Calamity 261

Naruto: The Wind Calamity

Chapter 261: Unknowingly throwing the Opportunist to the Center of the Battle! One of Rasa's advisors asked, "What's the matter, Lord Kazekage?"

Rasa turned around and continued walking. He asked, "Who were those people?"

Though his voice wasn't soft, Fujin and the mercenaries didn't hear it due to the distance between them.

The advisor answered, "They are wearing the headband of the mercenary group Kurogane no Sensen. It is the group that is active in the countries between us and Earth. Is there any issue with them?"

Rasa replied, "It's just a feeling. Send three Anbu groups to chase after them. I have a feeling that we will find something important by trailing them."

The advisor nodded.

The mercenary group had become very tense and nervous when Rasa glanced at them. Even Fujin was the same. He didn't have any desire whatsoever to face Rasa. Especially when they were surrounded by deserts.

When Rasa turned around and continued walking, the mercenaries finally began breathing again. Fujin also became visibly relaxed. He decided, 'Alright, no more mess in this city. Though unlikely, if this is his clone and his main body is hiding inside the city, I will be in deep trouble.'

After Rasa left their line of sight, the mercenary group immediately left the Wind Capital. One of them carried Fujin on his back so that they would be able to move faster. For once, Fujin didn't object.

After Rasa's group moved a sufficient distance from the city, 40 Anbu ninjas appeared in front of them. Rasa immediately assigned tasks to them. 3 squads of Anbu chased after the Kurogane no Sensen mercenaries. 4 squads were tasked to sneak into the Wind Capital and keep an eye on the city from the shadows. They would coordinate with Baki to catch all undercover enemy ninjas in the city. The last 3 squads would keep an eye on the surroundings of the Wind Capital and keep track of the people travelling in and out of the city.

Rasa and the advisors immediately began travelling back to Sunagakure.

The mercenary group continued without knowing that they were being followed. Since Fujin couldn't activate his chakra field, even he was unaware. Fujin acted like he was helpless and obediently guided them towards the location. After travelling for nearly half a day, the group arrived at the spot where Fujin had killed their members.

Fujin said, "This is the spot where we met that man. He was sitting here and was covered in blood."

Seiji looked at Fujin. Fujin looked very tired and sleepy. The mercenaries didn't find it odd as it was late at night and they had travelled for twelve hours straight!

Seiji asked, "Are you completely sure?"

Fujin looked nervous and said, "I am confident. However, this is a never-ending desert. Everything looks the same. So I can't be 100% sure."

Seiji looked sinisterly and said, "You better hope that we find them. Otherwise, you will have hell to pay. Even your family won't be spared."

Fujin's face became nervous and said, "I am sure that we met that man around here."

Seiji looked around and said, "Everyone, investigate the nearby area. See if you can find any tracks."

Everyone nodded and began looking. The group had a couple of sensors. They spread their chakra fields and began investigating. For a couple of minutes, they didn't find anything.

Fujin observed them. The nervousness on his face faded away. He decided, 'It's time.'

He was about to flicker when the eyes of one of the sensors widened. He shouted at the top of his lungs, "Everyone, gather together!"

Fujin hadn't used his chakra yet. He was surprised and stopped his plans.

Immediately, all 12 ninjas gathered next to each other. Seiji asked, "What did you sense?"

The sensor said loudly, "We have been led into an ambush."

Seiji and others looked at Fujin and stared at him. Fujin was dumbfounded. He thought, 'The one who is supposed to ambush you is me. Who else is here? Did those four I killed become zombies?'

Seiji grabbed Fujin's collar and cursed, "Hiroshi, you dare lead us into an ambush?"

Fujin became alert. He could have killed Seiji, but he was on guard against who their sensor had sensed. He said, "I have no idea about any ambush."

At the same time, he raised his guard to the max. If Seiji or anyone else would have any thoughts of killing him, he would retaliate.

Before Seiji could retort or take action, twelve Anbu ninjas of Sunagakure appeared in front of them.

One of them said, "I wonder what Kurogane no Sensen ninjas are searching for in the Land of Wind."

He took a look at Fujin and added, "That too with a civilian leading you."

Seiji replied, "Our squad that was assigned to protect them went missing. We are investigating them."

The Anbu ninja said, "Nice story. I will have to ask you to surrender without a struggle. Otherwise, it won't end well for you."

A glint appeared in Fujin's eyes. He thought, 'Good. These two can fight each other. No one will waste their time on a civilian. Once one of them wins, I will kill the survivors.'

However, suddenly his eyes widened. Seiji grabbed Fujin with more force and said, "Interrogate this civilian. You can verify our story from him!"

He lifted Fujin and threw him at the Suna Anbu ninjas. Fujin shouted in panic, "Wait, don't do this! Bastard, you promised my safety!"

However, he was still sent flying towards the Anbu. He cursed, 'Shit, I wanted to take advantage of their fight and kill them all. But he pushed me to the center of it!'

The lead Anbu smirked behind his mask and grabbed a kunai. He swiped it at Fujin while keeping his eyes on the mercenaries and saying, "Do you think that you can get away by using a civilian as a distra..."

Suddenly, one of the Anbu ninjas shouted, "Be careful!"

Fujin was just one meter away from the Anbu who was swinging a kunai at him when he opened his mouth and exhaled extremely sharp winds on the unsuspecting Suna ninjas. The attention of the Suna ninjas was on the mercenaries. The attack caught them off guard. The lead Anbu ninja was hit head-on. The winds slashed through his neck and beheaded him. Both his detached head and body had several deep cuts from which blood sprayed out like fountains.

Nine more ninjas suffered a similar fate. They fell with their eyes wide open, not expecting to die so suddenly on a simple mission. Only the Anbu who shouted and the anbu next to him jumped backwards in time to dodge the attack.

Fujin noticed them in the air and flickered, appearing behind them in the blink of an eye. Both grabbed their kunai and turned around to face him.

The mercenary group was dumbfounded. They had examined Fujin before leaving and hadn't found anything suspicious about him. They saw Fujin open his mouth and shot multiple air bullets. The last two Suna Anbu had their bodies riddled with holes. Both fell down dead like the rest of their comrades.

Having killed all the Suna ninjas, Fujin turned his gaze towards the mercenaries. In an instant, everyone grabbed their weapons and watched Fujin with grim expressions. The Suna group who they were afraid of was slaughtered with ease by the 'trader' they forcefully brought along with them. Seiji asked, "Who are you? And why did you hire one of our squads if you are so strong?"

Seiji obviously realized that the person in front of him was in disguise. However, he wasn't if he had disguised as Hiroshi all along or if he had replaced Hiroshi later. He decided to act oblivious to leave an escape for himself.

Fujin realized it and thought, 'Good attitude. Unfortunately, you shouldn't have taken the initiative to bring me out of the city.'

Without a word, Fujin disappeared. Their sensor immediately shouted, "On our right!"

