

“He did,” Hinata agreed, her face gaining colour as it always did when Naruto was mentioned.

“As such, we owe him a debt.”

Hinata looked at her curiously, her colour still high.

“As daughters of the house, it is up to us to reward the one who saved us.”

“What do you mean?”

Hanabi sighed to herself. Her sister could be so dense at times. But then, she hadn’t read the book. “We give him ourselves for the night, to do what he pleases.”

Hinata gasped. “You mean, us, and him, and him with no clothes? And…”

Clearly the idea was too much for the older girl, as she had passed out from massive blood loss.

Hanabi sighed once more. She had really hoped that, just this once, her sister would have been useful.

So it was down to her. As always, or so it seemed. She knew it might hurt, but she was a Kunoichi, she could handle it.

She padded to Naruto’s room. She was already in her finest kimono, and had brushed her hair to perfection.

She knocked, and when there was no response, she opened the door silently. Naruto was asleep on his back, his chest bare.

Despite the shortness of time, she could see the benefits of his new training routine, and blushed slightly.

With a deep breath, she crawled into bed with him, and leaned against him.

Nothing happened. She frowned and tried to remember what the book said. Maybe it was because

his hand wasn't in the right place.

She gently lifted his right arm around her, and placed his hand on her bum. Although it didn't feel like anything, other than a weight, the book said she was to moan in pleasure. So she did.

The next thing she knew she was hugging a pillow, and a shocked looking Naruto was on the other side of the room.

That wasn't supposed to happen. "Is it because I don't have Hinata here?" she asked. "The book said there should be two sisters."

Naruto took several deep breaths. "Hanabi-chan," he said softly, "what book?"

"Icha Icha Paradise, volume six," she replied.

Naruto took another deep breath, and then sat down on the edge of the bed. Hanabi took this as a good sign.

"Where did you get the book?" he asked.

"We've all seen Kakashi-sensei reading it and giggling, so our class thought it was a comic book. We worked together to get one of them from him. I was supposed to share it with the others, but things got in the way. We didn't realise it was a guide book."

Something strange flickered in Naruto's eyes. Hanabi found herself talking before she could control herself. Something had gone wrong here, and she needed to know what. She didn't like making mistakes. "The book said we should both sleep with you, as a thank you, but Hinata passed out again, so I had to do it on my own. I've had the Kunoichi classes, so I knew what I was getting into."

"You know the basics of part A into slot A?" Naruto asked to clarify.

She nodded.

"But not why?"

"Why what?"

"Why you would want to do it?"

"Well, because it's fun, right, or because we owe you?"

Naruto reached over and lightly stroked her face. "Hanabi-chan, normally, your mother would have this conversation with you, or your father."

Hanabi knew that something was completely wrong here, and the idea of admitting that she'd made a mistake to her father was horrific. "Can you tell me, please?"

He sighed and nodded. He sat, cross legged on the end of the bed; she curled up comfortably on the other side, against his pillow. It was still warm, and smelled slightly of him.

“This is difficult, I’ve had several versions of this talk from my friends, because I asked them so that I could try and get some common ground.

“For civilians, this is easy. You wait until you find someone you love and are going to marry, and then it comes natural. For ninja, it is infinitely more complex.”

“Why?” she asked.

“Because we are tools. And just as we can be ordered to kill, so we can be ordered to sleep with someone. And sex is the most intimate thing that can happen between two people. Seduction missions do come up, and you have to cope with them. And they can be a male being asked to seduce another male, as much as a female being asked to seduce a male. There have even been missions where young boys have had to seduce old men. It happens. And because of that, the advice is different.”

Hanabi tried to imagine doing what she had proposed to do with Naruto with someone else, and shuddered. “How do you cope with that?” she asked.

“Everyone does it differently. Kurenai-chan would cheat, she’d get close, and then use an illusion to make it look like it’s happened. Anko-chan would turn it around, she’d use her target for her own pleasure. Yugao-chan is perhaps the strongest, as she’d do it, do it properly, and would then go home to Hayate-san, take a long shower, and forget about it. Anything that happens to her as a ninja has nothing to do with how she is at home with her love.

“The other thing that complicates it for us, is that we face death. As we become Genin, we become adults, full adults at fifteen, with the right to decide what we do.

“That’s the legal aspect. The other aspect is harder to explain.”

Hanabi nodded, she was leaning forward now, fascinated.

“The first thing is to wait until you are ready, physically and mentally. You know about puberty, right?”

She nodded, feeling herself blush a little. Even starting that had been embarrassing. Fortunately, the library had explained everything for her.

“The second is to find someone that you don’t just want to go to bed with, but you want to wake up with the next morning.”

That made sense.

“But, that’s the best case scenario. A seduction mission, or a myriad of other things could happen that changes things. In that case, the best thing to do is to find someone you trust and respect.

“The other thing to remember is that it need not be a member of the opposite sex. Friendship, love, and respect can happen to anyone, and it might be more comfortable that way.

“We have a more open attitude to that sort of thing, as a kind of a counter balance to everything else that we have to go through.”

“I understand,” she said, as she thought about it. “So, I like you, you like me, why did you react like you did?”

He closed his eyes for a moment. “You’re a very pretty girl, Hanabi-chan, but my personal morals wouldn’t allow me to sleep with someone who was also only doing it for gratitude. And that’s not to mention the issues with this being your father’s house, and how much I respect him.

“Now, do me a favour, tell me how you got the book?”

Hanabi placed everything she had learnt in the back of her mind for later contemplation. “It was Konohamaru’s idea. We did it in two days. The first time, he, and his posse, ran into him, and he dodged. I studied how he dodged. The second time, I hinged myself into place, as Konohamaru crashed into Kakashi-sensei again. As he dodged, Moegi and Udon appeared, and he had to dodge again. This allowed me to drop the henge and grab the book, before going back into my henge.”

Naruto smiled faintly. “Congratulations, you four just passed Kakashi’s Genin test.”

She felt her eyes grow wide. “Huh?”

“That is how Kakashi tested the three of us, only it was bells, not his book. That book, by that way, is a comic book. And adult comic book. The scenarios in there are fantasy and frankly, pretty poor fantasy as well.”

“But...”

Naruto smiled and slid off the bed. He sat next to her and gave her a hug. “Don’t worry about it, I’m flattered, honestly, and I can understand your logic.”

“Thank you, Naruto-kun,” she whispered and hugged him back.

“Do you have any questions?”

“One.”

“Go on.”

“Do men really want to put their thing up a girl’s bum?”

Naruto waited until Hanabi had left, before he let the cheerful mask drop from his face. He didn’t bother using any hand signs as he pulled on some jeans and a sweater, then vanished.

He appeared in Hiashi's office. Neji was sitting in the far corner, reading.

"I need a word with Kakashi. You are going to help me."

Both of them looked at him in surprise, before they moved.

Naruto felt the purest rage he had ever experienced continue to swirl through him. As soon as the two men were ready, he grabbed them and rode the lightning to outside the favoured Shinobi bar.

He walked forward. A bouncer moved in front of him. He glared at the bouncer. The bouncer suddenly appeared to remember a pressing appointment in another country.

Naruto entered the bar. A glare at the raised stage stopped the music. People turned to stare, and he spotted Kakashi.

He didn't remember moving, but he would remember later the satisfying feeling of his fist impacting on Kakashi's chin.

The Jounin stumbled back, to be caught by Hiashi and Neji, both of whom had faintly glowing hands.

Naruto stalked over to Kakashi. "I've been working hard all day, trying to get a new technique down," he whispered. "I was exhausted, utterly, so I went to bed early. Do you know how I woke up?"

Kakashi seemed a little pale as he shook his head negatively.

"With my hand on a twelve year old girl's rear."

Hiashi and Neji both sucked in their breath, and the bar that had been quiet beforehand was now silent. The two men's grips on the Jounin suddenly tightened.

"Do you know why my hand was there?" Naruto continued.

Kakashi shook his head again.

"Because Hanabi-chan got the idea from a book that she owed me something. After trying to persuade her sister, she came alone. Do you know what book this was?"

For a third time, Kakashi shook his head, although the dread in his eye suddenly became clear.

Naruto reached out and pulled Kakashi's mask down, so that he could look in both of his Sensei's eyes. Kakashi's face was unlined, with an angular chin and a straight nose.

"Icha Icha Paradise," Naruto ground out. "Do you know why this twelve year old was reading Icha Icha Paradise?"

He didn't wait for an answer this time.

“Because a certain Jounin reads this porn in front of children, and giggles a lot. Hanabi, and Konohamaru – you remember him, the Hokage's grandchild? – thought it was a comic book, so they decided to get a hold of a copy. Do you know how they got hold of a copy, Kakashi?”

Again, he didn't wait for an answer.

“They stole it from you. Four academy students tricked the great Copycat Ninja. The Legendary Hatake Kakashi.

“And because of that, I not only had to wake up with my Kami-damned hand on a pubescent girl's rear, I then had to give her ‘The Talk’.

“Yes, I had to give someone the talk. I'm barely old enough to understand it myself, and I had to explain it to a precocious child.

“A child, Kakashi, not even a teenager! A child sneaked into my bed and thought I'd want to screw her, because of that damned book they got from you.

“I accept that some people like porn. Hell, we're ninjas, we get up to all sorts of crap, but not in public. Not continuously. And not in front of little kids!

“Right now, what I want to do, is kick your arse from here to Wave and back, but, Foxy-chan is whispering that it's not completely your fault. It's thanks to her mercy that I am not.

“But, if I ever, and I mean ever, see you reading that book in public, I will ensure that you spend the rest of your life as a Eunuch, understood?”

Kakashi, still pale, nodded.

“Get out of my sight,” Naruto ordered.

Hiashi and Neji reluctantly let him go.

“To my office, I think,” the Hokage's voice said in to the silence. “We have many things it is now time to discuss.”

The two vanished.

“I need a drink,” Naruto muttered. Before he could blink, a beer was in front of him. “Thanks,” he said. “Now, Hinata.”

“Naruto,” Hiashi said, “let me handle it.”

“But...”

“I know you’re annoyed at her for not stopping Hanabi, but she is my daughter. You are too angry at the moment.”

Naruto took a deep breath and released it, before draining the beer. “Okay.”

“Thank you, Naruto-kun, for everything.” Hiashi vanished. Neji moved over and placed his hand on Naruto’s shoulder. “Never doubt that you acted honourably, my friend.”

“Thanks,” Naruto whispered.

Neji nodded and moved out the door, past the silent crowd.

Naruto finished the beer and sighed. “Sorry to interrupt your evening,” he said to the room.

“I think most of us would have paid to see that,” Hayate said from the corner. “Come and join us, Naruto.”

Naruto looked over to see all his friends, along with the other Jounin Senseis. He nodded and walked over. The band started to play as he sat down, a bit quieter than before.

Kurenai and Anko moved, and pulled him between them.

“So,” Asuma said, blatantly changing the subject. “What new technique were you working on?”

Naruto took a deep breath and tried to relax. It didn’t help, so he waved to the barman, and pointed at his empty bottle. A new one was thrown his way. He caught it, opened it, and drained it quickly. The alcohol settled him a little, before his chakra burned it up.

“Two, actually,” he said with a grunt. “Not much success on either. I can tell you about the first one. I’ll make it freely available. It’s a non-clan, cut down, version of the Akimichi Partial Multi-size technique.”

“Yosh,” Gai said excitedly, before he paused. “Why?”

“Hold out your hand, palm facing me.”

Gai did as he was told. Naruto reached up from where he was, and put out his arm. “There is about two inches between our hands, right?”

Everyone nodded, watching intently.

“Anko-chan, hold a kunai to my neck, so I can’t move forward.”

“Okay,” she agreed, and he felt the cold steel touching him.

“Babe-chan, can you do the same to Gai?”

She did.

Naruto concentrated hard, and without moving, his arm slowly and tortuously expanded, closing the gap.

“Wow,” Kurenai exhaled slowly.

Naruto nodded. “When we fight, we dodge based on experience. Imagine being able to grow your arm two inches without warning, hits that would miss would suddenly hit. People’s defence would be thrown off completely.

“As you saw, though, it’s really in the early stages. I can only do one thing fast, and that’s useless.”

“What’s that?” Anko asked.

Naruto poked out his tongue at her, and it suddenly grew to around six inches.

Anko flew out of her chair, propelled by the blood from her nose.

“What?” Naruto asked innocently, inwardly smirking.

“Neji, Neji,” Ino yelled across the street.

Neji looked up, to find his girlfriend, and most of the other rookies, sat at the Ramen stand that Naruto liked. His cousin and Sakura were the only two missing. Haku was needling Sasuke, who was trying to keep a smile off his face.

He walked over to them, and took the seat that was vacated next to Tenten. Tenten leaned against him comfortably. “What’s up?” he asked.

“Is it true?” Kiba asked excitedly.

“Is what true?”

“That Naruto removed Kakashi’s mask?”

Neji sighed. “You gossip like old woman.”

“Neji-kun,” Tenten purred. “Are you calling me old?”

Neji groaned inwards. He’d walked into that one. And he now knew he wasn’t going to get out of here without telling everything. At least he’d talked to Hanabi this morning, and had her side of the story. “In short, Hanabi stole a copy of Kakashi’s damned porn. She read it, and thought it was a guide book, and as Naruto did us a favour, she thought she’d use ideas from the book.

“So Naruto woke up to my baby cousin in bed with him, where she had placed his hand on her bum.”

Kiba whistled slowly.

“That is so far beyond troublesome,” Shikamaru muttered.

Tenten, Ino and Haku had identical expressions of horror on their faces.

“Being Naruto, he replaced himself with a pillow, and then tried to find out why. She begged him to give her the talk.”

“I would rather have Naruto do it than my mother,” Shino said quietly.

“Yeah,” Kiba agreed with a shudder.

“He did, and made sure my cousin would never make that sort of mistake again. And sent her to bed. He then came and found Hiashi and me. He was radiating pure killer intent, and there was nothing to do with the Kyūbi. This was Naruto as mad as I have ever seen him.

“I’ve never seen Hiashi follow someone’s orders like that, but like me, he didn’t want it turned on him. Naruto grabbed us and we rode the lightning to the bar. The bouncer tried to stop Naruto, but one look and the guy needed a clean pair of underwear. We entered, the music stopped, and Naruto did something, I have no idea what, but it was like an instant sign less body flicker. One second he was next to us, the next Kakashi was on the floor.

“Hiashi and I grabbed Kakashi, disabling his Chakra points and allowed Naruto to yell at him.

“It was both funny and terrifying at the same time. Funny, because a fifteen year old Genin was laying into a Jounin, but scary because it is the first time I’ve ever seen Naruto so serious.”

“So,” Ino said, “what did he look like, Kakashi?”

Neji shrugged. “Good looking. No scars, no moustache, nothing bad, just a good looking man.”

“How disappointing,” Haku murmured. “Oh well. Is Hanabi alright?”

“Yes, however, Hinata and Naruto might not be.”

“Why?” Kiba asked.

“Hanabi went to Hinata first, instead of pointing out all the flaws in her plan, Hinata passed out – you know how she crushes on Naruto.”

“Yeah,” everyone said together.

“So where is Naruto now?” Sasuke asked.

“I think he’s working out his anger somewhere.” He paused, as a massive wave of Chakra swept over them. “That would be him,” he finished.

Hiashi sighed as he looked at his daughter. He had asked her to come to his office, and now wasn’t sure how to handle this. It was certainly easier when he could just call her useless. He didn’t need to think.

Of course, he also didn’t get anything back in those times.

“Do you remember what happened last night?” he asked.

Hinata flushed and looked down.

“After Hanabi came to you, she decided to go to Naruto on her own.”

Hinata looked horrified.

“Fortunately, Naruto took the honourable option. However, he was not happy last night. For good reason. No man desires waking up with a young girl in his bed.”

Hinata nodded hard.

“Naruto was understandably upset last night, and I had to beg him to allow me to deal with this.”

Hinata looked confused.

“Naruto thinks you should have stopped your sister,” he said bluntly.

Dawning horror spread over Hinata’s face, and a devastated look appeared in her eyes.

“Yes,” he continued firmly. “I believe you passed out due to your crush on Naruto, and because of that, caused him to have an extremely unpleasant night. It is not all bad, as it has set my mind at rest about Naruto, and some other things that needed to be said, were said last night.

“But that still leaves us with a problem. Hinata, how do you think you can have a relationship with Naruto, if even the idea of kissing him leaves you unconscious?”

Hinata’s look added a level of embarrassment not normally seen on a human.

Hiashi sighed to himself. “He has no chance of living up to the ideal you have of him and you will never think you are good enough for him. That is a relationship that can never work.”

Hinata looked down, at her fingers as they pressed against each other.

“What I want, is for you to learn from this, and at least contemplate dating someone else for a while. Get some experience, grow up a little, and see how you feel then. Don’t hide yourself

away for a dream.”

A look of sadness now adorned his daughters face. “I will try,” she mumbled.

Hanabi deactivated her eyes and nodded slowly to herself. She thought that her father had handled that quite well. And she certainly approved of her sister dating someone else.

That dog boy from the Inuzuka clan was a good choice. He was like a poor man’s Naruto.

She’d have a chat with him and suggest he asked her sister out.

“Guys,” Naruto yelled.

“Boss,” the three children yelled back.

“Take a seat,” he ordered, as he dropped to the floor, sitting cross legged.

The three sat opposite him, looking attentive.

“First, I want to congratulate you.”

“On what?” Konoha asked.

“Successfully working together as a team, and getting something of value from Kakashi.”

The three looked proud, before Moegi frowned. “Where is the Hyūga anyway?”

“That’s what I’m here to talk to you guys about,” Naruto said. “That book wasn’t a comic, well, it was, but it was Hentai.”

The three gasped, and then blushed.

“Hanabi will not be sharing it with you, nor will she tell you what is in it, I have her word on that. If you are curious, wait until you are Genin, and look it up for yourselves.”

“No way,” Moegi said distastefully. “That’s disgusting.”

“Yeah,” Udon and Konoha agreed.

Naruto grinned at them. “Good answer. So, as I’ve pulled you out of class, how about I teach you something cool?”

Two days later, Naruto was sparring with Hayate, when he was summoned to the main gate. He

grabbed Hayate and rode the lightning there. In front of him, two hundred men and women were standing patiently.

“Only you can create this much chaos,” Hagane Kotetsu said cheerfully to Naruto.

Naruto looked at the men, and then smiled. “Tazuna!” he yelled, “You old drunk.”

“Naruto!” Tazuna yelled back, “you little brat!”

The two hugged.

“I’m here as requested,” he said. “And I’ve got some super help and the supplies you asked for.”

“Great,” Naruto said enthusiastically. “I’ve got the plans and some helpers.”

“Naruto,” The Hokage said, as he appeared in a swirl of leaves, accompanied by four ANBU members. “Why is there an army on my doorstep?”

Naruto looked at the people in front of him. “The hardest working army, right?”

“Yeah,” they all cheered back.

“We’ve been hired, Hokage-sama,” Tazuna said respectfully. “We’re here to build Naruto-kun a super-great home.”

There was another cheer from the gathered craftsmen.

“Yeah,” Naruto agreed. “I hired them after seeing the amazing job they did on the Bridge, and besides, it’s going to take a while for them to get back on their feet properly, so why not put a little work their way?”

Tazuna nodded eagerly. “Kid did amazing by us, and things are picking up already, but we can’t live on the money he left forever, we need contracts, work, and this is a good start.”

The Hokage sighed and nodded. “I’ll have to ensure that you are guarded, for our safety and yours.”

“We expected as much.”

Sarutobi looked at all the supplies. “Just what are you building, Naruto?”

“Ooo,” Naruto said happily. He made the seal, and created a couple of hundred level one clones who quickly hinged into various shapes, and jumped into place before him.

The ANBU, Tazuna, and a few others gathered around, as the rest milled closer.

“Right, this is the main house,” Naruto said, pointing to a large building. “These are the eight

houses I want around the main circle, with a nice garden in the middle where we can hold parties.

“This is the bathing area, the training area, the Jutsu area.” He reached out and dispelled the roofs of each building. “As you can see, each of the smaller houses has four en-suite bedrooms, large open plan living rooms and fully featured kitchens and a library.

“My house is bigger, and has a few more features, but this is the basic.” A new clone rushed out of the gate, he looked tired. He handed Naruto some drawings.

“Thanks, Six,” Naruto said, as the basic clones dispersed and he was able to spread the drawings down.

“You’re building a small village,” the Hokage pointed out with a sigh.

“Of course I am,” Naruto grinned.

“Do I want to know?”

“Probably.”

“Are you going to tell me?”

“Only if you order me.”

The Hokage sighed. “Let them in and get them to work. Assign an ANBU group as their liaison.”

The ANBU next to him vanished.

“Welcome to Konoha,” the Hokage said firmly. “Naruto, please don’t slack off on your training.”

“Hey,” Naruto protested. “That’s unfair!”

The Hokage grunted. “Probably,” he admitted. “Brat.”

“Six,” Naruto called. “You’re in charge. What do you need?”

“Twenty level twos for supervision, two hundred level ones for the work.”

Naruto nodded, and two hundred and twenty clones popped into being. “Six is in charge,” he told them firmly.

“Yes, boss,” the clones shouted in unison.

“Could I have Eleven as well, he’s a better motivator than me.”

Naruto nodded, and another clone popped into place.

“Whoa,” the new clone said. “Boss, you’ve done it!”

“Really?”

“I think so, I feel it, anyway.”

“Hmm,” Naruto said thoughtfully, and looked at the ANBU surrounding them. “Could one of you create as many Shadow Clones as you can?”

The Hokage nodded, and one of the ANBU, in a Tiger mask, made the familiar seal and shouted out. He staggered a bit as six clones appeared.

“Go for it, Eleven,” Naruto encouraged. He placed his hand on the clones shoulder, and subtly fed him some more Chakra.

The clone took a deep breath. “Shadow Clone No Jutsu,” he yelled. Five clones appeared next to him, all with surprised looks on their faces.

“Woohoo,” Naruto cheered. “Eleven, you’ve just earned a name!”

“I’ll keep Eleven,” Eleven said with a pleased look.

“Okay, you’re with Six.”

“Hmm,” Six said, “shouldn’t he be in charge now?”

“Nah,” Eleven said, “You’re the one who has been doing all the hard work, I’ve just got a bit more power.”

“Right,” Six said. “Enough of this lollygagging, we’ve got work to do. Level ones are to help all these people in to Konoha, show them to our land, and help them get their tents set up.

“Level twos, go and get enough sake and beer for everyone, as a welcoming present. Tazuna-san, if we could discuss the plans on our way?”

“Err, sure,” Tazuna said slowly.

“Chop chop,” Eleven ordered. “Time’s a wasting people.”

“Yes, boss,” the clones shouted, and got to work.

Naruto watched with a smile as the procession of people entered the village, and headed up the streets.

“Naruto,” the Hokage called, as the procession ended, and he was left alone with the ANBU. “What just happened?”

“After over a month of trying, I finally managed to create a clone with Jounin level chakra,” Naruto explained. “Of course, he’s not a real Jounin, as he only has my skill, so he’s just an over-

powered Genin really. But, he should be able to take punishment like a Jounin, and won't disperse until a Jounin would be dead."

There was a silence that was only broken by the sound of the wind brushing over the grass.

"That's very good, Naruto-kun," the Hokage said softly. "Your goal is a thousand like that?"

Naruto nodded. "When I can do that, I'll be able to protect everyone, and no one I care about will die because of an enemy, before they are as old as you, old man."

The Tiger ANBU sniggered softly. "How many clones do you have live at the moment?"

Naruto thought for a second. "I've got around thirty Dot clones on permanent duty. Two hundred level ones under Six's command. I've twenty nine level twos on various tasks, twelve level threes, and one level four – Eleven, doing various things."

"Under the mask," Tiger said, "I am gaping at you."

Naruto laughed.

"Naruto, can you explain the levels?" the Hokage asked curiously. "What are Dot clones?"

"Oh, it's simple, a level one is a normal Shadow Clone – barely more than civilian level chakra. Level two is a Genin, three is a Chūnin, and four a Jōnin. As for a Dot, I'm proud of them, as they're my invention. They are limited intellect clones for long term duty."

"Limited intellect?" the Hokage probed.

Naruto scratched the back of his head. "They're single purpose," he paused and pointed into the forest. As everyone looked, one of the trees suddenly popped into smoke. Naruto made a sign, and it appeared again. "That Dot clone's job is to stay there and keep an eye out for trouble. He never gets bored or tired, because that's all he was created for and that's all he's capable of."

"Gaping, again," Tiger sniggered.

"Me to," the Hokage muttered. "And you have thirty of these around."

Naruto nodded happily.

"Will you tell me what they are doing?"

"If you order me to."

The Hokage looked at him for a long moment. "Don't you have a training session with Anko?"

"That was fun," Anko said.

Naruto paused as the cuts, bruises and other artefacts of the training were healed. "Yeah," he said. "A bit better this time."

"A lot better," Anko said. "You're coming on in leaps and bounds."

Naruto smiled at her.

"So, let's grab Kurenai and go to the spas. I fancy sitting in hot water and doing nothing until dinner."

"I'll see you later then," Naruto replied, a little sad that the training was over.

"Nope, you are coming too," Anko said.

"I'm male, and the baths are separate."

"You can use your sexy form."

"I'm still a male inside, or, well, a lesbian, because I still like to look at you."

"If it wasn't for your silly morals, you could do a lot more than look," Anko muttered. "Kurenai won't mind, it will be fun."

Before Naruto could think of another argument, he was being dragged back in to the village, where they bumped into Kurenai talking to Shino.

"Hey, bug boy, you mind if we steal your Sensei?" Anko asked.

Shino bowed briefly. "We were just finishing," he said.

"Hey, Shino," Naruto said, clapping him on the back. "How's it going?"

"Well, very well. Our hives have been interested in this idea of living every day."

"Take it slowly," Naruto advised.

"We will," Shino said, and with another bow, he turned and walked away.

"Kurenai-chan," Anko said happily, "as Naruto-kun won't take me home and roger me for hours, we're going to the spa together. Naruto's promised to put on his sexy skin and leer at us."

"Really?" Kurenai asked Naruto.

"Well, bluntly, yes," he admitted. "I was trying to explain to Anko that just because I'm female, doesn't mean that I don't fancy you, or her, any less."

Kurenai laughed. "I could do with a soak," she admitted. "Come on."

Naruto decided not to argue anymore, and switched to his female form. He was taller like this, and really needed to be able to get some clothes. “When we’ve finished,” he said, “can we go shopping? I think I might need a bra, my boobs swaying like this isn’t pleasant.”

“Shopping?” Anko whined. “I hate shopping.”

“Quiet, you,” Kurenai ordered. “Yes, we’ll go,” she continued to Naruto happily. “Just wait until I show you some lingerie.”

“Wait,” Anko interrupted. “You’re going to get him lingerie for this form?”

Kurenai nodded.

“I’m so there,” she promised. All three of them laughed and proceeded down to the far side of the village, where the baths were kept.

Anko paid their entrance fee, and guided him into the female changing areas. To his surprise, it wasn’t any different to the male changing rooms. Cubicles lined each side, with mirrors and hair dryers along the back wall.

Thick fluffy towels were in separate piles all over the benches. Anko picked out a locker, and removed her trench coat quickly.

Naruto shrugged and undid his belt, while kicking off his trainers. He leant back, as a fist shot by his head and impacted against the locker.

There was a blur of movement, and the next thing he saw was Sakura being held up by the throat against a wall, by a very annoyed Anko. “Just what the hell do you think you’re doing, Genin,” she spat.

Sakura, rather than answering, appeared to choose to go red instead.

“She can’t talk like that,” Kurenai pointed out.

Anko dropped her, but stopped her from moving with a dagger to her throat. Naruto wondered where she kept it, and tried to keep the blood from flowing out of his nose at the thoughts.

“N-N- Naruto,” Sakura stuttered. “He’s in that stupid Jutsu, and being a pervert.”

“What business is this of yours?” Anko demanded. “He’s here with a Special Jōnin and a full Jōnin. Do you think that somehow he was fooling us?”

Sakura shook her head. “But...”

“But mind your own damn business. If we want to invite him to relax with us, that’s our damn business, not yours. And you have nothing to worry about, as Naruto’s ours, and as for being a pervert, I damn well hope he will be, so I won’t feel guilty about the fact that I’m gonna be leering

at his tits as much as I damn well can be.

“Now, go away, little girl, and keep your other friends away as well.” Anko grabbed her by the shirt, and tossed her toward Ino, Hinata and Tenten – who caught her.

Naruto sighed and finished undressing. Kurenai passed him a towel, and he wrapped himself in it. “You know,” he said to them. “There are some strange things about this form. I mean, apart from the fact that foxy-chan says that I could get pregnant, it’s little things.”

“Like what?” Anko asked, as they walked past the girls.

“Chocolate tastes about eight thousand times better. I want to neuter Kakashi for reading that degrading porn in public.” He paused. “Oh, and last week, I had a period, and all I wanted to do was curl up in a ball and cry. Five and Nine didn’t know how to help, so they sent Eight to the library. He returned an hour later with a box of chocolates, some pretty flowers, and a load of sanitary products.

“I was so happy I burst into tears, which freaked Five, Eight and Nine out completely.”

The four girls they passed were gaping at him in complete shock, as they left the building and walked toward a pool.

He dropped the towel and entered the water. As a girl, it felt a lot better than before.

“You could have asked for help,” Kurenai said. “I had to help Hinata.”

“You were busy, as was Anko,” Naruto said with a shrug. “Babe was on a date with Sleepy, so I wasn’t going to interrupt that. Any of the girls I know would have reacted like Sakura, so I had to deal with it myself, it wasn’t a big deal.”

Kurenai and Anko looked at each other and laughed. “You’re comfortable, aren’t you?” Kurenai asked.

“Sure, I’m still me. I find the same things attractive, I just have different plumbing.” He stretched like a cat, and then heard the faintest sound of giggling coming from the fence.

“Oh,” he said a little louder than before. “I still remember the time you two tied me to the bed and licked me all over. When you were between my legs, it was heaven, and I still need to thank you. There’s no one around, why don’t we put up a Jutsu to stop any of the other girls from disturbing us?”

“After all, Anko needs a good spanking, she’s been a naughty girl, haven’t you, Anko-chan?”

Kurenai and Anko were giving him wide eyed looks. “Yes,” Anko blurted. “Please.”

There was a more audible thump. “Pervert!” Naruto hissed. “Let’s get him.” He jumped out of the bath and charged. A stream of clones appeared and hinged into clothes for him, and the other

two, as they followed. He hopped over the fence easily, to see an old man with grey spiky hair on the ground, recovering from a nose bleed.

He didn't hesitate, and kicked him between the legs. "Pervert," he yelled.

Two snakes shot out of Anko's hands and bit the man, while Kurenai, looking as annoyed as Naruto had ever seen her, went to stab him.

The man came to, and blocked the stab, while jumping to his feet. Anko kicked him in the side, giving Naruto enough of a gap to launch a two handed punch into his stomach.

As if suddenly realising he was in a fight, the old man back-handed Kurenai away, and turned to Anko.

Naruto flashed through some hand seals, and launched a punch forward, only to find his hand grabbed by the wrist, by a worried looking Hokage.

"Old man?" Naruto asked.

"I'm sorry, Naruto," the Hokage said solemnly, "but I'm afraid I can't let you kill Jiraiya at the moment. I need him."

"Kill me?" Jiraiya asked in amusement. "Me, one of the legendary Sanin? The girl is a Chunin at most, I was just going to let her hit me and get it out of her system."

Naruto growled and tried to move his hand, but the Hokage's hand was like steel.

"Create a Shadow Clone," the Hokage ordered. Without any movement or effort, a duplicate Jiraiya appeared. "Please, Naruto, take it out on the clone."

The clone smirked at him.

Naruto finished the punch and caught the clone under the chin. He grabbed tight, and flooded it with his chakra, while making a one-handed seal with his free hand.

The clone shook and shook, before Naruto roared and pulled his hand back hard, ripping out the clone's spine as he did, and holding the now decapitated head in the air.

The clone dispelled.

"Sweet Kami on a bike!" Jiraiya exclaimed. "What the hell was that!?"

"A warning about underestimating opponents," the Hokage said.

"This isn't fair," Naruto ground out. "He was spying on Anko-chan and Kurenai-chan!"

"It was research brat, for I am the esteemed author of the famed Icha Icha Paradise series!"

Those were the books that lead to Naruto waking up with Hanabi-chan. He launched himself forward again, intent on finishing off the pervert for once and all.

Jiraiya stumbled back in surprise, as Anko and Kurenai jumped on Naruto and held him down.

“He was also looking at you,” Kurenai said. “And calm down, it’s okay, the Hokage is going to punish him.”

Naruto growled.

Anko took the direct route to calming him down, and kissed him firmly, her tongue exploring his mouth.

He struggled for a bit, but was helpless, especially when Kurenai took over from Anko. The two women kissed as differently as they looked. Anko was wild and passionate, with an underlying tenderness, while Kurenai was tender and loving, with an underlying wildness.

“Okay,” he whispered. “I’m calm. Sorry.”

“Never apologise for protecting us,” Kurenai said, and hugged him, before allowing him to sit up.

“Yeah,” Anko agreed. They looked around, to find the Hokage and the Pervert on the floor, unconscious.

Naruto walked over and searched Jiraiya. He found a notebook, that he destroyed, a copy of one of his books, and some money, that he chucked at Anko. “He can pay for our next few sessions.”

“I like how you think,” she smirked, before kicking the Pervert awake. The old man woke next, and had the grace to look embarrassed.

“So, why can’t I kill him?” Naruto asked.

“You do know that you’re still in your female form?” the Hokage asked in lieu of answering.

“What?” Naruto looked down, and rolled his eyes. He cancelled the Jutsu, ensuring that the clones hanged clothes at the same time. “Happy?”

“You-you-you’re a boy!” the Pervert said.

“I know,” Naruto agreed.

“It’s ...” Anko started.

“Please, Anko,” the Hokage interrupted. “Can we please keep him conscious for a while?”

Anko pouted.

“Jiraiya, apologise.”

“What?” the Sanin demanded.

“He doesn’t have to apologise,” Naruto said evenly. He created a clone. “Two, send someone to the capital. Have them buy Parkurst Publishing, and install a new editor of this trash. Reject anything that looks inspired by anything other than his imagination.”

“Will do,” Two said, and turned and sprinted off.

“You can’t do that,” Jiraiya screamed. “My work...”

“Is fine,” Naruto snarled, “as long as it’s not done by voyeurism! I’m getting annoyed again, come on, let’s go back and enjoy the rest of our bath.”

“And after that,” Anko purred, “we can talk about my spanking!”

The three of them laughed, as Naruto moved back to his female form, and they left the Pervert with the Hokage.

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 5

In the Sandaime's office, the Hokage was behind his desk, while Jiraiya was sat on the window still.

"That would have killed me, me!" Jiraiya muttered. "I can't believe it!"

"Yes, well, a lot has changed."

"And my research, ruined it is! Ruined by a brat!"

"By a brat who gets invited into the tubs with two beautiful Kunoichi," the Hokage pointed out.

"Minato's kid, eh?"

The Sandaime nodded. "Why are you here?"

"How can I not be here? I came as soon as I got your message!" He pulled out a piece of paper, with the sketch the Hokage had done of Naruto's impersonation of the female Kyūbi. "I had to meet this person. Icha-Icha Fox-Girl is calling!"

"Ahh, you'd have to ask Naruto," the Hokage explained. "That was his henge of how Kyūbi looks."

Jiraiya's jaw dropped. "What!"

The Hokage sighed and repeated himself.

"But..." Jiraiya started, before stopping, with nowhere to go. "What about the seal! What about keeping it a secret!"

"Naruto decided he didn't want to do so," the Hokage explained. "He even introduces himself as a Jinchūriki some of the time." He went on to explain what had happened over the past few months, including what had happened in Wave.

Jiraiya shook his head and whistled. "So the brat really can buy the company?"

The Sandaime nodded.

"Damn it."

"Well, while you're here, do you want to be the next Hokage?"

Jiraiya fell to his knees and laughed and laughed. When he finally finished, he wiped his eyes, and shook his head. "Funny," he admitted.

“I thought that was going to be your response,” he sighed. “Right, you have a mission. Grab Naruto and find Tsunade, it’s about time she got over what is bugging her, and came back home. This village needs her.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m old, and I want to spend my retirement with my family, and damnit, I want to join in training Naruto, everyone else is having fun and I’m not.” The Hokage paused. “Seriously? Well, I’m old, and the last few weeks have shown me that this is a younger man’s job. Tsunade would be perfect, I’ve cut off the Root’s head, it needs someone else to deal with the decaying body. I’ve defanged the council, so at least that has been dealt with.”

Jiraiya sighed. “If you say so, you did retire once.”

“Damn right, and I want to do it again, while I still can.”

“Why the brat, though?”

“Because a Sannin could teach him a few things.”

“He’s not bad for a Genin.”

“A Chūnin, I believe you said.”

“Yeah, well, okay. There’s a big card game in Bird, if we hurry, we can be there and back in two weeks.”

“Good, because I want Naruto in the Chūnin exams the week after, so no hanging around.”

Jiraiya nodded. “Have I told you about my latest book?”

Naruto knocked on the door to the Yamanka flower shop. He was dressed in smart, if slightly casual, clothes.

“Naruto,” Inoichi greeted him as he opened the door.

“Inoichi-san,” Naruto said back.

“Come in, come in, and drop the san.”

Naruto smiled at him and followed the elder Yamanka in to the house. “Thank you for inviting me.”

“It is our pleasure. Unfortunately, Ino couldn’t make it, so it will just be the three of us.”

“That’s fine,” Naruto replied, feeling a little relief.

“You two sit down and talk,” a voice from the kitchen called. “Dinner will be about thirty minutes.”

Naruto followed Inoichi into a comfortable living room, and took the indicated seat. “Can I ask you a work related question?”

“Sure.”

“You transfer your consciousness into another human, correct?”

Inoichi nodded.

“Is it a blood line, or can anyone learn it?”

“It’s not something we pass around, but it’s not a blood line. Why?”

“I’ve had an idea,” Naruto said, not wanting to give it away yet. “And I could see the technique being incredibly useful.”

Inoichi looked at him for a long moment. “Learning the technique is hard work. It involves understanding who you are on a deep level.”

“Well,” Naruto said, “when I meditate, I often drop in to see Kyūbi, and we communicate on my mental landscape. It used to look like a sewer, now it’s starting to look more like Konoha.”

“Okay, so maybe it’s not that hard,” Inoichi smirked.

Fifty minutes later, after a mainly technical discussion, with a few personal questions thrown in, that Ino’s mother joined in with, Naruto had the fundamentals down, and had foxy-chan breaking down the Jutsu merrily.

“So,” Inoichi said as they finished the main course. “Can I ask you a question now?”

“Of course,” Naruto replied, expecting it to be about his clones.

“Why Kurenai and Anko?”

Naruto blinked. “Excuse me?”

“What do they mean to you?”

Naruto leaned back as a plate of custard pancakes was placed in front of him. “Well, first, it’s not as if I could separate how I feel for each of them. Anko loves Kurenai, anyone can see that. And Kurenai is slowly falling for Anko, they fit together, and I’m not sure that I fit with them.

“Anko is loud and boisterous; she enjoys life, but doesn’t know where the line is sometimes. Kurenai is her moral compass.

“Kurenai is quiet and more willing to watch, and then offer her opinion. Anko pushes her so that she’s more forceful, and it helps.

“In looks, Kurenai is the sort of beauty that artisans have been capturing for eons. She’s classically beautiful, that goes so much more than skin deep. Anko is more the wild and exuberant goddess, dancing naked in the rain, seducing mortals with her appeal.

“But as wild as Anko is, she longs for what Kurenai represents, just as Kurenai would love to be as free as Anko is.

“As for me, I want to dance with Anko in the fire, then cool off with Kurenai in the rain. I have no idea what is going on, and don’t want to know. I just know that I wouldn’t find anyone like them if I looked for a thousand years.”

He stood, and bowed to the elder Yamankas. “I’d like to thank you both for dinner, but reassure you that I only answered because Anko and Kurenai wanted me to. I’m a little disappointed that they couldn’t ask me themselves. Good night.” He made some hand seals and vanished in his lightning.

Kurenai dropped the illusion that was covering her. “Bollocks,” she muttered, before looking at Anko, who was blushing faintly.

“Yeah,” Anko agreed. “I think we’ve been training him to well.”

“I told you it was a bad idea,” Inoichi said lightly.

“You did,” Kurenai agreed.

“And he’s going away on a mission for a couple of weeks tomorrow.”

“Damn it, come on, Kurenai,” Anko said, “let’s go explain.”

Kurenai nodded, and they both vanished in a swirl of leaves.

“Sakura!” Ino shouted.

“Pig?” Sakura asked, as she walked over.

“Come on, upstairs,” Ino said, capturing her friend and rival’s wrist, and dragged her up to her room.

“What is it?”

“Sit down, forehead,” Ino said, as she sat on her bed. “I know how to get Sasuke away from Haku!”

Sakura sat down next to her, almost bouncing in her eagerness. “How?”

“Well, it’s not gonna be easy,” Ino cautioned.

“I can do it, and do it better than you, pig.”

“That’s the problem, we need to work together.”

“To defeat Haku? Fine!”

“Look, I talked to Sasuke alone, yesterday. And he told me.”

“Told you what and how did you get him alone?”

“He was trying to buy flowers for Haku,” Ino said absently. “Look, Sasuke is the best, right?”

“Right.”

“And he deserves the best, right?”

“Me, yes. That’s right.”

Ino rolled her eyes. “So he deserves something special?”

“Absolutely.”

“He said he’d dump Haku, for us.”

“For us what?” Sakura asked, looking confused.

“Use that brain behind that huge forehead of yours!”

“Huh?”

“Me, and you, together!”

“Oh,” Sakura said. “But…”

“Yeah,” Ino agreed. “But it’s Sasuke, right? And we’d be the winners, and everyone would envy us!”

“But, that’s… that’s perverted!”

“It’s Sasuke, and you already agreed that he’s worth it.”

“Yes, but.”

“No buts, is he, or isn’t he?”

“Of course he is,” Sakura snapped.

“Then, all you have to do, is kiss me, and we can go and get him!”

“Me kiss you?”

“Hey, I’m the one telling you, bringing you in, it’s time you did something first.”