Everyone turned their heads, only to see a gigantic Wind Dragon heading towards them. They immediately dispersed. The Dragon tackled the spot they were standing at and exploded causing winds to spread through the area.

The winds immediately sent the sand flying in the air. Not only did it lower the visibility in the area, the sand would enter the eyes of anyone who would keep them open. Unlike Fujin who could sense, their group had just one sensor. Without the ability to see and knowing how strong and treacherous their enemy was immediately caused panic to spread.

In the dust cover, Fujin flickered behind the mercenary who had shouted his position. The mercenary turned around and shouted, "He is here!"

He immediately jumped backwards while keeping a kunai in front of him defensively. However, Fujin just took a step forward and swung his sword at the mercenary. The mercenary tried defending, but the sword cut straight through his kunai and split him into two.

Without the sensor, the remaining mercenaries were left blind in the desert. Fujin killed them all with extreme ease in just a couple of minutes.

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Chapter 262: Solving a Mystery

The Winds died down and the sand settled back in the desert slowly. The blood was automatically buried under the sand. Fujin had already stored all 24 dead bodies in scrolls. He also collected the scroll containing the dead bodies of the four ninjas who were protecting Hiroshi's trading group.

He analyzed, 'With 12 mercenaries and the same number of Suna Anbu missing, the deserts will soon become very chaotic. Returning to Wind Capital will be pointless and very risky. I should eliminate a few targets who are outside the city quickly and return to Konoha.'

Having made his decision, Fujin began moving towards his targets.

10 minutes after Fujin left, a squad of Sunagakure ninjas arrived where the fighting had taken place. One of the chunins said, "It doesn't look like anyone was here, Captain Yura."

Yura frowned and said, "It looked like there was a huge battle here. It should have just ended. Inspect the area. We may find some clues."

Since Yura was the team leader, everyone obediently followed his instructions. For half an hour, they didn't find anything. Suddenly, one of the ninjas shouted, "Everyone, come here!"

Immediately, everyone approached him. He had dug the sand a few meters and was standing in a hole. As soon as they reached him, everyone's face became solemn. The sand was dyed red in blood. And it wasn't just a little bit either. One of the ninjas commented, "So much blood-soaked sand. How many people were killed here?"

The spot they were standing on was where Fujin had killed ten of the twelve Anbu ninjas from Suna. Though he had collected their bodies, the blood had seeped into the desert. Fujin didn't bother getting rid of it as it would require a lot of effort and time without providing him with any benefits. Yura said, "It looks like someone killed a bunch of people here. They didn't bother cleaning up all the evidence thinking that no one would find it there. Unfortunately, they didn't think that we would sense their battle and come investigate so quickly."

Unknown to the Suna ninjas, it was their good luck that the killer didn't waste time clearing all the evidence. Otherwise, they would have run into Fujin and joined their comrades on the trip to the afterlife.

One of Yura's teammates countered, "But who would be so brazen in our country? I think it might be the work of someone from our village. That is why they weren't concerned about others finding out."

Yura nodded and said, "Could be. Regardless, collect as much of this blood-soaked sand as you can. Others will keep scouting this area. If it was an intense battle, then everyone wouldn't die in the same place. We will carry the blood samples to Suna. If it was done by someone else, then it will help the village a lot."

His team immediately got to work. They spent over half a day searching the entire area and managed to collect blood samples of all 24 ninjas who were killed. Of course, they didn't know that and kept searching for hours despite finding all the blood samples. Finally, at noon the next day, they stopped searching and continued their journey to Sunagakure.

At the same time, Fujin was running across the desert. He let out a sigh and muttered, "This country is too damn big!"

Though the Land of Wind didn't have many resources, in terms of Land area, it was the largest country in the ninja world. The deserts went on for thousands of kilometers to the West. Due to this, the country was incredibly difficult to be invaded. It was one of the factors why Konoha didn't push into the Land of Wind despite inflicting grave damage on Suna in every major war.

The large size of the country meant that there were some cities in the West that were very far from the Land of Fire. Due to their geographical location, they had no choice but to be completely subservient to Sunagakure. Konoha and the other villages had zero influence in this area. So Shikaku wanted to weaken Suna's influence by targeting cities and towns in this area.

Yura's squad travelled a few hours through the desert towards Sunagakure when they encountered another squad. Yura noticed them and immediately stopped and greeted respectfully, "Elder Manabu."

Elder Manabu was in his fifties and a member of the Sunagakure Council. He had an illustrious career and made many contributions during the Second and Third Great Ninja Wars. So Yura was very respectful.

Manabu didn't bother making any small talk and asked, "Yura, you are coming from the Land of Bird, right? Did you see any Anbu or mercenaries on your way here?"

Yura shook his head and said, "No, but the place we passed through had a huge battle. We probably missed it by less than 15 minutes. We didn't see anyone there but a lot of blood was spilled there. We estimated that at least 18 people were gravely injured."

Manabu frowned. He had been dispatched by Rasa after they lost communication with that group of Anbu. He analyzed, 'Kazekage-sama said that he sent 3 squads of Anbu to chase them. And the mercenary group had 12 ninjas and 1 civilian. 18 grave injuries could mean that one of the two forces was wiped out.'

Suddenly, he had a very bad feeling. He muttered to himself, 'If our Anbu won, they would have returned or at least sent a message. Does that mean that they lost to merely mercenaries? But how could our Anbu lose to mercenaries? And how did they avoid Yura's group? Did they escape into the desert instead of continuing their journey?'

Manabu asked, "Yura, did you spot any tracks leaving the battlefield?"

Yura shook his head. Manabu frowned and asked for the blood samples. He took it from Yura and handed it to one of his subordinates and said, "Carry this back to Sunagakure and have them inspect the blood. Also, ask Lord Kazekage to prepare multiple units. We may need to scout the entire desert. Yura, you and your squad lead us to the spot where you noticed the combat."

Yura replied, "But we have to hand over the mission report."

Manabu instructed, "Pass it to him. This could be an emergency. I might need all the help that I can get."

Yura nodded and said, "Alright Elder."

He handed another scroll to him and they began their journey back. Yura's squad had already consumed Soldier Pills. So they could continue running. The group returned to the spot where Yura had collected the blood-soaked sand. They investigated a lot but didn't find anything substantial.

Around the same time, Rasa received Manabu's message. He immediately reached the same conclusion as Manabu and frowned. He muttered, "First the issue with the Daimyo and now twelve Anbu went missing? What is happening in my country?"

He immediately got to work and began arranging more squads to reinforce Manabu while analyzing, 'Looks like my suspicion on the mercenary group was right. But, that group didn't look strong enough to take on my Anbu. Was someone hiding their strength? Or did I underestimate the goals of the group creating a mess in the Wind Capital City?'

Rasa over-calculated as he didn't have a clue about Fujin. His Anbu died just because they were unlucky enough to encounter him.

Since they had no success, Manabu's group began moving towards the Wind Capital City to investigate the reason for the appearance of the mercenary group. At the same time, they wanted to investigate the civilian with them.

After another half a day, they finally arrived in the Wind Capital City. Manabu quickly moved towards the city gate where they were spotted and found Ryota. Despite not being under Sunagakure, Ryota greeted the Elder warmly. Manabu directly asked, "Tell us about the mercenaries from Kurogane no Sensen with whom you were talking a few days ago."

Ryota was surprised by the question. He said, "They came here over two days ago when the Kazekage left the city. They were investigating their four-man squad that went missing while escorting a trader group. Their circumstances were quite weird as the trader group made it to the city without any harm but all the four ninjas were missing."

Manabu frowned and said, "The trader group is very suspicious."

Ryota nodded and informed him about the remaining details. He ended by saying, "The trader Hiroshi was worried about their safety. So he volunteered to go with them to tell them where they saw the man."

Ryota lied with a straight face. Instead of saying that he was forced, he said that Hiroshi volunteered. However, this lie helped Manabu as he became even more suspicious of Hiroshi. He said, "Give me the details of where Hiroshi stayed. Also, gather the remaining 11 traders and have them meet me."

Ryota was about to say no as Manabu had no right to order him around. However, Manabu added, "I have a suspicion that this group might have something to do with the recent murders in the city."

Ryota became serious and immediately nodded. He asked his subordinates and informed them about the hotel where Hiroshi stayed. As for others, he would need some time.

Manabu nodded and began moving towards the hotel. He muttered, "Twelve traders, twelve assassins, twelve mercenaries. I think we are finally getting some clues."

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Chapter 263: Culprits Found?

As they were walking, Yura asked, "Elder, what assassinations took place in the Wind Capital City?"

Yura and his groups weren't in the Land of Wind when Fujin was creating a mess. So they were unaware. Manabu's subordinates filled them up. Yura and his subordinates began sweating having realized how much trouble their village was in. After hearing the circumstances, they couldn't help but suspect that their own village was behind the assassinations. They understood how others would have felt.

The group reached the hotel where Fujin had stayed and entered his room. The room was impeccably clean. They began investigating the room. After half an hour, every single one had an ugly face.

One of Yura's subordinates said, "There is nothing here that could point us to him at all. It's as if no one has lived here for months."

Another said, "But the hotel staff said that he lived here for over 7 weeks."

A third ninja commented, "Maybe the hotel does such a good job cleaning that all evidence is wiped out."

However, one of Manabu's subordinates shook his head and said, "No. No matter how well they clean, their scent gets left behind. But there is no scent in these rooms. This guy is not a civilian for sure. He should be a well-trained Anbu ninja from some country."

Everyone agreed with his analysis. Yura added, "If he is, then the other traders should be as well. And they didn't leave the city. We can catch them and clear our village's name."

Manabu nodded and said, "Baki is leading our ninjas in this city. Let's meet up with him. He must have an appropriate plan for when we catch the culprits."

Everyone nodded and left. When Baki received the news, he was elated. He had been under a lot of stress for the last few weeks. No matter how much he worked, he never found any clue. The entire job was a dead end. Since Manabu cracked the case, he immediately deployed his ninjas in the city to find the remaining eleven traders.

Unfortunately for Baki, even this clue was a dead end. They searched non-stop for two days. However, no matter how much they looked, they didn't even catch a whiff of those 11 traders. It was as if they had long disappeared from the city. No one even remembered their faces. Only a few merchants who earned big profits from their trade recalled them. But they hadn't seen them again for almost two months! So their memories were useless for Suna ninjas.

Baki sighed and muttered, "I should have known that it wouldn't be this easy."

Manabu nodded and said, "They probably changed their disguises after entering the city."

He looked in the direction of the city gate and added, "Fortunately, we can soon be able to inspect every citizen in this city."

Manabu's words confused the Suna ninjas other than Baki. Baki and Manabu moved towards the city walls and jumped on top of it. The other Suna ninjas followed them. As soon as they saw the sight outside, their eyes widened. Most were too stunned to speak. Finally, one muttered, "This is insane!"

Outside the walls were numerous figures running towards the city gates. A total of 334 ninjas were sent by Rasa to keep the Wind City safe in accordance with his deal with the Wind Daimyo.

Yura asked in surprise, "Did Lord Kazekage send these many ninjas to help us search the deserts?"

Baki replied, "No. They will be stationed in the wind capital to prevent such incidents in the future. It was a deal between Lord Kazekage and the Daimyo to settle our differences."

Seeing that these were their reinforcements, the Suna ninjas were elated. Excitement coursed through their bodies. With such numbers, finding spies would become extremely easy!

Sunagakure ninjas received a warm welcome. Baki immediately made arrangements for everyone. After settling them, Baki immediately began acting on his plan. He cooperated with the city guards to get records of every citizen officially living in the city. He informed the ninjas of their task.

He planned to inspect each and every person in the city. He wanted to find any person living in the city who was unregistered. That could help him find the 11 traders who were under different disguises. At the same time, he planned to deploy sensors throughout the city. Though spies could disguise themselves as civilians, completely hiding from sensors inside the city would be much more difficult. Especially since there were a few extremely capable sensors with him.

Unfortunately, before Baki could begin his search, another Suna ninja arrived in the Wind Capital and rushed straight to Baki and handed him a scroll. Baki opened and read it. His eyes widened and his expression became very grim.

Manabu was surprised. He asked, "What does the scroll say?"

Baki handed him the scroll. Manabu read it and immediately became angry. He cursed loudly, "Which heinous bastard did this?"

The Suna ninjas became curious. However, the messenger said, "Elder Manabu, Lord Kazekage has asked you to travel to Sabakuetsu. Yura will assist you. In addition, 5 squads of Anbu and 30 squads of varying strengths have moved out of our village and are currently heading towards Sabakuetsu."

Manabu nodded. He and Yura along with their squads left immediately.

Another scroll with a similar message reached the hands of the Daimyo. He too became solemn. Soon, the news spread throughout the city causing panic to spread. Daimyo did his best to quell the panic. His assurances calmed the citizens of the Wind City and brought stability back to the city.

12 hours ago :

Fujin travelled for over 3 days through the desert to finally reach the city called Sabakuetsu. He let out a sigh and muttered, "The distance between this city and Sunagakure is larger than the distance between Konoha and Sunagakure."

Though Fujin took a few breaks, he wasn't a fan of travelling for so long through non-stop desert. He couldn't help but wonder, 'In these 3 days, I encountered 2 sandstorms. They didn't affect me due to my expertise in Wind release but I can't help but wonder how civilians even trade across these huge and treacherous deserts.'

Fujin began inspecting the defenses of the city from the outside while recalling the information about the city mentioned in the scrolls provided by Shikaku. Sabakuetsu was a mid-sized city in the far West of the Land of the Wind. Though it wasn't the largest city, it was one of the most important cities for one critical reason.