Sakura looked thoughtful for a second, before she leaned in, a small blush on her face, and it was only as Ino could feel her friend’s breath against her lips, that Ino pulled away.

“Oh, Kami, we’re pathetic,” Ino moaned as she bashed the back of her head against her headboard, repeatedly.

“Ino!?”

“I said, we’re pathetic,” Ino mumbled. “Look, last night, Naruto was having dinner with my parents, he’s been eating with a lot of the Clans, and dad invited him. Anyway, I said I couldn’t make it, but might have accidentally left a tape recorder downstairs, and taped the conversation in the living room.

“They were talking about Jutsu, and while Naruto was practising something, Dad asked him why he didn’t go out with us when we were focusing on him.”

“What?” Sakura asked, looking bewildered.

“Quiet, forehead,” Ino sighed. “You know what he said? That there was no challenge! That he could get both of us, without any real effort, all he’d have to do was play on our feelings, and he’d have us both at once.

“I thought that he was just talking crap, but Dad sighed, and thanked him for not doing it! I realised Dad thought I’d do that, and I was like, ‘no way’.

“But then I got worried, so I figured I’d drag you in, you’d shoot me down, and we’d laugh about it. But no, you went for it, and I realised I would have as well. And I don’t even like girls!”

“Nor do I,” Sakura retorted, before she stopped, and blushed.

“Yeah, blush it up,” Ino muttered. “We got turned down by one of the best boys, because we’re useless.”

“One of the best boys, this is Naruto...”

“If the next words out of your mouth are ‘dead last’ I’m gonna throw you out the window.”

“He was, though.”

“Yeah, was, past tense. He is also the son of the Fourth Hokage, for Kami’s sake, is it any wonder he’s accelerating so fast?”

“I guess not,” Sakura sighed. “And, a male who understands how much it sucks to have a period?”

Ino sniggered. “Yeah, a male who’d actually understand.”

“You think it’s too late for one of us to go with him?”

“Sure,” Ino smirked. “I’ll take out Kurenai-sensei, and you’ll take out Anko.”

Sakura shuddered deeply. “She scares me.”

“They’ve both put massive Do-Not-Touch signs on him. And you know where Naruto’s gone today?”

Sakura shook her head.

“On a mission with Jiraiya, one of the Sanin, the same one who taught his dad!”

Sakura sighed. “What do we do, pig?”

“We grow up, work hard, and try not to get left behind. I watched Sasuke yesterday, he’s improving massively as well, Haku and Kakashi-sensei have been training him really well.”

“I know,” Sakura muttered, “I’ve been watching.”

“Why haven’t you been taking part?”

“Because it’s hard.”

“So is being a ninja! You only joined because of Sasuke, right?”

“What? No, I wanted to be a Ninja long before I met him.”

“So what changed?”

Sakura opened her mouth, and then shut it again. “Puberty?”

“How about I ask Dad for help, for both of us? He can recommend someone who will get us up to speed.”

“We’ve lost Sasuke, haven’t we?”

“We lost him the moment Haku made him smile.”

Sakura sighed deeply. “So much time wasted.”

“Me too.”

“Pig?”

“Sakura?”

“Thanks.”

“You’re welcome.”

“So what’s Tsunade like?”

“She needs a keeper,” Jiraiya mumbled. “She’s a chronic gambler, and her skills have led her to the nickname of the Legendary Sucker. She also drinks like there’s no tomorrow, and is always accompanied by her apprentice, a pretty lass called Shizune and a pig call Tonton.

“We’re going to Bird, as there’s a big card game there, and she’ll be there.”

Naruto nodded slowly.

“Anyway, as we’re going, I’m going to give you a huge present, brat.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, I’m going to let you sign the Toad summons contract. With it, you’ll be able to summon whenever you need to.”

Naruto nodded slowly. “I know the Jutsu. Thank you, I appreciate it.”

Jiraiya smiled a little, and summon a toad. The toad appeared with a huge scroll in its mouth, which Naruto quickly signed, using his own blood as ink.

“Now, this doesn’t mean that the toads will work with you, you will need to come to an agreement with the boss first. He’ll want to test you. In order to summon him, you’ll need as much chakra as you can gather, then do the Jutsu.”

Naruto nodded. “*Foxy-chan, can I borrow some of yours?*”

The fox gave a mental shrug. Naruto pulled out every ounce of his own chakra, and then as much of Kyūbi’s as he could. “Summon No Jutsu,” he roared, pouring all of the chakra in to it.

The very ground shook and rocked, before a huge toad appeared. The toad had his eyes closed, and was smiling pleasantly. He had a straw hat on his head.

“Sweet hat!” Naruto exclaimed, as he looked up at the giant being.

“Why thank you, Naruto-kun,” the toad chuckled merrily. He absently moved a pendant on a necklace back in to place, before he stretched.

“You know me?” Naruto asked in surprise.

The toad chuckled merrily again. “For a very long time,” he said.

Naruto looked at Jiraiya, who was staring, totally agape, at the toad. Naruto realised he must have got the wrong toad.

“I’m sorry,” Naruto apologised, placing his hands together and bowing. “I was aiming for the boss toad, but I didn’t use enough chakra.”

“Chakra?” the Toad asked, his eyes closing again. His mouth opened slightly, and a long tongue flicked out. “I think you used more than enough.”

Two puffs of smoke appeared by his feet, as two smaller toads appeared. One was a female holding a ladle, the other a male holding a cane.

The smaller male toad looked at him with ancient appearing eyes, before he swung the cane, beaming Jiraiya in the head.

Naruto giggled. “I like you.”

The toad slowly smiled at him. “I like you to, kid, even if you have interrupted my dinner. Ma?”

“So this is where our sage vanished to, eh Pa?”

“The boy here was going for our son, but got me instead,” the giant sage chuckled. “It’s been such a very long time since I’ve seen this world.”

“I’m sorry,” Naruto said again. “Please do accept my apologies.” He wasn’t sure what was going on, but felt it would be wise to be very polite to toads that could brain a Sannin with ease.

“My, he’s a nice one, isn’t he,” Ma said. She beamed at him. “Why don’t we have a cook-out, Pa, get to know this new summoner.”

“Erm,” Naruto interrupted. “The Pervert said that I needed to pass a test first, before I was official.”

Pa chuckled. “Son?” he called out.

There was a huge cloud of dust, as a toad that was easily a hundred foot tall appeared. He was carrying a huge sword, and was dressed like a yakuza. “Who called?” he roared.

Pa smacked him in the left ankle with his cane, while Ma got his right with her ladle.

“Ma, Pa,” the giant said in shock. He turned, then bowed deeply. “The great sage! What are you doing here?”

“The kid was going for you, but overshot the mark by about ten times as much Chakra as needed,” Pa chuckled. “You’re not going to test him, are you?”

“Of course not,” the giant said obediently. “Delighted to have him as a new summoner.”

“Excellent,” Ma said.

“Kid, I’m Gamabunta,” the toad said, “call me by name, and I’ll appear. We’ll need to have a drink together.”

Naruto looked up at the toad and saluted. “Yes, sir,” he said.

The toad grinned and vanished. To the left, Jiraiya was coming to, until Pa hit him again.

“Well, as you’re here,” Naruto said, “why don’t I cook for you, as an apology?”

“That would be wonderful,” Pa said quickly, before looking nervously at Ma.

“I agree,” Ma said.

“Hmmm,” the giant sitting sage mumbled in agreement.

With the help of a few clones, Naruto quickly had a fire going, and was soon making a thick soup. He kept it clear of meat, as he wasn’t sure if toads practised eating other animals, and he didn’t want to offend these toads that knocked around a Sannin.

During dinner, he found himself expertly interrogated, as the two smaller toads worked together to learn everything they could from him. The sage just smiled and nodded.

In return, he found that they had been the ones who had trained Jiraiya in their home. The Sannin himself came around just after dinner was served, and sat quietly.

Ma, Pa and the sage left shortly after they had finished eating, praising his food. After they were gone, Jiraiya looked at him. “Just how much Chakra did you use?”

Naruto shrugged. “I could have created around seven hundred level two’s with that.”

Jiraiya whistled softly. “And you used Kyūbi’s chakra?”

Naruto nodded. “I asked foxy-chan first.”

Three nights later, they were on the border of Bird country. Jiraiya had abandoned him, which he was quite happy about. All the Pervert had taught him so far was how to pop balloons with his

chakra.

Next to him, was close to twenty huge barrels of beer that had cost him a fortune. He'd had to pay for shipping from a brewery close to a hundred miles away, as well as a premium due to the alcohol's popularity, this close to the big card game.

With his own Chakra, he called for Gamabunta. "Kid?" he asked. "Is it important?"

"Sorry," Naruto said. "One, you said you wanted a drink," he gestured at the beer. "And two, I wondered if you knew how to play poker?"

The toad boss froze. "Poker? Beer?"

Naruto nodded.

A giant smile appeared on the Toad's face. "Kid, do you have any gold?"

He nodded. "Not on me, but I can get quite a lot of it, why?"

"Ma and Pa like you, so I'll spot you this time, come on." Gamabunta reached down with a massively webbed paw, and grabbed him and the beer. With a flash, they were gone.

As Naruto blinked, he found himself in a stone room. The ceiling was made of straw, and there were torches burning at regular intervals along the wall. Dominating the room was a huge circular table, with eight spots. In seven of those spots, sat a giant animal. A snake, a slug, a dog, a tiger, a monkey, a dragon, and a three toed sloth.

"What is that, that, h-h-human doing here," the snake hissed, its head moving back and forth.

"Chill, Manda," Gamabunta said, "he's got gold, and has bought us a gift." He pointed to the barrels of beer.

"That's good enough for me," the slug said cheerfully. It nodded at the table, which promptly expanded so there was an empty seat.

"My thanks," Naruto said. "You'll have to go easy on me for a bit, I'm here to learn how to play."

The other bosses' eyes lit up. "He has gold?" the dragon asked.

"Tsch," the sloth mumbled. "So tiresome, that has been stated already. Clean your ears out, Micha."

"...bite you... hard..." the dragon mumbled under its breath.

"Not to be offensive," Naruto said, "but how do some of you play?"

"Trust the human to bring up opposable thumbs," Manda sneered. "Look at us, through some

weird genetic quirk, we can do things, aren't we wonderful? Midgets."

"Manda," the monkey chided. "You have the manners of a goat. I'm Emna, by the way, Naruto. The Hokage speaks highly of you."

"Take that back," Manda hissed.

Emna sighed. He clapped his paws, and a second later, an old gentleman was in his place. "You will, of course, not tell anyone about this."

"Of course," Naruto said with a grin. The others around the table changed shape as well. Gamabunta was almost an archetype yakuza, where as Manda dressed like a Feudal lord. The dragon almost put Anko to shame.

"Isn't that cold?" Naruto asked her, looking at her skimpy steel outfit.

"Want to feel it?" the dragon challenged.

"Sure," Naruto agreed, and changed in to his female form.

"His scent, it changed!" the ex-tiger said. "That's not possible."

The sloth, who was now dressed in a purple tie-dye shirt sighed. "Tsch. It has, therefore it is," he mumbled.

The dragon looked at him, and then laughed and bowed her head. "You win this round," she said with a grin. "Gamabunta, how did you meet this scamp?"

Gamabunta grinned and pushed Naruto in to the new seat, while he sat down in his. "You tell them, kid, while I get the chips."

"It was simple, really," Naruto explained, reverting to his normal form, before trying out his new one. "Adult No Jutsu," he muttered. He created a clone, who nodded and said, "Perfect," before dispersing.

This technique allowed him his full adult form, he was close to six foot two tall, and his face had straightened somewhat, giving him a slightly more feral look.

The dragon wolf-whistled playfully, and he couldn't help blushing. "Anyway," he continued in a rush. "The Pervert gave me the Toad contract to sign, and told me to gather all my Chakra. As it seemed I needed a lot, I borrowed some of Foxy-chan's, and ..."

"Wait," the man who had been a dog interrupted. "Foxy-chan?"

"Kyūbi, I'm her container."

Manda stared at him. "You call the nine-tailed demon 'Foxy-chan'?"

“Of course, haven’t you seen her?”

“No.”

Naruto shrugged, and used his Sexy-Fox No Jutsu, this time adding the nine bushy tails.

Manda stared at him, unblinking.

“What?” he asked.

“Tell Manda to put his eyes back in, or I’ll tell Chemon he was leering.”

“Foxy-chan says that if you don’t stop looking at me like that, she’ll tell Chemon you’re leering.”

Manda paled and glared at him.

“Whipped,” the dragon mumbled. “Kid, Kyūbi doesn’t have a female form. Nor is she female.”

“Of course not,” Naruto agreed. “She’s way past such minor concepts of sex, I know that. But I’m male, and straight. What would you rather have inside you? A beautiful foxy woman, or some grumpy old man? It’s bad enough having a talking fox, I’m much happier anthropomorphising her in to this form.”

“Kid, you’ve shocked them, all. Great work.”

Naruto smiled, and let the second Jutsu drop, reverting to his adult form.

“Continue your story, young man,” the slug encouraged.

“Oh,” Naruto scratched the back of his head. “So, yeah, I got all the Chakra, and tried to call Gamabunta, but kinda missed.”

“And?” the sloth yawned.

“I thought I’d screwed up, because a large toad appeared and smiled happily at me. I apologised, and realised something wasn’t right, when two smaller toads appeared, and knocked out the Pervert.”

Gamabunta sniggered as he sat down. “And for those that can’t read behind the lines, the brat called our sage!”

The dragon whistled slowly.

“Impressive,” the dog muttered. “Very impressive.”

Naruto shrugged. “So, poker, how do you play it?”

“A drink,” the tiger said, thumping his hand down.

“You drink, I’ll teach him,” the dragon said. “Come, sit. We will dual-play for a while.” She patted the side of her chair.

Naruto obediently walked around and sat near her. “You’re not scared, you are attracted to me, however. Explain.”

“One of my…” he shrugged. “Girlfriends, I guess, dresses in less than you.”

“That was plural,” the slug pointed out.

“Anko-chan and Kurenai-chan are kind of special.”

“Mitarashi Anko?” Manda asked.

Naruto nodded.

Manda sniggered. “You may be okay, for a brat,” he muttered. He looked at the dragon. “She’s got bigger tits than you, Micha’.”

Micha growled.

“But your growl is much sexier,” Naruto interrupted, hoping to avoid an argument. Micha grinned at him.

“Thank you. At least someone knows how to treat a lady.”

“If I see one,” Manda trailed off.

“He’s a git, and a gimp,” Micha explained to Naruto. “We take on some of the characteristics of our summoners, and his is a real git.”

“Wait, the Snake Sanin?” Naruto asked.

Manda’s face went dark. “Yes.”

“Mand’ keeps making it more expensive to call him, demanding sacrifices, but he keeps paying it,” the Tiger explained.

“What?” Naruto demanded. “Are you an idiot?”

The whole room went deathly silent.

“You ask a murdering psychopath for sacrifices? That’s like asking a baker for a load of bread! For Kami’s sake, next time demand that he calls you while wearing a pink tutu or something!”

The silence was broken by a snort from the sloth, then a hastily covered snigger from Gamabunta.

Manda was staring at him with dead eyes. He stared back. “What,” Manda asked, “Is a tutu?”

Naruto created a clone, who changed his clothes in to the aforementioned outfit.

Manda stared at it for a moment, before he started to chuckle. “Yes,” he mused. “Yes, indeed.”

“I want photos,” Micha demanded.

“Let’s play cards,” the sloth said. “All this talk is making me sleepy.”

“Everything makes you sleepy,” the tiger muttered.

A few hours later, or at least Naruto thought it was, it was difficult to tell how much time had passed in this room, the stakes were getting higher and higher. The dog and the Tiger were out, Gamabunta and the Sloth were close, while Manda and Micha, and the slug and the Emna had reasonable piles.

Naruto was now sat back at his own seat.

“Your turn,” Gamabunta said. “Are you in, or out?”

Naruto looked at his cards, and the large pot of gold in the centre. He took another long sip of the beer, and then took one card. He smiled happily, then pushed all his money in to the centre.

“To rich for me,” Micha said, folding immediately.

“You’ll never learn to play like this,” Manda said, as he folded as well. “You gave it away, none of us are going to risk it, when you obviously have such a good hand.”

“Yeah, kid,” Gamabunta agreed.

Naruto smiled as the others folded as well. He grabbed all the gold, and chucked his cards on the table.

The tiger sniggered, while the dog outright laughed.

“You bastard,” Micha muttered, as she looked at the five random cards. “You got us.”

Naruto grinned, he now had the most money, and could afford to be a little more reckless.

More time passed, and was left to him and Manda. He had around two thirds of the money, to Manda’s third.

“All in,” he said, after smiling at his cards.

“I’ve not got enough,” Manda muttered. “How about I throw in a single favour? I know I’m going to win this.”

“Deal.”

Each of them flipped their cards over, as the others looked on in interest. It was with Naruto's last card, a King, to match the other three showing, that he took the hand.

Manda groaned and slumped down.

Naruto smirked and finished his beer. "My thanks to you all for letting me play," he said. He separated the money in to nine even piles, and passed everyone their money back, with double for Gamabunta who had lent him the gold.

"Kid?" Micha asked.

Naruto shrugged. "Call it payment for teaching me how to play."

The others around the table nodded. "You're welcome back anytime," the sloth yawned. "Second Sunday after a full moon is poker night."

Naruto nodded, and tried to hide a yawn.

"You did good, kid," Gamabunta said, and placed a hand over his head. Everything went black.

Naruto woke with a slight hangover, and a lot of empty barrels.

"What, in the name of Kami, went on here?" Jiraiya demanded, looking around in amazement.

Naruto stretched, and helped himself to some water. "I decided to have a drink with Gamabunta last night, ended up at the Summons's poker game. Met Micha, Emna, Manda, and a tiger, a dog, a cool sloth, and a polite slug I think was called Katsuyu. Was a fun night."

"Naruto," Jiraiya said seriously. "I hate you, and all that you stand for."

Naruto blinked at him.

"Humans don't get invited to sit at Summons's poker table!"

"Pfft," Naruto yawned. "I had beer and gold. What more could they ask for? You know Manda's kinda cool? We were talking about the snake-bastard, and next time, instead of sacrifices, Manda's going to demand he summons in a pink tutu. Micha's demanded pictures, so I hope I'll be able to see them at the next game."

Naruto paused, to see Jiraiya on the ground, worshiping at his feet. "I take it back," the Sannin said, suddenly back on his feet. "You are a man amongst men."

"Thanks, I think," Naruto replied. "If there's no hurry, I'm gonna have a nap." He pulled out his wallet and handed over a large amount of money. "Go, have fun."

All that was left was an afterimage of Jiraiya.

Naruto went back to sleep, and as he did, went to talk to Kyūbi. The fox was more human sized, and had his snout in a large book.

“Interesting?”

“Yeah,” Kyūbi agreed. “If we work hard, we might get the Jutsu in a few weeks.”

Naruto smiled. “So, you know Manda?”

“I know a couple of the summons, never played poker with them.” Kyūbi lifted up a massive paw. “No opposable thumbs.”

“You couldn’t take a human form?”

“At the time, I wouldn’t have lowered myself. Humility, it’s a bitter pill to swallow.”

“Want to tell me why you attacked Konoha?”

“I’d rather show you a new Jutsu.”

“Okay,” Naruto agreed, not wanting to push a recalcitrant demon.

Later that afternoon, Naruto changed in to some smart clothes, and wandered in to town, looking for some fun. In order to avoid problems with being his real age, he adopted his Jutsu form.

He wandered through the crowds, trying hard not to stand out. He’d watched Jiraiya do this, and couldn’t help notice how no one really paid attention to an old pervert.

He stopped for some lunch, avoiding ramen, as everyone knew it was his favourite food, before he continued to wander.

“Tonton!”

Naruto looked up, to see a small pig wearing a pearl necklace shooting past him. He leant to one side, and caught said pig with one hand, lifting him in the air. The pig’s legs continued to move, as its eyes were closed.

It suddenly seemed to realise it wasn’t moving, and looked at Naruto balefully.

“I’m so sorry,” a dark-haired woman in a kimono said, coming to stop in front of him.

Naruto looked at the pig. “You’re escaping from her?”

The pig nodded eagerly.

Naruto looked at the woman he now knew to be Shizune, and shook his head. “Are you insane?”

If pigs could shrug, this one would have.

“Lesson one in life, my piggy little friend, you never run away from beautiful woman with entrancing eyes.”

Shizune blushed, as the pig rolled its eyes.

“Hi,” Naruto said to her, moving her out of the street and in to an alley, where they wouldn’t be disturbed. He threw up a silencing Jutsu, and a notice-me-not one for good measure. It wouldn’t stop a ninja, but it would do against civilians. “I’m Uzumaki Naruto, Konoha’s Jinchūriki, son of the Fourth Hokage.”

Shizune gaped at him.

“Oh, right,” he said, remembering he was in his adult form. He cancelled it and grinned at her, before resuming it.

“I,” she said slowly, “need a drink.”

“Lead the way, beautiful lady. Tonton and I will follow, right?”

Tonton seemed resigned.

He followed the woman back through the throngs of people, and into a small hotel. Shizune walked up to a blonde who was making her way through a bottle of adequate sake, stole the wooden cup she was drinking from, and downed it. The blonde had both features Jiraiya had told him about. A diamond in her forehead, and watermelons attached to her chest.

He made a mental note to hurt Jiraiya for that description.

“Shizune!”

“Sorry, Tsunade-sama,” Shizune muttered.

Naruto took a seat the other side to Tsunade and studied her.

“See something you like?” she asked dryly.

“I don’t know yet. The Pervert says that you’re an alcoholic with a borderline personality disorder, and a fear of blood.

“The Slug boss thinks you’re an alright person, but you’re slowly following the Snake-gimp and the Pervert into infamy.

“The old man thinks you’d make a good Hokage.

“Three radically different opinions. I’m trying to see which one is correct. The old man isn’t normally wrong; however, I’m following the Slug boss at the moment.” He placed Tonton on the bar.

Tsunade gaped at him, before her hand shot out and she punched him.

Tonton scarpered.

“Yeah,” Naruto said from the doorway as the clone popped out, “the Pervert said you had anger management issues.” He picked up the now thoroughly disgruntled pig.

Tsunade blinked at him, and then at his apprentice who was on her third cup of sake.

“Just what did you say to her?”

“Hmm? Oh, I just introduced myself. I swear, if I didn’t have such a complicated personal life, I’d be at her feet, begging for a date. There is something about the shy and demure types, well, the ones with dark fire in their eyes, that just make me want to start writing bad poetry. In fact, will you go out with me this evening?”

Shizune blushed, and then passed out as the alcohol ran its course through her body.

Naruto sighed and walked over, placing the pig on her, he lifted them both up. “Let’s go talk,” he suggested.

“Hmm,” Tsunade muttered, but led him upstairs, into a small suite.

Naruto looked around the room briefly; it was a standard hotel room, with absolutely no redeeming features at all. The wooden floors blended in to the bare wooden walls with no sign of care or attention.

He placed Shizune down on the couch, and patted Tonton. The pig sighed, and settled down for a nap.

Naruto sat down on a chair. “So,” he said. “I’m in a quandary.”

“Oh?”

“My mission, along with the Pervert, is to bring you back to Konoha.”

Tsunade frowned and flopped down. The movement forced her shirt open a little. He didn’t find it hard not to stare.

“Why? It would take a lot more than you to drag me back. And who do you mean by ‘Pervert’?”

“Jiraiya, your ex-teammate, and other Sannin,” Naruto replied. “Don’t worry about him, I gave him some money and sent him to a whore house. It will be days before the money runs out.”

Tsunade sighed. “You don’t have a high opinion of us, do you?”

“I’m going to kill one of you. I’ve already put a stop to the Pervert’s most egregious crimes, and

I'm still unsure as to what to do with you."

"What are your options?"

"Well, I could force you back to Konoha, ignoring what you feel. I could fail the mission, and find someone else I can trust to look after Konoha, or I could persuade you to come back – which would probably be the best option for all concerned."

"Force me?" Tsunade asked with a laugh.

"It would take me one message."

Tsunade laughed again.

"And I can have you banned from every casino in the Elemental Countries," Naruto finished.

Tsunade froze.

"When I killed Gatō, the Shipping Merchant, I blackmailed him in to signing his businesses over to me. Having no clue what they were worth, I separated them roughly, and kept around a third of them.

"By sheer luck, I kept the most valuable ones. I own the Pervert's publishing company, and I own a chain of casinos, as well as a number of other businesses. Oh, and by the way, you owe me a fucking fortune."

Tsunade was now gaping at him.

Naruto sighed deeply. "Why don't we relax and start again?" he suggested. "I'll drop my henge, you drop yours, and we just talk, ninja to ninja." He dropped his, reverting to his naturally small form.

"What henge?"

"The one you are currently using to hide the fact that you're the same age as the Pervert. Foxy-chan doesn't seem the world the same way as anyone else."

Tsunade blinked. "Who is foxy-chan?" she asked, looking bewildered.

"Oh, sorry, I didn't introduce myself. I'm Uzumaki Naruto, Namikaze Naruto, depending on which of my parents I want to name myself after. I'm also the one that dear old dad sealed the Kyūbi in to."

"Oh, I've heard about you. You freed Wave and killed hundreds of bandits doing it."

Naruto smiled. "Yeah, that was a fun day."

“Killing hundreds was fun?”

“When they are murderous raping bastards, yes.”

“Oh.”

“So, tell me your story.”

“Why?”

“Because you’ve yet to drop your henge, and I’m still blackmailing you. Sure, the Pervert told me some things, but he left out a lot more. Tell me about why you left the village, tell me why you’ve been running for so many years.”

“This is not what I expected to happen today,” she mumbled. She sighed deeply, “I can’t believe I’m doing this, for a brat as well.”

Naruto grinned at her.

Tsunade dropped the henge, leaving a woman in her fifties. Her hair was proud silver, and her breasts were still impressive, despite the skin not being as smooth as it once was.

“If I didn’t think you would freak out, I’d point out that I actually find you more attractive like this.”

Tsunade glared.

“Not as cute as Hanabi-chan,” he muttered. “When you’re in a henge, you keep switching between young and old as I keep an eye on things, it’s distracting. Besides, you’re actually very good looking, you don’t actually need to hide behind a bimbo-esque henge.”

“I was beautiful; I can’t bear to see myself grow old.”

“When everyone you love is the same in your mind, frozen and undamaged by the trials of time?”

She sighed and nodded briefly. “Dan is beautiful, so brave and strong – he fought so hard for everything, and then he died, and I felt his blood through my fingers, I can still remember the panic, the way I did everything I could, but it wasn’t enough, it was never enough.

“And every time I close my eyes, I wonder, could I have done more? Could I have done everything more? And every time I do, I see Nawaki, telling me I should try harder, do something, do anything to save them, to save him.

“But I always fail, I can’t do it, and then I wake up.”

“And the only thing you can do is drink to forget,” Naruto finished.

A cynical smile appeared on Tsunade's face. "And now we know the root of my feelings, you just need to manipulate them to get me to accept the job."

"By pointing out the obvious fallacy in your feelings?"

She nodded.

Naruto shrugged. "I could, but I'm yet to be convinced that you're worth it. You have a terrible past. It's tragic, but so is every other good ninja's past. It's not until you feel like you've lost everything, and that you have nothing, can you break through the barrier that was holding you back, and make something of yourself.

"The people who don't know tragedy are not Ninjas, they are civilians, they live life through the adventures of others, they love, they eat and they drink, they hate and they fear, they had minor triumphs and minor catastrophes, and they never really see what life is like in our world.

"And that's why we are Ninja. We work to protect them, we die so that they can live, because as they can't understand us, we can't understand them. But it is our job, it our life, to save them.

"And each generation, a new bunch of civilian children look around and smile, and know, deep inside, that they need more, that they want more, that they need to do more, so they sign up, they sign up to a life of pain, agony and eventually, nothing more than a small name on wall.

"And they do it willingly, they know how bad it is going to be, and they don't care, because they know, deep inside, that by their sacrifice, others will live, others will love, and when they're in a ditch, bleeding out their last, they will know, that they did what they could for others, and they can finally be at peace.

"You already know the answers, but you are too afraid to face them, and you would rather stop, you would rather be a civilian, and let others care for you. You've given up everything you care for, and you've been lost for so very long.

"So, I'll give you an offer. Quit now, and I'll seal your chakra. You will be a civilian. I'll even throw in enough money for you to live comfortably for the rest of your life."

"What?"

"You don't want to be a Sannin, you don't even want to be a Ninja, so I'll make it happen. Screw the mission, if it's not something you want deep in your soul, then it is pointless forcing you to do anything. I can tell the old man that you are no longer capable, and you will be finished."

"C-can I think about it?"

Naruto nodded. "Tell Shizune that I'll pick her up at eight, and to wear something nice." He didn't wait for her response, as he turned and walked out.

As he left the room, he took his adult form again, and headed toward a nicer hotel. There was no

way in hell that his first stay in a hotel was going to be in a generic medium priced hotel.

The concierge at the hotel looked horrified at his travel stained clothes, and made a signal. A few busboys made their way to stand near him.

Naruto sighed. “My name is Uzumaki Naruto,” he said stiffly. “Owner of Nami Inc.”

The receptionist gaped at him.

If he hadn't been informed that this was the best hotel in town, he'd've walked out by now. He opened up a seal, and deposited a large bag of money on the table. “I want a suite.”

A man shot out of the back, pushing the receptionist to one side. “Of course sir, it's such a pleasure to have you here. You look tired.”

“I am,” he admitted. “I need a nap, can you send up a tailor, I have a date this evening.”

“But of course, shall we say, six?”

Naruto nodded.

“Do you have any luggage, sir?”

Naruto nodded, and then smirked. He undid a bunch of seals, and let his equipment drop to the floor.

The manager smirked slightly as well, before he turned to the concierge and raised one eyebrow.

The concierge had now lost his smile, and hurried to help, kicking the other busboys into action.

“There might be a grey haired pervert stop by later. Jiraiya, the Sannin, if so, give him your worst room on my tab. And if he asks for Geishas, limit him to one a night.”

“Of course, it shall be as you say. I've got you in the penthouse.”

“Perfect,” Naruto smiled. “And thank you.”

“No, thank you sir.”

Naruto turned and followed his luggage up the elevator, and into a palatial room that was the single biggest room he'd ever seen.

As soon as the – tipped – busboys and concierge had gone, he dropped his transformation, ran over to the bed, and jumped up and down on it, before tearing around whole place, examining everything from the trouser press, to the sumptuous dressing gowns.

The bathroom made the spas he'd been in look like a peasant's toilet. He turned the taps on and

stripped, throwing his clothes in to the corner. While the bath was filling, he took a shower and got clean.

As he was finished, he stepped in to the bath and relaxed. With an exhale, there were another eleven Naruto's in the bath with him.

“So, how'd I do?”

“Well,” Two said thoughtfully, “pretty good. She had no clue how to handle you at all.”

“I don't know which way she's going to respond, though,” Eight added.

“Me neither,” Naruto agreed with a yawn. “So, what do we do next?”

Naruto headed back to the hotel that Tsunade and Shizune were staying in, dressed in the finest clothes he had ever seen.

The tailor, an obsequious little fellow who got a little too personal with the details on how “sir” dressed, was at least extremely competent, and the kimono he wore, in black and grey, suited his colouring perfectly.

As he walked, people stepped out of his way – which felt a little weird, and made him wonder if he was over doing it slightly.

He clearly was, as a group of ruffians obstructed his path. He didn't stop, even as they drew weapons. He raised his hand slightly, and thirty clones quickly made short work of them, before stripping them, and tying them to a fence in the middle of the street.

He entered the hotel, to find Shizune standing around nervously. She was also in a kimono, with her hair up and held in place with two long sticks of wood. She had on a small amount of make-up.

“You look amazing,” he said softly, as he took her hand.

She giggled. “Thank you.”

“Relax,” Naruto told her. “As beautiful as you are, I'm already in a relationship of some strangeness. Tonight is about getting to know you, and having fun, and letting Tsunade think.”

“What did you say to her? She's not said much all afternoon.”

“Uh-uh-uh,” he said softly. “Not until after dinner, before that, we're talking about the beautiful lady known as Shizune, and the brat known as Naruto.”

“Brat?” she asked, arching her left eyebrow. “Maybe in the past, but not now.”

“That’s only because you don’t know me, yet.”

“Why are you in this form?”

“Because you wouldn’t be able to relax if you were on a date with a short-arse teenager.”

“But I am,” she pointed out.

“And instead of being laughed at, you’re being envied.”

Shizune looked around, and gasped in shock at the number of people watching them surreptitiously.

“And of course, I am being envied as well, but not as much, I’m being slightly hated, they just think I’m a rich man who got lucky.”

His companion blushed, as they entered a restaurant. There were a few people in front of them, but the Maître D moved straight toward them. “Uzumaki-sama, you honour our establishment with your presence. Please, come quickly, for I have a table ready for you.”

Naruto inclined his head in a small bow. “I thank you,” he replied formally, hiding his amusement. They were led to a table, and soon had drinks and their food ordered.

“Wow,” Shizune mumbled. “Tsunade said you were loaded, but, wow.”

Naruto laughed softly. “I’m friends with Hiashi-san, and I’m acting like him,” he confided. “I’m also trying to show off my dating skills. How am I doing?”

Shizune looked at him. “If you keep this up, your date would be happy to warm your bed later.”

It took every bit of his self control for him not to choke on the water he had just sipped. He couldn’t control the blush on his face, however.

Shizune laughed. The food was brilliant, and the conversation better. For years, Shizune had travelled the countries, trailing after her mistress, and she had many amusing stories of their adventures.

“So,” Shizune said, as the waitress took away the last plate, and left two coffees. “What did you offer Tsunade-sama?”

“Everything, and nothing,” Naruto sighed. He looked at her. “She told me about Dan and Nawaki, and I offered her a way out.”

“How?”

“I can seal her Chakra, she’d be normal.”

Shizune looked horrified. “But...”

Naruto reached out and raised her chin, closing her mouth. “I’m praying that she doesn’t accept. I was harsh on her, because I know what the job of being a Hokage is all about.”

“Hokage?” Shizune asked. “Of Konoha?”

Naruto nodded. “That why I’m here, with the Pervert.”

“Jiraiya-sama?”

Naruto nodded. “I sent him off with a load of money. I presume he’s in a brothel somewhere, practising his healing Jutsus to ensure he doesn’t catch something he shouldn’t.”

Shizune giggled. “Can you really do it?”

Naruto sighed and nodded. “Foxy-chan – Kyūbi, by the way – says that I can give her Chakra poisoning by injecting some of the demonic Chakra in to certain points of her body. It would burn the natural Chakra out of her.”

The dark haired women winced and shivered slightly. “What would I do?” she asked herself.

“Well, you could continue to follow her around, I’ll make sure you’re no longer bothered by debt hunters, I own most of your debt anyway.

“Or, you could come back with me to Konoha, I know we’d love to have someone as skilled as you with us.

“Or, you could work for me personally, I have a few businesses, and I would always love to have intelligent and beautiful people working for me.”

“So many options,” Shizune sighed. “We both know what I’d choose.”

“To stay with Tsunade,” Naruto agreed. “Your loyalty is definitely the best thing about you. Don’t worry, I might have been harsh on her, but I do understand what she has done for Konoha, and if she chooses retirement, I will make sure that she enjoys it.”

Shizune leaned over and kissed him gently on the cheek. “You’re a special man, Naruto-kun.”

“A brat,” he corrected cheerfully.

“So, tell me about your girlfriends.”

“Well...”

The phone ringing woke Naruto the next morning. He grunted, and rolled over, picking up the

receiver. "Hello?" he rasped.

"Good morning, Uzumaki-sama," a perky voice said. "I have Tsunade-sama and Shizune-san asking for you in reception."

"Please send them up," Naruto replied. "Did Jiraiya turn up eventually?"

"He did, he is currently," the voice paused, "indisposed."

"Good," Naruto grunted. "If he looks like waking up, send some fresh entertainment to his room, on my account."

"I will. Your guests will be with you shortly."

"Please send up a bottle of your finest sake as well."

Naruto hung up, and grabbed a dressing gown. He dashed in to the bathroom and brushed his teeth, before throwing on some jeans and a t-shirt. He finished just in time to open the door and welcome his guests in.

"Are you hungry?" he asked.

They both shook their heads negatively.

"Can you send me up some breakfast in half an hour?"

The attendant nodded and politely vanished, after passing him the tray with the sake and three wooden cups.

Naruto walked over to a chair next to a couch. "Take a seat," he offered.

Tsunade dropped down on the couch, Shizune sat primly next to her.

Naruto sat, and silently opened the bottle of sake and poured for the three of them.

"That's good stuff," Tsunade sighed in pleasure. "Naruto, tell me something."

"Hmm?"

"If you wanted me to have the job, how would you sell it to me?"

Naruto settled back and thought for a few minutes.

"Being Hokage of Kohona is the hardest job in the world. And yet, it's been made easier recently. The old man has made a few master strokes to allow his successor an easier time. He vanquished paper work, and Root has been dealt with.

"So the hard work now comes from sending Ninja out on missions, and dealing with the other

Kages. It's all consuming, because the village looks to you for strength, for direction, and for leadership.

"And it's terrifying, because at times, you have to take the decision to send a friend and a colleague to their deaths.

"But the rewards, the rewards are huge. You have an army of powerful people devoted to you, and to your protection, so many people who would die for you without a seconds thought.

"You get to influence entire generations of students, passing on your knowledge and experience.

"And every day, you get to look out at our village, and know, deep in your heart, that you are doing the right thing, not just for yourself, and for your family, but for the hundreds of thousands of people you are letting be normal.

"That is a Kage, living with the hard decisions, to let everyone else do their jobs without having to worry."

Tsunade pulled out a deck of cards. "It's simple, we each deal one hand. Best hand wins."

"What are the stakes?"

"If I win, you forget all my debts, and you let me gamble all I want for the rest of my life. You never come to me again, and I go on as I have been."

"And if I win?"

"You win me, and Shizune."

"What!" Shizune almost screamed.

"Quiet, apprentice," Tsunade snapped.

Naruto looked at her for a long moment, and then slowly smiled. He understood, he hoped. She wanted the job, but her pride wouldn't let her just give up her life. Doing it this way, by chance, even if she lost, she could claim that she was back because he ordered her to.

If the Hokage felt that she needed someone to lean on, he'd do his damndest to be that person. It was his duty as loyal leaf shinobi.

"Deal the cards," he told her.

Shizune gasped, her hands going in front of her face, as she tried to hide.

With an expert flick of her fingers, Tsunade shuffled the deck, then placed it on the table, tapping the top. Naruto reached out and cut it.

Tsunade dealt out five cards each. Naruto flipped his cards over, not looking at them. He looked straight at Tsunade.

“If I win, something bad is going to happen,” she said. “That’s how my luck works.”

“Not this time. If you win, you’ll get what you wanted.”

She flipped other each card, her eyes not saying anything, as she looked at them. With the second to last card turned over, Shizune gasped.

He looked down. He had a three of a kind in eights. Tsunade had two tens, and two random cards. If the last was a ten, she had won, if not, he had.

Her hand hovered over it.

He reached out and turned the card.

The ace of spades.

Shizune collapsed backward.

“We leave after breakfast, Hokage-sama.”

Tsunade met his eyes for a long moment, before she smiled and nodded. “As you wish, Naruto-sama.”

“Just Naruto.”

“And to you, I am Tsunade, not Hokage-sama.”

He smiled at her. “Do you need to pack?”

“We just need to pick up Tonton, we’ll meet you at the gates?”

He nodded and saw them out, Shizune still looking shell-shocked.

As soon as they were gone, he created Five and sent him on a mission.

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 6

It was late in the evening when they stopped. He'd set up a couple of tents, and they were eating dinner. He'd dropped his adult look, and was happily back acting like the fifteen year old he was.

It was all very well trying to be mature, but he still preferred acting like a kid.

"Finally caught up with you," Jiraiya grunted as he sat down and helped himself to some soup.

"Enjoy the whore house?"

Jiraiya nodded. Happily. "So, Tsunade-chan, he convinced you, eh?"

"No," Tsunade replied. "He won us in a poker game."

Jiraiya seemed to freeze.

"Hmm, I broke him."

"It's not difficult."

"He, he, he, he," Jiraiya giggled. Suddenly he stood, and pounced, grabbing Naruto and pulling him away. "I know you're a kid," the Pervert continued, "so some advice, don't forget to make them kiss each other before bed!"

Naruto sighed and freed himself from the unresisting Sannin. He headed back and sat back down.

"Know what you're doing, kid?"

"Think so..."

"Be careful, tonight's full of potential pitfalls, and I really don't want to be killed by an enraged Sannin."

"I know, I know."

"I had hoped to leave him behind," Naruto said to the others. "But, like a venereal disease, he turns up where he's not wanted."

"Hey," Jiraiya protested. "A little respect, please."

"What have you done to earn it recently? As far as I can tell, you spend your time being a pervert."

"I'm not a pervert," he protested. "I'm a super pervert!"

Naruto stared at him for a long time. Then he smiled thinly. “It’s time for bed. The three of us.”

Shizune and Tsunade looked at each other, a hint of worry on their faces, as they followed him into a tent.

He turned his back, as he got undressed, and hopped in to the enlarged bed. Tsunade was sending apologetic glances at her apprentice, as the reality of the situation she’d so blithely entered them in suddenly became real.

She had gambled both of them in a card game, and in one sense, he now owned both of them.

He suspected that they thought that he was a normal horny teenager, and he was. But he was also loyal to Anko and Kurenai, and besides, he was just doing this to drop Jiraiya in it.

The two women, dressed in the most prudish sleep wear that he’d ever seen, climbed in to bed next to him.

“Jiraiya also said that, as well as sleeping with you, I should get you two to kiss. He seemed to know what he was talking about.”

Pure unbridled anger appeared in both of their eyes for a second.

“Naruto,” Tsunade said slowly. “It’s not normal for us to kiss. He was being a pervert again.”

Naruto frowned. “Do you not love each other?” he asked curiously.

“We do, but we’re the same sex.”

“So?”

“Look, what if you were here with Jiraiya, would you kiss him?”

“Of course not.”

“See?”

“I don’t love him, so I wouldn’t kiss him. You do love each other, so you should.”

Tsunade paused, before she shot a look asking for help at Shizune. Shizune shrugged helplessly.

“Look,” Naruto sighed. “It’s easy, I’ll show you.” He leaned forward, and gently kissed Tsunade on the cheek, then did the same for Shizune. “See, a kiss. I really don’t know what all the fuss was about. Now, I’m going to sleep. Sleep well.” He pulled on his frog night-cap and settled down. “*Sleep please, foxy-chan.*”

“*Look at their faces,*” Kyūbi laughed, as she obliged and knocked him out. “*They look like you just smacked them around the face with a wet fish.*”

Shizune looked down at the sleeping boy, and felt like she'd never be able to raise her jaw from the floor again. It had been the strangest thirty hours of her life. From meeting a handsome man, finding out he was a kid, getting drunk, then having the best date of her life, and now she was here, having had her future sold by her master, to a kid who'd just made her feel like she was as bad as Jiraiya.

When he had said for them to kiss, she'd instantly presumed he meant in a deeply erotic way. And she was mortified at the idea, and she refused to acknowledge the tiny part of her that was slightly curious.

And then, he had shown her, with a simple soft kiss on the cheek, and she realised that it was her that had been the pervert, not him. This innocent teenager in front of her had taken Jiraiya's perverted advice, and cleaned it up so much.

Tsunade giggled next to her. "I'm going to beat the Pervert to within an inch of his life tomorrow, then hug the brat for not letting himself be corrupted."

Shizune giggled. "I feel so guilty," she confessed. "I thought..."

"Yeah, me to."

"Why did you do this?" she asked softly.

"Because, by saying he what he did, by asking not if I would take the job, but if I was worthy, he made me want to prove myself again. Dan and Nawaki, and my parents, and grandparents, were judging me, and like him, they were not happy.

"What I want, is for people like him to think about me, as he does about Sensei. But I'm not strong enough to do it by myself. If I was, I would have done so a long time ago. I know who I am, Shizune, I'm not strong."

"You're the strongest," she protested.

"In strength, maybe, but not where it counts. Without you, I would have probably lost a fight years ago, on purpose. I've not been a good master."

"You have!"

"No, I've not been, and I know it. You've been incredibly loyal, more so then I have deserved." Tsunade reached over and gently kissed her on the cheek. "Thank you."

Shizune felt herself blushing. "But..."

"And I did it for you," Tsunade finished with a teasing glint in her eyes. "Someone was walking on air when she got in last night."

“He’s already in a relationship, though.”

“And they’re going to have to get used to the idea that he owns you,” she said smugly. “And no one who cares so much for his home is ever going to let you go.”

Shizune re-acquainted herself with the feeling of her jaw being on the ground.

“Now, sleep,” Tsunade ordered, and settled down on the other side of Naruto.

Shizune settled down as well, but her thoughts would not let her sleep in to well in to the night.

The Sandaime looked up as there was a knock on his door, and a familiar figure entered.

“I don’t think we’ve met?” the Hokage asked.

“Oh, I’m Five,” the Naruto-clone said cheerfully. “And, would it be okay if I borrow some Chakra from someone? I’m running a little low. I kinda got from Bird in a few minutes by riding the lightning. Great fun, but tiring. Oh, and well, I kinda need a hug to get it.”

“I’ll do it,” Anko said, emerging from the shadows.

“Um, would be better if Yugao-san was here,” Five said.

“Oh?” Anko asked.

“Hug the boss’s girlfriend?” Five asked. “Not a good move, I might get demoted!”

“Demoted?” The Sandaime asked, as Yugao moved out of the shadows as well.

Five walked over and hugged her, there was a small glow as Yugao opened up her Chakra, and Five took it in.

“That’s better,” Five said, bowing to her. “The best clones get created many times, and get numbers. I’ve got a really high number, and I don’t want to lose it. There are thousands of clones after my job, after all.”

“So what’s with the Yugao-san?” Yugao asked curiously.

“Only the boss call’s you Babe-chan,” Five explained. “We’d only do it when we’re impersonating the boss.”

“You do that a lot?” Anko asked.

He shrugged, “When it’s needed. Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen are currently on long term duty impersonating the boss in various countries, getting reports on how the businesses are doing. When they come across something they can’t handle, the boss asks for help here and tells them

what to do.”

“Fascinating,” the Hokage murmured.

“Clone politics are fun,” Five continued. “But it means we’re always looking to pull off the best moves. I was the one that scared Gatō into signing over his businesses, so I got promoted to level three. Eleven’s spent the most time of anyone out and about, and he’s the one that knows how the boss thinks best of all of us, so he’s really good at being a replacement.

“And of course, then there’s Four,” he sighed softly.

“Four?”

“I think we’re all in love with Four,” Five explained. “She’s the only female clone. We did wonder if, you know, one of us could get with her.”

“But, she likes girls?” Anko suggested.

“Exactly, well, as much as any of us clones do. You know, she was with us on the dock, when one of the bastards got a lucky shot in and dispelled her. We all went a bit nuts after that.”

Anko sniggered.

“Why are you here?”

Five sat up straight. “Sorry. Naruto’s got Tsunade-sama returning to Konoha, they should be here in a couple of days. I need permission to open a casino here.”

“Why?” The Hokage asked.

“Because Tsunade really enjoys gambling, and this way Naruto can control it. The money she loses to him, Naruto can give to Shizune to ensure that she has enough. It also means he can ban sake when she’s working.”

“He can ban?” the Sandaime asked.

Five’s hand reached up and he scratched the back of his head. “Well, Naruto kinda won Tsunade and Shizune in a card game.”

The Hokage sighed, as an amused look flickered around his eyes. “You know how to run a casino?”

“We’ve got a load of them already, we know the laws, and we can guarantee you a very healthy tax revenue stream. As well as guaranteed ethical management, local employment, and a place for all the Ninjas to let off steam safely.”

The Hokage shrugged. “Okay.”

“Cool,” Five breathed in relief. “The boss sent me so that I can grab the Wave guys and gals and get them to work on the next project. They’re working so fast and doing such a brilliant job on the boss’s home.”

“Naruto,” Jiraiya said, “there’s a small bandit camp up ahead. A couple of Chūnins there, do you want to take care of it?”

Naruto vanished.

Jiraiya chuckled to himself.

“Can he look after himself?” Shizune asked worriedly.

“He has the single greatest mastery of the Shadow Clone technique I have ever seen or heard of. Each of them has a personality, and is quite capable of using Jutsus. His normal technique is to cover the sky line with Clones and attack using overwhelming force.”

Tsunade smiled faintly. “Good technique.”

“Apart from the fact that he’s always in the middle, where the fighting is hardest.”

Tsunade and Shizune both paled slightly.

“Anyway, how are you, really?”

Tsunade shrugged. “I actually want to go back. His reverse psychology worked.”

“Yeah, it took me a while, but I’ve worked out his secret. He never does anything alone.”

“What?”

“He’s clever, he always gets plenty of opinions on what to do before hand. He asked Sensei, me, Hiashi, and a couple of others about you first, then he had a group discussion with his clones.

“Don’t get me wrong though, if he didn’t trust you, you wouldn’t be here. Naruto killed both of Sensei’s teammates because, “the old man needed people he (Naruto) trusted advising him, not self serving wretches”, and that was at the same time that he set up Danzo to be killed.”

Tsunade sniggered. “I wish I could have seen the old fool’s face as he died.”

“You can, Sensei got it all on video.”

Tsunade rubbed her hands together in pleasure. “I thought I sensed you around when he was talking to me.”

“Yeah, he doesn’t have a high opinion of me, and I understand why.”

“Oh?”

“Kakashi.”

“Your number one fan?”

“Not even in the top hundred,” Jiraiya mumbled. “And the most idiotic. Even I don’t recommend reading Icha Icha Paradise in public. A couple of academy students stole a copy from him, one of them, a Hyūga heiress, thought it was a guide book, and long story short, Naruto woke up with a twelve year old, who had barely started puberty snuggling him, expecting some fun and games.

“As much as he blames Kakashi, he has some anger at me for writing the stories.”

“Ahh,” Tsunade nodded. “That explains his distaste.”

Jiraiya nodded. “I’ll get through to him, I do have some principles.” He paused. “Not many.”

“True,” Shizune mumbled.

“Naruto has dealt with Kakashi?”

Jiraiya grinned. “Unmasked him in a bar. Sensei then grabbed him, as one of the kids that got the book was Kon.”

“So,” Tsunade interrupted. “What’s going on with the world?”

“Have you ever heard of Akatsuki?”

The Sandaime looked at the Jounin Senseis in front of him. “So,” he said, “I said that I’d ask your opinions about your teams. What do you think?”

“I’ve got a problem with Haku,” Kakashi said before anyone else could say anything.

“Oh? She’s not ready?”

“No, well, I mean, she’s at Jounin level already. She’s massively over-qualified for it. Stamina, skill, ability, planning, you name it, she’s that good. So I don’t know what to do with Sasuke and Sakura.”

The Hokage smiled. “That’s perfect. Naruto should be home in the next few days, he can take her place temporarily.”

Naruto bounced back toward the four others, and picked up Tonton who was trotting happily between Shizune and Tsunade.

“That took a long time,” Jiraiya teased. “Losing your touch?”

“Three Chunins, not two,” Naruto explained. “Was fun.” He took a deep breath. “There’s a hot springs three miles ahead, on the left, at the bottom of a large hill, and it seems that there’s some sort of female-only day there.”

Jiraiya’s after image slowly faded in to nothing-ness.

“Naruto-kun?” Shizune asked.

Naruto moved out and took her hands, he placed Tonton in her arms, and slipped a pair of handcuffs on her wrists. “Sorry, Shizune-chan, these are from Ibiki, they won’t let you use Chakra.”

“What?” Shizune and Tsunade both demanded.

“I’ve asked Foxy-chan to not heal me,” he continued, ignoring them. He pulled out a kunai, took a deep breath, and plunged it into his chest. Shizune screamed. The pain was white hot, he dragged the metal out, and some blood for an arterial vein squirted in to the air, some of it landing on Tsunade, who froze.

The pain was worse than he had expected, there was no adrenaline to act as a pain killer.

“P-please,” he choked out, finding blood in his mouth. He started to choke, and couldn’t seem to stop.

“Tsunade-sama, you must do something, Naruto-kun is dying.”

Tsunade didn’t move. She was staring at her hands, at his blood on her hands, in horror.

“Naruto, you fucking idiot, you’re almost completely out of chakra! I might not be able to fix this in time. Atleast ask before doing something so mindbogglingly stupid!”

“Tsunade,” Shizune shouted firmly, “you will heal this patient in front of you immediately!”

Tsunade looked up, her eyes were lost.

“You will use your chakra to drain his lungs and heal his wounds, and then you will relax. You will do it, and you will do it now.”

Her hands reached out, a green glow appeared around them.

“The lungs first,” Shizune ordered.

“I know, I know,” Tsunade snapped back, her hands moving. She paused. “I know,” she whispered, and a small smile appeared on her face. The pain in Naruto’s chest slowly vanished, and he was able to breathe again.

A few seconds later, with Foxy-chan now helping, he was back to normal.

He panted for a few seconds, then unlocked Shizune's handcuffs. The dark haired medical specialist reached back and gave him a punch that would have made her mistress proud.

Naruto flew back, landing on the ground, his head snapping to the right. "I deserved that," he muttered. He stood and shook his head. "That was, by a long way, the Kami-damned stupidest thing I have ever done!"

Tsunade giggled, and reached out and pulled him close. "Thank you," she said, and kissed him gently on his forehead.

He grinned at her. "It was still a stupid way of dealing with it, it could have backfired massively."

"Yes," she agreed. "And as Shizune has punched you, and you already understand how stupid that idea was, not to mention that if you'd been an inch to your left, you'd have died, I'll just appreciate the gesture."

"Well," he scratched the back of his neck. "The Pervert told me about your fear of blood, and we can't let anyone use that against you, can we? Oh, and foxy-chan said thanks, and is still telling me off for not even checking with her first."

"And why, exactly, are you so short of chakra? The bandit camp can't have been that bad."

"Err," Naruto grinned. "So, maybe I shouldn't have set up a prank like I did before trying this. I'll learn that lesson for next time."

"A prank?" Shizune said, as she walked up and hugged him tightly. "I'm sorry for hitting you."

"I'm sorry for scaring you, and I did deserve it. Oh, and the ordering around? Really sexy."

Shizune blushed and giggled.

"Come on, let's go see my revenge on the Pervert. It's something that Kurenai-chan came up with. Like with clones, I can't create normal ones, as I've just got too much Chakra. With clones, I create thousands of Shadow Clones, which is way over the top. So, Kurenai-chan thought I should try a massively over-the-top illusion, so I did.

"Long story short, I managed to make it look like Konoha had vanished. And it scared the stuffing out of people, because all the Ninja couldn't tell it was an illusion, it was so big, and so massive, that it hid all the signs they normally look for.

"Once you've seen it a few times, you'll be able to tell, but because it's so big, it will fool anyone the first time." He grinned. "It fooled the old man."

Tsunade had a big smile on her face, as the four of them walked, well, three walked, one pig snuggled against Shizune's chest.

Naruto nudged Tsunade, “is it wrong of me to be jealous of a pig?”

Tonton looked up and grinned at him.

Tsunade just laughed and put an arm around his shoulders.

They caught up with the Pervert, who was hidden behind a fence, giggling incessantly as he scribbled frantically. There was a pool close to the fence, then some grass, and another series of pools that the ladies were bathing in.

“Stay here,” Naruto whispered, “and watch.” He walked over to Jiraiya, “Look, Pervert, I’ve been a bit harsh on you,” he said.

Jiraiya nodded in agreement.

“So, as an apology, Foxy-chan gave me a Jutsu for you. You use the Dog seal three times, concentrate on your eyes, and call, “Memory No Jutsu,” it will seal what you see in to your memory, so that you will always be able to remember it in perfect clarity.”

“Thank you,” Jiraiya breathed excitedly. His hands flew, and he grinned happily.

Naruto reached out and touched the fence, so that it became transparent. “They can’t see you, and you’ll be able to hear them better,” he said, as he walked back to the other three.

“Naruto?” Shizune asked. “What?”

“Just watch,” he grinned.

“I’ve got an idea,” the voice floated. “There are no men around, why don’t we skinny dip in that pool over there?”

There was a chorus of agreements, as they walked out of one pool, their towels around their waists, and their chests bouncing with each step. All of them were gorgeous, with each having a unique hair colour.

Jiraiya had stopped writing, his whole concentration on the approaching women. A couple were kissing each other playfully as they moved. “I’m gonna make you scream, Hitomi-chan,” one of the girls promised.

They paused in front of the large pool, and stretched up, before, each of them put their hands to their towels.

“Please, Kami, please,” Jiraiya pleaded under his breath.

As one, all of them dropped their towels, and, five seconds later, Jiraiya screamed, a scream of agony and torture. “Noooooo!”

Naruto fell to the ground and laughed as hard as he could. The image of Jiraiya's face as he stared at the group of beautiful girls, each with erect male genitalia, would stick with him for the rest of his life.

"Tsunade-sama," Shizune said.

"Yes, my apprentice?"

"Please, never let me get on Naruto's bad side."

"As long as you do the same for me."

"I will. That said, it was funny."

Tsunade grinned, and then laughed, and a second later she was on the floor with Naruto. Shizune joined them a few moments later. Tonton was already on his back, his legs waving in the air.

Naruto looked up, "Release," he whispered, and the hot springs vanished. The ladies quickly turned back into Naruto-clones, each with an identical wide smile. They dispersed in a group, leaving nothing but grass behind them.

He walked over to Jiraiya, "Now we're even, old man," he said cheerfully. "I had something horrific, you've had something horrific." He helped him up. "So, you're a Sannin, right?"

Jiraiya, his eyes wide, nodded.

"Then, on the way back, you can help train me, along with Tsunade-chan and Shizune-chan."

It was another four days when they arrived in Konoha. They got through the gates quickly, the very fact that Tsunade, related to the first two Hokages, was back, was a cause for them to be rushed through.

Naruto took them on a slightly scenic route, and they paused by a large lot, where a horde of Naruto's were clearing it out.

"What is going on here?" Tsunade asked.

"I figured you'd want to see this place first," Naruto said. "After all, if a Hokage works hard all day, and gets all her paperwork done, why shouldn't she be allowed to spend the night relaxing at Kohona's first casino and nightclub?"

Tsunade squealed happily, and pounced on Naruto, giving him a full body hug. Naruto had to use Chakra to stay upright.

She kissed him on the forehead, then hopped off. "Come on, Pervert," she said. "Let's go see the old man. Naruto, can you take Shizune to the nearest hotel?"

“Why?”

She looked at him.

“Because, as long as you don’t mind the fact that there is a load of building work going on, I figured you’d live with me in my new house.”

“You have the space?”

Naruto grinned. “Head toward Dad’s land when you’re ready.”

Tsunade walked with Jiraiya in to the Hokage’s office. She smiled at the old man at the desk, despite everything; it was good to see him again.

“Hey, Sensei,” she said.

He smiled warmly at her, then moved around the table and hugged her. “It is really good to see you. Even if you are three days later than I expected.”

Tsunade shrugged. “We got carried away training Naruto.” She looked past him, at the four ninjas hidden in the shadows. “So, you must be Anko-chan, Babe-chan, Sleepy-kun, and I’d recognise that mask anywhere, Tiger.”

The ninja’s in masks removed them, and smiled at her. “Tenzou,” she nodded to the one that had been wearing the Tiger mask.

“Lady Tsunade,” he said, going down on one knee.

“Rise, I’ve told you before, you’re kinda family.”

“Kinda,” he agreed with a slightly amused look.

Tsunade turned to Anko. “Yes, Naruto is back, yes, you can go and see him, no you can’t dump Shizune, yes, he does own us, no, we’re not letting him out of it, yes, you will have to learn to share if you want a relationship with him, no, I don’t know if I want to join in, no, I don’t know about Shizune, no, never with her, yes, we are living with him, yes, if you hurt him, I will kill you personally.”

Anko closed her mouth, as every question she had was answered. She slowly smiled wryly.

“Yes, she is,” Tsunade finished, “and no, I don’t have any problem with your past, both because having a problem would be illogical, and because Naruto-kun is crazy about you.”

Anko laughed and grinned. “I look forward to serving you,” she said with wicked smile.

“I’m sure you do. Oh, and just wait until I tell you how Naruto got revenge on the Pervert.”

Anko clapped her hands together. "I could get Naruto and Shizune to tell me."

Tsunade nodded.

Anko vanished in a swirl of leaves.

"That," the Sandaime said dryly, "is the first time I have seen that technique done quite so exuberantly."

"She's a tiger, that one, no offence, Tenzo."

"None taken," the ANBU replied.

"I get no respect," Jiraiya muttered.

"I would like to know," Yugao said cheerfully.

"As would I," the Hokage agreed. "Do you want my job now?"

"Nah," Tsunade replied. "You can judge the Chunin exam. I'll take over after that."

"Excellent, I'm sure that council will be delighted. They've been ever so helpful recently."

"So I heard."

"They seem to be under the impression that if they don't do a good job, Naruto might think that they're harming the village. And I might have let slip that Naruto was instrumental in Danzo's death, as well as my former team mates, because he thought they were harming the village."

"You know," Jiraiya interrupted. "I think that after the exams, I'm going to take him on a training trip. Should be a couple of years, no more than that."

"What!" The word came from everyone in the room, with the exception of Hokage and Tenzo.

Jiraiya shrugged. "You've all done a pretty amazing job with him, but I can do better."

"I think it's an excellent idea," the Hokage said firmly. "In fact, it's such a good idea, that I'm going to go as well."

This time, the "what" did come from everyone else in the room.

"Part of the reason I'm retiring is so that I can train Naruto, I do agree that he'd prosper more out of the village, where he doesn't have distractions. It would also give me a chance to introduce him to the world, and meet some of my old friends."

"So that he can take over from me," Tsunade finished.

The Hokage nodded. "He has good instincts, but needs to know when to act and when not to act,

sometimes doing nothing is the best thing.”

Tsunade sat down and sighed. “Well, I’m glad you’re gonna take the flak for this, I can see a lot of irritated people going for your blood.”

“My blood?” the Sandaime asked. “We’re not announcing it until after the finals. When you’re in charge.”

“I hate you.”

“I think,” Naruto said with Shizune, “is that we should head through town first, I can introduce you to some people. Then we’ll head to the Hyūga compound, and tell Hiashi that I’m moving out, before we see how our new place is coming.”

“Okay,” Shizune agreed.

“Hey, that hurt!” The noise came from around the corner.

“Put me down!”

“That’s Konohamaru,” Naruto said, vanishing around the corner. Shizune following him closely.

As they rounded a corner, Konoha was being held up by a black-clad shinobi with a large sack on his back. Next to him was a girl with her hair in four ponytails. They were wearing headbands that announced that they came from the Suna, the Village Hidden in the Sand.

“You have two seconds to put my student down, before I have you killed, Chunin exam or no Chunin exam,” Naruto said coldly.

The foreign ninja looked at Naruto in surprise.

“Two, one.”

As the boy hadn’t moved, three clones appeared, each with their swords against the boy’s neck. “I said,” Naruto growled, “Put him down.”

The boy did, and Kon scampered over behind Naruto.

“*Kid, kid,*” Kyūbi said, her voice sounding upset. “*I’d recognise that Chakra anywhere. It’s Shukaku, the one tailed Tanuki. In the tree. He once tried to mate me when I was asleep!*”

“*But that’s rape!*” Naruto mentally said in horror. “Kon, Shizune, run, now.”

“But.”

“That was an order,” Naruto snapped. “Get the ANBU here, immediately.”

Shizune took Kon and vanished.

“Shukaku,” Naruto yelled, to the red haired boy in the tree. “Get your arse down here immediately!”

The two nins next to him gasped in horror, as a red-haired boy swirled in to place next to them. Sand formed first, then faded down, leaving the boy clear and glaring at him.

“Mother wants your blood!” the boy growled. The other two slowly started to back away.

“G-G-Gaara,” one of them said.

“Quiet, Kankuro,” Gaara snapped. He pulled out some killer intent at Naruto.

“Your mother is an attempted rapist, and your intent to kill me is pitiful. This is how you do it!” He pulled out his own hatred for perverts, and added the extra hate he had for anyone who hurt one of his key people. Foxy-chan was lending him anything he wanted. He looked directly at the boy, and released it in one single burst.

The boy stumbled back a step or two, a look of shock on his face. The other two were frozen, caught in the outskirts of it.

“I have no problem with you, Gaara,” Naruto snarled. “But that one tailed git inside you, I’m going to rip his fucking tail off and give to Kyūbi as a Kami-damned present, you son of a bitch.”

“Mother,” Gaara cried. “You won’t take my mother!”

“Your mother is a male, you idiot, he’s not even managed to get past needing a sex yet.”

“But…”

“What’s going on here?” the Sandaime asked as he appeared next to them. Tsunade and Jiraiya were next to him, Shizune, and several ANBU teams were surrounding them.

“Did you know that Suna were sending a Jinchūriki?”

“No, they somehow failed to mention that. Where is your sensei?”

The red-head was looking panicked, the other two still couldn’t move.

“Naruto, would you please let them move?”

Naruto growled.

“My turn,” Anko said cheerfully, as she bounced in front of him. “Missed you,” she said, as she kissed him.

As much as Naruto wanted to keep up the killing intent, it was impossible to feel like that when you had someone like Anko kissing you.

“Thank you,” The Sandaime muttered in amusement. “Now, who is your Jounin-sensei?”

“B-B-Baki,” the girl said.

“Fetch him.”

Two ANBU left, and returned less than thirty seconds later with a tall ninja, he had a bandage covering his head and the left side of his face.

“Lord Hokage?” he asked, going down on one knee.

“Would you care to explain why your charges decided to assault my grandson?” the Hokage asked calmly. “And quite how you forgot to mention that...”

“Gaara,” Naruto said. “The one-tailed Shukaku is inside him. Once I get through with him, he’ll just be another pitiful tail-less beast!”

The Sandaime sighed.

“My apologies, Lord Hokage,” Baki said smoothly. “We weren’t aware that we needed to say anything.”

“Cloud are participating for the first time in years, and they told me,” the Hokage said. “A matter of politeness, if nothing else. Ensure that your Genin are under control. Naruto, please leave them alone until the exams.

“And if you are interested, the other Jinchūriki is entering through the main gate in about thirty minutes.”

“Okay,” Naruto reached out a hand to Shizune. As soon as she was in range, he made the hand seals and grabbed both her and Anko.

Temari tried as hard as she could not to shake, as the boy in front of her vanished with two other girls in a burst of lightning.

She had thought that nothing could be scarier than Gaara. She had been wrong. Very wrong. Gaara had the one tailed beast inside him. The boy – Naruto – had a nine tailed beast. And perhaps worse, appeared perfectly rational. That much power combined with a rational outlook to life scared her intently.

“We are allies, Baki,” The Hokage said softly. “Please inform the Kazekage that I desire a word or two with him, as soon as he arrives.”

“I will.”

The Hokage, and the others vanished.

“The hotel, now,” Baki ordered, his voice implacable. She ran, as fast as she could, ignoring the others. She wanted to hide, but knew she couldn’t.

Back in their hotel room, they collapsed down.

“Who the hell was he!” Kankuro shouted.

“Weren’t you paying attention?” Temari snapped. “He’s like Gaara, but with the Kyūbi inside him.”

“This is a problem,” Baki muttered. “Did you see who was behind the Hokage?”

She shook her head.

“Jiraiya and Tsunade.”

“But they’re not supposed to be here,” she protested.

Baki scratched his bandaged head. “I need to report to your father, this may change our invasion plans.”

“I need to fight him,” Gaara muttered. “For Mother’s honour.”

Naruto sat with his feet dangling off the edge of the building, as Shizune and Anko had a whispered conversation behind them. There was a slightly scary amount of giggling going on between the two.

Up ahead, he could see four ninjas approaching. One a blonde girl that, even from the distance he was at, seemed powerful. Judging by her height compared to her companions, she was probably the Jounin sensei of the other three.

“*That’s little Nibi!*” Kyūbi said excitedly. “*She’s a good friend, like my baby sister.*”

Naruto watched as they entered through the gates. He jumped down from the roof, somersaulting twice, before landing in front of them.

“Nibi!” he cried cheerfully, and hugged the shocked girl. “Welcome to Konoha!”

The Jinchūriki moved out of his arms. “Who the hell are you?”

Naruto pouted at her. “You mean Nibi doesn’t recognise us?”

Her eyes faded. “Kyūbi?” she asked in surprise.

Naruto grinned at her. “Uzumaki Naruto, host of Kyūbi no Yōko, at your service.” He gave her a small bow.

“Nil Yugito, host of Nibi no Bakeneko.”

“Did you know that Shukaku is here?”

Yugito hissed under her breath.

“Sorry,” he said, “but I’ve already reserved the right to rip his tail off and give it to Kyūbi.”

Yugito pouted for a second, before shooting a kick out. Naruto swayed back the three inches needed for it to miss, and looked at her curiously.

“So, you’re not really a Genin,” she said with a smile.

He shook his head. “Genin, just got back from a trip where I got some training from a couple of the Sannin.”

She blinked and laughed softly. “Well, my guys are going to have to work to get promoted.”

Naruto waved at the three Genin standing behind her, they were pretending not to listen in.

“Where are you staying? I’ll guide you there.” As they set off, he looked at her. “I didn’t think that the Village Hidden in the Clouds sent Genin teams to us?”

“We don’t, normally, but I’m here to spy on you.”

“Me?”

“Yeah, when rumour starts spreading about the son of Fourth Hokage freeing a country, and taking over many businesses, the Raikage got a little curious. I’m here to see if you’re a threat.”

“Should you be telling me this?”

She shrugged. “Probably not, no. But then, if Kyūbi told you that you could trust someone implicitly, you’d follow...” she paused. “What is the correct pro-noun for referring to a being that no longer needs a sex? ‘It’ sounds massively insulting.”

“Oh, I just call her Foxy-chan,” Naruto said cheerfully.

“Nibi’s laughing. Anyway, you’d follow Foxy-chan’s advice?”

Naruto nodded. “Of course.” They arrived outside a large hotel. Naruto looked at it and frowned. “Look, if you get bored of hotel accommodation, you’re welcome to move in with me –

I have at least six bedrooms free at the moment.”

She smiled and gave him a hug. “Thank you, brother.”

“I know this is weird,” Naruto agreed, “but I do see you as my little sister.”

“And I’m close to a foot taller than you,” she teased.

Naruto smiled and hinged in to his adult form. “Is this better?”

Yugito reached out and touched his forehead. “A solid henge?”

Naruto grinned and changed to his female form. “We should go to the spas later. I can introduce you to some of the cool ninjas around here.”

“Nibi says that you really are female, hormones, pheromones, and all?” she said in surprise.

Naruto nodded. “Period, potential for pregnancy, the lot,” he agreed. “Not going to happen though, because even in this form, I like girls.”

“Like the two that are following us?”

“Anko’s kinda one of my girlfriends, and I won Shizune and Tsunade in a card game. I’ve had an interesting six months.”

Yugito studied him for a long time. “Yes,” she said abruptly. “We’ll go to the Spa together, I’m sure you’ve got a fascinating story, and I want to hear it.”

Naruto grinned at her. “How about tomorrow evening? I’ve got a load still to do today.”

She smiled. “I’ll look forward to it.” She paused. “Naruto, we’re not here to go eye hunting, if that makes sense.”

He looked at her, then grinned. “Your Raikage isn’t popular, but I’ll make sure that no one takes it out on you. Come on, Shizune-chan, Anko-chan,” he called to the two women, and then transported them to the Hyūga clan compound.

“Naruto-sama,” one of the branch members cried, throwing herself forward and hugging him tightly.

Naruto knew his expression was one of shock, as he looked at Shizune and Anko helplessly. He stroked her back, now aware that she was crying. Others were gathering around him.

She slowly pulled back and looked up at him. For the first time, he noticed that she, and the others, had a completely unblemished forehead. He smiled at her. “Brilliant, that stupid seal is gone!”

She nodded and turned, gathering her hair and raising it, showing a small tattoo at the base of her neck. “We’ve all got one of these, even Hiashi-sama,” she said happily. “All the benefits, none of the pain.”

At that, he was mobbed by happy Branch members who wanted to thank him. It eventually took Hiashi to pull him out of the mess. Safely ensconced in his office, Naruto looked at Anko and Shizune balefully. “A lot of help you were.”

“Ahh,” Anko smirked. “Poor Naru-kun couldn’t handle all those nasty people being grateful.”

“Welcome back, did your mission go successfully?” Hiashi interrupted the nascent argument.

“Hiashi-san, may I introduce Shizune, Tsunade’s apprentice.”

“We’ve met,” Hiashi said, aiming a small smile at Shizune, who smiled back.

“Okay,” Naruto agreed as he dropped in front of the older man and settled down. “Two things.”

“You’re moving out, as your first house is habitable.”

Naruto grinned. “Yup, as soon as I’m ready, I’ll invite you all around for a house warming party.”

Hiashi nodded. “And the second thing?”

“Cloud sent a Genin team.”

Hiashi scowled, and started to rise.

“And while normally I’d agree with what you’re about to do, they were clever. They sent my sister.”

Hiashi paused and slowly lowered himself back in to his chair. “Sister?”

“Nil Yugito, holder of Nibi no Bakeneko, and Foxy-chan’s little sister. She’s the Jounin sensei for her Genin team. She has also promised me that she is not here on an eye hunt, nor is anyone from Cloud.”

“So you’re saying that our argument is with Cloud, not your sister?”

He nodded.

Hiashi sighed deeply, a frustrated look on his face. “I understand, I know people were just following orders, and that we’ve done some pretty bad thing, but still, it’s difficult not want to get some revenge in. I will inform Neji myself. Now, have you eaten?”

“Nope.”

Hiashi looked at his watch. "Come, we will eat." They walked out, everywhere they went they were met with beaming smiles. They joined Hinata, Neji and Hanabi in the dining room.

"Kawaii!" Naruto yelled cheerfully as he pounced on Hanabi. She smiled at him and hugged him tightly, before he released her.

"Hey Hinata-chan, Neji."

"Welcome back, Naruto-kun," Neji said. "I have heard that you've had an interesting afternoon."

"Yeah."

"Neji, Hinata, Hanabi, representatives from Cloud are participating in the Jounin exams. This is not the time for revenge."

"Why not?" Neji asked.

"Because they sent their Jinchūriki, who happens to be Kyūbi's little sister."

Neji sighed and grumbled under his breath.

"Thanks," Naruto said. "For those that don't know, this is Shizune, Tsunade's apprentice, and you know Anko."

"Hey," Anko waved.

"Thank you for having me," Shizune said calmly, as she took a seat.

Dinner was quite fun, as Naruto regaled them with tales from the mission, leaving Anko in hysterical laughter at what had happened to Jiraiya.

After they had finished, Hinata stood. "Father," she said softly. "I will not be eating with the family tomorrow. Kiba-kun has invited me on a date, and I have accepted."

"Woo, Kiba's a lucky guy," Naruto praised.

"Indeed," Hiashi muttered. "I hope it all goes well."

Hinata blushed, and managed to get out of the room without fainting.

"Neji," Naruto said slowly. "Do you fancy a walk later this evening?"

"A walk that just might take us past the Inuzuka compound?"

"There's a chance that, in the spirit of pure coincidence, that we might go that way," Naruto agreed.

"And if we were to see, say, Kiba, we might have a word?" Neji.

Naruto nodded. “We are friends, after all, it would behove us to keep that friendship up, we could check that he’s as happy as Hinata-chan is.”

“Indeed,” Neji chuckled.

“Don’t scare him too much,” Hanabi cautioned. “You don’t want the date to be cancelled.”

“Scare him?” Naruto asked. “Nonsense, it would just be a friendly little chat. Right, Neji?”

“Absolutely,” Neji agreed.

“Thanks for the meal, Hiashi-san.”

“You are welcome at any time, Naruto-kun.”

Naruto grinned at him. “Catch you later,” he said, as he popped away with the other two, to have a look at his new house.

They arrived in front of what appeared to be a small grey and white castle, complete with curved walls and wooden pointed ceilings.. To the left and to the right, hundreds of people, and more clones, were busy at work, building some smaller versions, but from what he could see, the main house was done.

“Boss!”

“Eleven,” Naruto greeted his clone. “It’s good to see you.”

“Six is over there,” he pointed to the left. “Supervising a problem with the plumbing. He’s been working hard.”

“As have you,” Naruto agreed. “You’ve done an amazing job.”

Eleven grinned. “Tazuna, get your drunken lazy arse over here,” he yelled.

Said bridge builder walked over to them. “Bloody clones,” he grumbled. “Hey, brat.”

“Drunky,” Naruto grinned at him.

Tazuna rolled his eyes, and then moved forward. He opened the doors dramatically. “Welcome to your new house.”

Naruto, accompanied by Shizune and Anko entered. To Naruto’s surprise, the entrance hall way was massive, with a white marble staircase sweeping up to a balcony for the second level, and a polished marble floor.

“Where, exactly, did you get all this marble so quickly?” Naruto asked in surprise.

Eleven coughed. “I might have leaned on a few of our contracts. We’ve got some friends in Earth, and they sent it out quickly. In unrelated news, a minor lord in Tea country is upset with us.”

“Oh dear,” Naruto said blandly.

“Yeah,” Eleven agreed. “On with the tour, Tazuna.”

They moved to the left, to a large sitting area. The walls were painted white, and there were only a couple of scraggy couches.

“Perfect,” Naruto praised.

“Huh?” Anko asked.

“I’ll explain in a bit,” Naruto said with a mysterious grin. The next room was a massive kitchen, with a long breakfast bar, and loads of windows out to the garden. It took up around half of the back of the house. Through a door, was a weapons rack, with numerous weapons already hanging in place.

“Kitchen is custom built, we had to learn carpentry to help, but it is fun. All appliances came from stores in town. We didn’t accept discounts.”

“Good.”

From the kitchen, they walked in to a room with a large hot tub sunk into the floor. There were a series of shower cubicles around the outside. The floor was tiled in blue and white, with the Uzumaki swirl in the centre. Naruto bent down and touched one.

“Under floor heating,” Eleven explained cheerfully. “After training, we can come in here, shower, then sit in the pool and relax.”

“Nice,” Anko breathed softly.

They continued to the last room on the ground floor, a huge dining room, with a long table, that was completely bare, and twenty four hardwood seats.

“There’s a corridor straight to the kitchen, so we don’t need to go through the pool area,” Eleven pointed to a door in the corner. They walked on, into a large corner room. “Library, the book cases are arriving next week.”

Through another door, they emerged back in the entrance hall.

“Up stairs, is easier. Each bedroom is the same,” he explained as they moved up the stairs. He opened the first door, to show a large room with built-in wardrobes, and a bed. As with every other room, the walls were white.

The en-suite bathroom had a shower unit, as well as a freestanding bath, a large marble top and a sink. A mirror hung on the wall over the sink.

“Okay, I can’t take it anymore,” Anko said. “Why is everything so boring! No paintings, no colours, just white everywhere. It’s like you spent all the money on the outside, with nothing left on the inside.”

“Why Anko-chan,” Naruto said with a grin. “I figured that everyone who moved in would want to decorate their own rooms, and everyone could then help decide how we decorate the rest of the house. I’ve not got a clue.”

Anko looked at him with large eyes.

“Of course,” Naruto finished. “That’s if you want to move in? You, and Kurenai-chan, I made it with rooms big enough for you.”

Before he could blink, there was a strange squee’ing noise, then he was flat on his back, with a special Jounin pounced on him.

“We can do so much,” she said eagerly. “I’ve got colour schemes in mind already. We can use clones, right? And buy what we need?”

He smiled and nodded. “Just remember that Shizune-chan and Tsunade-chan will be living here as well. And I’ve still got to ask Kurenai-chan.”

Anko pounced off him and grabbed Shizune. “Come on, let’s make notes.”

“Okay,” Shizune agreed, an excited look in her eyes, as a pen and notepad appeared from nowhere.

“You did a great job, Tazuna. All of your guys.”

“Well, actually, we just told you, erm, Eleven, how to do it, and he worked on this one with most of the clones. You’ve got a huge advantage, because you all work together perfectly. And you can just ask for advice, and you all know it.”

Naruto smiled. “Eleven, can you arrange for some more sake for Tsunade, and put something together for Tonton.”

“The pig? Sure.”

“How’s Six holding up?”

“He’s stressed, but having the time of his life.”

“I’ve got a feeling that I’m going to need you more over the next few weeks, so I’ll put Four in charge here. She’s been itching to do something.”

“Lucky Six,” Eleven mumbled.

Naruto nodded to his left, and Four puffed in to being. She smiled massively and gave a huge stretch, her hands going up, which raised her t-shirt out of her jeans and emphasised her chest.

“Eyes right, Tazuna,” Eleven warned, his voice barely audible.

“Four, can you go and fetch Tsunade at around six, and make her at home? Then talk about the decoration.”

“Sure thing, boss,” she said with a beaming smile. Four bounced over to Naruto and gave him a quick hug. “It’s good to see you back.”

“Thanks. Eleven, do you want to show her around?”

“Of course,” Eleven said, almost stuttering

The two clones left, leaving Naruto alone with Tazuna. “How are you holding up?”

“I kinda miss my family,” he admitted.

“Why not send a message home, invite everyone to come up for next weekend? We’ll have a big party, throw a barbeque, and everyone can see their families again. I can arrange for a couple of teams to escort them.”

“You’re a good kid. That’s a great idea, I’ll let the others know, and send a message. See you later, Naruto.”

Naruto looked at his watch, he barely had time to eat, so he rode the lightning to his favourite store, and spent the remaining time he did have shooting the breeze with Teuchi.

Kurenai walked in to the Hokage’s office with Shino. Her other two Genin had vanished, with an upcoming date between them.

“You’ve got to be Kurenai-chan,” a blond woman said as she entered. “And that makes you Shino.”

“Tsunade-sama,” she gasped, going down on one knee. Shino was a second behind her.

“Relax. Please. I’ve had enough of that today already.”

She stood again.

“So you know,” the Hokage said, “after the Chunin exams, Tsunade will be taking over from me.”

She nodded respectfully. “Mission complete, Hokage-sama.”

“Excellent.”

“Shino, how is living life going?” Tsunade asked.

“Slowly,” the boy said. “It is difficult to do something that you do not know how to do.”

“You want some advice?”

He nodded.

“Sake, have a party, get everyone slightly drunk, then play some silly games. You’d be amazed at how alcohol can lower inhibitions. Just don’t drink too much.”

“We will try,” he said.

Tsunade grinned at him. “Naruto said that there was a cool kid fighting to get out somewhere inside you.”

The visible parts of Shino’s face flushed slightly. “Naruto is... unique.”

“He is indeed, you can leave, Shino.”

The boy bowed and dashed out the door.

“Might I inquire as to why I must be Kurenai-chan?” she asked politely.

“Enchanting eyes, the sort of body that makes gay men reconsider their choices, and an incredible mind,” Tsunade said, her tone indicating that she was quoting. “And also the person behind the Wide Area Illusions that Naruto’s playing with.”

Naruto. Only Naruto would say something like that to someone like Tsunade.

“He told us all about you and Anko-chan on the way here,” Tsunade added.

Kurenai felt a small blush on her cheeks, as well as a warm feeling in her heart.

The doors swung open, and a figure bounced in, before pouncing on her. She closed her arms and caught the figure. “Hey,” the girl breathed.

“We ought to call you something different when you are like this,” Kurenai said.

As the door closed, Naruto looked around at the shadows. “Oh, good, we’re all friends. Hi Tiger-kun,” she waved to the corner where Tenzou was hidden. She moved out of Kurenai’s arms.

“Actually, I’m Four, the boss is having a bite to eat.”

The clone smiled brightly. It was the sort of smile that seemed to lift everyone’s mood.

“Hey, I can do something for the boss,” she cheered. “Nai-chan,” she said, looking directly at

Kurenai. Kurenai nodded slowly.

“I’m here to show Tsunade back to our new place, but we want you to come as well.”

“Why?”

“Because we’re hoping that you’ll move in with us. We’ve made you a huge room, and we’ve got all the sort of things that you’d love, in the privacy of our own home, and there’s gonna be Anko-chan, Shizune-chan and Tsunade-chan all in their own rooms as well, so no one will ever be lonely. You can even help us fill the library, we’ve got loads of space and no books!”

She blinked, this wasn’t what she had expected. And it was a huge decision.