The city was surrounded by numerous oases and received a decent amount of rainfall every year. Due to this, it had the highest agricultural production in the entire Land of Wind. Overall, around 60% of the total agricultural production in the Land of Wind would be obtained from this city.

Due to this, it provided food to all the cities and villages in this region, thus saving the Land of Wind a lot of trouble to transport food across the vast desert. In addition, it also sent some food supplies to the Wind Capital and Sunagakure and helped them reduce dependence on other countries for food.

For this reason, Sunagakure permanently deployed 8 squads to protect this city. In addition, one Elite Jounin would always be deployed in the city.

Fujin observed the defenses and analyzed, 'Though the city is important, the defenses aren't very high. The reason for this is that Sunagakure doesn't expect anyone to hit them so far away. In addition, the Samurais won't protect this place because of how far into the desert it is. Still, the city does have an Elite Jounin. Killing him would be troublesome. Especially if there are Jounins to reinforce him. Unless I can take him by surprise like those Anbu.'

Fujin analyzed and shook his head, 'No, that would be difficult. If I fight him and fail to kill him, then he will gain a lot of my information. It would be troublesome if they get enough information to calculate later on that it was me. I shouldn't use my summons or Vacuum techniques in my fight unless I am sure that I can kill all who see me use them. The same for my famous swords. Probably best if I avoid using my swords completely.'

The city had two entrances and was surrounded by huge walls. Each entrance had 2 ninjas watching over it. The walls did have seals inscribed in them, but they weren't as complicated as the Wind Capital city walls. Fujin planned, 'I could enter the city through the gates by using disguises of one of the people who leave the city to work in the fields. However, if they follow a certain routine, then entering at odd times will raise suspicions.'

Fujin thought for a bit and decided, 'Leave it, it's late at night. They won't leave the city for hours. I'll try to infiltrate directly. If I fail or am detected, I'll just escape and replace one of the citizens working outside.'

Fujin began working on the seals. He was a bit excited as he had never yet attempted to dismantle the seals of an entire city! The most fun he had with seals was messing with Hiruzen in the Wind Training rooms in the Anbu Training Facilities.

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Chapter 264: Salvaging the Food Supplies!

Fujin spent a few hours studying the seals on one section of the wall. Due to hiding his chakra and the massive length of the wall, he wasn't detected or seen by anyone.

Finally, the Sun rose. And at the same time, a smile appeared on Fujin's face. He muttered, "It's cracked!"

He summarized, 'These seals are inscribed by a Grandmaster. However, the wall is huge. Whoever inscribed it wasn't very dedicated and did the bare minimum to ensure the safety of the city. However, even if he had been serious, I would have managed to break through. Though I would have needed a lot more time. Hmm, maybe while I return, I should swing by the Wind Capital and leave a few clones to try to break through the seals there. It would be a good test.'

Fujin entered the city and transformed into one of the people he saw in Wind Capital. Fujin didn't waste much time and directly began visiting the important locations. He thought to himself, 'Four ninjas were at the gates. There should be 28 more ninjas in the city. I wonder if they are also deployed or are resting in the city.'

Fujin's guess was accurate. The ninjas in the city were divided into 3 groups. The first group of 12 ninjas were responsible for keeping an eye on the city gates in 8-hour shifts. The next group of 12 ninjas were also responsible for protecting two crucial locations. The last group of 8 ninjas and one Elite Jounin would stay on standby in case an emergency occurred.

Of course, due to how peaceful the city was, every one of them had gotten complacent. Fujin walked towards his target. Soon, a huge fortified structure with sturdy walls that were designed to withstand not only the harsh desert conditions but also any attack by enemy ninjas became visible. This sturdy structure was one of the two Provision Depots in Sabakuetsu. It stored a vast amount of harvested food grains and other food items that could be stored. These depots served as a Lifeline for the entire Western region of the country!

Fujin didn't sense any chakra field active around him or the Provision Depot. So chakra gathered in his eyes and observed inside the depot. He observed, 'So this place has only two ninjas. I guess the other depot also has 2 ninjas overlooking them. But what exactly are these guys doing? I can feel that both of them are very tense.'

Fujin was curious, but he didn't care much. He decided, 'It doesn't matter. They are only chunins.'

His expression became serious as he observed the seals inscribed on the depot walls. He muttered to himself, 'The seals are much better than outside city walls. And I can't keep studying this one for hours. Looks like it's time for the Dynamic Entry.'

Chakra gathered around his fist. The people who were walking around him were surprised and immediately looked towards Fujin. They noticed that his right fist was glowing. One kid said, "Mom look! His hand is glowing!"

Another kid asked, "How can I do that, Mom?"

The people were just normal civilians. They hadn't seen ninjas in action. Suddenly, Fujin disappeared. Though the walls had very good protection, the same couldn't be said about the doors. Fujin punched the door and smashed it into pieces.

The two Suna ninjas inside the depot were playing a game of cards. Suddenly, they heard a loud noise and felt the entire depot shaking. The noise generated by the impact of the punch travelled hundreds of meters through the city. The people who were watching the glowing fist curiously became terrified. They immediately ran away. At the same time, the Elite Jounin and the other ninjas in the city became alert. 14 ninjas along with the Elite Jounin immediately began moving towards the depot.

The two ninjas inside the depot got up and grabbed their kunai. However, Fujin flickered next to one of them. The ninja immediately swung his kunai at Fujin, However, Fujin was much faster. A punch landed on the ninja's face and blew him up. Fujin had enhanced the punch with chakra as well.

Blood, flesh, bones and insides of the brain hit the face of the second ninja. His horror knew no bounds! One second he was playing a game of cards with his friend, and in the next second his friend's brain was blown up! Fortunately or unfortunately, his misery was short-lived. Fujin fired an Air Bullet through his throat and ended his life as well.

Fujin immediately flickered towards where the grains and other food items were stored. It was easy to find. Fujin knocked the door down and immediately spat a fireball on it. The entire room was lit on fire! However, this wasn't the only grain storage in the depot. There were 7 other such rooms. Fujin immediately began lighting them on fire as well.

The Elite Jounin appeared in front of the depot and was horrified to see smoke coming out of the depot! Fujin had set fire to 3 food storage facilities. Another ninja appeared next to him and asked, "Captain Hitoshi! What are your orders?" Hitoshi quickly commanded, "There should be an intruder inside. I will douse the fire. You guys stop him. Don't let him set fire to every storage facility."

He immediately jumped in the smoke. 5 ninjas followed him in. The remaining Sunagakure ninjas in the city kept arriving every few seconds and went into the burning depot.

Fujin had set fire to 5 storage facilities when the Suna ninjas spotted him.

Hitoshi immediately made hand signs. 4 water clones appeared next to him. He and the water clones headed towards the 5 rooms from where smoke was appearing. The other ninja immediately ran towards Fujin.

One of the Jounins screamed hatefully, "How dare you burn the only source of food for the hundreds of thousands of people living here?"

Another ninja shouted in rage, "I will skin you alive!"