“Besides,” Four continued, “your place is really small, and you deserve something better! Please, Nai-chan, move in with us?” Four dropped to her knees and put her hands together, looking up through her eye lashes. Her blue eyes seemed huge, dominating her face.

Kurenai didn’t stand a chance. “Okay.”

“Woohoo!” Four yelled, pouncing on her. “We’ll have so much fun,” she promised. She looked around, and then leaned in, “and the boss has promised to spend more time in this form for you. And he’ll throw in a few kisses.”

It was only through years of experience with Anko that she was able to stop blood coming from her nose at the thought.

“Come on, Tsunade-chan,” Four said, reaching out and taking the blonde’s hand. With her free hand, she scooped up a pig that had been sleeping under the Hokage’s desk, put the pig over her shoulder, then grabbed Kurenai’s hand.

A second later, Kurenai found herself being dragged along by the energetic clone.

Hanabi watched the two boys walked out of the Hyūga compound, a small smile on her face.

It had been difficult to get Kiba to ask her sister out, as she hadn’t wanted anyone to know that she had suggested it. A judicious henge, and she was able to get a message passed through one of the members of his clan.

The way that Naruto had reacted was perfect, as it made sure that he didn’t think of her sister like that.

With her out of the way, she just had to work out how to get rid of the other two girls in his life. And that was going to take a lot of thought, because they were Jounin, not little girls.

Still, nothing worth doing was ever easy.

Naruto knocked on the huge doors that marked the entrance to the Inuzuka compound. The door opened slowly, and a marked Chunin peered out. “Yes?”

“Kiba in?”

“I believe so.”

“Excellent,” Naruto said, carelessly pushing the door open and entering. “Be a good fellow and fetch him, will you? We need a quick word and we’ll be out of your hair.”

The Chunin frowned, then looked at his dog. He walked off, leaving the dog behind.

“So how’s life treating you?” Naruto asked the dog.

The dog woofed back.

“The idiotic mutt says that it’s pretty good, although he hasn’t had a fight in a long time.”

“No missions?” Naruto asked, ignoring the added commentary from Foxy-chan.

The dog barked a few times, then whined.

“His pet made some stupid comments, and he’s stuck on guard duty for a while.”

“What did your human do?”

The dog looked around, and then started to bark.

“Stop!” the Chunin yelled.

“We were only having a talk,” Naruto protested.

“Actually,” Neji muttered, “Naruto was having a conversation, I was merely hanging around.”

Naruto grinned at him.

“Naruto? Neji?” Kiba asked. “What are you doing here?”

Naruto smiled. “We’ve come to deliver the traditional threat.”

Kiba blinked. “Oh, for the love of Kami. Bog off, the both of you, it’s none of your damn business.”

“I think you’re mistaken,” Naruto replied. “Dogs can be wonderful, loyal, passionate, but then there is the other side. And as long as we can all agree that the good side shows up for the date tomorrow, no one needs to get hurt.”

Kiba growled in defiance.

Naruto laughed softly. “Neji.”

As Naruto moved forward, he caught a glimpse of Neji taking out the Chunin in seconds.

Kiba reared back and threw a punch at Naruto. A few months ago, it would have smacked through his guard and hit him. Training with a couple of the Sannin, not to mention ANBU and Jounin, as well as his other training, meant that the move was telegraphed, and he had time for a bowl of ramen, before it got near him.

He caught it, twisted casually, knocked Kiba’s feet out from under him, pushed him on to the ground, knelt on his back and twisted his arm up, so that it was painfully pointing toward the boy’s neck.

Akamaru, Kiba’s dog, came running out, but ran into a net held by a couple of clones that had been created for that purpose.

“Now,” Naruto said, not losing his amused voice. “Let’s continue our discussion.”

“What is going on here?”

Naruto looked up, to see a beautifully wild woman staring at him. She was surrounded by four dogs, one of them right next to her. Behind the dogs were five or six ninjas of various ranks.

She had the same facial markings as Kiba, but where as his looked childish, these markings just increased the feral wildness of the woman before him.

“Sweet Kami,” Naruto whispered. “You didn’t tell me your sister was so hot!”

“She’s my mother, not my sister! Let go of me, you asshole.”

Naruto blinked. “Your mother? No way.” He absently swapped position with a clone, and stood. He gathered some chakra. “Release,” he said.

Nothing happened.

Naruto frowned, and poured most of his chakra in to a second attempt to dispel the illusion in front of him. Like a wave, the red tinged chakra rushed over the woman, and headed toward town.

The woman was still the same.

“You’re really his mother, and not his sister?”

The woman smirked. “Tsume,” she introduced herself.

From the distance, a shout of “Naruto!” made him wince.

“Aren’t you a clone?”

Naruto shook his head. “That’s the clone, I swapped.”

“Seamlessly, I didn’t see it.”

Naruto shrugged. “I’ve got to say, you look incredible.”

“Flattery will get you to a certain place, but not further.”

“Who was flattering? I was telling the truth.”

“You do realise that you have the clan heir on the ground, and you’re outnumbered.”

Naruto grinned. “Numbers are meaningless, besides, we’re just having a friendly chat with our old friend Kiba.”

“Friendly?” Tsume asked.

“He’s going on a date with Hinata-chan tomorrow, and we were just making sure that he realised that Hinata is the daughter of the second most powerful person in the village, and that if Kiba shows the negative side of his personality, it would be very bad for him, but it’s friendly, because we know that Kiba’s a good person really, he just sometimes has bad instincts.

“So we were just debating the proper behaviour for a date, and just reminding him of the things he knows deep down, that he might forget in the heat of a moment.”

“Oh,” Tsume said slowly.

One of the dogs near her barked a few times.

“The stinking mutt advised that we throw you out.”

“That’s hardly polite,” Naruto said to the dog. “Besides, as an apology, can I buy you dinner?” He directed the last question at Tsume.

The dog lurched forward.

Tsume raised her hand to stop him, but before she could say anything, Naruto glared at the dog, instinctively using Kyūbi’s power.

The dog skidded to a halt, then tried to back away, whimpering slowly.

“Idiot,” the dog next to Tsume said with a grunt. “Go back to the Kennels, you are not fit for guard duty.”

The dog whined.

“I don’t care,” the talking dog continued. “You do not attack a guest, especially one not showing

any threat at all. This is clearly a human ritual, and as the boy isn't in any real danger." The dog paused, "unless he does something stupid, in which case, he deserves what he will get."

"Kuromaru!" Kiba protested.

"What do you know, a talking mutt, perhaps some are intelligent after all."

"Foxy-chan is impressed with you," Naruto translated, addressing the dog.

The dog inclined his head. "I'm going back to sleep. You should go, you've not eaten yet, and he's better than the normal idiots that ask you out."

Tsume looked at him for a long moment.

Naruto smiled at her, raising his hands defensively. "My personal life is already complicated, I have no idea how Tsunade-chan and Shizune-chan are going to fit in with Anko-chan and Kurenai-chan. But, I did invade your compound, so the least I can do is take you out to dinner, and get to know another of the people that the old man trusts so much."

"So no romance?" she said, although it was phrased as a question, Naruto could see that she had no interest in him.

"I am going to have a one-sided crush on you, but I swear nothing more than that – I give my word, and I never go back on my word."

"Okay."

Naruto hinged in to his adult form, and offered her his arm. She laughed, and sent the last dog away. She took it.

"Mum!" Kiba complained.

"Talk to the nice boys, Kiba," Tsume told him cheerfully.

"You okay finishing the message, Neji? Seventeen will hang around with you."

Neji smirked at him. "Far be it from me to stand in the way of a crush. Kiba and I will finish our chat, and then I'll go and see Tenten."

"Give her my regards."

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 7

Yugito walked through the entrance to the area she'd been told was Naruto's land. She paused. To the right, was a large city that might have once been tents, but now looked like huts. People were gathered outside, and looked to be having a great time.

To the left, four houses were currently being built, around a circular spot in the centre. She presumed more were going to be built over the current shack-ville.

The only house that was built was impressive, even though it was only two stories high.

She walked up to the front, aware of a lot of eyes on her. She knocked on the door.

The door opened, and a pretty dark-haired woman answered it. "Can I help you?"

"Err, is Naruto here?"

"Yugito-chan!" a female voice yelled, and a second later she was being hugged by Naruto in his female form. "Come in, come in."

She found herself dragged in, with the dark-haired woman, in to an enormous living room. Despite its size, it only had a couple of tatty sofas that were filled with women, surrounding a fire place.

"The boss is going to be so happy you came."

Yugito paused. "The boss?"

"Oh, I'm Four," the girl she had presumed to be Naruto said. "Oh, of course, you don't know, do you? I'm one of the Boss's clones. I'm currently a level four, that's Jounin level chakra, but of course, only the Boss's skill level."

Yugito found herself gaping at the clone. While she was doing so, she was pushed in to a spot, and Four sat on a cushion on the floor.

"Jounin level clone," she mumbled to herself.

"The boss is trying to be able to create a thousand of us."

Yugito got a vision of being on a battlefield, facing a thousand versions of her brother, and shuddered.

"Anyway," Four continued cheerfully. "Ladies, this is my little sister, Nil Yugito, she's got Nibi no Bakeneko inside her. Yugito-chan, this is Kurenai-chan, Shizune-chan, Anko-chan, and Tsunade-chan. We're just having a discussion on how to decorate this shell!"

Yugito shook herself, hard. As she did so, a wave of red chakra passed through the building. The young blonde that had been Tsunade earlier, was now a handsome woman in her fifties.

“Naruto!” Tsunade yelled, as she reapplied the illusion.

“I need a drink,” Yugito muttered.

Four shot to her feet. “I’ve got just the thing,” she promised, and vanished out the room.

“I’m Naruto’s sister,” she said softly. “Who are you?”

“Well,” Anko said, “Kurenai and I are kinda first in line for him to date, when he’s grown up a bit. He won Tsunade and Shizune in a card game, and they’re sticking around as well.”

“So when he mentioned that he had a complicated private life, he wasn’t kidding.”

The four women looked at each other, and then laughed.

Four bounced back in to the room and handed her a mug of steaming hot chocolate, complete with marshmallows and whipped cream.

“Thank you, Four.”

Four beamed at her, then opened a large book, that had loads of notes. “Here’s what we’ve got so fa...” she didn’t finish the sentence, before she burst into laughter.

“What’s happened?” Shizune asked.

“The boss took Neji to talk to Kiba about being a good doggy on his date with Hinata tomorrow. Anyway, the clone he left behind just dispersed, and that wave of Chakra? That was him trying to prove that Tsume was not Kiba’s mum.”

“Wait,” Yugito said, “you got what that clone saw as well?”

“Of course,” Four replied. “And the repe... Whoops, can’t mention them. Anyway, yeah, we do.”

Yugito tried to keep the frown of her face, as she wanted to work out what the girl was going to say. She didn’t force it, as ridiculous as it sounded, she didn’t want to get the clone in trouble.

“Morning, old man, how’s the job?”

“The prospect of retirement is amazing,” the Hokage replied evenly.

“So, what’cha got for me?”

“You know the Chunin exams are in two days time?”

He nodded.

“I want you to team back up with Sakura and Sasuke for the duration. It seems that Haku is already at Jounin level.”

Naruto grinned. “Sure.”

“So spend the day with them, practice.”

“Before I go, how would a normal Uchiha activate the Sharingan?”

“Normally, it’s a response to an intense situation.”

“Hmm,” Naruto murmured. “Okay, do me a favour and occupy Kakashi for the morning, perhaps send him after Jiraiya. Tell him that he’s not even in the top hundred of Jiraiya’s fans.”

“Why?”

Naruto grinned. “Gotta activate a Sharingan. Catch you later.” He flicked his hands and rode the lightning away.

He appeared outside the Uchiha compound, and snuck in. Through a window, he smirked, as Haku and Sasuke had fallen asleep together on the couch. He crept toward the door and broke in silently. With a whisper, he hinged himself in to a shape he’d borrowed from a now-dead bandit. Outside, fifteen more clones appeared, each as a bandit.

He created forehead protectors for each of them, each with the crest of Kiri, the Village Hidden in the Mist.

He reached over and covered Haku’s mouth. The androgynous boy’s eyes shot open. “It’s Naruto,” he hissed, “play along.”

He picked the boy up, and pulled her over the couch.

As they entered the kitchen, Naruto uncovered his mouth. “Scream.”

Sasuke woke as a terrified scream ripped through the air. Haku! He was gone. Sasuke jumped over the couch; thankful he was dressed, and dashed out the door.

Sixteen people were holding a struggling Haku, all wearing symbols proclaiming their loyalty to Mist.

“Let her go,” he ordered.

One of them smirked at him. “Little Miss Frosty missed the blood purge. No one gets away from us for long. Go back inside, little boy.”

Automatically, Sasuke's hand swooped in to his pocket and a kunai flew at the man.

The man swayed to one side, caught it, and threw it back. "Too slow, little boy. Hold her so I can kill her, quick, we need to get out of here."

"No!" Sasuke yelled, running forward and attacking them. He kicked one, and launched a fireball at the second.

He was thrown roughly to the ground. "Too slow," the same annoying voice mocked him. Sasuke rolled away, and started to dodge a barrage of weapons. He tried to get closer, but he just couldn't.

He closed his eyes for a second. Failure was not an option here, he had to save Haku, he had to, it was more important than anything, even killing his brother.

He dodged, again, and then paused. He could see things more clearly now, he ran forward, now dodging with ease, and landed a kick to the back of the man about to gut Haku.

The man vanished in a poof of smoke, as did everyone else, leaving only Haku on the floor, being held down by Naruto.

"What the hell!" Sasuke screamed.

"Congratulations," Naruto said. "You now have the Sharingan!"

He walked over and punched Naruto as hard as he could. "That was for scaring the life out of me," he said. He paused, as what Naruto had said suddenly came through. He had the Sharingan! He held out his hand, pulled Naruto to his feet, and then hugged him for a second. "That was a bastard thing to do, but thanks."

Naruto grinned, and moved out the way as Haku hugged him tightly.

He hugged his friend back. "I'm so happy for you," Haku whispered.

"So why are you here?" Sasuke asked Naruto, not letting go of Haku.

"What, I can't drop in on my two favourite lovebirds?" Naruto asked cheerfully.

Sasuke felt himself blush, but didn't let go.

"Actually, I had the old man distract Kakashi so I could come and help get you your eyes fixed, then I figured we'd go and spar for a while, as Haku here is going to be entered in the Jounin trials soon, and I'm going to be your team-mate for the Genin exams."

Sasuke tightened his arms around Haku, and swallowed the momentary jealousy that Haku was better than him. He replaced it with pride in his friend.

“So, Team Seven is back to its original members,” Haku said gently.

“Only temporarily, once we’re Chunin you’ll take my place again.”

“Are you sure that’s okay?” Haku asked.

“Look, it’s simple, really. If I want to tell Sasuke he’s being a dick, I call him on it loudly, we argue, and nothing gets resolved. That’s how we work, when you want to do it, you handle it completely differently, and Sasuke changes. That’s how a team is supposed to work.”

“Yeah,” Sasuke mumbled. “Look, Naruto, I’ve been thinking. About my future.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, Haku bought it up. After Itachi is dead and I have a child, what then?”

Naruto shrugged.

“I want head of ANBU. I’m not the right person for the Hokage, that’s your job. I want the action and adventure of being the best of the best, second only to the Hokage.

“As such,” he continued, his voice now sounding a little thin, even to his own ears, “you’re going to have to prove to me that you can be the Hokage. So, you’re in charge for the exams.”

Naruto grinned at him and bowed. “Deal. If I fail, I promise that any mission we are on together, you can lead.”

Sasuke nodded.

“Right, I’ll leave you two to have breakfast, and meet you at the bridge at ten.” He flashed his hands and vanished in the lightning.

“He’s not going to fail,” Sasuke told Haku. “Naruto never understood the concept of giving up, now he’s been trained, he’ll quickly forget how to fail as well.”

“Is that so bad?”

“Hell no, we’ll just never tell him I said that.”

Kurenai yawned and stretched, then patted the head asleep on her shoulder.

She paused, suddenly very unsure as to exactly why there was a head on her shoulder, as she always slept alone. She looked down, to see long blonde hair spread out, and an arm splayed over her.

The head moved slightly, snuggling in closer. It was disturbingly comfortable. “Four?” she

whispered.

“Sleeping,” Four murmured, and shifted, so that more of her body was pressed against Kurenai’s.

“Why are you in bed with me?”

Four groaned and looked up, her eyes were dark with sleepiness, and unable to help herself, Kurenai reached down and kissed her on the forehead.

Four smiled at her and moved her hair out of the way. “Didn’t want to sleep alone last night, asked if I could stay with you.”

“And I said yes,” Kurenai whispered, “although you were supposed to stay on your side of the bed.”

“Pfft,” Four blew eloquently. “You smell far too nice, and feel far too good, for that to happen.”

Kurenai reached out and started to stroke Four’s hair. “I thought you clones had rules to follow.”

“I’m a girl,” Four pointed out. “Part of my reasons for existence, is if a seduction mission is needed. I really hope not,” she shuddered, “because I like girls. Anyway, because of that, I’m more sexual than the boys, and while I won’t go too far, I am allowed some more leeway.”

“Naruto is very complex, far more so than I ever thought.”

“Yeah, the boss is cool like that, I think it’s because he refuses to go insane, no matter what. So, Nai-chan, why are you here?”

“I don’t know. Can you keep a secret from Naruto?”

Four looked shocked for a second. “I don’t know,” she said, “I’ve never thought about it. I guess if I locked it in my personality, then possibly, but, that’s being disloyal, and a disloyal clone is no clone at all.”

“Well, not keep a secret forever, just for a bit?”

Four grinned. “That, I can do, I’m planning on hanging around for a long time. So I won’t disperse for ages yet!”

“Okay,” Kurenai whispered. “I don’t know why I’m here. Really. I guess part of it is potential, part of it is Anko. It’s just, I dunno.” She sighed.

Four crawled on top of her and settled down comfortably. “Tell me about it,” Four ordered with a soft look in her eyes.

“Anko’s been chasing me for a couple of years, and it’s been flattering. In fact, the only reason I didn’t take her up, is because I don’t go for casual relationships, and because I could never be

enough for Anko on my own.

“And then Naruto turned up, and he was fun to flirt with, Anko and I had a little game with him, but then things started to get out of hand seriously.

“Every good ninja has personality flaws. It’s a part of doing what we do, and in general, you find someone with flaws you can live with, and take it from there.

“I like Naruto’s flaws, and suddenly I realised that if I just waited a few years, he would fix the problem. Anko would get what she needs, and I could be happy with Anko.”

“And Naruto was more someone for Anko, than you?”

“Kind of, but I like him as well. But then, there’s Tsunade, a Sannin, for Kami’s sake, and Shizune. It’s getting out of hand.”

Four sighed. “Look, you need to promise me to keep this a secret as well.”

“I promise,” she said, meaning it.

“Naruto knew that Tsunade-chan had problems, so he set about dealing with them backwards. Rather than ask Tsunade to become Hokage, he challenged her to prove that she was worth it.

“At the same time, he took Shizune out for dinner to see what she was like, and to try and understand Tsunade more.

“Tsunade is incredibly strong, but also weak. She’s been hurt as badly as all of us, and it shows. She needs someone to lean on, so the Boss volunteered to do that. He knew it might cause a problem with you and Anko.”

“So why did he do it?” she asked softly.

“Because the Boss will always think that Konoha is more important than himself. He loves this village, completely and utterly, and if it came to a decision between what as good for himself, and good for the village, he will always come second.”

“What about me?” she asked.

Four sighed. “It becomes so complicated. I can’t answer. If you asked him for something, he’d weigh up everything and make a decision.”

“I see,” Kurenai whispered. “So I have a choice, I stay and embrace abnormality, or go and be normal.”

“Normal’s for civilians,” Four stated firmly. “You stay and have fun with people who love you, or go and try and live a normal life. That would be a mistake, because you’re a Ninja, and we don’t get to choose normality, the more of us that are together, the stronger we are. You make it one on

one, and one of you dies, and the other is devastated and alone. One of us dies, we're all devastated, but we're here to help each other, to get over it."

Kurenai started to stroke Four's long blonde hair, thinking over her words. After around a minute, the blonde started to purr softly. It was a hypnotic sound, and it soothed her.

She loved Anko, but had known that they couldn't be together, not happily, not with Anko needing more. But not they had a chance of that, in a massively dysfunctional family, based on a guy that would allow her to fulfil the part of her that liked girls, without worrying about other guys, because if there was one thing she was sure of, it was that Naruto was not going to share with another male.

His clones were a perfect example of that. The girl had freedom, the boys didn't even think about it.

"Some people look comfortable."

Kurenai turned to the door and looked at Anko. She was wearing a white shirt, and not much else.

"Hey, Anko-chan," Four mumbled.

"Anko, come over here."

Anko moved over, and sat on the bed, her hand on Four's back. Four started her soft purr again.

"Are you happy?"

"This isn't about me, Nai-chan," Anko said, looking at her directly. "Say that word, and I'll walk away."

"You'd give up all of this, for me?"

"In a second."

"But I'm not enough."

"Of course you are."

Kurenai suspected that Anko was lying, even to herself. But she appreciated the thought. In her mind, an image of Narutos adult form smiled at her, and she smiled back.

"Okay," she decided. "I'm staying, but Naruto can take us out on a date, one each alone, so that I can check I'm going to be happy with him as well."

"Woohoo," Anko cheered.

"But," Kurenai continued. "I'm going on your date, you're going on mine."

“What?”

“You’ve always wanted to be taken on a romantic date, and I’ve wanted a wild one. This way, we get what we want.”

Four giggled. “I won’t tell the boss.”

“Are you sure, Nai-chan?” Anko asked.

Kurenai nodded. She’d made her decision now.

“Hey,” Four piped up. “Anko, you know, if the Boss uses his female shape, we’d be like twins, wouldn’t you like it if we worked you over?”

Anko’s eyes dilated massively, before she just passed out.

“Cool,” Four breathed.

“What did you do that for?” Kurenai asked, desperately trying to keep her own arousal under control.

“Because she’s always doing it, and I wanted to see what it was like. It was fun.”

Kurenai laughed.

“So you’re staying with us, really?”

She nodded.

Four dragged herself up slowly. “Welcome,” she said, before kissing Kurenai firmly.

Naruto arrived at the bridge in training ground seven, to find that only Sakura was there.

“Hey,” he greeted her. “I’m stepping in for Haku for the Chunin exams. She’s already better than us.”

“Okay,” Sakura said with a smile. “Want to spar while we wait?”

Naruto nodded and jumped off the bridge, and in to the clearing. Sakura followed him, launching in to a spin kick,

“Nice,” he praised, as he leaned back and guided it in front of him. She twisted, dropping to the floor, and spun again, causing him to jump, then dodge as two knives flew at him.

He landed, and jumped again, as more weapons flew at his head, while she attacked again.

“Great,” he praised, as he dropped down. A couple of Sakura clones appeared, and they circulated quickly,

Without looking, he threw two kunais to dispel them.

“Damn it,” Sakura complained, as she launched a small air bullet at him, then punched the ground, causing it to go unstable.

Naruto dropped sideways and rolled hard, avoiding her attempts to jump on him, before he jumped to his feet, pushing up from his shoulders, and dived over her, rolling clear.

With her hands now glowing, Sakura ran at him faster than she had before, aiming a sweeping claw across his chest.

He slid to one side, grabbed the wrist of her leading hand, and rolled her on to her back.

There was some applause from the bridge, as Naruto let go of Sakura.

“You’ve really improved, Sakura-chan,” Haku praised.

“Yeah, not useless,” Sasuke agreed dourly.

“But I didn’t come close to hitting Naruto,” Sakura complained.

Naruto smiled, a little embarrassed, as he scratched the back of his head.

Sasuke launched himself forward, at full speed, his Sharingan active. Without thinking, Naruto did the same move he had on Sakura.

“See,” Sasuke said as he stared up at the sky. “We’ve all improved, but the idiot’s been getting training from two of the Sannin, as well as ANBU, and Kami-knows who else. We’ve had Haku, and Kakashi.”

“Should I be insulted?” Kakashi asked from behind them.

Sakura and Naruto looked at each other for a moment. Sasuke sighed and covered his ears.

“You’re late,” they yelled together.

Haku giggled in to the silence that followed it.

“Yes, well,” Kakashi said. “I heard that I wasn’t even in the top hundred of Icha Icha Paradise fans, so I had to find out why not.”

“That’s...” Sakura started.

“True,” Naruto finished, his hand covering Sakura’s mouth. “I asked the old man to distract him this morning.”

“Oh,” Sakura said.

“Anyway,” Kakashi said, with a glare at Naruto. “As we’re back to the original group, I figured it might be an idea to do the bell test again. Just you three against me.”

Naruto rolled his eyes and made a clone. “Seventeen, keep Haku company.”

“Sure thing, boss. Can I train with her?”

“If she wants to.”

Seventeen walked toward Haku.

“Thanks,” Sasuke mumbled.

“Ready?” Kakashi asked, as he attached two bells to his belt. “Go.”

Naruto grabbed Sakura and Sasuke, and used the lightning to take them away.

“That’s cool,” Sakura announced, as they arrived on top of the Hokage’s monument.

“So what’s the plan?” Sasuke asked.

“Huh?” Sakura said.

“Naruto’s in charge, don’t worry about it, it’s all a part of a bet between the two of us.”

“Okay,” Sakura said doubtfully.

“Right, first thing is, we should do this properly, even though we are ninja.”

“That one bypassed me,” Sasuke admitted.

“Well, the easy way for us to get the bells is for me to spam a couple of thousand level one, two and three clones, and let them take care of Kakashi until he is tired.”

“And that’s wrong because?” Sasuke asked with a small smile.

“Because it’s hardly teamwork. Besides, it will be more fun for us to do it properly. Sakura, clamp down on your chakra.”

“Okay,” Sakura said, her tone still doubtful.

“Harder,” Naruto encouraged. “Concentrate on not letting any of it leak out.”

She did, and Naruto smiled. “Perfect,” he praised.

“Hmm,” Sasuke mumbled. “You’re almost invisible.”

“Exactly, so we do this the old fashioned way. Sasuke and I attack him head on, no clones, just a straight out fight, both of us going all out. We’ll pretend that you’re hiding and letting us do the work. We’ll aim him toward you, and you grab the bells, then we grab Haku, and go and have a drink and talk about what’s been going on since we split.”

Sasuke nodded approvingly.

“Sneaky,” Sakura muttered. “Are you sure I can’t help fight properly?”

“You’ve improved dramatically, but you’ve got a long way to go. I am impressed with how far you’ve come, honestly, but you’ve just found what you are fighting for, Sasuke and I have had it for much longer.”

She nodded. “Okay. Thanks.”

Naruto quickly called Nine out into the world. “Can you take Sakura nearby?”

Nine nodded. “I can’t do it like you, though, boss.”

“Sakura, you’re going to need to hug Nine to get there, he’ll borrow a little of your Chakra, as well as make the seals behind your back.”

Sakura flushed lightly, but she went over and did as she was told. Sasuke reached out and grabbed his shoulder, and they were away.

As soon as they landed, Naruto pushed forward and ran in a crouch. Over his head, two fireballs shot toward Kakashi.

Kakashi spun out the way, and out of Naruto’s path. Naruto didn’t stop, until he jumped, pounced on to a tree, and launched off it at the Jounin.

Kakashi blocked him easily enough, and then lent back dramatically to avoid a kick from Sasuke.

With a smile, Naruto dropped back a bit, and put together his torpedo Jutsu, he didn’t want to show Kakashi anything new in a spar like this.

He smacked into Kakashi, throwing the Jounin back against a tree around twenty yards away.

Kakashi stumbled forward into a punch from Sasuke.

Naruto threw his hands together, casting a wind technique. It missed Kakashi, who pushed Sasuke away and smirked at him.

“You mi…” Kakashi didn’t have time to finish his gloat, as he had to avoid the large tree falling on him.

Sasuke leapt over tree, a kick going straight into Kakashi’s face. Naruto dashed forward and,

using the same move again, torpedoed Kakashi's back. Sasuke had clearly been expecting this move, as he followed it up with a flame attack that took the shape of a roaring lion.

Kakashi grunted, and lowered his mask, revealing his own Sharingan eye. Sasuke suddenly turned his own eyes on.

Red met Red, before Sasuke smirked. Naruto, taking advantage of the stare off, kicked Kakashi to the right.

Sakura leapt up from the hole she had been hiding in, grabbed the bells, and somersaulted over the Jounin. Kakashi grabbed for her, but a wind-enhanced fireball combination from Naruto and Sasuke meant he had to pull away.

"That's cheating," Kakashi mumbled.

"Pfft," Naruto replied. "You underestimated us as always. And besides, getting distracted because Sasuke has pretty eyes? Very unprofessional."

Kakashi mumbled something else to himself, before he covered his eye back up. "Since when have you achieved your eyes?"

"Naruto saw a problem, and decided to fix it. So he did."

"How?" Sakura asked.

"He fake kidnapped Haku, then taunted me and threw things at me until it activated."

"Oh," Kakashi said. "That's actually a good idea."

"Yeah," Sakura agreed.

"Well, you three will be able to work as a team for the Genin exams. Good luck. Meet on the third floor of the building next to the academy at eleven in two day's time."

"Kakashi, we caught Jiraiya peeping on a whole village of naked women. He did this weird Jutsu, and said that he'd now got it imprinted. Anyway, foxy-chan told me that you can share that vision, with his permission, simply by using the Wolf seal three times, together, and Jiraiya calling "Memory-Share No Jutsu.""

Kakashi gasped, "Thank you, Naruto!" He vanished, leaving only an after image.

"Naruto!" Sakura yelled, and tried to hit him.

Naruto swayed back, then punched her in the jaw. "Will you stop doing that," he demanded. "All you have to do is ask what is going on, instead of presuming something stupid!"

"What is going on?" Sasuke asked.

Naruto turned his back on Sakura. “It was all a set up, I had a few hundred clones hinged as women, and when they dropped their towels... male genitalia.”

“And that’s the memory Jiraiya-sama is going to share?”

Naruto nodded.

Sasuke smirked. “Your pranks have improved.”

“See you at the academy?”

“You bet.”

Naruto rode the lightning away.

“Feel like an idiot?” Sasuke asked.

“I’m so confused,” Sakura sighed. “It’s so much easier for me to forget that he’s the son of the fourth Hokage, that he has been trained left, right, and centre, and just hit him. I didn’t expect him to hit me back.”

“Why not?”

She shrugged. “Abject stupidity?”

Sasuke smiled faintly. “Hnn.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you for your eloquent response,” Sakura muttered, rolling her eyes.

“Well, let’s go rescue my girlfriend from Naruto’s clone, then see if we can persuade him to show us a few things?”

“I’ll get it,” Haku called, as he walked through the corridor to the main entrance to the Uchiha clan house.

“Haku-chan!”

Haku blinked, and found himself being hugged by a female who looked like Naruto.

“Come on, we’re having a girl’s night out.”

“Naruto?”

“Hi Sasuke-kun,” the female said, and gave him a huge hug too. Haku noticed that his boyfriend didn’t actually pull back, like he normally did when females got close to him.

“Naruto?” Sasuke asked.

“Oh, silly me, I’m Four, and I’m kidnapping Haku for a girl’s night out.”

So this was another of Naruto’s clones. “I am male.”

Four rolled her eyes. “So is the Boss, but hey, do I look male?” She posed demurely, and fluttered her eye lashes.

“No,” Haku muttered, trying not to feel any jealousy.

“Anyway, Sasuke, you’re to head toward Naruto’s new place, he wants to talk to you about something important! As for you, make the Ram seal, say ‘Sexy No Jutsu’, and relax, that’s all you should need to do, because you’re already in touch with your feminine side.”

Haku looked at Sasuke, who slowly nodded.

He focused his Chakra, and did what he was told. The sensation was like he was painlessly melting in to a new form. Everything felt different, as much as he thought he had been ready for this, he was surprised at just how dramatic the change actually was.

He looked down, to find that he had breasts. It was incredibly strange to see something where normally only shadow existed.

Sasuke reached out and lightly groped his new chest. Haku reacted by punching him.

“Oh, Kami, Sasuke, I’m so sorry,” he cried.

Sasuke looked at him for a second, and then slowly started to laugh. “It really is a full transformation?”

Haku nodded.

“Naruto is nuts.”

“Extremely.”

“Well, go, have fun. Four, no hitting on my... girlfriend, boyfriend, either.”

Four huffed. “I keep telling people, I prefer girls!”

“Haku’s a girl now,” Sasuke pointed out.

“Temporarily, besides, she’s too young for me.” Four suddenly smiled brightly, “anyway, it’s time to go, I’ve got so much to introduce you to, just wait until you taste chocolate.” She grabbed Haku, and pulled her out.

“Oh, Sasuke,” Four called. “Just a thought for you. Haku could have a child in this form.”

Haku’s last sight of his boyfriend for that evening was of a face in total shock.

Four giggled. “We’ve got a few minutes, so hold on tight.” Haku found himself hugged again, this time with the weirder feeling of his own chest pushed against Four’s, and they appeared in the centre of town. She was dragged in to an ice cream parlour and forced in to a seat.

“Two triple chocolates with extra hot sauce,” Four yelled. “And be quick, we’ve hardly got any time.”

“Coming right up, Naruto,” the owner yelled.

“Naruto?” Haku asked.

Four grinned bashfully. “I’m allowed to impersonate the boss when I want something in a hurry. Some people are cloneist!”

Haku tilted his head slowly, before he laughed. “They have a prejudice against clones?”

She nodded. “Clones are people too! We get upset and everything.”

Two plates were shoved in front of them.

“Eat, eat,” Four said, bouncing up and down in a slightly distracting way.

Haku obediently took a bite of the ice cream, and then had to grab the table as the chocolate melted in his mouth, and a wave of pleasure shot through him.

Four cheered happily, and then dug in feverishly. Haku abandoned propriety and joined her, concentrating on getting enough of this ambrosia inside him.

Four settled down and sighed in pleasure. Haku did the same, smiling.

Four slinked forward, climbing on all fours on the table. Haku found his eyes dropping to her chest, as she swayed forward, her mouth heading for his cheek. She reached up with one incredibly soft hand and used her thumb to brush away something for his cheek. “You missed a bit,” she purred, and licked the digit responsible.

“You are dangerous,” he whispered.

She smiled at him. “Want me to stop?”

“You understand I love Sasuke?”

“You understand that I am, or was, Naruto, and that he’d never hurt his friends?”

“Then no.”

Four’s smiled seemed to get even brighter, and she slid back.

Haku groaned under his breath, and looked around to see that they were the centre of attention.

Naruto bounced up and paid, waving away the owners attempt to let her have it for free, and a second later, he found himself being pulled toward the hot springs.

Hanging around outside, he recognised Sakura, Ino and Tenten. “Hey guys,” Four said, letting go of his hands, and giving each of them a big hug. “Sorry we’re late. I had to perform an emergency ice-cream operation. Haku had never tried triple-chocolate with hot chocolate sauce.”

All the girls nodded, as if this was a perfectly reasonable explanation for their tardiness.

“Umm, Naruto?” Sakura asked.

“Nope, oh, I keep thinking everyone knows me,” Four said. “I’m Four, I’m the only female clone.”

“Didn’t I see you on the mission to Wave?” Sakura asked.

“No, that was a couple of level twos hinged in to girls. I’m actually a girl.”

Ino scratched her head. “So you’re a clone?”

“I’m a level four clone, with two differences to all the other clones. First, I’m a girl, not a boy.”

“That doesn’t make sense,” Tenten said.

“Look, when the boss becomes a girl, he really does it, right?”

Everyone nodded.

“So, I’m that part of him. Real girl, head to toe. Anyway, second thing, I’ve been given special permission to hide things from the boss.”

“Huh?” Sakura asked.

“Well, I was with Nai-chan and Anko-chan last night, and they wanted my opinions on things that they needed my advice on, but didn’t want Naruto to know yet. Now, not telling the Boss anything is a total anathema to a clone, so I had to ask specially to be allowed to keep things from him.

“Luckily, the Boss understands that girl talk needs to be kept a secret, so I get to do things like this. Oh, final thing, I prefer girls to boys, so let’s not get worried about anything, okay?”

“You really are a female Naruto,” Ino marvelled.

Four nodded proudly. “As soon as my sister gets here, we’ll go in. My treat!”

“I think,” Tenten grinned, “this is the start of a beautiful friendship for all of us.”

Haku found himself hoping that it was.

Sasuke grumbled to himself as he walked to the gates of the new compound that Naruto was building. It wasn’t hard to find it, everyone in town knew about it, and the fact that there were more deliveries there on a daily basis than the rest of the town put together didn’t exactly hide it.

It was typical Naruto. Do everything that needed to be done, and never let little things like fear and doubt get in his way.

He entered and saw a bunch of people he vaguely recognised from his first true mission. “Yo, any one seen a blonde idiot, about yay tall, irritating ‘I can do anything’ attitude?”

“Naruto’s over there,” One of them shouted back, pointing.

Sasuke smirked as the man recognised the description. He walked over, and soon spotted Naruto.

“Ahh, there you are.”

“You summoned?” he asked, slightly irritated as he had planned to spend an evening training with Haku, and had instead, had one of Naruto’s clones practically blow his mind. Still, judging by the lack of smirk, Naruto didn’t know that yet.

“Yes, come, come.” Once more, Naruto proved that he was completely incapable of following social boundaries, as he grabbed his arm and walked him forward.

They entered a building that was still being built. It was nice enough, four reasonable size rooms on the ground floor, a nice shower and hot tub area, and four good sized bedrooms upstairs with en-suite bathrooms.

“Nice,” he said politely. “Why are you showing me it?”

Naruto said down on the bed in the last room. “Because I’m having it built for you. I want you to move in, with Haku.”

Sasuke suddenly felt the need to sit on the floor, so he did. “What!?”

“Look, that place you call home. It’s dark, depressing as hell, and I’ll bet that every time you turn a corner, you get smacked with a memory you don’t want, or you see you brother, right?”

Sasuke found himself nodding before he could stop himself.

“But you want to stay there, because it’s your families place, and because you have nowhere else

to go.”

Sasuke nodded again.

“I think part of it is what has locked you into your must-destroy-own-life-to-kill-that-tosspot mindset that we’ve all been trying to get you out of.

“So here, new chance, keep your family place as a museum, have fun blowing it up, give it to charity, sell it, anything, but live there and wallow in the memories.”

A memory formed, one of Haku’s soft attempts to check that he was happy at his home.

He’d never thought about it before, but clearly Naruto had. And the idiot was correct, he was haunted by the ghosts of the past in that place. But that was how his life was, and he’d accepted that. The idea of an alternative hadn’t occurred to him.

And yet here was one.

He wasn’t sure he wanted to move, but once more, the idea of a happy Haku danced through his mind.

He sighed softly, if doing things for others didn’t make him feel good, he’d never do it. “We’ll move in.”

Naruto smiled. “You can show Haku around when you want to, talk to Six, he’s in charge here and can help you start with planning your decorations.”

“I am paying for everything,” Sasuke said flatly. “And paying you rent.”

“Okay. I’ll leave you to wander around.” Naruto stood and headed toward the door.

“Naruto?”

“Yes, Sasuke?”

“Thank you.”

Naruto gave him a grin, and vanished out the door.

Sasuke looked out the windows, matching it to what he had already seen. Naruto was a ninja, and it had clearly been designed with that in mind.

Perhaps magnolia on the walls, and a big bed. Haku would definitely like that.

Sakura sighed in pleasure as she sank down in to the hot water at the spa.

She watched as Four released her hair from the haphazard twin pony tails she normally kept it in, and settled down as well.

She wanted to hate Four, and Naruto. It just wasn't fair. Naruto's female form was prettier than her and better built than her, only, the clone had such a bright and sunny personality that it was impossible.

Next to her was Haku, who Sakura could accept being prettier than her. Sasuke's girlfriend was both older than her by a few years, and more importantly, female from birth.

The other side of Four was Naruto's "little" sister, a Jounin Jinchūriki from Cloud of all places! And while not as pretty as either Haku or Four, she was a fully grown woman, and carried herself with confidence and poise that made Sakura feel gauche and insecure.

Yugito looked a little surprised to be there with them, but was relaxing anyway.

Four dunked herself under the water, then rose up, slicking her hair back. "Ahh," she sighed in pleasure.

Yugito's hand shot out and grabbed one of Four's legs, she lifted it to the surface and then used her other hand to stroke it. "You wax?" she asked curiously.

"Wax? Absolutely not!" Four replied. "Horrible way to get rid of hair! The Boss tried it once, never again!"

"So how are your legs so smooth?"

"The Boss invented a new Jutsu for me. Hair Removal No Jutsu. Lasts the same time as waxing, none of the pain or problems."

"Si-ii-ssss," Yugito said, her voice pleading. "Teach me, please?"

"Me too," Tenten said eagerly.

"All of us," Ino said. "It's a genius idea."

"I'll get permission from the Boss to teach you," she promised.

"You can't just do it?"

"Not my techniques, that wouldn't be right. You wouldn't just give out your clan techniques without checking first, would you?"

None of the girls nodded.

"Anyway," Four said, sliding her legs back down. "One of the reasons I asked you to all come is that I've got some questions. Earrings, what's the point?"

Sakura blinked at the question.

“They look pretty,” Ino said. “The can help emphasise your neck, and your hairdo.”

“Ignore her,” Tenten muttered. “She was dropped into a pile of civilian as a child. Earrings are great, you can use them as storage scrolls.” Tenten reached up and touched hers, a Kunai appeared in her hand. She stored it again.

“Cool,” Four cheered. “Right, I’m going to have to get my ears pierced. Haku-chan, we can do it while everyone is being tested tomorrow morning.”

Haku smiled and nodded, she looked very relaxed.

“Next, hair dressers, are they worth it?”

“Yes,” Every single girl said their without hesitation.

Sakura was slowly starting to realise that Naruto was a girl, but didn’t have the experience of growing up as a girl.

“Make-up, what’s the point?”

“It’s used to emphasise different parts of your face,” Yugito said. “It can also be used to conceal things, such as bad skin.”

“So I don’t need any?”

“I’ll teach you how to use it,” Ino suggested.

“Thanks Ino-chan,” Four said with another of her wide smiles.

Four’s eyes went distant for a moment, before she smiled. “Hinata’s date is going well,” she announced. “Kiba’s acting properly.”

“How do you know?” Sakura asked.

“The boss has the area covered. Just because Hinata’s not right for us, doesn’t mean that we don’t care for her a lot.”

Yugito chuckled. “I’m betting she’s younger, right?”

Four nodded.

“You did have grown up taste, sis.”

“Speaking of that,” Sakura said. “How come you’re taller in this form?”

“The boss’s height is mainly due to diet growing up. Foxy-chan is working with him to fix that.

As a female, I'm Naruto if he had been born female and fed properly."

"And his adult form is very attractive," Yugito said. "Looks just like the Fourth Hokage, only with a slightly more feral look. If I wasn't his sister..."

Sakura sighed internally. It just wasn't fair. Not only had she lost out on a potential with him, he wasn't even friends with her anymore!

"Don't worry about it, Sakura-chan," Four said. "The Boss has forgotten about it already. Just don't do it again."

"Do what?" Ino asked curiously.

"Nothing," Four said.

"No, I screwed up," Sakura contradicted. "Naruto did something, and rather than think, I tried to hit him. I missed, and he hit me back."

"He hit a girl!" Ino gasped.

Sakura found herself frozen as she, and Ino, were the victims of some highly intense killer intent from Tenten, and far more powerfully, from Four and Yugito. Haku was watching, her hands out of the water, small icicles formed on her skin.

"Are you ninjas, or are you civilians?" Four asked tightly.

"Huh?" Ino asked, starting to shake a little.

"Ninja," Sakura answered quickly. "Ninja!"

Four took a deep breath. She lightly touched Haku and Yugito's shoulders, before raising a long limbed leg, and lightly patting Tenten's shoulder.

All of them sighed and relaxed a little.

"The Boss would never hit a civilian girl," Four explained tiredly. "But you are a Ninja."

"So?"

Tenten groaned. "For Kami's sake," she said to the sky. "Look, you stupid bitches, if you want to be treated different, fuck off and stop trying to be ninja. Do you know how hard it is to be treated as a professional, when we're outnumbered two to one, and as we get higher up the chain, it's as many as ten to one? Hell, Tsunade-sama is going to be the first female Kage in the history of Kages!"

"Naruto hitting you when you attacked you means he respects you as a colleague and a fellow ninja, and you whine about it?"

“Gah!”

Four slipped over and hugged Tenten. “It’s okay,” she said.

Tenten looked sad. “It’s just hard, you know? Neji’s good, but Lee always wants to prove his flames of youth by protecting me.”

Four sat on her lap, and reached out, using her thumb to clear a tear. “I promise, I’ll have a chat with him. Make him see where he’s going wrong.”

“Lee is very hard headed.”

“More so than the Boss?”

“No one is more hard headed than Naruto,” Tenten said with a small smile.

“That’s better,” Four pronounced, and swam back to her place. She rested her head on Yugito’s shoulder. “Naruto was giving you respect, Sakura. I can stop it if you’d wish.”

Sakura shook herself. This was the second time Naruto had dropped the honorific from her name. And each time it was her own fault.

She swam forward, and moved so that she was kneeling, her hands on Four’s knees. “Four,” she said solemnly. “I have a long history of not thinking when it comes to Naruto, I didn’t put together the idea that he had seen me improve, and treated me different. As you said, I acted like a civilian, not what I am. I am truly sorry.”

Four looked at her, her bright blue eyes seemed like the strongest beams in the galaxy.

“Please, Sakura-chan, stop doing that. One day, the Boss will turn his back on you completely, if you don’t change, and he’ll never do anything more than acknowledge you again. He wants to be friends, real friends, as do I, but we won’t be treated badly, by anyone.”

“I promise,” Sakura said, meaning it more than she had meant anything in her life before.

Four lifted her chin, and leant forward and kissed her on her forehead. “Then we’re friends,” she said with a smile.

Sakura floated back, feeling a little flushed.

“Erm, I’m sorry as well,” Ino said. “For reacting like I did.”

“So we’re all friends again,” Four announced. “So, sis, what’s Cloud like?”

Naruto sighed to himself. The past few days had been full, and tomorrow was the big day, the start of the Chunin exams.

He couldn't wait.

He opened the door, and bang on time, all his major clones entered. When they were all out and about, he couldn't just create them, so they had to schedule.

Four sat next to him and cuddled against him. He kissed her hair, and she smiled.

“Okay, Eleven, report.”

“Right, Twelve, Seventeen and I have been looking at the other Genin teams. Tenten-chan, Lee and Neji are fine. They're all ready to be Chunin, so we don't need to worry about them.

“Hinata, Kiba and Shino aren't. Kiba still thinks he can kick anyone's arse, Hinata, for her improvements, still lacks confidence, and Shino won't leave his team. He's very loyal, but it does mean that he'll miss out this time.

“As for Ino, Shikamaru and Chōji, well, Ino's been progressing like Sakura, but Shikamaru and Chōji haven't really progressed that much. Asuma's a bit lazy, so they're not ready either. Shikamaru could be, which is really irritating, as if he just put a bit more work in to it, he'd be great.”

“Thank you,” Naruto said softly. “Sakura's not ready either, but she's our team mate, so we'll drag her along.

“So, the big question is, what do we do about the other teams? Do we make sure they all pass? Do we get everyone to be Chunin?”

“No,” Four said softly. “That's not fair on them, or us. We protect them, but we don't help them. They need to learn that it's a nasty world out there, and that, as much as we might try, there will be times when we can't fight their battles for them.”

“Four's right,” Five said. “This is a time when them failing will do them more good than passing when they're not ready.”

“It's agreed, then?” Naruto asked.

All his clones nodded.

“Okay, Eight, can we have an update?”

“Dad didn't leave us much information on the Flying Thunder God technique, but I think I'm getting somewhere. I'm got the hang of seals themselves, and I understand the intermediate seals. My knowledge is coming in leaps and bounds now that I've got those guys that did the Hyūga seal helping.”

“Keep going then.”

“Erm, Naruto?”

Naruto turned, to see Anko, Kurenai, Shizune and Tsunade standing in the door way. “What’s going on?”

“It’s my evening council,” Naruto said. “All the decisions are made here.”

“So you gather all the different versions of yourself, and hash through the ideas?”

Four smiled. “Yes, Nai-chan. We’ve all got slightly different aspects of the Boss’s personality, which is what gives us our personality. So everything we do, we do by group decision. Today’s a good one, but sometimes we argue for hours.”

“Yeah, like inviting the bastard to live near us,” Six muttered. “Still don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Quiet you,” Four ordered.

Naruto just grinned at the dumbfounded expressions. He nodded, and four seats appeared. “Want to join us?”

“We’ll just watch,” Tsunade said slowly.

Naruto nodded.

“Oh, Boss, I talked to Sakura today. She now understands why you hit her earlier. She didn’t get that you were respecting her as a Ninja. Tenten was really upset with her, as she’s fighting Lee’s over protectiveness all the time, so I said I’d have a word with him.

“Tomorrow I’m going to get my ears pierced with Haku-chan, and then get my hair done.”

“Excuse me,” Shizune interrupted. “Won’t that make you disperse?”

“Here,” Eleven called. He pulled out a knife, and held up his hand. He dragged the blade down his skin. Blood poured out for a second, before it slowly healed.

“That’s an impossibility,” Tsunade stated. “You are Chakra.”

Four bounced out of her chair and over to Tsunade. “Scan me.”

Tsunade did, and blinked. “You are human. Well, apart from your Chakra coils, there’s plenty in your system, but no source.”

“I am Chakra made into human form. I am a genetic copy, down to the DNA level, with only the XY Chromosomes swapped. All the others here are perfect genetic copies.”

“But that’s not how clones work,” Tsunade protested. She raised her hand and made a one-handed

seal. "Shadow Clone No Jutsu." Another Tsunade appeared.

Four looked at her, pulled a kunai and stabbed the clone. "That's because you're not doing it right!" She sat on Tsunade's lap and hugged her. "Do it again."

Tsunade made the same seal, but as she said the words, Four hugged her tightly and expelled a lot of Chakra.

A new clone appeared, looking at herself in surprise. She was younger than Tsunade, appearing in her late twenties. Her blonde hair was longer than Tsunade's.

"Wow," the clone muttered. "And, what the hell?"

"Erm, I think that was my fault," Four said. "I was trying to show Tsunade-chan how to do it properly, but I kinda imprinted my Chakra on you, so you've got a little bit of me in you."

"Kinky," the clone said with a grin. "Hey, Boss, can I stay out for a while? I've got a hankering for some Sake!"

Tsunade grunted and dispelled the clone, before grabbing her head. "Tsunade-chan," Four cried. She ran her hands over the next Hokage's head, a soft green light glowing.

"Thanks," Tsunade muttered. She looked at Naruto.

"He does it because he's used to it," Four interrupted. "I was about to tell you how to do it, but you had to jump the gun."

"Whoops," Tsunade muttered.

Four climbed off her and bounced back to Naruto, leaning against him again.

Naruto opened his Chakra, allowing Four to recharge.

She sighed in pleasure and cuddled against him.

"Naruto, whatever you are doing with this lot, they aren't Shadow Clones anymore."

"Sure we are," Eleven protested. "We're just an evolutionary step."

"Hey, boss, can I blow their minds?"

"You've not done enough, Four?" he asked.

"If I have a baby, it would be fully human," Four announced.

Tsunade and Shizune stared at her, their eyes wild.

"But don't worry," Four added. "As I keep saying, I like girls."

“Besides,” Naruto added. “If we decided to have our own child, I’d do it anyway.”

“Ooo,” Four said, bouncing in her spot. “Question for you and Foxy-chan, could you give someone enough Chakra to keep a special transformation up for two years?”

“Why?” Naruto asked curiously. He could feel Foxy-chan paying attention.

“Well, Sasuke wants kids, Haku wants kids, but obviously Sasuke’s gay and Haku’s male. When I taught Haku the Sexy Jutsu either, I said to Sasuke that Haku could get pregnant like that, and he was stunned.

“Sasuke’s in love with Haku, the person, not Haku, the male. You know, the person not the package. As such, he might be up for it, and I think Haku would be as well.”

“That would be incredibly interesting,” Foxy-chan mused. “We lend him a lot of Chakra, and make sure he takes it easy, and he could do it. We’d be a bit drained afterward, but nothing a day or so’s worth of napping wouldn’t take care of.”

“We can do it,” he said to Four, who cheered happily.

“Wait,” Anko said. “Haku’s a guy?”

Naruto nodded.

“And you’re going to help him change to a chick, so he can have a baby with his gay lover?”

Naruto nodded again.

“Un-fucking-believable.”

“Agreed,” Kurenai muttered.

“At some stage, Naruto,” Tsunade said slowly. “I am teaching you far more medical procedures. You have a mind that cannot be wasted. You don’t see limitations.”

Naruto found himself blushing. “Moving on,” he said. “How do I act tomorrow?”

“Well,” Eleven said. “We’ve got two choices. We can follow our instincts and keep a low profile. The problem with that, is that it leaves all our other teams a little vulnerable, as the sharks will realise that they’re barely ready. Especially that one-tailed bastard.

“The other, is to continue to make ourselves the focus. If we go in like we own the place, we can concentrate all of them on us, and let the others have a slightly easier route.

“We’re not going to help them become Chunin, but we can’t just throw them to the wolves.”

“Opinions?” Naruto asked.

“I agree,” Three agreed. “Acting like a dick is the best way forward.”

“So you do it on purpose?” Shizune asked curiously. “Act so brash and forward.”

Naruto scratched the back of his head. “Well, no. Not most of the time, it is natural to me. The first time I did it, I was trying to get out of a fight, but then when my sister turned up, then it was good – you know, people are focusing on me, which means they’re not focusing on my friends.” He shrugged. “So that’s what we’ll do then. Thanks guys.”

Three yawned. “Right, I’m heading back to the library. I was at an interesting stage. I’ll catch some sleep later.”

“I’ve got to sleep,” Five said. “Got a meeting with the architect early tomorrow about the plans for the casino.” Most of the other clones, apart from Four, quickly departed.

“Naruto-kun,” Kurenai said. “What do you mean about not helping my team?”

Four shifted and sat on Naruto’s lap, cuddling in to his chest. He held her softly. “I’ve got enough power to drag every one of us through the exams. I can protect them, but we agreed that would be bad for them. We won’t always be there, and limiting their growth now would be bad in the long run.

“So we’re going to let everyone pass and fail on their own merits, while ensuring they keep alive.

“Neji, Tenten and Lee are ready, none of the others are. Shikamaru could be, but he’s too lazy. The rest need more experience.”

“And your team?”

“Sasuke’s ready, Haku’s done a great job, got that stick most of the way out of his arse, and showed him why we work in teams.”

Kurenai smiled. “I was going to ask you to allow my team to fail, I am impressed with your decisions.”

“Arguing with myself is always the best way forward.”

Naruto woke early on the day of exam, he was excited, and wanted to do some training before he started the day, just to get the blood flowing.

He walked in to the kitchen to find that he was the first up, so he started making some breakfast. Nothing special, just some bacon and eggs. The smell soon had the others awake, and they joined him.

“Hmm,” Naruto mumbled as he took a bite.

The others looked at him.

He stretched, and then created a new clone. “So?”

“Really?” the clone asked excitedly.

Naruto nodded.

“Yay!” the clone cheered. “I’ll start with learning Ramen, then everything else!”

“Good luck, Twenty-five.”

The clone puffed out his chest, and then ran out.

“What was that?” Tsunade asked.

“The boss just promoted a grade 3,” Four said with a smile. “He’s going to learn how to cook properly.”

Naruto nodded in agreement. “My cooking is adequate. That’s not good enough.”

After they finished, Naruto was escorted in to the living room, where he was quickly sat next to Shizune and Kurenai.

“Naruto,” she said, reaching inside her shirt and pulling out a necklace. She undid it slowly. “My grandfather, the First used it to handle some of the Tailed Demons, and it was passed down to me. For a while, I thought it was cursed, now I am not so sure. Everyone male who has worn it has either been, or wanted to be, the Hokage.

“I want to give it to you.”

Naruto moved forward and went down on his knees. “I would be honoured,” he said clearly.

“The last people who wore this are dead,” Tsunade whispered.

“Trust me,” Naruto replied. “I won’t die, I have too many people to love and protect.”

Tsunade dropped to her knees, and she reached out and put the crystal pendant necklace around his neck.

“Thank you,” he whispered, and then gently kissed her. She didn’t reciprocate, but nor did she pull back.

“Ooo,” Anko said. “I got the new Bingo book this morning, from Rain. It’s not out yet, I’ve got a friend over there. Anyway, look who’s in it!”

Naruto smiled in anticipation, he was ready for what ever happened today, and couldn't wait for it. He was running late for his meet up with Sasuke and Sakura, when he felt his Kawaii senses tingling.

With a shrug, he jumped toward Hanabi, curious as to why she was calling him. He landed in the grounds of the academy and hugged her.

She was ready, and returned his hug tightly.

“Shouldn't you be in class?”

She smiled a shy little smile at him. “I cut,” she explained. “I had to wish you good luck today.”

He smiled at her. “Thank you, Hanabi-chan,” he said and hugged her again.

She kissed him on the cheek. “You're welcome, Naruto-kun. Become a Chūnin!”

“Come on,” he said, and took her hand. He walked with her to the side, along the ground floor, and to Iruka's classroom. He knocked, and entered.

“Naruto?” Iruka asked.

“Sorry Hanabi's late,” he apologised. “Totally my fault.”

Iruka looked curious, but nodded.

Hanabi squeezed his hand, and then walked to her seat.

Naruto grinned at everyone, waved, then vanished in the lightning.

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 8

He arrived in a large room, in a dramatic half-crouch.

“... and Naruto Uzumaki,” Kiba finished saying.

“Sorry I’m late,” he said to his teammates.

“You’re late!” Sakura screeched.

“Well,” Naruto said, “While on the road of life...”

“He was stopped by a,” Sasuke continued, a smirk on his face.

“Old woman whose cat was on fire. Of course, I had to put it out, so I used a water Jutsu. Unfortunately, it sent the cat in to the Forest of Death, where I had to rescue it by mud wrestling two alligators and a water buffalo!”

Sakura laughed.

“Man,” Naruto complained. “Making up lies is hard. So, why are there so many people here?”

Sasuke rolled his eyes. “We were all ignoring a silly illusion designed to keep idiots away, apart from Tenten, Mini-Gai and Neji who were putting on a great acting job, before some idiot had to show off and ruin it, letting all the losers in.”

“Hey,” Kiba protested.

“So why was said idiot saying my name?”

“Meet Yakushi Kabuto,” Sasuke said, nodding toward a tall Genin. “He was about to give us some info on those cards of his.”

“Hi,” Kabuto said cheerfully.

Naruto nodded at him. “Well, don’t let me interrupt.”

“Sabaku no Gaara,” Kabuto said. “From Sand, clearly. Mission record is spotless, including one B-rank. And he’s never been injured.”

There were some gasps of respects, as people looked at the red-haired boy, who didn’t seem to care.

“Is that all you’ve got?” Naruto asked in surprise. “You didn’t even say that he’s the Jinchūriki of the one-tailed cross dressing loser, Shukaku.”

Killing intent flooded toward them from the said demon container. Sasuke managed to stay still, but the other Genins in the room flinched.

Naruto growled. "I told you, that's not how you do it!" Before he could release his own killing intent, the blonde girl with Gaara dived out of the way. He hit the other container as hard as he could, dragging out Kyūbi's chakra as well.

Every Genin facing him dropped to the floor. "I told you," Naruto snarled. "As soon as I get permission, I'm ripping Shukaku's fucking tail off!" He cancelled the intent. "Now, you were saying?" he asked Kabuto politely.

Kabuto looked shocked, before he nodded slowly.

"Erm, well, you're the other one he wanted to know details about."

Naruto smiled. "Go ahead then."

"Kid, you remember the name?"

"Yes, this is the git who released Sasuke early. And he smells. Like Anko, but a lot stronger."

"Uzumaki Naruto," Kabuto said, his voice a little scratchy. "Son of the Fourth Hokage, Namikaze Minato. Jinchūriki of the Kyūbi no Kitsune. On his first mission, he killed the C-Ranked Demon Brothers, the A-Ranked missing nin from Mist – Momochi Zabuza, the B-Ranked missing nin Fuja, the Merchant Gatō and over two hundred bandits."

There was absolute silence in the room, as everyone stared at him.

"What?" he asked playfully. "It was a good mission."

"He also has an S-ranked mission on his stats, and that he's been trained by Jounin, ANBU and two of the three Sannin. He's Konoha's general specialist, having worked with all the Genin teams. Oh, and is the only Genin here in the bingo books, Rain have him marked down as Konoha's Legion, B-rank, with thirty million Ryō on his head."

"Wow," Naruto exclaimed. "That's amazing, Kabuto-kun. In fact, Torture No Jutsu." A steam of clones rushed out of his mouth and in to Kabuto's before the man could blink.

"Are you loyal to Konoha!"

Kabuto nodded. "Yes."

"Liar," Naruto spat, as his clones reported an increase in heart rate and sweating. It wasn't much, but the spike was timed to perfectly for it to be anything else.

There was a flash of lightning, followed by many different form of transportation, as the Hokage arrived with Eleven, and a troop of ANBU. A second later, Seventeen appeared with Tsunade.

“Naruto, what’s going on?” the Hokage demanded.

“This idiot’s not loyal to us,” Naruto explained, glaring at Kabuto. “First strike was that he was the one who released Sasuke early from hospital, meaning Haku-chan had to work even harder to help him out. Second was that he smells of snakes, fresh snakes, and third, he has seen a copy of Rain’s new bingo-book. So I’ve asked him, and he was lying when he answered.

“I’m currently incapacitating him. I suggest we get Inoichi to drag every damn thing out of him.”

“Grab his teammates,” the Hokage ordered.

“Oh no you don’t,” Naruto snarled, suddenly looking at the disabled boy on the floor. “Torture no Jutsu!” He poured more clones in, as he received images of them dying in their thousands. Kabuto’s chakra was killing them. The clones were fighting as well as they could.

Kabuto’s body bucked.

“Tsunade-chan, help.” He poured more clones in. “He’s trying to kill himself, he doesn’t want his secrets out.”

“I’ve got it,” Tsunade said. “He’s trying to inject Chakra straight in to both his heart and his brain. Can your clones disable him completely?”

“They’re trying, but he keeps killing them with bursts of Chakra. They’re getting too small to do anything useless, so are just dispersing. I need to work out a way of stopping them from dividing in the future.”

“Attack his brain, try and disable him from there.”

Kabuto’s body gave an almighty jerk, before it went still.

“Kami damned son of a bitch!” Naruto swore. He kicked the body, hard.

“He injected his own Chakra straight in to his heart. There was nothing I could do. Sorry,” Tsunade said to the Hokage.

The Hokage sighed. “You did your best, both of you.”

“Can we get anything out of his body?”

“No,” Tsunade grunted. “High level medic nin only, no blood line or anything. I think I need to go through the hospital, see if he was working on his own.”

Naruto looked at Eleven and Seventeen, who nodded. They reached down, grabbed the fallen traitor, and vanished with him.

“Where are they going?” Babe-chan asked curiously.

Naruto looked at her. “They’re going to cut off his hands, rip out his tongue, and pull out his eyes, then bury him head first in the middle of the road in to Konoha, so that he can never rest, and his soul will wander limbo for eternity, blind, unable to talk, and unable to help himself. That is the fate of those who betray my village!”

Yugao nodded slowly.

“Good luck with the exam, Naruto,” the Hokage said, and they all vanished, leaving the Genins alone again.

“Naruto,” Sasuke said, his voice a little thin.

“Sasuke?”

“You know that Itachi is a traitor, right?”

Naruto nodded.

“Can I do the digging?”

Naruto grinned at him. “Sure.”

“Troublesome blonde,” Shikamaru muttered. “Why are you even in this exam anyway?”

“So I can become Chunin?”

“Half the room is scared of you, the other half is praying that you never think that we’re traitors. You use lightning as a personal transportation device, and have been trained by the best in our village.”

“So have you guys, ‘Nai-chan’s great, Asuma’s one of the best with his blades. Gai, for all his eccentricities is brilliant, and Kakashi’s not bad either.”

“It’s too troublesome to argue with you,” Shikamaru groaned.

“Excuse me?”

Naruto turned to face one of the Genin’s that had approached them. “Oh, you’re one of Yugito’s Genin’s, right?”

The boy nodded. “Why are you called Konoha’s Legion?”

Naruto smiled. He pulled out a small bit of Foxy-chan’s Chakra, and allowed it to turn his eyes red. His teeth elongated slightly, giving him a faintly demonic look. “My name is Legion, for we are many.” With barely a puff of smoke, Naruto created a level three clone for every Genin in the room.

“They slice, they dice, they use Chakra,” Sakura said, her voice eerie in its lack of inflection. She reached out and sliced the cheek of the one nearest her. It bled, before the wound healed.

Naruto clapped his hands, and every clone vanished, leaving him with a panoramic impression of the room, and nothing of use.

“That’s enough, Naruto,” a large man wearing a trench coat said.

“Ibiki,” Naruto said in pleasure. “You’re our first proctor?”

He nodded. “Want to introduce me?”

“Guys, this is Morino Ibiki, our head of Torture and Interrogation. He is absolutely brilliant at getting people to talk. I once saw him get one Jounin to confess everything, with just a paperclip. It was amazing!”

Ibiki smirked, before he released some Killing Intent. “You will enter the next room silently. You will take the test. If you get caught cheating, you will fail. You will not ask questions. You will not whine to your mothers.”

Naruto saluted silently, put one arm around Sakura’s waist, the other around Sasuke’s shoulder, and marched them both forward.

“There’s a seating plan. Follow it.”

Sakura sat down and sighed to herself. Sometimes, she wondered just who she was teamed with.

Sasuke was supposed to be the best. He was from the best clan in Konoha. So she’d asked him why he was accepting, to a degree, that Naruto was learning faster than him.

He’d given her two replies. One, that thanks to Naruto, he had a Jounin teaching him every day, as well as a girlfriend. Two, that while he might be from the most prestigious clan, the best clan, Naruto was part of the Namikaze family. Even Sasuke’s dad had talked with respect about the Fourth Hokage.

But here she was, finding herself agreeing with Shikamaru. It wasn’t fair. Naruto was no more a Genin than the scary scarred proctor was. And to be honest, neither was Sasuke.

Sakura liked to shop, to have some time off, and to live a normal life. Sasuke like to train. Naruto liked to create fully living replicas of himself so that he could do everything he felt like.

It was completely and utterly insane.

She looked at her test, and started to sigh. It was going to be difficult.

“Don’t jump.”

It was only because she had been expecting something bizarre that she didn't.

"Your ears are pretty," the voice continued. "The boss has got a clone here, with Sasuke, and a couple finding the correct answers.

She picked up the pen, and wrote on a piece of scrap paper for notes, "That's cheating."

"Well, of course it is, we're Ninja, not Samurai."

"Good point," she wrote, and relaxed. She spent the hour having a weird chat with the clone, scribbling her part of the conversation down, and ignoring everything about her, not even paying attention to other Genins being thrown out.

"Listen up," Ibiki ordered. "The last question is oral. However, if you fail it, you will be stuck as Genin's the rest of your life."

Sakura gasped softly.

"You can't do that," one Genin from the corner shouted.

"I can do what I want," Ibiki snapped back. "Take it and fail, or get out of here."

Sakura found herself looking at Naruto, suddenly aware that every else was. Naruto had a half-smile on his face. In his hand, a pencil was twirling so fast, it was almost hypnotic.

"Hear me, brat?" Ibiki asked.

"You say something?" Naruto asked casually.

"You get this question wrong, and you'll stay a Genin for the rest of your life."

Naruto smiled. "I get this question wrong, and I'll never be Hokage. I've got a lot riding on it. But, I've always felt that if you're going to fail, you should do so spectacularly. At least I know I'll be the most over-powered Genin in existence. It's everyone else I'm worried about.

"Just imagine it, sent home because they got a question wrong, and having to face the scorn of everyone they ever cared about, knowing that they are stuck as they are for the rest of their lives. Having to face the disappointment of their own Kage.

"I've got family to rely on, so even if I lose, I can still succeed. Everyone else? Good luck to them."

Sakura gasped in shock.

"The boss is playing with the Genin and helping Ibiki out," the clone in her ear said casually.

"I quit," one of the Konoha Genin's called from the back. "I'm not ready!"

That started a landslide, as team after team backed out, until there were only twenty five teams left.

Ibiki started to laugh. “The rest of you pass. Thanks for the assist, Naruto.”

Naruto smirked and saluted at him.

“Oh thank Kami,” Tenten muttered. “For a few seconds, I thought you were actually serious Naruto. But there is no way in hell you’re not living your dream.”

“What the hell?” The blonde with Gaara asked.

“It was a test of your will,” Ibiki explained. “Sometimes, you have to face a life or death situation. This was a replication of one. Anyone thinking clearly would have realised that I have no power over any village but my own.”

From outside, there was a sound that seemed like a female yelling.

Naruto laughed, and stood with his arms open, his posture braced.

“...aaaaiiiiiii!”

A window in front of Naruto exploded open, showering him with glass. The glass cut his face, not that Sakura could see that clearly, as Anko landed in Naruto’s arms. A banner exploded from her hands, attaching itself to the far wall.

“Your second proctor, the very sexy and extremely taken, Mitarashi Anko!”

Said proctor was currently making happy sounds as she licked the blood from Naruto’s face.

Sakura was pretty sure that Naruto’s hands were holding the Kunoichi up by her arse, and she tried not to be jealous.

Anko looked up. “Wow, only twenty five teams left. I’m impressed, boss.”

“Your little buddy there helped.”

“He ain’t little where it counts,” Anko purred.

‘Bitch’, Sakura said in her own mind, far too scared to say it out loud.

“Okay, those of you who are left, clearly have mental guts, so next it’s see if we can make you puke. So make your way to the forest of death. You’ve got thirty minutes.”

Naruto leaned backward, so he could use his hands. They flashed a few times, and the two of them vanished in their lightning.

“He could have taken us as well,” Sasuke grumbled.

“Where are we going?” Neji asked.

Sakura nudged Sasuke, who looked at her curiously. Sakura tapped her ear. Sasuke smirked.

“That way,” he yelled, pointing. As all the Genins looked, Sakura found one of her earliest fantasies coming true, she was being carried in Sasuke’s arms, at speeds far faster than she could move, out the window and down the side of the building. As the clone gave her directions, she pointed.

“Byakagun!”

Sakura pouted, as she realised Neji was already following them, and with his eyesight, they were unlikely to lose them.

She suddenly smirked, and started to make some hand seals. “Close your eyes, Sasuke - Sunrise No Jutsu,” she called, turning in Sasuke’s arms, so that she was draped across his chest.

A bright light led to a scream from Neji, and she smirked to herself. “You can open them again.”

Sasuke did, and launched them both on to a roof. “That,” he said, “was bitchy, uncalled for, and harsh. Really good work.”

Sakura smiled to herself cheerfully. They arrived at the designated meeting place a few minutes later.

Naruto was sitting with his back against a tree, Anko was stretched out, her head in his lap.

Naruto looked at them. “Pretty good,” he praised. “If you hadn’t been bugged, it would have been perfect.”

Sasuke grumbled and hnn’d to himself.

Anko stretched like a cat, before prowling to her feet as the others, lead by Shino, started to arrive.

“Bitch,” Ino spat.

“Team Seven’s Resident Bitch,” Sakura corrected calmly, buffing her nails on her shirt.

Ino had a look of grudging respect in her eyes.

“Okay, listen up,” Anko yelled. “Rules are simple. You each get a scroll with either a symbol for Heaven or Earth on it. You have five days to get to the centre of the lovely forest in front of you, with one of each. How you get it is up to you. Don’t open the scrolls in the forest. Sign the forms the Chunin are giving out, as they absolve of us any legal liability if any of you croak it.”

Naruto grinned at her, before he signed the form with a swirl. He passed it to Sasuke, who did the same. Sakura smiled at them both. “Gonna look after me?” she whispered.

“Only if you need it,” Naruto replied.

Sakura smiled and signed her own name.

“You guys have gate six,” A Chunin said.

They walked toward the huge gate. “How do we want to do this?” Naruto asked.

“What’s the cheat option?” Sasuke asked.

“I blanket the area with clones, steal the first scroll I come across, then we ride the lightning to the tower, and be done in time for lunch.”

Sakura took a deep breath. “I need to see how I really am,” she admitted. “So can we pretend that you’ve not got a stupidly powerful demon inside your stomach, and pretend that Sasuke hasn’t been training every waking moment for years?”

Naruto and Sasuke exchanged looks. “Sounds fun,” Naruto admitted.

“Hn,” Sasuke said.

Sakura elbowed him firmly in the stomach, understanding that was Sasuke talk for, ‘I’m too cool to say that your ideas intrigue me.’

“Go,” Anko yelled.

She took the lead, aware that both boys were jogging next to her. She spotted Ino in the distance, and sent her a little smile. “*Screw you, Pig, you’ve got a fatty and a lazy bum, I’ve got two guys willing to let me try and find myself in relative safety.*”

“Sakura, you’re in charge,” Naruto said. “You tell us what to do.”

Sakura nodded and took a deep breath. “Can we have a perimeter ring of clones?”

Naruto nodded and fifteen appeared. “They are only level one,” he said. “So they’ll act like my first clones did.”

She nodded. “We’re going to head straight for the centre for a while, then stop and make camp. We’ll leave three clones hinged as us in the middle, while we rest in a tree.”

“A trap?” one of them asked.

She nodded.

There was a series of foxy grins that signalled their approval. They rushed away, and she started to move. The boys alongside her again.

“Okay, I’ve got a move for you.”

Sasuke almost stumbled in excitement. “What does it do?”

Naruto’s hand flew through a quick series of seals. His body suddenly turned green and quickly elongated in to a dragon. He lurched forward and took a bite out of a stone boulder, before reverting to normal.

Sasuke dropped to his knees.

“Oi,” Sakura said, “worship later, move now.”

“Sorry,” Sasuke mumbled, as he got to his feet. “You’re going to teach me that?”

“Foxy-chan says that a guy named Liu Kang developed it ages ago. He seems to think it would suit you.”

“Please say thank you to her,” Sasuke said politely.

“She can hear you.”

“Oh. Thank you, Lady Kitsune.”

“And here I thought he was just a gay idiot.”

“Foxy-chan says ‘you are welcome’. If you master this one, we have one where you turn yourself in to fire, and teleport inside another person. And that’s not to mention the Stolen Chakra Fireball.”

Sasuke shuddered deeply, and Sakura had the thought that Naruto had just earned himself Sasuke’s eternal loyalty. She knew her ex-crush craved power, and there was nothing more powerful than Kyūbi, in terms of raw power at least.

“As for you,” Naruto continued, looking at her. He put his hand against his side, and pulled out a long stick. He threw it at her. “You’re going to have to learn to use this.”

“It’s a stick,” she pointed out dryly.

“It’s a staff,” Naruto said patiently. “You’d be amazed at what you can do with it, with a bit of Chakra.”

“Thank you. But why?”

Naruto jumped over a fallen tree without taking his eyes from her. His awareness, and Sasuke’s,

was simply amazing. He seemed to be deep in thought. “Because,” he said slowly, “we’re Team Seven, and always will be.”

Sasuke grunted his agreement.

Sakura smiled and went quiet, she called a halt a few hours later, but rather than settling down as she would normally, she looked at her stick (and she was going to call it that, it seemed like a Naruto-ish thing to do, and that seemed to work for him.)

A clone appeared in front of her, and silently showed her how to hold it.

Naruto exchanged a long look with Sasuke. He could tell that the other boy was bored as he was. He couldn’t even teach properly, because that sort of move needed space and chakra, both of which they had to keep to themselves at the moment, if Sakura’s plan was going to work.

And for a Genin, it was a good plan. It used her resources, and the three Rain nin who were approaching stealthily had fallen for it.

Naruto smiled and created two new clones, one of which hinged in to Sasuke. The real Sasuke looked at him curiously. “Me before Foxy-chan, you before Haku,” he mouthed.

Sasuke rolled his eyes, then shifted silently, and closed his eyes for a nap.

Naruto snorted to himself, as the Rain nins rushed in. With some accurate throw of weapons, they had the three clones on the floor trapped. The two new clones silently jumped over to Sakura, who smiled at them.

She whispered something, then jumped down as the three clones on the ground dispersed.

“How nice,” she murmured. “Welcome to our camp.”

“Where’s the blond,” the lead demanded. “We can make a fortune from his head.”

“How?” she asked. “I doubt boiling it would work.”

Naruto sniggered under his breath.

“Look, kill her.”

Two of the Shinobi moved forward, but Sakura was already moving, she span, kicking one on the stomach as she threw a kunai at the other. The other one dodged the flying weapon.

The Sasuke clone landed next to her. He posed heroically. “Now, you die,” he declaimed dramatically. “By killing you, I’ll be one step closer to killing him!”

The real Sasuke’s eyes opened, and he looked at Naruto reproachfully. “I was not that bad!” he

mouthed.

Naruto didn't bother to correct him.

"Shadow Clone No Jutsu," the clone impersonating Naruto shouted excitedly.

Naruto rolled his eyes and created a bunch more for the clone. "Prepare to suffer a beat down, Uzumaki style!" the clone cried.

Sasuke was now smirking.

Sakura dashed forward, heading for the lead, while the clones fought the other two. The two Rain nin weren't that bad, all things considered. Competent Genin, and were putting up a good fight.

The Naruto clone was having more problems than the Sasuke clone, who had scored a direct hit with a fireball.

The Naruto clones dogpiled their target, and just punched and kicked in an embarrassing example of how he had used to fight.

Sasuke finished shortly afterward.

"I knew he was faking," Sakura's opponent said with a smirk. "You leaf nins trying to impress everyone."

"That's a low-level clone you idiot," Sakura retorted. "Both of them, the real ones, are up in that tree."

Naruto was impressed, and shared his impressed look with a shocked Sasuke. Naruto knew that they were both thinking the same thing – we need to practice more.

"What?" The Rain nin demanded.

Sakura sighed. "I've asked the boys to let me go through this exam properly. I'm a normal leaf Genin, not some driven avenger or some idiot savant of the ninja world."

"Ouch," Naruto mouthed at Sasuke.

Sakura suddenly jumped forward, spin kicking the nin. He moved back, and in to a couple more thrown kunais.

"Stop playing around, little girl, and let me get to the ones I want."

"What?" Sakura demanded. She pulled out her staff, and foregoing any attempt at finesse, brained the nin over the head, repeatedly.

Naruto dropped down to the ground, as Sakura turned, tears running down her face.

“Sakura?”

“I-I-I-I broke Stick!” She held up her now dented staff.

“It’s okay,” Naruto said. “That’s only a training stick. When you know what you are doing, I’m going to give you a real one.”

“Really?” she asked, sniffing a little.

He nodded, and found himself being hugged. He looked at Sasuke for help, but the bastard had gone back to sleep.

Sasuke woke up the next morning, to find Naruto heading to the river, with a fishing rod, presumably looking for food for breakfast. Which was good, because he liked fish. He stretched, and dropped down from the tree he had slept in.

“You do know,” he said to Sakura, “That it is cheating to use clones?”

“Pfft,” Sakura said, waving her hand airily. “We’re Ninja, not Samurai. Let them have the honour, we’ll get the damn job done.”

He nodded approvingly.

“Now that we have both scrolls, we’re just going to head to the tower today,” Sakura said. “No point in asking for trouble.”

He pouted slightly.

“No,” Sakura said firmly, “You are not allowed to fight Gaara.”

“Why not?”

“One, because he’s powerful,” Sakura replied, “and two, because Naruto has already got their first.”

“No fair,” he said with a slight smile.

Sakura suddenly looked at him seriously. “If I had acted like this six months ago, would I have had a chance?”

He looked at her for a long moment. He had no real wish to tell her that she was the wrong sex for him, so he ignored that bit. And as he did, he realised that yes, he would have been more interested. The idea of a fangirl, one who never challenged him was pathetic. He needed someone who would stand up to him, tell him when he was being stupid, and help him get where he needed.

He took a deep breath. “You’d be third,” he said honestly. “After Haku.”

“And?” she asked curiously.

“Do you want to know?”

She looked at him for a long moment, before her eyes widened. “Four?”

He shrugged and nodded, understanding that Four was the female Naruto clone. He would have wanted the real one. If he was in to girls.

“She treats you like nothing special, just pushes you,” Sakura sighed.

He nodded once more.

“Great,” she muttered. “My male team mate is a better girl than I am. Thank Kami that Haku is female.”

“You know that I don’t fancy you?” Naruto asked.

Sasuke restrained the urge to jump. Sakura didn’t fair quite so well. “How long have you been there?” she demanded.

Naruto grinned. “Long enough. Four, and I, both prefer girls.”

“Doesn’t change the fact that you are beautiful and powerful. And your annoying cheerfulness is a million times more palatable coming from Four.”

A huge blast of wind suddenly ran through the camp, throwing Naruto in to the distance.

He turned, immediately on guard, moving in front of Sakura. Sakura had her new training stick in her hand.

“Ku ku ku ku,” one of the female Genins from Grass whispered. “Sasuke-kun.”

“You are not a Genin,” he stated slowly. He could feel the Chakra inside this person in front of him.

“Good, good,” the female said, before she reached up and pulled her own skin off. The face that was revealed was incredibly pale, with dark eyes that dominated a long face. He had long dark hair that fell forward.

Sakura wretched, losing her breakfast.

“Orochimaru?” Sasuke gasped, setting in to a fighting stance. This was the other Sanin, the guy who had performed unholy experiments on over sixty children.

“I want you to come with me, Sasuke-kun,” Orochimaru whispered. “I can give you the power your soul needs, the power to destroy your brother.”

“Really?” he asked.

“Oh yes, I can make you so powerful.”

“Wow,” he said softly. “In fact, I must say that I’m Katon No Jutsu.” The fire balls exploded from his mouth, to the surprised Ninja, who barely dodged.

“Oh, well done,” Orochimaru whispered. “So very clever, no signs or anything. You’ll make a fine host.”

Somehow, Sasuke knew that he’d rather have Foxy-chan take control of him, than this guy. Almost too fast for him to see, the foreign ninja attacked, punching at him.

He twisted, activating his Sharingan quickly, not so much for the copying ability, but the ability to follow the traitor.

Sakura jumped out of the way, and stood poised. He appreciated her sense to get the hell out of the way.

Orochimaru appeared in front of him, his foot flying out. He dodged, and was helped as Orochimaru had to move to avoid a stroke from Sakura.

The foreign nin back-handed Sakura away, and she thumped heavily in to a tree, landing on her knees, shaking.

“Stay still,” Orochimaru growled, releasing killer intent. It was the most that he had ever faced directly, even dwarfing Naruto and Foxy-chan’s, it was the intent of a natural killer.

He grunted and threw himself to one side. The practice from what he had felt before meant he wasn’t going to stand there like an idiot and get killed.

“Ku ku ku ku,” Orochimaru chuckled happily. “You are impressive, Sasuke-kun, so much so, we’re going to be so happy together.

Absently, he threw another series of fireballs at the freak.

Four snakes exploded from the guys sleeves, shooting toward him. He reached behind his back, and pulled out a sword. He wasn’t exactly proficient with weapons, but nothing beat a piece of metal when decapitating snakes, so that was what he did. He hated the feeling that this idiot was playing with him.

Haku’s voice echoed in his mind, telling him to keep cool, to do what he could to stay alive.

There was a slight rustling and he relaxed a little bit, Naruto was back. Together, they’d take this fuck down, and show that no one was better than an Uchiha... except maybe a Namikaze with a demon in his stomach.

And that was a close maybe.

Orochimaru swayed casually, and batted Naruto's attack away with contemptuous ease. The speed Naruto was travelling must have been Jounin level, and Sasuke suddenly saw the difference. As big as the difference between a Genin and the Jounin, the gap between a Jounin and Sannin was just as big.

Lightning shot from Naruto's hands, while clones threw themselves at the enemy. Orochimaru gagged slightly, before a sword appeared, wrapped in a prehensile tongue that looked gross. The snake Sannin grabbed it, and removed the clones in one move.

Naruto leaped forward again, totally focused, and managed to catch a glancing blow on the Sannin.

"Impressive, Naruto-kun," Orochimaru muttered. His hand smashed out, but Naruto dodged, his swords appeared in his hands, and he approached again, with three clones. There was a strange dancing synchronicity between the four of them.