Two threw shurikens at Fujin while the other three weaved hand signs. Fujin dodged the shurikens, but the assault had just started.

'Wind Release: Air Bullet jutsu'

'Wind Release: Wind Gale Wolf jutsu'

'Wind Release: Wind Sword jutsu'

Eight Air Bullets, three Wind Wolves and multiple blades of wind moved one after another towards Fujin.

Chakra gathered in Fujin's eyes. He immediately flickered out of the way and dodged every air bullet.

He gathered chakra in his mouth.

'Wind Release: Infinite Breakthrough jutsu'

He exhaled a wind current from his mouth. However, instead of the destructive attack, he exhaled an extremely gentle wind current.

The blades of winds entered the wind current and were redirected. They moved towards the doors of the remaining storage facilities and cut through them. Seeing their attack destroy portions of their food supply made their hearts ache in pain. At the same time, their hatred towards Fujin increased even more.

Lastly, the 3 Wolves entered the wind flow. However, the wind flow was too strong for them to continue. 1 dispersed directly while the remaining 2 were sent crashing into the walls and finally dispersed.

However, Fujin's position didn't improve much as 3 more Suna ninjas had arrived. Half of the eight ninjas were Jounins. Fujin's odds kept getting worse.

One of the Suna ninjas slammed his hands on the ground. Immediately the ground rose and interrupted the Wind flow he had created. Immediately, the remaining 7 ninjas pounced on Fujin. Dozens of shurikens and multiple wind jutsus were launched at Fujin. Fujin dodged while counterattacking, but the Suna ninjas kept attacking without carrying about their chakra reserves.

Fujin kept dodging as he sensed 4 more ninjas entering the depot. He frowned, 'Killing them in a short time isn't possible without using Vacuum jutsus. I need a distraction.'

He weaved a hand sign as he continued dodging the attacks.

'Fire Release: Fire Dragon Flame Bullet jutsu'

At the same time, one of the Suna jounins too completed his hand signs.

'Wind Release: Wind Dragon jutsu'

Two massive 30 meters long dragons appeared in the depot. However, seeing the fire dragon made the Suna ninjas very nervous. The Wind Dragon collided with the Fire Dragon who didn't make any move.

The impact of the collision destroyed the fire dragon. The Suna ninjas were surprised at how quickly it was defeated. However, their eyes widened in horror as the Winds generated by the Wind Dragon carried the flames everywhere inside the depot. The doors to the storage facilities that were destroyed earlier let all the fire enter inside. The last remaining food grains that were safe inside the depot began burning!

The ninjas attacked while cursing Fujin with every foul word and curse they knew. However, Fujin kept dodging and counter-attacking without responding.

At the same time, Hitoshi and his clones doused the fire in all 5 rooms. However, their expressions weren't good. Hitoshi muttered, "Even though I doused the fire, all the food items have gotten wet. I am not sure how long it will last."

He and his clones left the rooms. Fujin noticed that the smoke coming from those 5 rooms had turned into water vapour. A smile appeared on Fujin's face as he decided, 'It's time.'

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Chapter 265: Konoha's Scheme

A massive chakra appeared around Fujin. The sudden spike in chakra shocked the Suna ninjas. Without giving them any time, Fujin attacked.

'Wind Release: Infinite Breakthrough jutsu.'

Unlike the previous version, this jutsu was as destructive as it could possibly be. The Suna ninja, who considered themselves unmatched in Wind jutsus, were dumbfounded by the scale and destructiveness of this attack!

The attack left giant scars on the sturdy walls of the Provision Depot! The Suna ninjas were blown apart as well. Two ninjas had their throats sliced by the sharp winds. Another had his eyes pierced. One had his left arm sliced off.

The winds also moved into the 8 storage facilities. Hitoshi and his clones were caught off guard. All 4 water clones were dispelled, leaving just Hitoshi in one of the rooms. He quickly weaved a hand seal.

'Water Release: Water Prison jutsu.'

A Sphere of water surrounded him and saved him from the impact of the winds.

While the Suna ninjas were struggling, a shadow clone appeared next to Fujin.

'Fire Release: Searing Migraine jutsu'

He wasted no time in releasing a massive fire into the winds generated by Infinite Breakthrough. The fire spread began spreading instantly! The winds carried the fire to each and every corner of the depot. Hitoshi watched in anger and helplessness as an even bigger fire entered his room.

The 3 storage rooms that had just small fires were set ablaze. Every food grain was burned up. The 5 rooms where Hitoshi and his clones had doused the fire were set ablaze once again with even more intensity. Worse, of the 14 Suna ninjas that were fighting Fujin, 12 were set on fire as well. Only two managed to use defensive jutsus in time.

Fujin noticed the destruction and decided, 'That should be sufficient.'

He immediately flickered out of the depot. Two Suna ninjas were rushing towards the depot when Fujin suddenly appeared in front of them. Both grabbed the weapons and asked, "Who are you?"

Fujin looked at them without replying and began building up his chakra. The two Suna ninjas prepared themselves for a fight. However, Fujin suddenly disappeared. He used Wind Instantaneous Body jutsu to flicker directly to the city walls and left the city. One of the ninjas shouted, "Where did he go?"

He couldn't even follow Fujin's movement. He was about to look for Fujin when the ninja next to him shouted, "Leave him. First, help douse this fire!"

The ninja stopped and focused back on the fire. However, before they could do anything, Hitoshi completed weaving hand signs. He poured over 80% of his remaining chakra into the jutsu!

'Water Release: Great Waterfall jutsu!"

He released a massive amount of water. The water first flooded the room he was in. A massive amount of water was converted into water vapour, but the fire was doused. The water flowed out towards the remaining depot from the door. The Suna ninjas who were on fire immediately ran towards the water and dived in.

In a minute, the water entered all the storage rooms in the depot. The ninjas that were outside the depot immediately jumped out of the way as hot water rushed out like a flood.

Hitoshi walked out of his room. His expression was ugly. He noticed the burns on his subordinates. He realized, 'He was a sensor. If he had done this attack when I was dousing the fire, I could have stopped it. But he timed it perfectly when I lowered my guard slightly after dousing the fires.'

He looked at the two ninjas standing outside and asked, "Did you see anyone leave?"

The ninja nodded, "Yes Captain. We saw a man flicker away in a hurry. We wanted to give chase, but decided that saving the depot was more important."

Hitoshi sighed and said, "It's fine. Even if you gave chase, you have probably been killed. Arrange the two medical ninjas to heal the injured. I'll watch over the other depot. This one is ruined."

He flickered away towards the other depot while being worried, 'I hope he doesn't attack the second depot as well. But if he does, I'll abandon the grains and focus on killing him. However, my chakra is very low right now. It will be a very difficult battle.'

In a few seconds, he arrived at the second Provision Depot. No attack had taken place there. The two ninjas stationed were on high alert. Hitoshi sighed in relief. He analyzed, 'Since he didn't show up here, he should be very low on chakra after using the combination jutsu by himself.'