"The Dance of the Crescent Moon," Orochimaru said in delight. "How good to see that the art of sword play is still alive in Konoha!"

Sasuke took advantage to throw two Kunais, one hidden in the shadow of the other, before he attacked.

In short order, Orochimaru killed the three clones and blocked Naruto's attack, avoided both Kunais, and kicked Sasuke in the face.

"I'm actually having to work," Orochimaru announced happily. Naruto jumped back, his hands flashing. "Swamp of the underworld!"

Orochimaru sunk down slowly, laughing once more. "Jiraiya's been teaching you everything," he smirked. "The problem with this, of course, is that it's designed to capture someone weaker than you. You may have Chakra, but you have years before you are at my level, Naruto-kun." The snake Sannin concentrated for a second, and the swamp exploded, flying in to the distance in small chunks.

Sasuke dodged, as did Naruto. Poor Sakura managed to get a face full of wet swamp, and her swearing explained her opinion of that.

"Hmm, reinforcements, clever, Naruto-kun." Four snakes reared up, grabbing Sasuke's legs and arms, locking him in place. "I have a final gift for you."

Orochimaru leaped forward, his hand glowing, as he hit Naruto in the chest. The boy flew into a tree, before he turned to Sasuke.

Out the corner of his eye, as he struggled, he could see Naruto desperately making some hand seals, leaning against a tree for support.

Orochimaru's head flew forward, his neck elongating like a snake, his jaw open.

In quick succession, Sasuke found himself against the tree, watching as Orochimaru bit Naruto on the neck.

Naruto glared at him. "Boom." He exploded, throwing the Sanin away.

Two lightning bolts appeared, as Four and one of the other clones arrived, then ANBU swirled in, along with Anko.

"Not what I was going for," Orochimaru sniggered. "But good enough." He sunk in to the ground, and was gone.

"Naruto!" Sasuke yelled, suddenly seeing the boy on the floor. He skidded over to him, arriving the same time as a swamp coated Sakura and Anko.

"Fuck, a curse seal!" Anko said, tearing his shirt open.

"Anko-san," one of the ANBU said, "what should we do?"

"The bastard's long gone," Anko sighed. "Tell the Hokage, I'll take Naruto to the hospital."

"No!" Sakura shouted. "You can't do that, he'd fail."

"He needs medical assistance," Anko pointed out.

"What are you going to do?" Sasuke demanded.

Anko paused. "I don't know," she admitted.

"Take him," the clone said. "I'll take the boss's place."

"You okay with that, Eleven?"

"I'll stay with the boss," Four said. "I can't do the rep... you know, like him, but I'll do what I can. I'll also gather the others."

Eleven nodded. He walked over and took Naruto's swords, before he stood in front of Four. Four reached up and punched him hard, knocking him out. She created a few more clones, and they beat the fallen clone up quickly.

"He'll wake up in about an hour," Four said. "Same as the boss would have."

Sasuke groaned. "This is hardly the time to be fair!"

Four giggled and hugged the real Naruto, vanishing with him.

Four appeared in the foyer of Konoha's hospital, cradling Naruto.

"I need a bed, immediately."

There was a second's pause, before nurses started to scramble. "Where's Tsunade?" Anko demanded, as she appeared next to Four.

"She's still in surgery, with Shizune," Four said, "the Hokage and the Pervert are still in an important meeting. Nai-chan and Kakashi are with the other Jounins and we don't know where, Hayate and Yugao are both out of town on a mission, Ibiki's torturing someone and can't be disturbed, Iruka's teaching."

Anko blinked. "Four, how did you know that Naruto was in trouble?"

Four sighed. "I'm not allowed to tell you. As soon as we found out, we tried to get everyone, and it was only by luck that we found you. We were about to go and grab all the ANBU ourselves. The boss isn't going to be happy about things like this, so he'll come up with a solution."

Naruto was now on a gurney, and doctors were pouring over him.

"Fuck the meeting," Anko said. "Look, Naruto-kun's got a curse seal. Keep his temperature down, and do what you can to stabilise his chakra flow. I'm going to get Jiraiya." She swirled away.

"Do you know any water Jutsu?" Sakura asked.

Sasuke shook his head.

"Crap."

"There's a stream about a mile that way, I think," Sasuke said, pointing.

"Well, you get to carry the clone."

"Why?"

"Because I'm just a little girl," Sakura said with an innocent smile. "And I stink."

"Good point," Sasuke mumbled, as he picked the clone up and pushed him over the shoulder. He weighed as much as Naruto, and he had to grunt.

They headed toward the stream, and set up camp quickly. Sakura went to the stream and managed to get the worst of the swamp of her clothes.

"Sasuke," Sakura said, as she was finally feeling human again.

“Yeah?”

“We were lucky, weren’t we?”

“Yes. He was after me.”

“Why?”

“Probably my damn eyes.”

“That makes sense, his ambition as a child was to learn every Jutsu in the world. Your eyes would help with that.”

Sasuke shuddered deeply. He paused. “How do you know that?”

“Last night, I was reading a Hundred Great Shinobis of the Elemental Countries. He was in it.”

“Oh, yeah, good book that one,” Sasuke agreed. “Lots of cool battles.”

Sakura sighed and sat with her legs crossed. She took out a rag from her pocket, and started to polish her staff. “Did you see the problem with it?”

Sasuke settled down, with his back against a rock, slightly surprised to find himself actually having a somewhat decent conversation with Sakura. “Problem?”

“Most fights were the same, identical, boring.”

“Explain?”

Sakura rolled her eyes at him. “A conversation involves two people, not one barking single words in an attempt to get to the point immediately.”

“Sorry,” he grunted, and then smirked.

“Git,” she mumbled. “Okay, most of the fights were kick, punch, Jutsu, bigger Jutsu, flashy Jutsu, speed, more Jutsu, someone dies.”

“Right,” he agreed. “Some very good techniques were described.”

“And the person with the best techniques normally won,” Sakura added.

“Exactly.”

“How did Naruto beat Zabuza.”

Sasuke opened his mouth, and then stopped. How did Naruto beat him? Zabuza was as good as Kakashi. Zabuza had all the powerful Jutsus. “Naruto cheated.”

“Exactly,” Sakura agreed. “You look at a lot of the fights, and they were more like Samurai duels.”

“And Naruto keeps saying, we’re Ninja not Samurai.”

“Exactly,” Sakura agreed. “I’m not saying that we shouldn’t learn all the Jutsus, I know Naruto is as well, but he’s concentrating on something else – being unpredictable. And I think that’s going to be more important.”

Sasuke slowly nodded. She made a very good point.

“So,” Sakura said, “I’m going to try and be more like him, only without the love of orange. Orange and pink really don’t go.”

He sniggered. “True,” he agreed. “At least he has better clothes now.”

“You can thank Hanabi for that.”

“The pint sized Hyūga?”

“Yeah. So, anyway, my point is, that being like Naruto looks like it has two advantages. One, you’re unpredictable.”

“And the other?”

“You have a load of fun, because you don’t care what other people think.” She held up her staff. “Stick and I are going to go places.”

“You know what would be funny? Your next practice with Ino, if you pull out stick and brain her like you did that Rain nin last night.”

Sakura giggled. “I might just do that,” she agreed.

Sasuke frowned as he felt three people heading toward them. He made a slight movement of his hand.

“So, Sasuke-kun, will you date me?” Sakura asked in a vapid tone that made him want to smack her.

“No,” he grunted.

“I hate you,” she cried, bursting in to tears. She ran off in to the forest.

“Just the person we’re looking for,” the first one said. He was tall, his head swathed in bandages, and it looked like he was wearing a fur cloak. His headband told him that he came from Sound, as did the others.

“How convenient, eh Dosu,” the one next to him said. He wasn’t as tall as Dosu, and had some weird looking cheek protectors coming from under his headband.

The girl with them seemed almost normal. Kinda cute, if you liked girls.

“We’re here to kill you,” the unnamed male stated.

“Zaku,” the girl chided. “You have no subtlety. Orochimaru has ordered your death, so you die. And the blonde brat with you.”

“Please,” Sasuke sighed. “The blonde idiot and I managed to get away from your, frankly disturbing, boss earlier. Three mere Genins aren’t exactly going to be a problem. I mean, any man who can swallow a two foot long sword has real problems, and the whole giving of a love bite to young guys, it makes people ask questions.”

As repartee went, Sasuke thought he didn’t do too bad for his first real attempt at this sort of thing. The three were now looking mad, which was what he was aiming for. And following Sakura’s lead in borrowing from the book of Naruto seemed like a good plan.

“Kin, get him,” Dosu ordered.

Kin’s hand blurred and five senbon needles flew toward him.

“Pathetic,” he murmured, not even bothering to rise from his position. He caught them neatly. His boyfriend was a master at these things, she was just a kid playing with sharp needles.

Kin suddenly yelped as the needles he threw back bounced off her forehead protector. It was a contemptuous thing for him to have done, and the glare he was getting showed she had got the message.

If he could have killed her with them, he would have, but as he couldn’t, making her mad was just as good.

Dosu sighed and raised his arm. “If you want something done,” he muttered.

“Vibrating Sound...”

Whatever technique he was going to use was suddenly stopped, as Sakura rammed Stick on to his arm. There was a harsh crack, and Dosu yelled.

“What the hell?” Zaku said, turning to Sakura.

Sasuke turned his Sharingan eyes on, launching himself forward at full speed. He threw a Kunai at Kin, kicked Zaku’s knee joint. There was a satisfying crunch, and Zaku yelled as well.

Sakura twirled Stick and turned to Kin.

Kin gulped, looking at her two team mates who were both cradling limbs. “Look, we’ll go,” she said.

“Leave your scroll,” Sakura ordered.

Kin pulled it out of her pouch and dropped it on the ground, before helping the two boys away.

“Why didn’t you kill them?” Sakura asked.

“What do you think Orochimaru will do to them when he finds out they failed?”

Sakura slowly nodded.

“That technique Naruto showed you to hide your Chakra is really useful,” Sasuke noted. “I couldn’t sense you either.”

“It gets harder as I practice more. I can cut off my chakra because I’ve not got that much. But as long as I keep practicing, I should be able to keep it up.”

“You do know that this is the first time you’ve done more than stand there with a kunai?”

Sakura suddenly beamed.

“Way to go, Sakura-chan,” Eleven, or Naruto, said, as he sat up. “You both did well. One thing to think about though, that technique won’t work in a city. All humans have Chakra, so having none would make you stand out as well. You’ll need to practice with civilian level.”

“Good to see you awake, El..Naruto?”

“I’m in boss impersonation mode,” Eleven explained. “I’ll do my best to act like him.”

“Okay,” Sakura said. “I’ve had enough of this forest, and I want a shower. Let’s get to the tower now.”

“You’re the boss,” Naruto agreed. “Lead the way.”

They arrived at the tower without incident, and once inside, they opened their scrolls, to find Iruka summoned. They were the fourth team to make it. And Sakura was very grateful to get a shower.

Tsunade barged in to the hospital room, followed by Shizune. “What happened?” she barked.

Four looked up from her place next to Naruto.

“The Boss was with Sakura and Sasuke, making breakfast, when he was thrown away by a huge blast of wind. When he landed, there were a couple of Sound Chunin waiting for him. Understanding that something was wrong, he ordered me and Eleven to get help, while he quickly

took care of them the proper way – letting a hundred clones beat the snot out of them.

“Eleven and I tried to find anyone, but everyone was busy, so we were lucky to find Anko, by that time, we knew the boss was fighting Orochimaru-traitor, so we grabbed all the ANBU we could find, and went straight there.

“We arrived just in time to see the boss finish his chained move, a swap with a kamikaze clone, just after the bastard gave the boss a curse seal.”

“Four, tell all the clones, that I don’t care what I’m doing. If Naruto-kun is in trouble like that, you interrupt everyone, especially when it deals with S ranking traitors.”

Four nodded obediently.

“I agree,” the Hokage said, as he walked in with Jiraiya.

“We’re not Naruto,” Four tried to explain. “We’re clones, so we have to think of the boss’s reputation. But I’ll make sure we all know.”

Tsunade nodded and started to scan Naruto.

“I’m going to have to seal it as soon as he wakes up,” the Pervert said, as he prodded the seal. “Until then, all we can do is wait.”

Four sighed. “I’m scared,” she whispered.

Shizune moved over and knelt on the floor next to her. “Why?” she asked softly.

Four looked at her. “This is the first time I’ve been alone, he’s always there, you know, and now he’s not.” She burst in to tears, and dropped off her chair so that she could cry on Shizune’s shoulder.

“Woo,” Jiraiya cheered.

There was a crash, and as Four looked up, she saw a human sized hole in the window, and a figure arcing in to the distance.

Naruto looked around his mental landscape and frowned. In front of him, was a giant transparent barrier, cutting off his access to Foxy-chan.

Said Fox was banging on the shield, a confused look on her face.

Clearly the snake-paedophile had something to do with this. He looked around, as there was a strange dripping sound.

He followed the sound, to see a black, tar like, substance slowly invading his mental

representation of Konoha.

“That isn’t good,” he said to himself.

He absently created some clones, to find nothing happened.

“Fuck,” he said, as eloquently as the situation would allow. To sum the situation up. Foxy-chan was locked away, he couldn’t use chakra, and some black tar that just had to come from the snake bastard was invading his mind.

Life was just peachy at the moment.

It was the last Tuesday before a Full Moon, and the Summons were gathered for their other poker night.

As much as some of them liked Naruto, he was only a human, and Summons needed to have fun as well.

“You’re looking happy, Mand’,” Micha said. “Well, almost.”

Manda shrugged elegantly. “Orochimaru was not happy with my terms, and threatened to stop summoning me. I informed him that I could do with a holiday.”

“Tsch,” Emna said, “I presume he did not approve?”

“Threatened me. If it wasn’t for the contract, I would have eaten him there and then.”

“What about you, ‘Bunta?” Micha asked.

“Not much going on here, either. The kid doesn’t like calling us for unimportant reasons, and the Pervert doesn’t dare unless there’s a fight.”

“Is anyone getting any action?” Micha demanded.

Various no’s made their way around the table.

“Damn it,” Micha said with a pout. “How am I supposed to live vicariously through you?” She suddenly smiled, and for some reason, the other Summons got very nervous. “Let’s play,” she ordered.

The play was different from normal, as Micha was playing with a focus not seen before from the dragon.

It wasn’t long before she had amassed a sizeable amount. The only person to stick with her was Gamabunta, who was on a winning streak.

The two of them had both raised with all the money they had. “So, how about it, toad-face?” Micha said. “Ready for a real man’s bet?”

“Aren’t you a little female for that,” the Toad asked, exhaling smoke from his large cigar.

She frowned at him. “If you bet the right thing, I’ll bet what you’ve always wanted. A whole dragon skin.”

Gamabunta choked through his smoke, and leaned forward. “What do you want in return?”

“Your Summoner.”

“The Pervert?”

“Not the Pervert, idiot,” She sighed. “I want the kid. I’m fed up of being stuck here, so I’m risking my skin.”

“Deal,” Gamabunta said. He smirked. “Read ‘em and weep.”

Micha laughed softly. “Poor ‘Bunta,” she crooned, revealing her own cards.

The toad stared at them for the longest time. “Ma and Pa are going to kill me!”

At the end of the fifth day, all the Genin that had made it through the forest were gathered in a small stadium.

Four had sent him a message, that the boss was still unconscious, and that the Snake Sannin had really screwed him up. He’d passed that message on to Sakura and Sasuke, both of whom looked upset and mad. They’d given a brief highlight to the other Genin, especially to Neji and Tenten, who the boss was closest to.

In the three and a half days that they had been waiting, Eleven had worked with Sasuke and Sakura, helping to train them in private.

The Hokage, and then Hayate, explained that there was going to be a preliminary round.

Eleven found himself far too distracted to pay much attention. The feeling of aloneness was one he hated with a passion.

With seven teams having made it this far, one lucky person, a Yoroi Akado, was given a by in to the next round.

Everyone else was going to have to fight one opponent to get through.

A computer screen to the side threw up a random pairing, and the other Genin cleared the floor, and watched the fights.

The first was Kiba against the blonde girl from Sand. The girl was a long range fighter, using her fan to launch attacks. Kiba was a close range fighter, so it came down to tactics.

Kiba's tactics were Genin level, the girl's were Chunin level, so she won, with Kiba not getting a hit on her, and being blasted at high speed straight in to a wall.

The next fight made him smile in anticipation. He was against Tsuchi Kin. She worked for Orochimaru. If he couldn't get to that bastard, he'd take it out on his minions. He jumped down, and nodded at Hayate. "Are you a Kunoichi, or are you a girl playing at being a Ninja?" he asked.

"I'm a Ninja, as you'll see," she spat.

He could see Tenten sigh in pity, while Ino looked confused. He looked at Sakura, who simply nodded at him.

"Begin," Hayate ordered.

As fast as he could, he dumped as much Chakra as he could in to his legs, and moved. Less than a tenth of a second later, he had covered the distance between them, and his sword was buried deep in her chest.

She coughed, once, and stared at him in complete and utter shock.

He drew the sword back, and as she dropped to her knees, he swung the sword again, decapitating her.

Her head bounced on to the ground and her body slumped to the floor. There was a surprisingly large amount of blood.

Eleven pulled out a rag and cleaned the blood from his blade, then placed it back in his wristband seals.

Hayate coughed. "Winner, Naruto."

Eleven nodded at him, and made his way back to his seat. There was complete and utter silence from the watching Genin.

He sat back down between Sasuke and Sakura.

"Feel better?" Sasuke asked.

"A little," Eleven muttered. "Bastards."

"As much as we are supposed to be tools, we are still human," Sakura said.

"Or a living creature based on a human at one microsecond of time," Eleven added softly, so none of the other Konoha Genin nearby could hear them.

Sakura smiled.

“Did you have to do that, Naruto?” Ino asked.

Eleven looked at her. “She worked for that traitor, Orochimaru. She tried to kill Sasuke and Sakura. She only needed one strike, she had two.” It was better than saying that he only killed her to punish her boss for doing whatever the hell he’d done to Naruto. And he’d even given her an out.

Sakura leaned against Eleven and gave him a hug.

Medics finished clearing away Kin’s body, and the computer rolled again. Sasuke smiled this time. He was against Dosu.

As Eleven had, he jumped over the edge.

“I won’t go down as easily as Kin,” he swore. “I will have revenge.”

Sasuke just smiled at him, his eyes turning red.

“Begin,” Hayate called.

Sasuke dashed forward, Dosu raised his arm and started to shout, but it was too late. Sasuke was too fast. His hands were flying, and as he skidded to a stop, he finished the Jutsu.

With a cry, his body changed shape, taking the form of a dragon, and he lunged forward, his large mouth over Dosu’s head. There was a chomping sound, before the dragon reared back and spat a head out.

He changed back in to Sasuke, who nodded at the stunned Hayate, and made his way back. As with Naruto, there was complete silence.

“Feel better?” Eleven asked.

Sasuke nodded. “He worked for that traitor, Orochimaru. He tried to kill Sakura, he tried to kill you.”

Sakura moved and gave him a quick hug. She sat back down.

“What the hell was that move?” Ino demanded.

“Naruto taught me it,” Sasuke said.

Sakura smirked. The medics were still clearing up the mess. She moved to the front, and got down on her knees. She looked across the ring at the last Sound ninja. “Oh Glorious Kami,” she prayed loudly, “please grant me my fondest desire, that I meet *him* in a match.”

Zaku flinched.

Hayate coughed, attracting their attention. The screen rolled, and with divine favour on her side, the next match was indeed Sakura versus Zaku.

Sakura cheered. She jumped over the side and in to the arena. Green chakra spouted out of her hands, as she moved in to place eagerly. She was bouncing on the spot.

“I quit,” Zaku yelled.

“You can’t quit,” Sakura yelled. “Get down here so I can show what happens to people who try and murder my team!”

Zaku shook his head.

“Winner, Sakura,” Hayate announced.

Sakura pouted as she made her way back to them.

“Nice one,” Eleven praised.

“Yeah,” Sasuke agreed. “Excellent.”

“She didn’t do anything,” Ino protested.

“Troublesome blonde,” Shikamaru mumbled. “That was the point.”

“Huh?” Chōji asked.

Eleven sighed. “As far as Zaku could see, two of his colleagues had just been swatted like flies, no offence Shino, and he was now facing a Kunoichi that he hadn’t been able to detect in the forest.”

“Exactly,” Sakura continued cheerfully, keeping her voice down. “He’s probably better than me, but one of the lessons in the book of Naruto, is to always play on your opponents mind.

“He was scared, and I made the fear worst, by publically praying for his blood, and then making my hands glow. He probably thought I was about to decapitate him as well.”

“Head Impale,” Eleven muttered. “We’re going to teach you that later.”

Sakura blinked, and then bounced in her seat.

The computer screen flashed again, and Neji’s name came up, against one of Yugito’s Genin.

Neji jumped down. The Cloud Genin looked reluctant.

Eleven sighed. “Yo, Team Seven had a grudge against those Sound bastards,” he yelled across the

stadium. “The other fights will be normal Genin fights.”

There were some relieved looks from the other Genins, and an approving look from the Hokage.

“Neji,” Naruto called.

The Hyūga looked up.

“Win, but please don’t kill.”

Neji smirked briefly, and then got in to his Clan’s famous stance.

Anko removed her knife from the technician’s neck. “You can make the results random now,” she told him.

He pressed a button.

“Of course,” she continued. “I was never here.”

“Yes,” he squeaked.

“Because if I was here, I’d have to kill you to cover my tracks.”

“You were never here,” he said fervently. “It was pure luck that the second, third and fourth matches were like that. My code is truly random, so any matchup is equally as likely.”

“I’m glad we agree,” Anko said, and swirled away. Out of the three matches, she was most impressed with Sakura’s. She’d displayed some balls to bluff like that.

As soon as the matches were over, Eleven, Sasuke and Sakura rushed over to the hospital. They found Four and Haku sat with Naruto.

“Any news?” Sasuke demanded.

“None,” Four sighed.

Sasuke sighed.

“We’ve tried sending a clone in, but nothing come back,” Four added. “We are dispersing and not coming back. Something is really wrong.”

“So it’s something that Naruto and Kyūbi can’t deal with?” Sasuke asked. “I’d’ve been screwed then.”

“Do you think it was anything to do with the glowing punch the traitor landed on him?” Sakura

asked.

Four looked up. “Glowing punch?”

Sasuke nodded. “Yeah, just before he got bit, there was a weird punch.”

Four looked deep in thought. “Where’s Three?”

“Probably still in the library,” Eleven said.

“Would you mind fetching him?”

“I’m running low on Chakra,” Eleven admitted.

“Here,” Four said, holding out her hand. “I refilled this morning.”

Eleven took her hand and breathed in. He smiled, and made some hand signals, before vanishing in the lightning.

“Who is Three?” Haku asked.

“He’s our main seal clone,” Four explained.

“And how and why do you recharge?” Sakura asked.

“We’re human, apart from the fact that we are Chakra constructs. Three knows more about the mechanics, well, except for the boss and Foxy-chan, obviously. We have Chakra coils, but the boss hasn’t discovered how to hook them up properly yet, so once we run out of Chakra, we disperse back to the boss.

“We recharge through contact, clone to clone transfers are pretty easy. Clones to human need a hug, very close contact.”

Haku smiled slightly, as he walked around the bed. “Here,” he offered.

“Thanks, Haku-chan,” Four said, and hugged him. Haku glowed briefly, before they separated.

“That is just…” Sakura started, before she sighed. “It’s wrong, on many levels.”

Four grinned. “Yep, and we love it.”

Sakura shook her head.

There was another burst of lightning, and two clones appeared. One was wearing glasses.

“Hey, Three,” Four said.

“Four,” he replied, with a small bow. “Sakura, Sasuke, Haku,” he greeted the others. “So you say

that the boss was hit by a glowing fist in the stomach?”

Sasuke and Sakura nodded.

Three pulled back the sheets. “Four?”

Four nodded and placed her hands on Naruto’s stomach. A tattoo appeared, the inside was a spiral whirl, while the outside had six kanji points radiating out.

“That’s the Kyūbi seal?” Haku asked.

“Eleven?”

Eleven put his hands next to Fours, and a new seal appeared on his chest.

“Hmm,” Three said. “That’s a Five point elemental seal. It’s interfering with Dad’s seal.” He smiled, “You were right, Sakura, good work.”

Sakura blushed.

“Okay, guys, I’ll see you on the flip side.”

“Thanks, Three,” Four said softly.

He smiled, and pulled his hand back. “Five Element Unseal,” he cried, and slammed his hand in to Naruto’s chest. There was a wave of Chakra throughout the room.

Naruto reared up, and Three vanished. Naruto collapsed back.

“What happened?” Sasuke asked.

“Three used all his Chakra to release it, so he dispersed,” Four said softly. “I just hope the boss pulls through.”

“Because if he dies, you do,” Sakura whispered.

“No,” Four sighed. “I could keep going, so could all the level fours out at the moment, but we’d be lost, alone.”

“Alone,” Eleven sighed. “If I ever see that snake bastard again, I’m going to rip that fucking tongue out of his mouth and hang him from Dad’s head with it.”

The door slammed open, and Tsunade, Shizune and Jiraiya charged in. “What’s going on?” Tsunade demanded. “What’s with the Chakra pulse?”

“Snake gimp put a Five Element seal on Naruto, we think that wasn’t helping. Three released it.”

“Really?” Jiraiya asked in surprise.

Four nodded.

Jiraiya scanned Naruto's chest, and then nodded. "He succeeded," he said. "Impressive. The only problem that I can see, is that it's taking an age to vanish."

"Is it?" Tsunade asked.

"I would suspect that the curse seal is slowing it down," Jiraiya explained.

"Three's been on seal study permanently since the day after the festival. He's only been dispersed three times, to move him up the levels. Apart from that, all he's done is study.

"He also learnt a lot from the experts we have working for us, who dealt with the Hyūga problem. They gave him all sorts of practical insights."

"So, what now?" Tsunade asked.

"We wait."

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 9

Naruto sighed. About the only good thing, was that the tar wasn't moving very fast. He had just finished digging a large perimeter ditch, so that the tar couldn't encroach to easily. It was a delaying tactic, but at the moment, that was all he could do.

His trench was around two miles long, and four feet deep, and had taken every bit of his will power to complete, especially when all he wanted to do was collapse.

He wouldn't let himself, he had things to do, and being taken over slowly by some traitor was not on his list of things to do.

Suddenly, there was a roar. "Foxy-chan?"

"You're damn right," Kyūbi yelled. "Finally."

Naruto created a clone, and smiled. "Hey, Three."

"Boss," he grinned. "One Elemental Seal, removed. One Foxy-chan, free."

"Great work!"

Three scratched the back of his head.

Naruto looked at the tar, and shook his head. "You know what it's time for?" he said to Three and Foxy-chan.

Three nodded and moved over to the cage. There was a single piece of paper in the middle, with the Kanji for seal on it. His hand started to glow. "Modify," he yelled, slamming his hand in to the seal.

The paper glowed, and then turned red.

"What was that?" Kyūbi asked.

"Step one," Three said. "I've still got to learn step two, but you know, better than nothing."

"I don't understand."

Naruto walked through the bars, and took one of the huge paws. He heaved it up, and walked back through the bar. It didn't stop the paw.

Kyūbi pounced forward, landing the other side of the cage.

"You can wander around here for now, like I said, this is just step one."

Foxy-chan settled down before Naruto, his snout at ground level. “Thank you,” he said simply.

Naruto grinned cheerfully. Before he looked at the tar. “Want to help?”

“And get gunk on my paws?” Kyūbi asked with a foxy grin.

Naruto nodded.

“And stop this git from taking over, just when you were getting it nice,” Kyūbi finished. “You know what this calls for?”

“Enough clones to block out the sun?” Three suggested.

“Shadow Clone Technique,” Naruto yelled, filling his mental landscape with copies of himself.

“Shadow Clone Technique,” Kyūbi yelled, causing thirty huge foxes to appear.

“Charge!”

Sasuke found he didn’t actually mind sitting like this. Haku was pressed against him, his back to his chest. Haku was chatting with Sakura. Next to them, Anko and Kurenai had just arrived. Further down, Shizune, Tsunade, Jiraiya, Four and Eleven were playing cards. Hiashi, Naruto’s friends from the Ramen stand, as well as most of the other clan heads had stopped in for a few minutes during the last six hours.

Not only was it relaxing, it made him realise that he was slowly being accepted as a friend by two Sannin, and acknowledged as an actual adult, and not a spoiled brat, by a lot of important people.

By not doing things his brothers way, he was gaining more and more powerful allies, and the more allies he had, the easier it would be to not just kill Itachi, but make his clan great again.

Suddenly Four and Eleven looked up.

“Yeah!” Four yelled, as she jumped and landed on Anko, her hand reached out, and she pulled Kurenai in to a three person hug.

Eleven was on his feet, doing a small dance of pure joy.

“What’s happening?”

There was a pop, and a clone appeared.

Eleven and Four both looked, gasped, and then went down on one knee before him, their heads lowered, one hand across their chests.

“Hey guys,” the clone said.

“One,” Four said reverently.

“One?” Sakura asked.

“The first clone,” Four explained, not getting up. “Created a microsecond before anyone else. Has spent the most time awake of any clone, by a long way.”

“Guys,” One protested. “Get up, you’re embarrassing me.”

Four and Eleven grinned at each other, as they got to their feet.

One stretched. “I’ve not been out in ages,” he muttered. “So, the boss asked me to pop out and bring everyone up to date. That curse seal was trying to pollute the boss’s mind. At the same time, that elemental seal was playing havoc with the boss’s chakra, so he couldn’t do anything to help himself.”

“What did he do?” Sasuke asked.

“His mental mindscape is like Konoha, and the representation of Orochimaru’s taint was like tar. So the boss started to dig. He made a trench around it, to slow it down and trap it.

“That gave time for Three’s release to work, as soon as that seal was gone, Foxy-chan was back, as was the boss’s Chakra. Suffice it to say, Orochimaru’s curse is now being fought the proper way.”

“Yeah,” Anko grinned.

“Ahh, yes, Anko, I’m glad you’re here,” One said. “Means I don’t have to go looking for you.”

“Naruto-kun likes me more than you,” Anko said in a sing-song voice, needling Kurenai in the side.

“None of that,” One said. “The boss loves you both equally. No, it’s more that as soon as he’s done fixing his own seal, he’s going to do yours.”

Anko’s mouth dropped open. She had nice teeth.

There was a burst of yellow chakra from Naruto’s shoulder that seemed to eat the seal away, leaving tanned skin.

Naruto opened his eyes and leant forward. “Anko,” he demanded.

She moved over to him.

He pulled her on top of him on the bed. “This is gonna hurt,” he told her, his hands flew up, and he muttered something, before he seemed to chomp down on her neck.

Anko screamed under her breath, and then went very still.

“Well, as you can’t see what is going on,” One said, “I’ll give a running commentary. They’re on Anko’s mental landscape. Anko’s never been there consciously. She’s asking how he got there, and he’s explaining that the Jutsu came from the Yamanakas.

“They’re going through the mindscape now, which looks a lot like the forest of death, looking for anything that looks off.”

“One,” Tsunade said. “If Naruto’s mind was in Anko’s, how did he bite her?”

One smiled. “You think Naruto’s the only person inside there? I’ve been awake in his mind for months, and most of the other named clones hang around a lot.”

“That’s insanity,” Jiraiya said.

“Technically, you could be right,” One admitted. “I mean, he does hear voices in his head all the time, and they do tell him what to do.” He grinned. “Sanity is over rated anyway.”

Tsunade bopped Jiraiya on the head. “Enough of that, you,” she ordered. “Please continue, One.”

One grinned. “They’re just bouncing through the forest now. Foxy-chan thinks it’s hard to find, because her seal was an early version, and it wasn’t really complete yet.”

Everyone in the room went silent and looked at One.

“What?” he asked.

Four and Eleven groaned and banged their heads against the bed.

“Aww, crap,” he muttered.

“Please explain how you know what Kyūbi is thinking, when you are out here, and Naruto is in Anko’s mind,” Tsunade ordered.

One looked around. “Okay, we trust all of you. The second thing the boss did when he got his Chakra back, was set up the repeaters.”

“Repeaters,” Haku said slowly. “Automatic clones that just appear and disperse, sending all current knowledge to all existing clones?”

“Every three minutes,” One agreed.

“So that’s why you two felt so lonely,” Shizune said. “You weren’t getting updates.”

“It was like the boss was dead,” Four agreed with a shudder. “There wasn’t time for the boss to send an emergency repeater before he was hit, so we had no clue, until Sakura-chan told us, that he

had been sealed like that.”

“Still, the boss has put some measures in place to help in the future,” One said cheerfully.

“Three’s not going to get much sleep.”

“That’s the way he likes it,” Eleven said.

“Oh, they’ve found something. It’s a giant tree, and it’s sucking all the cool stuff out of Anko’s mind. It’s slowly killing Anko. She’s shocked, especially as they’ve just found that the bastard can make it worse.”

Kurenai moved forward and grabbed Anko’s hand.

“Relax,” Sasuke said. “The idiot will stop him, that’s what Naruto does.”

One grinned at him. “Actually, Eleven, if you wouldn’t mind?”

Eleven grumbled to himself, and then vanished.

“What happened?” Sakura asked.

“We needed to know what happened,” One said. His, and Four’s, eyes suddenly went wide.

“Good,” they said in unison.

“What?” Shizune asked.

“Eleven, while possibly a tad over the top, did the right thing with his execution of the Sound bitch,” One said. “She tried to attack one of our precious people, she deserved to die.”

Haku smiled and nodded.

“Sasuke, good execution of the Dragon Jutsu, did you notice how stunned the old man was?”

“He wasn’t the only one,” Kurenai said. “Some of the foreign Jounin demanded to know where Kakashi found that Jutsu. It was fun to watch him squirm, before Asuma pointed out that it must have come from Naruto-kun. Yugito was highly amused, as Nibi said it came from a fighter called Liu Kang.”

Sasuke nodded. “Yeah. Naruto demonstrated it, Eleven taught it to me. It only worked like that because I’m far about Genin level. If it had been against a Jounin, they would have smacked me through the wall when I was transforming.

The Jounin and Sannin in the room all nodded in agreement.

One smiled. “The boss has decided to apply some focused Naruto on to the problem.”

“Spamming the skyline with clones?” Sasuke asked.

“And beating it until its dead?” Sakura added.

“Exactly,” One agreed.

“Well,” Four said, “With One out, and the Boss back in business, I’ve got a few things to take care of.”

“Be careful,” One said.

Four grinned and opened the window. “Smoke me a kipper, I’ll be back for breakfast.”

“What’s a kipper?” Haku asked, as Four vanished.

Four dashed down to the shopping district, aware that it was now really late. She was hoping that some shops would still be open.

The darkness, with light only coming from restaurants and nightclubs, quickly put paid to that idea.

She pouted to herself and put her hands on her hips. It was alright for the boss, who could just create an endless amount of clones to henge as clothing, but she – who had already recharged Eleven earlier – didn’t have the chakra.

“F-four?”

Four looked up. “Hey, Ino-chan,” she said. Before she stopped. “Tell me, where does a Kunoichi go to get some clothes for a seduction mission?”

“The ANBU headquarters I think. Why?”

“Oh, nothing,” Four grinned. “Thanks Ino-chan.” She took off toward the main ANBU building, leaving the other blonde in her wake. She should have thought of that herself.

As she neared the ANBU building, she jumped on to the wall, and continued to run sideways. It was the easiest way to get to the entrance. The ANBU did not like dealing with civilians, so they had guards on the ground.

She jumped off the wall, skidded through the doors, and came to a halt in front of the desk.

“What do you need, Naruto?” the Chunin on guard asked with a smile.

“I need a costume for a mission.”

“Basement three,” the Chunin said. “Second door on the right.”

Four smiled at him, and headed down the stairs, sliding down the banister rail. She jumped off at

the correct floor and skidded to a halt next to the door.

She opened it warily, and smiled as the lights came on, revealing the single biggest collection of clothes she had ever seen.

From nightclub dresses to nurse uniforms that would have had Shizune-chan blushing like Hinata-chan.

She walked over to the uniforms section, and soon found what she wanted. She walked over to the changing rooms and quickly put the new outfit on, stuffing her jeans and t-shirt in a locker.

She posed in front of a mirror, giggled, before she let her hair out of the twin pigtails she normally kept it in, and replaced it with one long pony tail. A few wisps of hair to frame her face, a cute beret on top, and she was done. She headed back to the stairs. She met a couple of masked ANBU on the way up. Two of the three looked at her, lost their balance, and tumbled down the stairs, causing her to have to jump over them.

“What’s their problem?” she asked the still standing ANBU wearing a butterfly mask.

“They’re perverts,” she sighed. “Mission?”

Four nodded.

“Live free.”

“Die hard,” Four responded traditionally. She bowed to the ANBU member, and continued her journey upstairs.

The Chunin at the reception desk had been joined by Izumo and Kotetsu, who were sat on the edge of the counter. As she walked, both turned, before their eyes went wide, and they fell off the counter.

Four shook her head and walked out the door. She took the slow route out, ANBU members on guard allowing her through without hesitation.

She smiled at them, before deciding she had enough chakra to complete her self-imposed mission, and get them easily. She made the hand signals, and sighed in pleasure as the lightning embraced her.

“Please,” Kotetsu begged. “Please tell me that the CCTV is working!”

Izumo was already over by the computer. “It is,” he said in relief.

“What is?”

Kotetsu looked up, to see an ANBU member in a butterfly mask staring at him.

“The CCTV,” he said slowly.

“And why would a Chunin want to be looking at ANBU CCTV recordings?” she asked softly.

“A mission,” he said proudly. “By order of Jiraiya of the Sanin.”

“Oh, really,” Butterfly said, her voice now low.

“Yes,” Izumo agreed. “He needs to know what is going on in ANBU for his spy network.”

“I think,” Butterfly said, “that I’ll wait for the Sandaime to authorise this request. Unless, of course, you can provide signed papers?”

Kotetsu cursed in his mind. “No, ANBU-san,” he replied. “But I can get a hold of Jiraiya.”

“Off you go then,” she said, making a shooing motion. “I’ll wait here for you to get back.”

As the two Chūnin ran away, Chihiro reached open and took a piece of paper. She wrote a quick note, signing it with a small butterfly, and whistled for a messenger bird.

“They’re about half-way through,” One stated. “It’s taking longer, because this damn thing is entranced in Anko-chan’s mind.”

Jiraiya looked up. “I’ll be back in a minute,” he said, and walked out the door.

Kurenai frowned. A messenger bird flew in the window and perched on her shoulder. She took the message and read it.

Kurenai, I think the Pervert is going to try something perverted with Naruto. I could use your help to stop him at ANBU Headquarters.

It was signed with a simple butterfly.

“Tsunade-chan,” she called. “An ANBU friend of mine thinks that Jiraiya is trying to do something perverted with Four.”

“Four?” Tsunade asked, looking up from her game of patience.

“It says Naruto, but as he’s here...”

“I’ll stay,” Shizune offered. “Go and stop him.”

Tsunade smiled and cracked her knuckles.

“Can I get anyone anything on the way back?”

“Sake,” Sasuke suggested.

“You’re a good kid,” Tsunade grinned. “Come on, Kurenai.”

Together, they swirled out, arriving in the ANBU entrance hall. Jiraiya was already there.

“I demand the CCTV,” he was saying to Chihiro.

“Why,” Tsunade demanded.

Jiraiya jumped. “No reason.”

“No reason?” Tsunade asked.

He nodded.

“I think,” Tsunade said, “that we’ll have a look at this tape and see for ourselves.”

Kurenai frowned at the eagerness shown by the three Chunins.

“I think we can handle this,” she said.

The look of disappointment on their faces was comical, and made her very wary.

“In fact,” Tsunade said, “Jiraiya, about face.”

“What?”

“I said, about face,” Tsunade growled. “Or I’ll eject you from the building.”

Jiraiya pouted and grumbled as he turned.

Kurenai concentrated on the screen, as Chihiro pushed the last button.

The picture that showed up was of the staircase, leading down to the basement.

Blonde hair appeared, and was quickly followed by a familiar whiskered female face, and then Kurenai had to grab her nose to stop herself passing out from bloodloss.

The girl smiled, and bounced through the hall, and then out the door.

“Sweet Kami,” Tsunade whispered.

A sentiment Kurenai could agree with wholeheartedly.

“Does she kiss as good as she looks?” a voice asked.

“Better,” Kurenai answered, before she could help herself. She growled, as she looked to find

Jiraiya writing in his notebook, a perverted look on his face.

It didn't last long, as a single punch from Tsunade had him flying out the door. He didn't seem to care, as he kept scribbling as he flew backward.

"I'll take that," Tsunade said, as she moved over and ejected the tape. She put a fresh one in, and then moved over to the side. It took her another five minutes to write out all the paperwork needed.

Kurenai just shook her head, unsure if she was trying to lock the image in her mind, or get it out. In, definitely.

There was a small sound from outside, and she looked up, aware that Tsunade and Chihiro were doing the same.

The guard ANBU were not stopping the person as she trotted back toward them.

"You do realise," Chihiro said, "that our safety is now dependent on guards like that?"

"I'll get Ibiki to have a word," Tsunade agreed. "Where the hell did he learn to walk like that?"

Kurenai found herself almost hypnotised by the girl walking toward them. She had never had fantasies, not like this, but now she had seen it, it was going to live with her for the rest of her life.

She started at the top, and slowly worked her eyes down. The beret that was just a little lopsided was cute. She allowed her eyes to wander down over the deep blue eyes, and the generous smile.

A golden pony tail swayed behind her with every step. She continued her journey down, drinking in the startling innocence of the white blouse, and the way the blue tie hung over the girl's breasts.

Further down, the shirt was tucking neatly in to a blue pleated skirt, that flared with each step, and it was there that the outfit turned from cute innocence, into devastating attractiveness.

The skirt barely came down to mid-thigh, and revealed endless legs. Kurenai tried to move her eyes down further, but the way the skirt moved was to beguiling, to hypnotising.

"Hey guys," Four said cheerfully, as she stopped in front of them. She absently tugged the front of her skirt down, and Kurenai had to force herself not move.

"Nai-chan, can I borrow some Chakra?"

Kurenai found herself nodding, wondering how the hell she was going to stop herself from grabbing Four and taking her to bed. She wrapped her arms around the clone and let her Chakra out.

Four moaned softly, and Kurenai admitted to herself that she was completely in love with

Naruto's female form.

"Mission successful?" Chihiro asked.

Four nodded happily. "I'll be back in a few minutes. I'm going to get changed. It's cold out there."

Four bounced off, and Kurenai couldn't take her eyes off of Four's rear.

"It is not fair that a guy should have an arse like that," Tsunade muttered.

The girl vanished from sight, and Kurenai found herself collapsed against the counter.

"What was the mission?" Chihiro asked.

"Hmm," Tsunade muttered. "I bet that tomorrow, we'll hear that a Genin from Sound was found dead."

Kurenai nodded in agreement.

"What?" Chihiro asked.

"Naruto-kun doesn't believe in leaving threats to Konoha alive," Tsunade explained softly. "The Sound Genin were ordered kill Uchiha Sasuke, Haruno Sakura, and Naruto-kun. Naruto-kun doesn't let things like that go."

"So he got dressed up as the girl-scout from heaven, knocked on the door, killed him, then walked back?" Chihiro asked.

"Yes," Jiraiya said, as if he'd been there all along. "I had a clone follow her, just in case."

"What happened?" Kurenai found herself asking.

"She knocked on the door, and as the door opened, she bent over to do her shoelace up.

The boy looked down at her, and well let's just say that he was pleased to see her. She said that she was collecting for a new scout hut, and wondered if he would make a donation.

"He invited her in, and led her in to the living room. He was reaching for a weapon, when she cut his throat. She didn't say anything, just turned and left. At the door, she called out thank you, before she went down the rest of the street, finishing her alibi.

"Oh, and she used her Lightning to give the money to the Girl Scouts fund, before walking back here. You might want to have a word with her, Tsunade, because I don't think she quite realises that she looks like most men's wet dream."

Tsunade looked like she was itching to punch Jiraiya, but recognised that he was correct.

Kurenai didn't bother to add that Four was also more than a few women's dream.

"As a first assassination mission," Jiraiya continued, "I'd give it an A minus. She established an alibi, approached the subject, gained entrance, killed swiftly, and had the presence of mind to continue her alibi. No panic, nothing to draw attention to herself. And deliberate or not, not one person could describe her face. Every single person my clone has asked has, however, got a perfect description of her legs.

"It would be better if no one had seen her at all, but this way was pretty good as well."

"So what's with the meeting?" Four asked, as she walked back over to them. She'd changed back into a pair of tight jeans and a white t-shirt with an orange Uzumaki symbol down the middle.

"How do you feel?" Tsunade asked.

"Sleepy," Four replied.

"I meant, about your assassination of the Sound Genin."

"Oh, that," Four said with a grin. "He was dead the moment he attacked us." She tilted her head to one side, and then smiled. "They've about finished. We need to get back. Come on, 'Nai-chan,' she said, and Kurenai felt herself embraced once more, first by Four, then by the Lightning."

Jiraiya and Tsunade appeared seconds later, as they arrived back in the hospital room.

Anko suddenly threw her head back, and the same light that had escaped from Naruto's shoulder, escaped from Anko's. And when it was gone, the curse seal was no more.

"See," Naruto said. "Told you I could fix it." He smiled, and then passed out.

"Heh," One said with a grin. "Chakra-exhaustion, Foxy-chan's having a nap too." He stretched and looked at Four. "All done?"

She nodded.

"Right, I'm gonna hit a bar. Anyone coming?"

"I'm in," Tsunade agreed. She, and Jiraiya both left with One. Sakura, Sasuke and Haku walked out together, just leaving Shizune, Kurenai, Anko, Four and the sleeping Naruto.

Anko was staring at Naruto's face, her head shaking in disbelief. "Just like that," she muttered.

Four walked over and helped Anko down from Naruto's hospital bed. "Let's get you home, come on Kurenai-chan, Shizune-chan."

The four made their way home, before Anko was put to bed. Four went back to watch over

Naruto, and Shizune made her way to bed.

Kurenai entered her room, and slowly stripped, replacing her clothing with a man's shirt. She looked at her bed thoughtfully, and then turned abruptly.

“Anko?”

“Hey,” Anko called.

“How are you feeling?”

“Apart from being stunned? Better than I have in years.”

Kurenai turned, and rested her back against the door frame. She lifted one leg up. “So,” she said, as she placed her foot next to her knee. “I was wondering if you didn't want to sleep alone tonight?”

Even in the dark, Kurenai could see the light in Anko's eyes. The women moved the covers back.

Kurenai put extra effort into her walk, as she approached the bed, and slid in.

Four turned over the page of the book she was half-reading, and looked up as there was a light knock.

“Come in,” she called.

The blonde form of Yugito entered silently. Four blinked at her in confusion. They hadn't told anyone that Naruto was here, and the guards down the hall were keeping everyone else away.

“The clone did a good job, but Nibi could tell that he didn't have Kyūbi inside him.”

“Oh,” Four said. She smiled. “Well, pull up a chair.”

“How is he, and what happened?”

“He was given a curse seal by the snake gimp, Orochimaru. So we swapped him with Eleven.”

“Is that why your team had a grudge?”

Four giggled and nodded.

“My Genin suddenly got a massive wakeup call as to what life as a Ninja is like. They were terrified.”

“Sorry,” Four apologised.

“Normally, they get that wakeup call on a mission. So this was actually good for them. They’ve all doubled their efforts in training. As I suspect every Genin who lived did. You do know that the other Sound Genin will be out for revenge? He’ll be training even harder.”

“I killed him earlier,” Four said with a smile. “No point in leaving someone potentially troublesome alive.”

Yugito raised an eyebrow. “You are ruthless.”

“To those that threaten us.”

Yugito nodded. “Can I ask that you not kill my Genin if you meet them in the final?”

“They’re yours,” Four said, “so of course we won’t.”

“Thanks.”

Four made her way back to their house, happy that Yugito was looking after the boss. She paused by Anko’s door, and smiled. Kyūbi’s advice of playing innocent worked as a girl, as well as a boy, and her little adventure in a short skirt had obviously got someone worked up.

She was pretty sure it was the first time that Kurenai had actually slept with Anko, and didn’t want to disturb them.

It was time for her to start sorting out the next problem. She kicked off her jeans, after toeing off her trainers. Her socks were quickly yanked off and thrown in to the corner. She reached under her t-shirt and pulled off her bra, contorting to get it off her arms, before heading toward Shizune’s room.

She opened it softly. “Shizune-chan?”

“Four?” the other woman asked sleepily.

Four walked in and shut the door behind her. She didn’t wait to be invited, she just climbed in to bed.

“What are you doing?” Shizune asked, sitting up.

Four pushed her back down again, and snuggled against her. “Sleeping with you,” she said. “I don’t like to sleep alone, and Anko-chan and ‘Nai-chan are finally together.”

“Oh,” Shizune muttered. And even in the dark, Four could see her blush.

Four draped an arm over Shizune and settled in to sleep.

Naruto yawned before he opened his eyes. “That,” he said to himself, “was really stupid.”

“Naruto?”

Naruto looked up and smiled. “Hey, Haku.” He looked around; One was asleep on the chair the other side of the bed.

“Sasuke’s getting some breakfast; I’ve only just got here. Yugito was staying with you, she’s gone to get some sleep. Sakura will be joining us shortly, we were going to stay all night, but Four sent us home. Might I ask, what was really stupid?”

Naruto smiled wryly. He stretched.

“Put it away, idiot,” Sasuke said as he walked in, carrying two large paper bags. “No one here wants to see your stomach.”

Naruto pouted at him. “Just because you like the cute dark types...”

“Exactly,” Sasuke agreed. “Now, you were about to embarrass yourself for my amusement?”

“That depends,” he said. “What you got in there?”

“I was only going to get breakfast for three,” Sasuke grunted. “But I had a feeling you’d wake you, so this bag is yours.”

He smiled in thanks, and was aware this his smile grew as he found a stack of six ramen bowls. He appreciated the gesture, and tried to eat sensibly. He was a little amused by the very couple-y behaviour of the two boys, as Sasuke hovered a little, ensuring that Haku had enough food.

There was a knock on the door, and Sakura entered. She looked like she was still half-asleep. Sasuke held up a bowl, that she took with a nod of thanks, and sat down next to the still sleeping One.

“So?” Haku asked, the second Naruto had finished.

“Huh?” Sakura asked

“The idiot was about to confess something stupid,” Sasuke said. “He’s been dragging it out.”

“It’s not that bad,” Naruto mumbled. “Look, I was trying to save your worthless life, and what did I do?”

“Replaced me with yourself, then yourself with an exploding clone?”

Naruto nodded. “And the problem with that was?”

Haku giggled. “You could have replaced Sasuke with an exploding clone directly.”

“Exactly, although, if that had been the case, I wouldn’t have learned how to beat the snot out of Orochimaru’s curse seal.”

“How are you feeling, Naruto?” Sakura asked.

“Pretty good. Foxy-chan and I just needed a nap. I’m pretty much back to my best.”

“Good,” she said.

There was a swirl of leaves, and Kakashi appeared. “What, no breakfast for me?”

“Breakfast is for people who arrive on time,” Sakura said, and defiantly took the last bite from her bowl.

“Right,” Kakashi drawled slowly. “So, I wanted to talk to you about training for the next month?”

Naruto sorted through his mind quickly, and extracted Eleven’s memories. “Sakura’s got Ino, Sasuke’s got Lee, and I’ve got Tenten?”

Kakashi nodded. “It’s in a month, to give the dignitaries time to visit. A lot of gambling happens at these events.”

“How nice, gambling over the fate of people fighting for their lives. How civilised,” Naruto snorted.

“Contrary to popular belief,” Kakashi retorted, “Genin don’t normally get their heads bitten off by dragons, or get decapitated by irritated clones. The vast majority of them live. No point in sending kids to their deaths.”

“Oh,” Naruto went quiet. “Still don’t like it,” he pouted.

Haku reached out and patted him on the hand.

Naruto gave him a quick grin. “Anyway, you were saying?”

Kakashi sighed. “I figured that you’ve got enough people hanging around, such as, you know, half the ANBU, oh, and by the way, if I hear one more ANBU tell me how impressed they were at your first assassination mission I will have to vomit, a multitude of Jounin, two Sannin and a Kage, that you don’t actually need me?”

Naruto nodded in agreement.

“Excuse me,” Sakura said, raising her hand like she was in school. “Assassination mission?”

“Four took out the last Sound Genin,” One explained, as he opened his eyes and stretched.

“Oh, good.”

“So yeah, I’m good,” Naruto agreed.

Kakashi nodded. “Sakura, I’m going to arrange a Jounin instructor for you, while I take Sasuke.”

“Can I borrow Stick?” Sasuke asked Sakura.

Sakura made a half seal, and her staff appeared. She handed it to Sasuke, who nodded approvingly, before braining Kakashi. He handed it back to Sakura. “What did we talk about?” he asked Kakashi.

Kakashi groaned. “That you’re a team.”

“Exactly. Want to try again?”

Kakashi’s one visible eye looked faintly embarrassed.

“Actually,” Naruto interrupted. “It’s not a bad idea. Kakashi and Haku go on a training trip with Sasuke, I’ll sort myself out.”

“And Sakura?” Kakashi asked.

Naruto smiled. He nodded to the side, and Eleven appeared. He had a staff in his hand.

“Welcome to Bootcamp, Sakura-chan,” Eleven stated. “By the time I’ve finished with you, you’ll be at least mid-Chunin level. Don’t expect to get much sleep for the next month.”

Sakura paled.

“And you better tell your family that you won’t be around much, we’re going to live at the training ground.”

“Yay,” Sakura mumbled.

“It will be fun,” Naruto promised. “And remember, no pain, no gain.”

Sakura poked her tongue out at him.

Eleven offered his hand to Sakura, who took it. Eleven pulled her up, into a hug, made the hand seals behind her back, and vanished in the lightning.

“Poor Sakura,” Haku muttered.

“Poor Ino,” Sasuke said with a cold smile.

“Hmm, to make it fair,” Naruto muttered. He created a level one. “Nip down and tell Asuma that we’re giving Sakura private lessons.”

“Sir,” the clone said, and jumped out the window.

“Level ones,” One snorted. “They’re so cute. I love the way you have to tell them what to do. Like a puppy.”

“One,” Naruto chided. He stretched. “Right, Sasuke, in two weeks, come and see me, if you’ve worked hard, you should be able to learn the Flame Ingulf. Haku, I’ve got a Snowball for you.”

“Snowball?” Kakashi asked.

“Ice grenade.”

Sasuke and Haku both smiled. “Come on, Kakashi,” Sasuke said, and turned. “See you in a couple of weeks, idiot.”

“Bastard,” Naruto responded, as he was left alone with One.

“How’d it go last night?”

“Four was pretty amazing. She’s got Kurenai and Anko together properly, and now she’s working on Shizune.”

Naruto nodded. “Good.”

“Tsunade, Jiraiya and I spent most of the night down the bar. Boy, can those two drink. I put the Pervert to bed in the bottom of the hot tub – it is empty, still, and Tsunade I put to bed with a level One.”

“Why the hot tub?”

“Seemed like something you’d do.”

“True. So, what have I forgotten?”

“You promised Tazuna that you’re going to have a party for the Wave people tomorrow.”

“Hire a couple of teams for a c-rank to escort them.”

“Oh, and there was a problem we hadn’t appreciated. When you got cut off, every level one and two dispersed.”

Naruto searched through his mind, looking in the dump where he normally put unimportant clone memories, and found that some of them had been mid work.

“Five and Six covered though, said you were in a serious fight. We were able to keep your injury under wraps as Six impersonated you.”

Naruto stretched again. “Think we should get out of here?”

“Yes,” One said promptly. “However, it will annoy Shizune and Tsunade.”

Naruto wrinkled his nose. “I guess.” He paused as he accepted the dispersal of the clone he’d sent to Asuma.

“Oh, he’s on,” One said. “What’s the prize?”

Naruto thought for a second. “The last of our Kiki island tobacco?”

“And from him,” One said slowly, “how about...” He paused. He grinned. “He has to advertise Teuchi’s Ramen stand, by spending the day dressed up as a giant chicken?”

Naruto sniggered.

“If you don’t mind, I’m going to stay out for a while. I’ll take care of the negotiations with Asuma, keep an eye on the other rookies, check that they’re improving.”

Naruto shrugged. “Sure, give some advice if people ask, but don’t offer any. We don’t want to butt in where we’re not wanted.”

“Catch you later,” One said, and hopped out the window.

Naruto spent a few minutes amusing himself by recreating all the lower level clones that he had lost, while he went through the sealing memories that Three had left him.

There was some interesting stuff. Sealing things in a Euclidean space was clever, they were powered both by Chakra, and the result of the interaction between two fourth dimensional objects pulling in orthogonal directions.

Then you had things like the curse seal that ran chakra in a basic Möbius warp, with the tainting effect of Orochimaru’s own soul adding the filth to it. There was also an extra element that seemed slightly demonic, highly diluted, but there all the same.

Two disparate thoughts came to his mind. One, that Three really needed to get out more, if he found that interesting. Two, that it had just solved one of his biggest problems.

He chuckled to himself. He was that much closer to his goal now.

If only he could find a sweet hat, the day would be brilliant!

“Anko,” the Hokage said. “I’m sorry, but I need you on a mission.”

“But...” Anko protested. “Me, Naruto, ten gallons of whipped cream, hot tub, sake, not being able to move because we’re sore!”

The Hokage pinched his nose slowly. “As much as I want to hear about Naruto-kun’s sex life, I do

still have a village to run.”

“But, Lord Hokage,” Anko whined. “He, above everything else, removed my curse seal! I need to say thank you, repeatedly, in as many position as we can manage!”

“Go,” the Hokage ordered, ignoring the pout.

Anko snatched the mission scroll and stormed out.

The Hokage watched her go with an amused smile. At least Naruto would be able to concentrate on his training now.

Now, if he could just distract the others, he might be able to teach the kid some things himself.

Gekkō Hayate was in trouble. Deep trouble. The sort of trouble that Ninja’s normally didn’t survive. He’d just launched his best attack, and Baki, the Jounin from Suna, had blocked it.

He could see the wind blade coming in and braced himself.

There was the sound of wind rushing by his face, and Hayate gasped. He recognised the sword that was in front of him. It had glowing blue edge, like the owner had run his own chakra running through it.

Naruto!

He jumped back, as Naruto was attacked furiously by Baki. Naruto looked surprised by the ferocity of the attack, and struggled to keep up with the better fighter.

Hayate launched himself back in to the fight, spinning his sword into different dances, as he did what he could to take the enemy.

Baki snarled, and slid to the side, so that Hayate was next to Naruto. He pulled out his own blade and saluted them.

“Give up,” Naruto said. “Reinforcements will be here in seconds.”

Baki didn’t, he just seemed to vanish, as did Naruto. Hayate looked down, to see the point of Baki’s sword poking out of Naruto’s back.

He slid to the side, his sword moving automatically. He noticed, as if through frosted glass, that Naruto was holding on to Baki’s wrist, keeping the sword inside him.

He swiped, and watched with grim amusement as Baki’s head bounced on the floor twice.

He turned to Naruto, who spat up some blood, and then collapsed. Hayate was on his knees, holding Naruto’s head.

“Naruto!”

Hayate shook himself, as others arrived. Tsunade, the Hokage, Jiraiya, ANBU, and Yugao, who tore of her mask.

“He saved me,” he said, aware his voice was distant. He shook himself. Tsunade was on her knees, her hands glowing.

“Spinal column separated at the second lumbar,” she said. “And his insides are a mess. He needs operating on, immediately. Kyūbi is going to need all the help it can get. We need to be careful though, a stretcher.”

“Can’t I use lightning?” a clone, and Hayate had no clue which one, asked.

“I don’t want to risk it. We screw up, and he’s paralysed.”

The clone gulped, and six more appeared, including the only truly recognisable clone, Four.

An ANBU member with a blank mask pulled out a stretcher. The clones, working in perfect unison placed Naruto on it, and then carried it. Their synchronicity was so absolute that the stretcher had no unwanted movement.

Four walked up to the body of Baki. She looked at the other clones. “They die,” she said simply.

Every other clone nodded.

“Hayate,” the Hokage said, as Tsunade and some of the ANBU followed the clones. Another group of ANBU appeared, and cleared the path for them. “What happened?”

“Sir,” he said, saluting, feeling his mind come back to him as he retreated to his professional persona. “Some of the information may be S-ranked. Suffice it to say that Naruto arrived at an opportune moment, stopping me from being decapitated. Baki attacked Naruto, so hard and so fast that Naruto couldn’t do anything but defend. I attacked Baki, but he was a superior opponent.

“Naruto wanted Baki to give up, as you were coming, but he attacked me again. Naruto took the blow, then held Baki against him. I killed Baki.”

“Why was Baki trying to kill you?” Jiraiya asked.

“That’s part of the information, sir,” Hayate said. He relaxed a little, as Yugao took his arm.

Jiraiya grunted. “Form a perimeter,” he ordered the remaining ANBU, before he muttered under his breath, and an orange dome shot up around them.

“Report.”

“Sir, I stumbled across Baki talking to a ninja I believe to be the S-ranked missing nin,

Orochimaru. Sand and Sound have joined together, and are preparing an invasion of Konoha. Orochimaru ordered Baki to kill me as a sign of their alliance.”

“Crap,” Jiraiya muttered.

“Thank you,” the Sandaime said slowly. “As you noted, this is S-ranked information. As far as anyone else is concerned, you have no idea why Baki attacked you.”

“Yes, Hokage-sama,” he said, hearing Yugao echo his words.

“Jiraiya, we’ll talk about this tomorrow.”

“Kay.”

The orange column Jutsu fell to the ground.

“Clear up this mess,” the Hokage ordered the ANBU. “No one talks.”

“Yes, Hokage-sama.”

“Let’s get to the hospital.”

Hayate nodded. He made the signs and used the body flicker technique to get to the hospital.

“Waiting room three,” the nurse at the desk said without looking up.

Hayate found himself following the Hokage and Jiraiya into the sort of room that professional killers hated.

He slumped down. Yugao sat next to him.

The Hokage pulled a staff out of nowhere, and stood, his eyes blank, a sign his mind was on the upcoming invasion.

Jiraiya pulled out a notebook and started to scribble.

“It was the Blade of Wind,” he said softly. “Naruto blocked it.”

“How?”

“Chakra laced blade.”

“How did he know that you were in trouble?”

Hayate paused. “I have no idea.”

Four entered the room, accompanied by a bunch of clones. One of them hinged into a comfortable chair for her. She sighed as she sat down. The others flopped down in various places

around the room.

“Four?”

The girl looked up.

“How did Naruto know that Hayate-kun was in trouble?”

“What do you think, One?”

“Save him explaining when he wakes up.”

“True,” she agreed. “Look at your watch, Hayate.”

Hayate did, staring at the present that Naruto had given him a few months ago. He frowned. It seemed a little smaller. “It’s smaller?”

Four nodded. “Dot clone.”

The Hokage and Jiraiya snapped to attention.

“The brat placed a non-sentient clone on a watch?”

Four nodded. “It monitors for trouble, and disperses if a bunch of things occur at the same time, like if Hayate was fighting for his life. As Naruto knew where Hayate was, he sent a couple of clones to get help, while he turned up.”

“Who has these dot clones?” Jiraiya asked.

“All of you,” Four said with a shrug.

“Even me?” The Hokage asked in surprise.

“Your pipe.”

The Hokage shoot his head as he looked at his pipe. His eyes widened. “How in Kami’s name did he do that?”

“You were out of it when he gave you the tobacco.”

“And me?” Jiraiya asked.

“Your notebook. ‘Nai-chan’s hair clip, Anko-chan’s handcuffs, we thought of things that you’d always wear, and made a few different ones for each of you.”

The door burst open, and Sakura entered with a clone. “How is he?” she asked Four urgently.

“We don’t know. He’s unconscious, the repeaters are off, Tsunade-chan is operating on him. He

had his spine severed.”

Sakura swore under her breath. “Should I call for Sasuke and Haku?”

Four shook her head. “Let’s see what happens first. They’re hard at work, as you should be, Sakura-chan.”

“It’s her one evening off per week,” the clone said.

“Damn, Eleven,” Four said. “You slave driver.”

“Sakura-chan’s gonna be the fourth best Genin.”

“Fourth?” Jiraiya asked.

“The boss, Sasuke, Neji,” One said. “Sasuke’s been working with Kakashi and Haku, and Neji co-opted every Jounin Hyūga he could lay his hands on, and Hiashi called in some favours for him.

“The others have been working hard with their teams, but nothing beats one on one training.”

The door bust open again, and Anko and Kurenai burst in. “How is he?” One looked at the clones. “Three, can you bring them up to date?”

One of the clones stood, pushed his glasses back a little, and walked over to two women, and started to talk quietly.

Hayate wrapped an arm around Yugao and sighed. He was trying to come to terms with just how close to death he had been.

He had seen the blade flying to his neck.

More of Naruto’s friends turned up, the Ramen waitress, the Jounin Jinchūriki – who was immediately pulled to sit with Four, who snuggled in to her, showing just how worried the clone was – the old man from Wave, Hyūga Hiashi, and a couple of other clan heads.

People from every end of the social spectrum, sat in a waiting room with uncomfortable chairs.

“One, you need to get the boss to refurnish this place. If he’s going to insist on taking shots that belong to clones, I am not going to spend my time sat on uncomfortable chairs waiting for him!”

“Six, you want to take charge of that?”

A clone on the floor nodded. “Hey, I’ve got an idea.”

He jumped up, and rested against the ceiling.

One looked up, and did the same, stretching out. “Man, that’s comfy,” he exclaimed.

With the exception of Four and Eleven, who was being used as a pillow by Sakura, the other clones did the same thing.

“Naruto did that when he came back from Wave,” Hiashi chuckled. “While we were going through his bounty.”

Tazuna chuckled as well. “It took ten of us close to a day to sort that mess out. It allowed us to clear of the entire country’s debts, and import everything we needed to get the country back running.”

The doors swung open again, as the new Ino-Shika-Cho trio entered, with their Sensei, Asuma.

“So what did the idiot do now?” The Yamanaka demanded.

Hayate blinked, as Yugao vanished from his side. The Genin was pinned to the wall by his girlfriend, her feet a good foot of the ground. One of Yugao’s hands were holding her up by the throat, the other holding a kunai to her neck. “The ‘idiot’ saved my love,” Yugao spat.

“Yugao-chan,” he said, moving over to her slowly. “Let the Genin down, she didn’t think about what she was saying.”

Yugao snarled.

He reached out and took her hand, moving the kunai back from blonde girl’s neck. Yugao dropped the girl, and turned, pressing her face in to his shoulder. He hugged her, suddenly aware that she was crying.

He guided her back to their chair, his eyes meeting Asuma’s for a moment.

“Shika, Choji, why don’t you take Ino down to the canteen?”

The two boys grabbed Ino and marched out with her.

Asuma looked up. “Is that Chakra?” he asked curiously, of the clones resting on the ceiling.

One nodded. “Use it as a sticky anchor against the ceiling. It’s like the opposite of water walking.”

Asuma shrugged and jumped up. He blinked in surprise. “Man, this is comfy!”

There were some chuckles from the clones.

“I nearly lost you,” Yugao whispered.

“Yes, but remember that Naruto gave his word,” he whispered back.

“None of you get to die until you’re as old as the old man,” One stated. “That’s the bosses Nindo,

and we subscribe to that one hundred percent.”

“Hayate,” Yugao said. “I want children.”

He looked at her for a second, and then nodded slowly.

She smiled at him, and then rested her head down.

Children. Maybe not now, but it was the first real sign that she was thinking about the future, and he liked that.

The Hokage absently tapped his staff three times. Hayate surveyed the room, seeing who had picked up on the signal. As expected, the Jounins in the room, along with Hiashi had seen it. Yugito was stroking Four’s hair, but Hayate could see that Four was focused on the old man as well. A scan of the ceiling showed that all of the clones looked at each other, and then started an amusing anecdote about training with Shino.

The old man’s hands moved, in short signs, as he gave a couple of orders. After he had finished, Four looked up. “Why do I smell blood?” she asked.

“What?” Hiashi demanded.

Four sniffed, looking around.

“Damn it, Hayate, why the hell didn’t you tell me you were injured!” Yugao yelled.

“Medic,” Jiraiya called, as Four slid on her knees over to Hayate. Her hand went under his shirt, and when she pulled it back, it was covered in blood.

He met Four’s eyes for a second, but gave no other sign as he felt a little prick on his side, and he started to pass out.

His last memory, was that of his girlfriend shouting his name. Anyone with the skill would know it was fake, but the people with the skill knew how to keep secrets.

Four walked back in to the waiting room. “He’s going to be fine,” she said. “Chakra exhaustion and blood lost. Hard headed idiot.”

No one commented on the irony of a clone of Naruto calling someone else hard headed.

“Might take him a week or two, so we’ll need to get someone to cover for him at the exams.”

“I’ll do it,” Asuma said.

“Thank you,” The Hokage said. “And thank you, Four, for your prompt action.”

Four turned and beamed at him.

“When we know how Naruto is, we will have a meeting to discuss the events of this evening. Asuma, could I trouble you to grab a few ANBU, and to ask some question of the Sand Genins to see if they know why Hayate was attacked so bad that he is now unconscious?”

Asuma dropped down from the ceiling. “Yes, Lord Hokage.” He vanished out the door.

The Hokage went silent again, and Four returned to her spot with her little sister. She hated waiting like this, not knowing. She was going to have to have a word with the boss, his idea of sacrificing himself for others was noble, but that’s what clones were for!

She felt Yugito start to stroke her hair again, and gave in to the urge to purr.

It was another hour before the door opened again, and Tsunade and Shizune entered, looking tired.

“When he won us in a card game,” she said dryly, “I was expecting some fun and games, not to spend my time wrist deep in his organs.”

Four bit her lip hard to stop herself from making a comment, a quick glance up showed that she wasn’t the only clone with that problem.

Eleven woke Sakura up gently. She looked around, and then focused on Tsunade.

“Brat’s going to be fine, probably awake the day after tomorrow.”

“Good work, Tsunade, Shizune,” the Hokage said.

Four pounced out of the chair and grabbed Tsunade, giving her a searing kiss, before she broke it, grabbed Shizune, and did the same.

“W,,,”

Everyone turned to Jiraiya, to find him surrounded by angry looking clones, each with a sword at his neck.

“...ell, that is good news,” he finished, a little lamely.

“It went easier when Shizune realised that we were treating Naruto-kun like a normal person. We were trying to heal him, but were conflicting with Kyūbi. What we had to do was place things in the correct place, and join them up, so that Kyūbi could rejoin them. It was different, and his back was hard because we had to remove some bone fragments from his spinal cord.”

“Naruto will receive a commendation for his work,” the Hokage said. “I think that we can all relax now, now that Naruto is over the worst of it. We’ll have a meeting of the Jounin at ten tomo...” he paused. “This morning,” he corrected himself. “One, Four, please attend.”

“And Yugito,” One suggested. “I’m vouching for her.”

The Hokage slowly nodded.

Four smiled. She looked at everyone. “Thank you all for your support,” she said with a big smile. “But go home, relax. Eleven, carry Sakura, and don’t forget that she’ll need to be fresh for the exam.”

“I won’t,” Eleven said, as he picked up the pink haired girl. She snuggled in to his arms.

“Guys, each of you escort everyone home. I’m taking Tsunade-chan, Shizune-chan, Kurenai-chan and Anko-chan.”

The other clones dropped down, and shortly afterward, the room was empty.

Tsunade flopped down on her bed and smiled. Despite everything, she was enjoying herself. She had no worries about debt collectors, and she had some where nice to sleep every night.

She was at an age where she enjoyed the idea of sleeping in a gorgeous bed every night far more than traipsing around the Elemental Countries.

Konoha had changed, and it was for the better. For so many years, since her grandfather, Ninja’s had tried so hard to fit in, to be normal.

It took a Genin to point out that one fact. They weren’t normal. They were ninja, highly trained killers, with the goal of keeping people alive.

And strangely, the civilians seemed to appreciate them more now, it wasn’t forced, it was pride. Konoha had strong people, like Naruto, completely dedicated to keeping them safe.

The new civilian council was exactly that, it took care of civilian matters only, the stuff that she, and most of ninjas, really didn’t care about. Zoning permits, and stuff like that bored her beyond tears.

The new council knew its place – they were to keep the village running, while the Ninjas did what they had to do to make sure they could keep the village running.

The village council did not even discuss what Ninjas were doing. Well, at first, some of the remnants from the old council had tried, but the Sandaime had simply killed them. Not with a flashy move, or mass amounts of power, he had just slit their throats and left them to die.

The ease with which it had occurred had finally made the council realise that when dealing with trained killers, it was better to follow the rules.

She rolled over on to her back, and settled down. She had a meeting in six hours.

For some reason, she wasn't surprised when her door opened. She could tell it was Four. The figure walked over and climbed in to bed with her.

"Four?"

"Hi."

Tsunade chuckled to herself. "So it's your job to break down our emotional barriers?"

"Huh?" Four asked.

"My dear," Tsunade said, "I've been alive for a very long time. I'm old enough to be Kurenai and Anko's mother. I am also a Sannin, there isn't much the slips by me."

"Oh," Four said. Tsunade imaged that she was wrinkling her nose in the dark. "Is it working?"

Tsunade sniggered. "Tell me, did you know what you were doing the other night?"

Four nodded. "I'm still Naruto, I know what a short skirt that barely covered my knickers would do. I hoped it would affect 'Nai-chan as well."

"It did. And Jiraiya."

Four shuddered. "Unfortunately, it's not something I can use just for one person."

Without really realising it, Tsunade found herself stroking Four's hair, and found the purr relaxing.

"You do know that Naruto could just order me in to bed?"

"Pfft," Four said expressively. "We three know that this ownership is to cover your pride, you've been thinking about returning for ages."

"True," she sighed. "Shizune needs a home, and I do as well. When years pass when you've not done anything, except watch the most important person in the world to you die a little more inside, even I started to feel guilty."

"My self-appointed job," Four said, "is to make sure everyone here is happy. 'Nai-chan and Anko-chan are, although Anko really wants to jump the boss's bones. 'Nai-chan is interested as well. Then you have Shizune, who is slowly starting to realise that this is home, and that she getting real friends. It won't be long before Anko is trying to get in to her knickers."

"And Kurenai?"

"She's not so aggressive. She knows Anko, better than Anko herself. So she's accepted and is happy with what is going on. Shizune going to be happy, it's just her definition is going to change a little."

“And me?” Tsunade asked.

Four paused. She slipped sideways, and rested her head against Tsunade’s shoulder. “You’ve got issues, many many issues. If we thought the Pervert could make you happy, we’d be pushing you two together, but you have a sibling like relationship. It would be like me and Yugito together.” There was a shudder from the younger blonde. “And we’ve yet to meet anyone else who can make you happy like we can.”

“I am old enough to be your grandmother.”

“Ahh,” Four grinned, she pushed herself up. Chakra from her hand illuminated her face. Like this, the female Naruto clone was breathtakingly beautiful. The hope, innocence, and passion that Naruto possessed was clear for all to see.

“Senior No Jutsu,” the clone whispered. She seemed to vanish as the light dimmed, when she returned, she was a he.

And he was old, in his late forties. His eyes crinkled as he smiled at her, and his spiky blonde hair had touches of silver at the temples. The eyes weren’t as youthful, they spoke of a life lived.

He was beautiful.

Four leaned down and kissed her gently.

She didn’t return the kiss, just watched.

Four smiled at her, and the light faded. “Illusions, Tsu-chan, that’s what we all are. We project what we want people to see, and ignore our hearts. In here, our hearts talk, and the forms we use are sops to our conscious, to the vague idea of normality.”

Tsunade smiled softly. “Three?”

“Seven, he’s the poetic one.”

The Sannin smiled. “So you’re saying that you don’t care, and if it bothers me, you’ll look how I need?”

Four nodded.

“So now you’re a female clone of a male transformed in to a male in his forties?”

Four nodded.

“You do know that you’re insane?”

The chuckle that followed sent shivers down her spine. “Sanity is over rated.”

“You do a good job, Four.”

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Konoha's Legion

Chapter 10

Four was the last to enter the Sandaime's office. It was full again, with the same people who had been in there when they had killed Danzo. Including a slightly tired looking Kakashi.

All the chairs were taken, and while she could get one, that really wasn't the point. She pouted. "I need a volunteer lap," she stated.

A bunch of hands shot up, mainly from men. She shuddered slightly. How many times did she need to tell people that she preferred girls?

"Hands down, perverts," Kurenai snapped.

The men pouted.

Kurenai and Anko were already together, and she didn't want to get in the way of them. Tsunade and Shizune needed to move, as Shizune was acting as secretary and Tsunade was a Sannin, Yugito was there, but she had sat on her lap yesterday.

She smiled as she spotted a lap that looked comfy. She walked over to One, signalling with her eyes. He leant down, allowing her to put her foot in his hand. He heaved and she jumped as well and somersaulted over the first row, to land in Tsume's lap. "Hi," she greeted.

"Hi," the feral woman replied with an amused look. "I've heard so much about you. One of my children has a crush on you."

"Please be Hana, please be Hana," she chanted.

Tsume sniggered. "Sorry."

Four sighed. "Well, as long as we all agree that if he hits on me, especially when he's dating Hinata-chan that I will have to hang him from the flag pole by his feet."

"Okay," Tsume stated.

"Shall we start?" The Hokage asked.

"Sure," Four replied cheerfully, as she made herself comfortable. "As soon as Naruto is awake, we'll rip off that Tanuki's tail, and kill Garra and those other two, and put their heads on spikes outside the front of the gates to show people what happens to those who try and hurt the boss."

Jiraiya chuckled, as Tsunade looked away. The Hokage sighed. "Four," he said gently. "You just can't kill the children of the Suna Kage."

"Sure you can, you cut their heads off with a sword. It's quick and effective, and if that doesn't

work, you burn them alive.”

Four could feel Tsume’s amusement.

“I meant politically.”

“Pfft,” Four stated. “We kill them, and it sends a message that if you come here to cause trouble, nothing will save you!”

“Four makes a good point,” Asuma murmured.

“And start a war?” one of the Jounins that Four didn’t know said.

“Well, isn’t that what we’re facing?” Jiraiya asked.

There was a pause, before an explosion of questions.

“Silence,” the Hokage ordered. And there was; absolute silence. “As some of you are aware, there was an incidence yesterday, where Hayate was almost killed by the Jounin sensei of Suna, Baki.

“Naruto was injured in Baki’s defeat. The information that Hayate discovered is S-ranked, it does not get talked about outside of here.

“Suna and Sound, under the leadership or Orochimaru, are planning on invading during the final of the Chunin exams.”

There were a lot of angry and powerful people in that room, and all of them were ready for a fight.

“I’m with Four,” Kakashi said. “We should eliminate some of the threats beforehand.”

“I can make it look personal,” Four said eagerly.

“No,” The Sandaime said firmly. “We are in a situation where we know when and where they are going to attack. It is far better for us to be prepared, than take action now and have the attack cancelled, and rescheduled for when we might not get the warning.”

Four frowned, that made sense.

The Hokage continued. “Ibiki, Naru Shikaku, Tsunade and Jiraiya are going to be planning the defence. I want all of you in tip top condition, and completely ready to defend our village.”

Everyone nodded.

“One?”

“Yes, Lord Hokage?” One said formally.

“You are in charge, while Naruto is asleep?”

One shook his head. “Actually, no, the others just like to embarrass me. There isn’t a hierarchy. Our numbers are given out in order, not importance. Eleven is normally the best, but he’s already working his arse off, ensuring that Asuma will spend a day in a chicken suit.”

Asuma snorted. “Right.”

“But really, if you asked any of us, we’d say that Four was in charge.”

Four smiled brightly.

“Okay, then I’ll ask you,” the Hokage said. “I want you, and I mean all of you, to come up with your own plan for defending Konoha.”

“Why?” Four asked in surprise.

“Hmm,” the elder Nara mumbled. “I would guess it is because I am logical, as are the others. You are not. Illogic has its place. People will be expecting a normal response, an illogical one they will not.”

“Oh,” Four said. She shrugged. “I’ll call in all the fours we have around, and we’ll start work. The boss will look over it before we give it to you.”

The room was silent, and it was the sort of silence that made Temari want to scream. Her little brother was totally still, yet still radiating an upsetting amount of bloodlust. Fortunately, he was obsessed with the blonde Jinchūriki they had met on their arrival.

She looked at Kankurō. Her “war-paint” wearing brother was playing with his battle dolls, practising animating them with twitches of his finger.

Although he seemed in control, she could tell that he wasn’t.

For the second time, she had met the Hokage, and the meeting hadn’t been pleasant. Baki was dead. And the Hokage wanted to know why he had attacked one of their Nins – who was now in a coma. The Hokage was not pleased, especially after not being told about Gaara’s status.

As far as she could tell, they were totally screwed. Their father had taken madness to a new level, and was refusing to see facts.

Fact: Konoha had two of the three Sannin resident. It didn’t matter if they had Orochimaru on their side as he was outnumbered two to one.

Fact: Konoha had a Jinchūriki who scared her more than Gaara ever had. Worse, their demon container held a being nine times as powerful as Gaara’s.

Fact: Konoha had a second Jinchūriki with them. Their ace-in-the-hole of Gaara was both

outclassed and outnumbered.

Fact: Kabuto, Orochimaru's spy had been taken out in seconds.

Fact: Konoha might not have numbers, but they had skill. Everyone knew of Kakashi, of Gai, and of the other Jounins. They all had the combination of skills and personality that made them stand out.

She sighed softly, and allowed her mind to wander back to Uzumaki Naruto. The son of the Fourth Hokage. Everyone recognised the Fourth Hokage as a genius, as probably the greatest ninja since the Rikudō Sennin himself. And it was no surprise that his son, combined with a willing demon, was following in his footsteps.

She had heard of Konoha's Legion, but was shocked to find that he just a kid. It was small rumours, that of a man who was many, who freed Wave, who was seen all over the Elemental Countries. It was insane. No one should be able to deal with that many clones without going insane.

But the very worst thing was what he had done with Kabuto's body. He had desecrated it in a way that cut to her very core. Kabuto had been an enemy of Konoha, and Naruto had treated him as such.

She was an enemy of Konoha. He would treat her the same way.

She took a deep breath. "Kankurō?"

"Yes?"

"I'm going for a walk."

"Okay."

She walked out, and in to the street. She wandered around, trying to work out what to do. She closed her eyes, not paying attention, as she turned a corner and bumped in to the person on her mind.

"Sorry," he said, as he picked himself up from the ground. He frowned.

"My apologies," she said formally, suddenly scared.

"No problem," he grunted. He adjusted some glasses on his nose.

"You wear glasses?"

"I'm not Naruto; I'm a level four clone. My name is Three. Now, if you don't mind, I have a lot to do, and nowhere near enough time to do it. You'd think that it would be easy researching seals, but no, everyone has to write in the most god-awful handwriting known to man. Good day."

He turned and hurried off.

She had bumped in to the clone hard enough to dispel any clone she knew. She had sent him flying, but he had just been irritated.

And what was a level four? Logic pointed out that if a normal clone was a civilian, then a four would be Jounin.

A clone with Jounin level chakra? A clone of a Jinchūriki with complete dedication to his village.

She turned and headed straight toward the tower. There was only one thing to do. She asked for an audience with the Hokage, claiming on her father's name that she had a message for him.

It was an hour later that she was granted an audience. She moved over to his desk, and stood at attention.

“Yes?” he asked, his eyes a little cold.

“I have information,” she stated firmly. “In return for the life of my brothers, and mine, as well as asylum, I will share everything I know.”

As Naruto woke up, he was slightly surprised to find that everything was white. He squinted softly, as he climbed to his feet.

He was clearly somewhere, and where that somewhere was, was currently beyond him. Not one to sit around, he moved, but with no frames of reference, he couldn't tell if he was moving or not, so he sat down.

“*Foxy-chan?*” he tried. There was no answer.

He tried to create a clone, but nothing happened. He was alone. So with nothing better to do, he started to sing.

He sung loudly and lustfully, getting in to it. It was a great way to pass the time.

“Stop, please,” a soft voice said.

Naruto turned, to see a woman looking at him. Her hair was proud silver, and hung to her waist. Her eyes were a deep and mystical blue, and seemed to be digging in to his soul. She stood, close to six foot tall, with a bearing so regal that it screamed that she wasn't human.