He frowned and asked himself, 'Should I have abandoned the Provision Depot and attacked him instead? I would have had a good chance of killing him.'

He thought for a bit and shook his head, 'No. If I had done that, all my subordinates would have died in the fire. And I would have no guarantee of killing him. Besides, if he has any allies, he could have lured me into a trap.'

Hitoshi cleared up his thoughts and began passing instructions. The security of the second Provision Depot was increased manyfold. 10 ninjas were deployed to defend it. At the same time, medical ninjas began treating the injured ninjas.

Hitoshi tallied his losses and sighed. 4 ninjas were killed in the fight. 2 of them were Jounins. All the food stored in that Provision Depot was destroyed. So in a few minutes, they lost half of their food supply. It was certain to put an immense strain on the Land of Wind.

Hitoshi wrote reports and sent messages to the Kazekage and the Wind Daimyo.

Meanwhile, Fujin had long left the vicinity of the city. After leaving the city, he kept using Wind Instantaneous Body jutsu continuously to escape over ten kilometers away!

Finally, he took a break and thought, 'That was rough. Bastards came at me with everything they had! Fortunately, the Elite Jounin was more focused on salvaging the grains.'

He let out a sigh and thought, 'No wonder Sunagakure attacked Konoha a few years from now. Shikaku and Hiruzen are two crazy bastards. In order to increase the dependence of the Land of Wind on the Land of Fire, they decided to burn half the food supply in the Western parts of this country.

Now the Land of Wind will have no option but to import massive amounts of food from the Land of Fire. The sudden rise in demand would also raise the cost of food items. And it will hence result in restricting the budget of Sunagakure. At the very least, Suna shouldn't expect any budget increases any time soon. Especially if Shikaku keeps up these tactics. In fact, they will have to spend their own budget to buy food.

If Rasa were to figure out that these incidents were done by Konoha, he would definitely want to attack Konoha even if he didn't have any solid proof. Only the disruption caused by a war will allow him to reset the ties between the Land of Wind and Fire and force the Wind Daimyo to cooperate entirely with him.

Still, Shikaku wasn't too heartless. The scrolls clearly indicate to just destroy one depot and to not destroy anymore if one had already been destroyed. If he had planned to destroy the second depot as well, then these people would have been very hopeless.

It would have been a tragedy. Thousands of people would have died due to food shortages. The Daimyo's position might have become unstable if people died in large numbers due to food shortages. But now, the food they have will be sufficient for them to survive until sufficient food is imported.

In the end, not only will this region not experience any tragedy, but the people here will be grateful to Konoha and the Wind Daimyo for helping them so quickly. On the other hand, Rasa and Sunagakure would be hated as their ninjas were too incompetent to protect their food supply. In fact, Rasa will be forced to increase the number of ninjas protecting this city by at least 2 times. A good scheme indeed.'

Despite not telling him, Fujin was able to discover Shikaku's real intentions through his instructions. Fujin smirked and muttered, "Rasa will be in a real mess soon. Hehehe. If I didn't have to maintain my disguise, I'd have loved to lure him here and fight a few rounds with him after securing my retreat. Though I won't stand a chance, the opportunities to fight against S-ranked ninjas are just too rare."

As Fujin expected, Rasa had a terrible headache. The bad news kept arriving one after another in his office. He had just sent a considerable force towards the West when two more reports arrived at his table. He read them both multiple times and his expression got uglier every time.

The first report came from the hospital in Suna. The doctors had checked the blood samples Yura sent back and stated that it was blood samples of 24 different people. The second was sent by Baki. He informed Rasa about Manabu's investigation and about Hiroshi and the 11 traders that came to Wind Capital along with him.

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Chapter 266: Rasa's Helplessness!

Rasa studied the two reports as he calculated, '24 different blood samples. The group had 25 different people. Meaning that except one, everyone got injured. But who stayed uninjured?'

After calculating more, Rasa concluded, 'It isn't someone from my Anbu. Since they didn't contact me again, it is safe that all 12 of them were killed. This implies that the mercenaries had someone very strong hidden in their ranks who could eliminate all 12 Anbu without allowing anyone to escape.'

His eyes fell on the second report as he analyzed further, 'That person could very well be this Hiroshi fellow. Either he was with the mercenaries and lured the Anbu into a trap. Or the more fearsome scenario, that guy killed all Anbu and Mercenaries by himself. But, how strong would he need to be to kill 24 ninjas who were at least at the Chunin level by himself?'

Rasa shook his head and corrected his line of thinking, 'No, he could have caught them off guard by using his disguise. However, even in that case, this person needs to be at the Elite Jounin level.

The 11 traders who came along with him were nowhere to be found. Though Baki hasn't completed his search yet, it should be a hopeless search. Because, if this Hiroshi is at the Elite Jounin level, then the remaining traders could have been his clones... No, his Shadow Clones! Probably the assassins were his clones as well. The person who attacked Sabakuetsu should be him as well.'

Rasa's expression became very ugly as he muttered, "Konoha sent an Elite Jounin to create a mess in my country so brazenly! They want to increase our dependence on them so that we are forced to stay in an alliance with them."

Just like Fujin, Rasa could see the impact of destroying just one of the two Provision Depots in the West. The scenario was just too favorable to Konoha. Unfortunately, he had no proof to give to the Daimyo or the public. However, despite the absence of any proof, he was certain that Konoha was behind it.

Within a day, he sent messages to every Noble in the West who supported him. In addition, he dispatched another 200 ninjas to the Western parts of the country. Fujin had no idea that he would soon be hunted all across the vast deserts!

However, the reinforcements were very far away. Travelling across the desert needed 3 days. During this time, Fujin had eliminated another Noble who supported Rasa completely.

Rasa's mood worsened even further after receiving the news. In a rage, he shouted, "Does Konoha want to go to war?"

He looked at his assistant and commanded, "Call every Council member in the village for an emergency meeting."

The assistant nodded and got to work. Within half an hour, most of the council members arrived. Rasa informed them about the situation and his calculations. Every council member agreed with his calculations.

Rasa stated, "Konoha seems to be hell-bent on making life difficult for us. We have to retaliate."

However, his words caused a wave of silence to spread through the room. After half a minute of silence, one council member commented, "We have no way to retaliate. Since the Uchiha Massacre, Konoha has increased their defenses multiple times. The number of their ninjas moving in the Land of Fire has increased multiple times.

We will have to send either Elite Jounin or a squad of Jounins to be able to achieve something significant. And once they succeed, Konoha will hunt them until they are killed. In addition, they have the Yamanaka clan. Not only will our ninjas be killed, but their memories will also be read. And if Konoha uses that information to convince the Wind Daimyo, then our budget will be restricted even further."

The other council members agreed with him. Rasa also frowned. He had a very low number of Elite Jounins. He didn't want to send them to their deaths. In addition, their deaths would hurt Suna in multiple ways.