He bowed to her.

“You know me as Kami,” she stated.

If there was one thing he knew, it was if a deity appeared to you, there was only one response. He went down on one knee and looked down. “My lady.”

“Lady, Lord,” she murmured. “You see me as you imagine.”

“Oh, another one of them, eh?”

She smiled. “Indeed. Stand, Naruto.”

He stood.

She looked at him for a long moment and then nodded. “My blessings,” she said softly.

He bowed deeply to her.

“You may ask of me one thing,” she stated. “As an apology for the burden you have carried since birth.”

“That is not necessary, my Lady.”

“I am the one to deem that,” she said firmly. Her tone was one of rebuke.

“My apologies,” he said, bowing in apology. “In that case, I desire what all men do.”

“Money or power,” she sighed.

He blinked at her. “Of course not. I want a kiss from a beautiful woman.”

Kami looked at him for a long moment, before she threw her head back and laughed. “You don’t want power?”

“I’ll earn power on my own. And I have money. And any idiot can get more powerful, but how many times have you been asked for a kiss?”

“Never.”

He grinned at her.

She took a few steps forward, bent, and kissed him softly on the lips. The power of the kiss swept through him, like nothing he had ever imagined, ever desired, ever wanted. It was a kiss with the power of creation and life.

As she pulled back, he dropped to his knees. “I think I’ve just had a religious conversion,” he whispered.

Kami’s laugh echoed around him. “Live your life, Naruto. As with all mortals, your life shall be judged at the end.”

He bowed once more.

“Now, there is someone who wants to meet you.”

Naruto looked up, as there was a bolt of lightning, and a tall man appeared.

“Sweet hat!” Naruto exclaimed.

The man slowly raised his head, the hat revealing that his eyes were completely white, with small sparks of lightning coming out of them. He was dressed as a Taoist monk, with the character for thunder embedded on his clothes.

“I am Raiden, the God of Thunder.”

If there was one thing Naruto knew, it was that Kami was the creator, so this dude was powerful, but not as powerful as Kami. “And owner of a sweet hat!”

Raiden smiled. “Your problem was that you searched for something special, not realising that it is you that makes something special.”

Naruto nodded. “Did you invent the lightning transport?”

Raiden nodded. “And the other moves you use.”

“So you know Foxy-chan?”

Raiden sniggered. “Yes, I do, although we’ve never met,” he agreed. “Yes, I do indeed. You may tell the old fox that I said ‘Hi’.”

“I will,” Naruto agreed.

“It’s time for you to wake up,” Kami said softly.

“Pleasure meeting you, Naruto.”

“I thank you for the honour, Lord Raiden,” Naruto said. He turned to Kami. “Would it upset you if I dedicated my victories to you?”

She smiled. “If you so desire, my little warrior.”

Naruto bowed once more, and everything went dark.

A third figure appeared in the white. He was an elderly gentleman, with a small silver beard. “You did not give him the Eyes of Reincarnation.”

Kami shrugged. “You’re the one into those gimmicks. I prefer my warriors to learn for

themselves. I did think about it, but I think he would not have liked it.”

“My people will win.”

“That is what you have gambled,” Kami agreed.

“Ten gold pieces on Naruto,” Raiden said.

“Done,” the third member said. “When I have this realm, I shall enjoy drinking your gold pieces.”

“If you win,” Kami whispered.

“I have two of the three great Eye techniques. My people are older and more experienced. Your child stands no chance.”

“We shall see. We shall see.”

Four grumbled to herself as she hurried toward training ground twelve. She had far too much to do, and not enough time to do it. Even with the boss out, there were still fifteen level four clones in Konoha alone trying to keep things together, and it simple wasn't enough.

This morning, she had to meet with Gai's team and deal with a problem there, check in on Hanabi-chan, as she didn't know Naruto was currently unconscious, check in on Kon, Moegi and Udon, meet up with the other rookies for lunch, continue to plan with the other clones for the invasion, and work out a way to kill the Sand Genins, just in case.

She arrived at the training ground. The scene was familiar. Neji was sparring with another Hyūga, Tenten was training with Zabuza's sword, and Lee was sparring with Gai.

“Yo,” she called, as she moved toward the two.

“Four,” Tenten called happily.

“Ahh, Four, your flames of youth are bright!”

“They are indeed, Gai,” she agreed. “Can I borrow your youthful student for a few minutes?”

“Which one, they are all springing with vitality.”

Four nodded toward Lee. “Lee, please come at me.”

“Yosh, a spar,” Gai said excitedly. “Lee, my youthful student, it is time!”

“Yosh,” Lee agreed happily. He ran at Four, and Four could instantly see what Tenten was talking about. He was barely going at the average speed for a Genin.

As he arrived in range, she moved, grabbing his arm, countered his counter-move, and flipped him on to his back, while whipping out a Kunai, and placing it against his neck. "You are now dead."

There was silence in the field.

Four stood and moved back once more. "Again," she snapped.

Lee looked confused, but came again, this time a little faster.

"Swamp of the underworld," she muttered.

Lee's step suddenly dropped through the swamp, sending him flying face first in to the dank ground.

Absently focusing Chakra to her feet, Four walked over to him, and pulled his head out of the swamp. "You are now dead," she said, and cancelled the Jutsu. With a water Jutsu, she soon had him clean again.

"Now, take your weights off, and again."

"But," Lee said, his whole demeanour one of confusion.

"Lee," Gai said, "Do it, Four is giving you a very youthful lesson."

"She is?" he asked doubtfully. He shrugged, and kicked out his left leg. Weights dropped off, leaving a small hole in the ground. He did the same with his right, then both arms.

He attacked again, this time much faster, probably at a speed a Chūnin getting ready for the promotion to Jōnin would be able to achieve. But Four could tell that he was still holding back.

It was starting to annoy her. Lee punched, and rather than dodging, she simply put Chakra in her hands, and caught the punch.

There was a slap, and a look of surprise in Lee's face, as she over powered him and forced him to the ground.

"I won't say this again, Lee. If you don't come at me at full speed and full power, I will have you pulled of Gai's team and placed in another team."

"What?" he shouted.

Four turned and walked away.

"Lee," Gai said, "Do you not want to be my youthful student?"

"Yaaargh," Lee yelled, and the difference was immediate. His speed and skill went up to mid-Jounin, and Four suddenly found herself under a lot of pressure.

Keeping the fight to martial arts only, she concentrated hard, merging lessons from Anko, Shizune, Kurenai, and more than the others, Tsunade together to ensure that his attacks drifted past her by millimetres.

It was incredibly hard work, and the best fight she'd ever had. Compared to the memory of Baki, though, he wasn't anywhere near as good, as Baki could actually use Chakra, and was far more dangerous because of it.

Suddenly, an extremely unyouthful opening appeared, and she took it without hesitation – smashing her knee into Lee's crotch.

There was a high pitched squeal, and Lee crumpled to the ground.

She sighed and moved over him, and keeping her hand at least three inches away, she healed any damage while keeping her mind on something else.

“Tsunade would have removed your head without a second thought,” she said intently. “Kurenai would have had you dead long before you got near her. Anko would have hamstringed you. Shizune would have had you unconscious in a cloud of gas. Yugao would have had you killed in your sleep.

“When you use your flames of youth to get in the way of your team mates, you are not being youthful, you are being extremely,” she swallowed, “unyouthful.”

“But...” Lee started.

“There are no buts, Lee,” Four growled. “Do you remember what happened with my opponent?”

“Yes, she was executed. It was most unyouthful.”

Four closed her eyes for a second, and contemplated smacking Lee until he got her point. She resolved to try words one more time.

“I asked her if she was a Kunoichi, she said yes. As such, I gave her the respect she wanted,” she said firmly. “When you try and protect Tenten, or you limit yourself when you spar with me, you are being sexist, patronising, annoying, frustrating, and disrespectful. You are flat out stating that you think that you are superior to the one you are against.

“And frankly Lee, you are not. I understand where you are coming from, that you want to prove that you can become a strong ninja with only hard work, overcoming your handicap.

“It's a marvellous thing, and everybody is really impressed, but your attitude toward Kunoichi is appalling and takes away from all of that.

“We do not need your so-called protection. We do not want you to go easy on us, and we find it highly insulting that you do so.

“Your flames of youth are not more important than ours, and we will not accept you trying to dampen our flames anymore. Understand?”

Lee’s eyes were wide with shock and horror. “I was dampening your flames of youth?”

Four nodded firmly. “More Tenten-chan’s than mine, but the fact that I had to order you to come at me properly multiple times was enough to make me angry.”

“Four is correct, my student,” Gai said heavily as he knelt near them. “I have told you myself not to hold back.”

“But I could have hurt someone!”

“That is not your decision to make,” Four snarled. “How did you feel when I took you down in one move? You thought that it was okay, because you weren’t going all out.

“But what if I had gone down when you sped up, letting you win? How would you feel? You’d think it was,” she swallowed, “unyouthful. Or what if I refused to use Chakra against you, out of pity? Would that be,” she swallowed once more, “youthful?”

“But my strength,” Lee said. “I’m so strong...”

Four groaned. “Right, Gai, kick that boulder,” she said, indicating a boulder that was about the size of a cow.

“Yosh,” he agreed. In a blur, he jumped up, moved to the boulder, and kicked it, hard. The boulder shattered in to rubble.

Four jumped to her feet, and walked over to another similar sized boulder. She took a deep breath and focused. She always found this easier in the middle of a fight, when she could leave it to her instincts.

She gathered her Chakra, and laced it through her hand as Tsunade had taught her. She pulled her fist back, and punched in to the rock.

The rock completely disintegrated in to a fine dust, as her Chakra enhanced punch did its job.

Tenten whistled slowly.

She turned, to see Lee was looking on in absolute shock.

“We are all strong, Lee. We are all deadly. That is what we do.”

Lee jumped to his feet. He turned to Tenten. “Tenten-san,” he said formally. “I have treated you most unyouthfully. Please accept my most humble apology.” He bowed at the same time.

“Don’t do it again,” Tenten said, “and you are forgiven.”

“Yosh,” Gai said excitedly. “Lee, your flames have diminished. Perhaps a run will help re-ignite them!”

“I will run around Konoha until I am flaming once more!” He vanished, before he reappeared sheepishly. “I forgot my weights,” he explained, as he quickly put them on and vanished again.

As soon as he was gone, Four tried hard not to laugh.

Neji, and the other Hyūga were staring hard at the ground.

“Must... not laugh...” Tenten mumbled.

Gai sighed. “A most unyouthful choice of words,” he said. “People might get the wrong idea again.”

Four gave in and laughed.

“Four,” Neji said. “That move with the boulder, it was Tsunade-sama’s?”

“Yep.”

“Crap,” he sighed. “Still need to work harder.”

“You okay, Tenten-chan?” Four asked.

She smiled. “Thanks Four. I really appreciate it.”

“As do I,” Gai said exuberantly. “My youthful student can be a little stubborn, at times.”

No one commented on the idea of Gai calling someone else stubborn.

“Right,” Four said. “I’m off to kidnap Hanabi-chan for lunch. And guys, we’re only three days away. Don’t slack off now.” She closed her eyes and made a clone. “Stay and practice with Tenten,” she ordered.

“Okay, boss,” the clone said happily.

“Go easy on her, Tenten, I can only make level twos.”

Four headed toward the Hyūga clan compound, when an ANBU swirled in front of her.

“Four-san,” he said. “The Hokage requests your presence, immediately.”

Four nodded, and made the hand signs. She appeared, to see Hiashi, Jiraiya, Tsunade, and the blonde bitch from Suna. She hissed.

“Whoa,” the girl said.

“Four, please, listen to what Temari has to say,” the Hokage requested.

Four stopped her hand seals, she hadn't even realised she was doing them, but recognised the process as the start to one of Foxy-chan's specials.

“I know that you're upset with my brother,” Temari said. “But you have to understand, that unlike your brother, my brother grew up hated by everyone, he had assassination...”

Two things happened at the same time. Jiraiya had his hand over the girl's mouth, pulling her away, and Tsunade caught Four mid-dive.

“Let me go,” Four ordered.

“I guess it's my turn,” Tsunade mumbled with a slight smirk. She lifted Four up, and kissed her firmly.

Four tried to struggle, but she couldn't match the Sannin's strength, or the feeling of her hair being stroked just how she liked it, or the softness of Tsunade's chest pressing against hers.

She pouted in to the kiss, and then kissed Tsunade back briefly. “I'm calm,” she mumbled.

Tsunade slowly let her down, a smile on her lips.

Four looked around, to see Jiraiya, Hiashi and the Hokage with their hands over their eyes. “It's safe.”

They both looked up. “We need to be conscious,” the Hokage muttered.

“Right, perhaps introductions are in order,” Jiraiya said. “Four, Temari. Temari, this is Four, the Jounin-level female clone of Naruto.”

“Four, Temari has given us a lot of information about the invasion, and Orochimaru's plans, in return for asylum for her, and both her brothers.”

Four groaned. “We can still rip off that damn tanuki's tail, right?”

The Fourth nodded.

“As for you,” Four said, looking at Temari. “Our life was just as your brothers, but we decided to do something positive about it, not sink in to a stupid rage and start killing people randomly.

“All he had to do was promise the one-tailed loser that he would kill everyone who attacked his turf, and he would have been happy, but no, he had to feed the idiot with delusions that he could do anything he wanted.

“So don’t expect me to feel much pity for Gaara. He had a choice as well. He made the wrong one.”

Temari didn’t look up.

Four sighed. “The information was that important?” she asked the Hokage.

He nodded and pointed to a scroll on his desk. She created another clone to read it, and when she had, she dispersed the clone. All the pertinent details appeared in her mind, and in the mind of all the other clones. She digested it, and as she finished, a clone of Three’s told her that he was incorporating the details in the plan.

“Fine, we’ll not kill Gaara, or the transvestite. Three is already incorporating it in the plan.”

“Thank you, Four,” The Hokage said. “Temari, you better get back before you are missed.”

“Hai, Hokage-sama,” Temari said, and walked out quickly. A nod from the Hokage sent several ANBU to follow her discretely.

As soon as the door was shut, Four collapsed to her knees. “Chakra,” she gasped.

Tsunade was holding her a second later, and she drunk in as much as she could. “That was close,” she muttered. She kissed Tsunade quickly. “Thank you.”

“Why did you do that?” Jiraiya asked.

“Never show weakness to the enemy,” Four said seriously. “If she talks about us, she’ll talk as if we were normal, not clones with a lot, but limited, chakra.”

She stood and leaned against the older woman. “I’ll call off the team charged with wiping those two out at the first sign of the invasion.”

“Thank you.”

“Okay, I need to get back to what I was doing. I really need to talk to the boss about promoting more people. We’ve not got enough, never enough.”

She dashed out the window, and down the side of the tower. She paused outside the Hyūga clan compound, and then did a little dance. The boss was awake!

And he had some ideas. Ideas that showed why he was the boss, and they were just clones.

They were utterly insane!

Naruto awoke, and instantly closed his eyes and dropped in to his mental landscape.

“Where the hell have you been?” Kyūbi demanded. “One second you were unconscious, the next second, you were totally gone!”

“Kami wanted to see me.”

The fox tripped over his paw, and stumbled to the ground. “Kami wanted to see you?”

He nodded.

“Kami. The Kami?”

“Sexless being, regal bearing, feeling of power that makes you want to visit the bathroom.”

“Wow,” the fox mumbled. “Just, wow.”

“Oh, and Lord Raiden says ‘Hi’.”

“You met Raiden?” Foxy-chan demanded. “Oh sweet Kami! You met Lord Raiden, and he said ‘hi’, to me?”

Naruto nodded.

The fox danced around happily. “That’s so cool,” she said.

“So, any way, having met Kami, I’m allowed to dedicate my victories to her.”

Kyūbi nodded eagerly. “Sounds good. As you’ve got good news for me, I’ve got good news for you. However, we’re going to have to go somewhere quiet for a few days.”

Naruto set up the auto repeaters and then opened his eyes. He was alone in the hospital room, with just a few clones.

One of them handed him a note he had just finished writing.

Guys.

Gone training. Be back for the exams. Four’s in charge. Three will drop off some additions to the plan when they’re ready.

Love, N.

With that, he was out the window, and deep in to the forest as quickly as he could.

“Okay,” Foxy-chan said, “*You know I was talking about glands and fixing your height that way?*”

Naruto nodded.

“*Well, I was missing something obvious. When you do your adult Jutsu, you change. All it would*

take is some pain and some chakra to make that change permanent.”

“Cool, very very cool.” Naruto agreed. “Let’s do it.”

“Well, change, and I’ll start the process.”

He changed, and then started to scream.

“Oh, excuse me,” the clone said, as she suddenly vanished.

“What was that?” Neji called.

“I have no idea,” Tenten replied, as she placed her blade down.

There was a flash of lightning, and a new clone appeared. This one looked like Naruto, but older. “Sorry,” he said cheerfully. “All clones were recalled for an upgrade. The boss fixed his problem earlier today.”

“Problem?” Neji asked, as he moved over to them.

“Being small enough to hide in a flower pot,” the clone explained. “This is now his natural form.”

“Crap,” Neji sighed once more.

Four snuck in to Shizune’s room.

“Hi, Four,” Shizune said.

Four slid under the covers, and rolled on top of the older girl. “Hi,” Four said brightly.

“What are you doing?” Shizune asked warily.

“You ever wonder how the boss can ignore the fact that Anko-chan wants to jump his bones? And Why he hasn’t done anything, despite being with four girls who like him a lot?”

Shizune nodded.

“It’s because he knows that this time is special for all ninjas, that between fifteen and eighteen, as puberty comes to an end, is when the biggest period of growth will happen. And with everything that is happening, he’s pushing forward even faster. But that doesn’t leave much time for the better things in life.”

Shizune nodded again. “I thought it was something like that,” she admitted. “As do the others.”

Four smiled. “But that doesn’t mean the boss doesn’t get those urges, but you know how he deals with them?”

Shizune shook her head.

“I took them from him,” Four explained. “With his permission, of course. And that’s why I’m here.”

“W-what?”

Four leant down and kissed Shizune firmly, using the experience she’d gained from the others.

“I’ve... never...,” Shizune mumbled, blushing furiously. “With a girl, I mean...”

Four allowed her smile to turn wicked. “Me neither.”

Kurenai walked in to the kitchen, to find Shizune, dressed only in a gown, cooking breakfast. That was unusual in itself, as Shizune never cooked in the morning, and she was never seen in any form of informal clothing.

With a twirl, Shizune finished loading breakfast on to four plates. As if drawn by the smell, Tsunade appeared, settling down at the table. Kurenai joined her. A few seconds later, a sleepy looking Four, with bed hair, and wearing only a long t-shirt, appeared.

“You know,” Tsunade said absently, “the last time you cooked breakfast was that morning after you spent the first night with your boyfriend...”

Kurenai looked at Four, as Tsunade seemed to realise what she was saying, and did the same thing.

“What?” Four asked tiredly.

“Leave her alone,” Shizune ordered.

Tsunade smirked. “So, was she good?”

“Oh yeah,” Four and Shizune said dreamily, before they both blushed.

Tsunade sniggered. “Well, this is going to be a fun breakfast,” she predicted.

The Hokage sat in his chair, looking down at the floor of the arena. It was a good thirty yards down from the edge of his balcony. It hadn’t changed much since his day, and offered the space that the Genin were going to need to display their talents to the fullest.

In the box to his left, nobles from all around Fire country were gathered together, talking excitedly.

He had wanted to ban them from coming, but couldn't without tipping his hand.

At least the Fire Lord himself wasn't with them. He had a meeting with the lord of Tea, who had made a complaint about marble, of all things, he'd heard.

The Suna Kage was sat near him, staring as well. Jiraiya and Tsunade sat behind them, as well as four ANBU from Suna, and four ANBU from Konoha.

Despite the fact that there was going to be war, he was looking forward to the competition.

Most of the Genin were lined up, waiting the start. There was still two minutes before the official start.

As the clock ticked over, there were a couple of swirls of leaves, as Sasuke and Haku appeared. The boy with the ice bloodline limit kissed Sasuke quickly, and then dashed up the wall in to the crowd, next to the space where the competitors would sit.

The ease in which he did it, gave huge credence to Kakashi's thought that he was ready to be a Jōnin. He made a mental note to arrange Haku's trial as soon as possible.

The clock slowly counted down, and they were still missing one contestant. Naruto.

With fifteen seconds to go, a dark cloud suddenly gathered over the arena, and a bolt of solid blue lightning smashed in to the ground, in the centre of the arena.

The feeling of electricity in the air was making the hairs on his arms stand on edge. A shape appeared, from the cloud. It was the shape of a human; one hand seemed to be holding on to the lightning, as if it was a rope lift, lowering him to the ground.

He was wearing a long cloak, and had a wide brimmed coolie hat.

As he touched to the ground, the cloud and the lightning vanished. The figure walked forward slowly, his head bowed. He looked to be about around six foot two, but not much else could be made out.

He stopped in front of their stand, and for some reason, Sarutobi felt like he was a small child, watching the First and Second Hokages.

The figure slowly raised his head, and looked up. As the hat moved out the way, everyone at their end could see that his eyes were crackling with lightning. The ninja turned, slowly, surveying the competition.

When he had finished his circle, he bowed deeply to the Kages in the stand. "I'm not late, am I, old man?"

“N-no, Naruto,” he said softly, as he recognised the voice.

Naruto moved over to join the other Genin.

The foreign Genin were looking at him with a mixture of awe and fear. From the Konoha Genin, it was mainly awe, although Neji and Sasuke were rolling their eyes at him.

“Damn, he’s got a better entrance than me!” Jiraiya muttered.

The crowd seemed to wake up from their shock, and they started to cheer loudly.

The clouds above the stadium dispersed, revealing a high cloud cover that made everything seem slightly gray.

Asuma, acting as proctor, shook his head. “The first match,” he started, and then had to wait for the cheering to stop.

“The first match is Sakura versus Ino.”

Naruto’s hands were already moving, and as Asuma finished, he spread his hands. Every Genin, with the exception of the two that were fighting, vanished, and re-appeared in a stroke of lightning in the area reserved for them.

“Idiot,” Sasuke said, with an amused look.

“Good to see you two,” Naruto replied. “You hear about my bet?”

“No?”

“If Sakura loses, I have to give the rest of my kiki island tobacco to Asuma, if she wins, Asuma spends the day dressed as a chicken to promote my favourite ramen stand.”

Sasuke chuckled. “Typical. I just went traditional.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, placed a cool million on her with the bookmakers.”

“You’re that confident?”

“Aren’t you?”

“Of course I trained her.”

“If you two chattering ferrets don’t mind,” Asuma called acidly.

They both looked down, to see Sakura smiling confidently.

Sasuke shrugged. "If it means that much to you, captain chicken."

Asuma glared at Sasuke. "Ino, Sakura, begin."

"For all your new confidence, I'm still better than you," Ino stated.

Sakura smiled calmly. "We shall see."

From the crowd, a clone, who the Sandaime presumed was Eleven, shouted, "Enough, Sakura!"

The pink haired girl twirled, a large staff appearing in her hands. She slammed it into the ground. The ground parted before her, like a fast moving earthquake, moving toward the blonde.

Ino looked surprised as she jumped up. With the staff in front of her, Sakura rotated it, slowly at first, then quickly bringing it up to speed. A blast of air shot out, throwing Ino off her jump.

As she came down, Sakura was waiting for her, her speed far faster than what the Hokage would have expected from an average Chunin. Sarutobi wondered just what the clone had done to the girl in the month they'd had available.

A stroke from Sakura's staff smacked in to the girl's stomach, throwing her hard in to the ground. She followed up with an instant smack straight to the face, which she pulled at the last second.

"Proctor," Ino called, staring at the end of the stick. "I quit."

Asuma's mouth was wide open. Sakura reached down, and held out her hand to Ino. Ino took it, and was hauled up.

The crowd exploded in to cheers, but the Hokage ignored them, and concentrated on the conversation between the two Kunoichi.

"What the hell happened to you, forehead?" Ino asked, as they walked toward the wall.

"How much did you train, pig?"

"Five days a week, all day. You?"

"I had four weeks of absolute hell. I got just one night off a week, and no more than five hours sleep any night. Eleven pushed me through every barrier I thought existed."

Ino sighed. "I should have asked for the same thing."

"I was surprised that no one else did. It's not as if Naruto has a shortage of clones."

Ino stumbled, and then groaned. "Still, at least we get to watch our sensei dressed like a chicken."

The two girls walked up the side of the arena without interrupting their conversation – showing

that Ino had grown as well, just not enough. Their progress was slightly studied, and no where near as smooth as Haku's had been earlier.

Intensive training was a credible explanation for what had happened. It wasn't something most ninjas went for – only the truly driven and dedicated. It warmed the Sandaime's heart to see a Kunoichi doing it.

As she got to the top, Naruto reached out and grabbed Sakura. He swung her around and then hugged her tightly.

Eleven was making his way along the edge of the arena.

Naruto passed Sakura to Sasuke, who did the same thing. "That was brilliant," he said firmly.

Sakura blushed.

Eleven arrived next to Sasuke, who passed the girl to him. He hugged her. "That's how you do it, Sakura-chan," Eleven said excitedly.

Sakura stepped back slightly. She clasped her hands in front of her, and then bowed from the waist, until she was at a forty-five degree angle. "Thank you, Eleven-kun, for everything you did."

The clone blushed.

"The next fight," Asuma yelled, "is Naruto against Tenten."

Tenten stood. "Well, you got me up here, you can get me down."

Naruto smiled and made the hand signals. They both vanished and appeared in the middle.

"Begin," Asuma said abruptly.

Naruto instantly ducked, as Tenten bought Zabuzza's sword out of a seal, and attempted to decapitate him. "One second," he said, jumping back. He created a clone, and handed over his hat and cape.

The Hokage blinked slightly.

"What the hell is that?" Jiraiya demanded.

Naruto's outfit was slightly off-white, with large silver shoulder guards, knee and elbow protectors. He had on white boots, with leggings underneath. From his shoulders, and down to his waist was a burnt orange sash, with the kanji for Fire, Lightning, Wind and Kami on it. Attached to his waist, to his left, was a katana scabbard.

"It looks pretty damn good," Tsunade said appreciatively.

“Nice outfit,” Tenten called.

Naruto grinned at her. He reached in to his scabbard and pulled out a pommel with no sword. He smiled, and the blade crackled in to life.

Tenten stumbled backward.

The Hokage turned to stare at Tsunade. She just smirked at him.

“How the hell do you have the Raijin?” Tenten yelled.

“Funny story,” Naruto said. “Thirteen and Fourteen were heading toward Rain, under a henge, as we have some businesses there, when they stumbled across Aoi. He was having a nap.”

“And?” Tenten asked.

“He was a Leaf traitor, so Thirteen pretended to be a damsel in distress – escaping from bandits. Aoi was happy to help, and when he went for what he thought was his reward – Thirteen, he sliced the veins in his groin so he couldn’t fight back. As Thirteen and Fourteen had some time, they healed his cut, broke every bone in his body and left him overnight, where the local wildlife ate him alive.

“The next morning, Fourteen then cut off what remained of his head, and put his sword and head in a scroll and posted it to me. Tsunade-chan said I could keep it,” he finished with a smile.

“My Grand-Uncle would be proud that his sword is back in the Leaf, and that is it being wielded by someone who understands what it means to be a Hidden Leaf ninja,” Tsunade announced.

“Hell yeah,” Eleven cheered.

Naruto grinned. “Shall we?”

Tenten nodded. She attacked again, moving into a steady rhythm that drew him in to a defensive pattern.

He blocked and dodged, watching her fighting style. As he ducked another attempt to decapitate him, she jumped back and launched over a hundred weapons at him.

Rather than move, Naruto opened his arms. The weapons hit him, before he suddenly vanished in a puff of smoke. Tenten dived forward, narrowly avoiding being skewered as Naruto appeared silently before her.

“When the hell did you make a clone?” she demanded.

Naruto just smiled. “Swamp of the underworld!”

The whole arena suddenly changed, the wide area Jutsu making the whole ground unstable.

Naruto didn't look bothered, even as Tenten growled. She attacked again, skidding on top of the swamp. Her feet were glowing slightly as she tried to avoid the chakra-draining effects of the swamp.

Naruto looked pleased, even as he blocked the swipe, the next one he deflected, and Tenten overbalanced slightly. The long headed cleaving sword splashed in to the swamp. Tenten pulled once, and then somersaulted backward, leaving it there.

Naruto reached out and took the handle. He heaved, swung it a few times, and then threw it hard in to a wall, where it stuck out. "A good sword shouldn't rust," he said.

Tenten grinned at him, as two short swords seemed to appear in her hands.

This time her style was radically different, as she attacked far faster, and at different angles.

Naruto was forced on to the back foot, as he had to swing the Raijin much faster to keep her out.

The Hokage nodded softly. He'd seen enough; she was going to get promoted. The speed and skill was more than what he expected from a new Chunin, and against a lot of surprises and a serious opponent, she'd kept her head and was still attacking, and showing mastery of different weapons.

He hoped that others would be tempted to take up weapons. Nothing beat having something else to rely on. Chakra could be exhausted, and having a sword could save your life.

Naruto dodged backward, and then started to implement the pattern of the Dance of the Crescent Moon. It finished with his sword against Tenten's neck.

She sighed. "Proctor. I quit."

Naruto smiled, a few handseals later, and they were both back in the combatant's area. Tenten was pouting, and accepted a hug from Neji.

"Interesting," the Sand Kage said. "I expected a bit more."

"He was more interested in making Tenten look good," Jiraiya pointed out.

There was a pulse of Chakra, as Naruto cancelled his swamp Jutsu. Asuma called down the next two combatants, both foreign nin, and as much as he wanted to, the Hokage couldn't concentrate on it.

There were some good matches coming up, and he was really looking forward to them.

"Next, Airi against Shikamaru."

"Do I have to?" Shikamaru muttered. "So troublesome, fighting a girl." He slumped down in his seat. "I'd rather not."

Eleven moved over to him, but stopped as Naruto shook his head. Shikamaru started to move, but it was too late.

Asuma growled. "Fine," he spat. "Winner, Aiji, next, Temari against Hinata."

The Hokage looked at the truly shocked face of Shikamaru. He sighed. Asuma had just given a very harsh lesson, but perhaps one that was needed.

What was interesting was the expressions that danced on Shikamaru's face. First shock, then horror, then understanding, and finally shame.

The fight between the two Genins was better than the one between Kiba and Temari, as Hinata managed to dodge and block the range attacks, but in the end, she fell to the constant barrage of air assaults.

In quick succession, Neji beat Kankuro, and Shino won his fight,

The Hokage sighed. The next fight was Lee against Sasuke. The Suna Kage next to him perked up at that.

Did Orochimaru think him an absolute senile idiot?

He'd known the Suna Kage for close to forty years. While not a candidate for Father of the year, he was a very proud man, with little interest in foreign ninjas. So when he had hardly reacted to Kankuro's defeat, the Sandaime had his suspicions raised. And now the interest in Sasuke, it was obvious. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw that his two students had weren't surprised in the slightest.

With a mental shrug, he went back to watching the match. It was a good one. Lee had immediately removed his weights, and had gone for broke.

Sasuke was forced on to the back foot, but seemed to be able to keep up with Lee's speed.

"You're fast," Sasuke said, catching another kick, "but my girlfriend is fast, and with her ice mirrors, she's faster."

Lee somersaulted backward and skidded to a halt. "Then I shall have to do something different."

He pulled out a bottle, and took a swig. "Ahh, sweet sake, that's the spirit." He shuddered, and glared at Sasuke. "You're a meanie," he mumbled, as he stumbled toward the last Uchiha in Konoha.

"Are you drunk?" Sasuke asked in surprise.

The punch that Lee launched was pitiful, the kick that followed it though, smacked into Sasuke's jaw.

“A natural drunken-fist expert?” Jiraiya asked. “We do have some interesting Genin this year.”

Sasuke looked a little frustrated, as he tried to fight back, but Lee was never where he was supposed to be – or even where he wasn’t. There was no logic to his movements.

Sasuke looked up to the side, and then took a deep breath, as he tried to regain his control.

He swayed to avoid one foot that seemed to come from an impossible angle, blocked a punch to his chest, and accepted a backhand across his face.

“This is your fault, Naruto,” Sasuke shouted, as he jumped back.

“Mine? How?”

“Everything weird always comes from you. Kakashi said that Gai would have taught him to open the Chakra Gates, not get drunk and beat me up!”

Naruto sniggered.

Sasuke launched some fireballs at the boy, only for him to stumble out the way. Other ranged attacks just didn’t seem to be able to hit the drunken boy.

“Think,” Sasuke muttered to himself. “What would the idiot do in a situation like this?”

He suddenly smiled. He created a clone, which instantly vanished in a swirl of leaves.

Lee attacked again, but this time Sasuke just moved out the way as best as he could.

The clone returned.

“Hey, Lee,” Sasuke said, as the clone hinged in to a bench. “How about a timeout and a drink?”

Lee looked drunkenly suspicious, as Sasuke sat down, took a swig of the bottle. Lee snatched it as he stumbled down. He raised the bottle, took a swig, burped, and then attempted to drain the rest.

“I’m gonna...” Lee muttered, before he keeled over backwards, the bottle going in to the air.

Sasuke quickly caught the bottle, and took another swig. “Good stuff,” he muttered to himself. “Cheers,” he saluted his clone.

The clone changed from the bench, nodded and dispersed.

“Winner, Sasuke.”

The Hokage applauded. He was impressed with Lee. Against another Genin, he would have won. He was more impressed that Sasuke could think on his feet, and find a non-violent way to deal with someone who was impossible to hit, and practically impervious to pain.

Gai appeared, and picked up his student.

Sasuke walked back up the wall, and offered the bottle to Naruto.

Naruto took it and had a sip. His eyes widened. “What the hell is this?”

“My late father’s pride and joy,” Sasuke said. “Packs a punch, doesn’t it?”

Naruto nodded; his eyes still wide. “Oh, and I’ve not talked to Lee about doing that! I didn’t even know he was like that.”

“It’s still your fault. All your ‘think outside the box’ crap and this idea of yours that people need more than just stupid Jutsus to get by in life. And just because you’re right, is irrelevant.”

The Hokage noticed the slight glare of anger from the disguised Orochimaru next to him, and smiled.

The next few fights went quickly, two of them with double knock-outs, leaving Naruto fighting Neji, Sakura fighting Temari, Sasuke fighting the last of Yugito’s Genins, and Gaara fighting a Rain nin.

“The quarter-finals,” Asuma yelled. “Naruto, Neji.”

Naruto jumped down, as Neji did. As he landed, his cape and hat arrived with him.

“Let’s put on a show,” Neji called.

“For the Glory of Kami,” Naruto yelled. Sunlight broke through the clouds and illuminated him for a second.

“I did not just see that,” Jiraiya said cheerfully.

“Coincidence,” Tsunade agreed.

“Have you gone and got divine support?” Neji demanded, his hands on his hips.

“No,” Naruto said. “Not support, I swear.”

Neji smiled. “So chaos still rules?”

Naruto nodded. He launched himself forward, in his Torpedo move. Neji jumped out the way, and threw some weapons at him. Naruto blurred, and was suddenly fighting the Hyūga up close.

Neji’s hands started glowing immediately. The Hyūga blocked Naruto’s attacks, and retaliated smoothly, going through some of his clan attacks.

Naruto broke off, creating a large amount of clones. They attacked as one.

“Kaiten,” Neji yelled, as his hands started to move.

The first few clones disintegrated, and the others pulled back warily.

Naruto fired a blast of Chakra at the shielded boy. “An absolute defence?” Naruto whispered. “Impressive, Neji, really impressive.”

Neji smiled.

“I was going to save this for the final,” Naruto said. He took a deep breath, and a feeling of Chakra exploded around the arena. It was somehow warm and comforting.

The Hokage looked at his arm, to realise he was getting Goosebumps. Something was about to happen. Something that was going to change the game for everyone. He knew it.

“Six path no Jutsu!” Naruto yelled.

Neji faltered, his Kaiten failing. There was not a sound in the whole arena, as six forms took shape around Naruto.

“B-Byakugan,” Neji said, as he gulped. He looked at the clones. He paled. “That’s impossible.”

“Sweet Kami,” Tsunade said in shock. “They have Chakra sources. He’s done it. They are true clones, and no longer constructs.”

“What have you done,” Jiraiya screamed.

The Narutos looked at him.

“They all have the Kyūbi! That’s impossible!”

They all gave him an identical smile. “Foxy-chan and I have been working on this for months!” One to the left said.

“We took some simple things and threw them together, and we have seven bodies. We don’t have the Eyes of Reincarnation, so this isn’t a true Jutsu, like the Rikudō Sennin, but it’s named in his honour.”

“I can see the Chakra moving between you, it’s wild, chaotic, beautiful,” Neji said. “One of you pulses, another catches. It’s amazing, perfect, beautiful, instant.”

The Narutos all scratched the back of their heads.

“We’re still on average Jounin power levels,” a third said. “We have to get these clones up to average Kage level.”

“Proctor,” Neji said.

“Neji?” Asuma asked, his eyes still on the Narutos.

“On a mission, if one comes across overwhelming force, a good ninja will retreat and regroup, as the parameters of the mission have changed. As such, I retreat.”

“Neji,” a fourth Naruto protested.

“Sorry, Naruto, I thought I could come close to beating one of you, as well as your normal clones, but this? No. My friend, you have created pure chaos, and I am proud that you honoured me with this technique.”

The six clones turned so that they were facing inwards, and walked toward the remaining one. As they got nearer, they merged, until only one remained.

“That’s intense,” Naruto noted. “Really intense.” He looked around, to see everyone gaping at him. “What?” he asked, what looked like genuine confusion in his eyes.

“Naruto,” Neji said gently. “How did you invent this Jutsu?”

“Well, like I said, I was talking to Inoichi, Ino’s dad, and he was willing to teach me his mind transfer Jutsus. We thought it might be useful at the time, but it wasn’t until the snake-paedophile-gimp Orochimaru gave us the curse seal, that I realised how we could get around the problem with my clones. No matter what I did, I couldn’t get them to have their own chakra sources.

“Three’s been studying seals, so I quickly realised how the tosspot was trying to change my Chakra. He was dragging it through subspace, via a Möbius warp and with some of his own Chakra.

“So all I needed to do was come up with something similar with my clones. I taught Foxy-chan the Shadow Clone ages ago, so we were able to work together to create a joint clone. It took practice and working together, but we soon created a symbiant clone. It still had the problem of no chakra source, but that’s what the seals were for.

“The last thing we needed to do was break down the mind transfer Jutsus, into seals, so that we could transfer at will. After that, it was just practice and making sure we got everything right.”

“You’re fifteen years old,” Neji said, shaking his head. “Naruto, this Jutsu is as important as your father’s Flying Thunder God technique.”

“No it’s not,” Naruto responded. “It’s just six clones that I can swap with.”

“You’ve not thought this through,” Neji continued.

The Hokage shook himself. He was a Kage, damn it, and having his jaw dropping at a Genin was beneath him. He quickly broke down what Naruto had said, absently stitching together the Jutsu’s needed, and came to a startling conclusion.

Naruto was right, it wasn't that special in its parts, and although something was missing, he could stitch most of it together.

"And I'm not going to spoil it for you," Neji finished. "Come on, we're stopping the other fights."

The Hokage found himself in complete awe of the sideways thinking needed to emulate the single most famous Jutsu in history, from a bunch of relatively simple ideas.

Naruto and Neji arrived in the competitor's stand.

"Sakura was right," Sasuke muttered. "You really are an idiot savant."

"Thanks, I think," Naruto mumbled.

"There's a missing piece," Jiraiya suddenly said to himself. "He didn't explain the full process. And I'll bet that the missing piece is the Fox himself."

Orochimaru was grinding his teeth in frustration.

The Hokage smiled to himself. It must be galling to see something that you have always dreamed about – practical immortality, only to realise you can never have it, because you need to have a demon sealed in your stomach.

"This is now going to be anti-climatic," Tsunade said with a sigh. "How can anyone top that?"

Asuma coughed. "I need a drink. Thirty minute break."

Still almost silent in their shock, the crowd slowly turned to each other, and started to talk excitedly.

"An interesting exam, so far," The Hokage said to the disguised Orochimaru.

"Indeed. If you'll excuse me, I need the bathroom."

"Of course, old friend."

Orochimaru walked away, his ANBU following him.

To the side, Naruto was surrounded by Ninjas throwing questions at him.

"He didn't realise," Tsunade said with a laugh. "He creates an imitation that powerful and he did it for a laugh."

"Insane," Jiraiya stated. "Completely, totally, fucking insane."

"You going to promote Neji?"

"Yes," the Hokage said.

“I agree,” Jiraiya stated. “Naruto’s a tough little bugger to start with on his own, but seven of him, all with endless Jounin level chakra, and his knowledge of assassination moves? All it would take is one tiny mistake and you’re screwed.”

Four walked around the edge of the stadium, and dropped in to their box. “You all look you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Can you blame us?” Tsunade asked.

“Can we please have some privacy?”

The Fourth nodded, and Jiraiya did his dome of silence again.

“It eats chakra like nothing we’ve ever seen,” Four said casually. “And its as confusing as all get out. We can’t fight with it yet, or keep it going for more than ten minutes.”

“What!”

“You don’t have to shout,” Four snapped, covering her ears.

“Sorry,” the three of them said together, before the Hokage chuckled as he got over his automatic reflex.

“When we are doing it, we’re getting constant information for seven sources, different perspectives, angles, everything. It’s a complete nightmare to try and control it and do anything other than stand there and talk. It’s not like we’ve got a bloodline to help us.”

“That was a bluff?”

Four grinned. “Five or ten years, the boss reckons, and he’ll have the chakra and experience to use it properly, so think of it more as a preview.”

“Wow, just wow,” Jiraiya said, shaking his head.

Four smiled. “The important thing, though, is the seals he was talking about.”

“Why?”

She turned and flipped her hair up, revealing a pretty looking seal on the base of her neck. It was brightly coloured version of the swirl of the Uzumaki clan. “No more recharging for me. I’m set for as long as I want!”

“Congratulations, Four,” Tsunade said warmly.

“Anyway, now you three are reassured, I’m heading back to Anko-chan, ‘Nai-chan and Shizune-chan. Enjoy the rest of the show.”

She skipped out of the dome, before using the Lightning to make her way across to the other side of the stadium.