Silence spread through the room. The only eligible name they could think of who wasn't already exceeding 50 years in age was Baki. But Baki was helpless in dealing with the situation in the Wind Capital. If he messed up after entering the Land of Fire, they would lose one of their strongest fighters. None of them wanted to risk this.

Finally, one of the Council members suggested, "In my opinion, we should focus on killing the Elite Jounin that has infiltrated our country. If we kill him, Konoha will feel heartache at losing him. After all, the value of an Elite Jounin exceeds more than a hundred Chunins. Especially considering that he is a very good user of Wind Jutsus. No country needs Wind affinity ninjas more than Konoha."

Everyone immediately agreed with him. The meeting ended without deciding on any good plan to hurt Konoha. Rasa sighed in disappointment as he too couldn't think of any good method to retaliate. He just hatefully looked in the West.

Around the same time, Konoha received intel about the recent happenings in the Land of Wind. Hiruzen read the reports with a weird expression and called Shikaku. Shikaku received the scroll from Hiruzen. His expression also became weird.

Hiruzen chuckled and said, "You messed up. You should have defined the mission parameters properly."

Shikaku sighed and muttered, "10 Nobles, 12 family members of Nobles, 4 ninjas and one Food Storage Depot... Does he intend to start a war?"

He let out another sigh and said softly, "What a drag. I told him that it is the Promotion Mission for Anbu Captain. Why is he acting like he wants to become the Anbu Commander?"

Hiruzen let out another chuckle. Shikaku looked at him and said, "This isn't a laughing matter. He has acted so many times that Suna will definitely suspect us. Even if he didn't leave any evidence, they will still want to retaliate."

Hiruzen nodded and said, "Fortify our defenses. Set up traps for any enemy squads who would want to create a mess in our country. In addition, prepare yourself for more such news. After all, he has just reached the Western side of the Land of Wind."

Hiruzen wasn't worried about Suna's retaliation. Instead, he wanted to use the opportunity to kill their elite troops. As long as Suna's strength was kept in check, they wouldn't try to break the alliance openly.

Shikaku sighed and said, "We also need to know what deal Rasa and Wind Daimyo reached. This wasn't what we wanted. If they resolve their differences, then all our efforts would be pointless. Als..."

He suddenly stopped speaking and looked at Hiruzen and asked, "Why do I have to do it?"

Hiruzen had asked him to do a very tedious task in such a smooth manner that he didn't even consider refusing it. However, he had no will to spend a lot of time working on it.

Hiruzen replied, "Because you were the one who messed up."

Shikaku retorted, "You were in the room as well."

Hiruzen nodded and said, "But you were the one to pass the orders."

Both entered into a staring contest. After a minute, Shikaku sighed and got to work. As soon as the door closed, Hiruzen chuckled once again. He looked at the reports once again and thought, 'I should have expected this. But it's alright. Suna was becoming too arrogant. If they aren't reined in, they will soon become more chaotic and break off the alliance. Once that happens, the Fourth Great Ninja War will just be a matter of time.'

Hiruzen got up and looked out of his window at the Stone faces. He let out a sigh as he thought, 'Finally, our strength has recovered. Once I officially promote the current crop of Ninjas to Jounin rank, our numbers will have reached sufficient levels officially. However, we still need a few years of peace for this generation of ninjas to fully mature. Then we can afford to enter another war.'

As he looked at the Stone faces, tiredness could be seen on his face. However, suddenly he squinted his eyes and chakra gathered in them. He noticed someone sneakily moving on the Hokage monuments. But, soon he let out a long sigh and muttered, 'I am getting too old for this shit. I should have dumped this kid on his perverted Godfather.'

The entire village suddenly noticed that the Hokage Monuments were painted and made to look hilarious. Soon, Iruka noticed it as well and began chasing after Naruto.

While Konoha was peaceful and joyous, the situation in the Western territories of the Land of Wind was heating up!

148 Sunagakure ninjas arrived in the city of Sabakuetsu. Manabu, Yura and two more ninjas met up with Hitoshi who told them every detail regarding their short clash with Fujin.

Manabu analyzed and said, "Kazekage-sama's analysis seems to be on point. This is most likely the same guy."

Odaka added, "An Elite Jounin from Konoha. We have to catch him and give him the most painful death imaginable. But..."

He scratched his chin and asked, "How do we find him in these vast deserts?"

Yura looked at Odaka and replied, "He seems to be targeting the Nobles that favor our village. We just have to study his movements and discover his next target. Then we can set up an ambush for him."

Odaka looked at Yura carefully. Odaka was one of the few Elite Jounins in Suna and a Council Member as well. He was quite senior as well. Along with Manabu, he was one of the two leaders of the Suna ninjas that arrived in Sabakuetsu. He said, "Good good. You are good, Yura. It's good to see promising ninjas in the next generation."

The last member of their group was an Anbu Captain who was assigned as the leader of the 20 Anbu ninjas. He was wearing an Eagle mask. He said, "Let's lay down a map and analyze his movements. We also need to analyze his abilities. Then we can set a trap."

The group nodded and entered Hitoshi's office.

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Chapter 267: A Devious Trap

After entering his office, Hitoshi laid down a map on a table. All 5 ninjas stood around it. Odaka asked, "Eagle, what do you recommend?"

Eagle took a marker and circled Sabakuetsu and a nearby town and said, "He first burned a Provision Depot in Sabakuetsu and then killed a Noble in this town. The nearest town from there is Korinshi. But

that town doesn't have any Noble. So according to my estimations, his target could either be the City of Shunkuto or the town of Kiganjima. But, it is difficult to say which one."

Manabu and Odaka began analyzing. After a couple of minutes, Manabu sighed and said, "It's impossible to say which one he will target. We will split up and guard both cities. Yura and I will go to Shunkuto while Odaka and Eagle will go to Kiganjima. Hitoshi, you stay in this city and ensure that the last Provision Depot stays safe. We will leave 20 additional ninjas with you. The remaining will be divided equally among us."

Odama, Hitoshi and Eagle nodded. They agreed with Manabu's plan. They quickly began discussing which ninja squads would join their groups. Suddenly, Manabu noticed something amiss and looked at Yura. Yura was still staring at the map and didn't say a word.

Manabu asked, "Is something the matter, Yura?"

Yura snapped out of his thoughts. He said, "I have a different take on this, Elder Manabu."

Manabu said, "Explain."

Yura said, "If we split up, our chances of killing him will decrease. And, if we move to those cities, then he might notice our movements and avoid hitting them altogether. In that case, our deployment will be a waste and he might annoy us further by randomly targeting other nobles forcing us to split into smaller groups. In addition, he should already have a good lead on us. If he kills that Noble before we even reach, then we won't be able to do anything and might get exposed for nothing."

His words made others frown. They had considered these points but not in this detail as they didn't see any other option. Manabu asked, "What do you suggest?"

Yura said, "Let's abandon these two Nobles."

The eyes of the four ninjas widened at how casually Yura asked to sacrifice the two Nobles.

Yura pointed at a city on the map and said, "After he kills the Nobles in Shunkuto and Kiganjima, he will target the Noble living in Mizunashi city. While he is busy killing those two Nobles, we can move around this territory and set up a giant trap in Mizunashi before he reaches there. We will hide inside and around the city using Fuinjutsu. When he attacks, we can all surround and kill him."

Yura's plan surprised them. They thought about his words and agreed more and more with him. Though two Nobles would die, the sacrifice would be worth it if they killed him. It was an exchange they were more than willing to make.

Odaka looked at Yura in a new light. He thought, 'I was just teasing him earlier for pointing out the obvious. But, he is indeed good. This level of talent should be in the Council.'

Manabu said, "That is a good plan. Much better than mine for sure."

Hitoshi added, "Good plan, but there is one flaw. The ninjas deployed at the city gates didn't notice any anomalies or anything strange. So I speculate that he entered the city without alerting the Seals inscribed here."

Yura replied, "I considered that. But this city is very big and was guarded by just 4 ninjas at the entrances. So he would have had opportunities to study the seals. But in Mizunashi, he will be able to sense us only if he is a sensor and activates his chakra field. However, doing so while attempting assassination will be very stupid. So he won't do it."

Yura's explanation made sense. Everyone agreed. He added, "In addition, the time would allow for the backup sent by Kazekage sama to arrive. So we can even set up a perimeter in the desert to stop him in case he somehow manages to escape. Either way, the battlefield will unfold as we want."

Manabu said, "Yes. Hunting him will begin easier if backup arrives before we set a trap for him. I'll communicate with them. You guys finalize the plans."

Manabu quickly left. The rest quickly finalized the details of their trap. In the end, they decided to leave 30 ninjas in the city. They will not only aid in the defense of the Provision Depot but would also be responsible for ensuring that the fact that so many ninjas arrived in Sabakuetsu doesn't get leaked outside the city.

Within an hour, 118 ninjas led by Manabu and Odaka left the city of Sabakuetsu. They moved around the town of Kiganjima and moved towards the city of Mizunashi.

As Yura calculated, Fujin had made his move. Just after they left Sabakuetsu, Fujin killed the Noble in Kiganjima and quickly began moving towards Shunkuto.

As he moved, Fujin analyzed, 'As expected, The Nobles are being heavily protected. But, there wasn't any Jounin-level ninja protecting him. I guess Rasa wasn't able to send reinforcements so quickly. Or perhaps, the other Anbu who are supposed to be on a promotion mission are also making a mess and forcing Rasa to deploy his ninjas everywhere. I can't be sure which one is the case, but it is better to assume the first one. My next target will probably be the last one without any significant protection.'

Within a few hours, he arrived outside Shunkuto. His eyes glowed as he observed the walls of the city. He muttered, "This one has no seals to protect it either. I am disappointed at how lazy Sunagakure has been. Granted these cities are far in the West, but is it really so much work to just ask a Fuinjutsu GrandMaster to visit all these cities and bless the city by carving a few seals?'

With no seals to block his path, Fujin just entered the city normally while maintaining a disguise. He casually walked into the city while moving towards Noble's mansion. After a few minutes, he arrived outside the mansion. He hid in a corner where no one would see him and muttered, "All these Nobles live right at the center of the city. I don't even have to make any effort to find them."

Fujin sighed. His mission had been progressing too smoothly. He was itching for a good fight. Of course, he wouldn't seek it if his enemies didn't act smart enough and allowed him to do his job without any resistance.

His eyes glowed as he observed the mansion. He analyzed, '8 ninjas. 2 at Chunin level and 6 at Genin. Rasa is awfully slow. Are they planning to lower my guard by giving me easy kills?'

He made a hand sign.

'Earth Release: Earth Military Movement jutsu.'

Fujin disappeared into the ground and entered the mansion. None of the 8 ninjas were sensors and Fujin was suppressing and hiding his chakra. So no one detected him. Fujin moved directly towards the central room where Fujin had detected 3 people. Two of them were ninjas while the third one was a civilian.

This was the room where the Noble was hiding. He was sitting in a chair while the two ninjas stood next to him. He nervously asked the ninjas standing next to him, "Lord Kazuo, how long do we have to keep hiding here?"

Kazuo was the Chunin in charge of the defense of this remote city. He replied respectfully, "Don't worry, Lord Toshio. Reinforcements from our village will arrive soon."

Toshio was still very worried. Kazuo assured him, "We are here with you as well, Lord Toshio. Live or Die, we will join you. So don't worry."

The Noble nodded. For some reason, he looked to be very fearful of Kazuo. Suddenly, all three of them looked ahead. A head popped out of the ground. In the blink of an eye, an entire person appeared.

Toshio was horrified. Kazuo and the other ninja also had solemn expressions. However, both had determined expressions. They seem to have accepted their fate. They quickly grabbed their kunai and took a fighting stance.

Kazuo asked, "Who are you?"

Fujin didn't bother replying and shot an Air Bullet at Toshio. The Suna ninjas couldn't even react when the bullet hit Toshio's chest.

Toshio's eyes widened. Time slowed down as he felt the pain in his chest. He knew that the Suna ninjas wouldn't be a match for the intruder, but he didn't expect to be killed so quickly.

However, instead of sorrow or horror, a gentle smile appeared on his face as he looked at Fujin. His smile surprised Fujin. It was the first time he had seen a Noble accept death with a smile on his face.

Toshio thought, 'My time has come. But my family will live a life of comfort and luxury.'

He closed his eyes and accepted his death with a gentle smile on his face.

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Chapter 268: The Spirit of Sacrifice

Fujin was stunned by the smile on Toshio's face. Despite being the killer, he noticed no hatred in Toshio's eyes for him. There was just relief alongside some reluctance. Thoughts clashed at the speed of light in Fujin's brain trying to make sense of this bizarre scenario. He muttered to himself, 'What the hell?'

Kazuo and his subordinate noticed Fujin's momentary lapse of concentration. Both immediately jumped at Fujin to kill him. However, Fujin was well aware of his surroundings. He stepped to his left and got out of the Genin's range. He caught Kazuo's arm and kicked him in the abdomen and sent him flying into the wall. He crashed into the wall and fell on the ground and began vomiting blood.

The Genin landed and moved towards Fujin again. However, all he saw was a fist coming straight at him. Fujin's chakra-enhanced fist landed on his face and blew it off his head.

Kazuo gathered himself and was about to get up when a kick landed on his side and sent him rolling on the floor while vomiting more blood. Numerous ribs had cracked.

Fujin didn't attack anymore and asked in a plain voice, "Who was that man?"

Kazuo finally managed to get on his knees. He looked at Fujin hatefully and shouted angrily, "You killed the kind Noble Toshio! A demon like you will rot in hell!"

Fujin snorted, "Save your lies for yourself. I have killed way too many Nobles to not identify one. Who was he?"

Kazuo's eyes widened. However, he immediately put on an angry face and cursed, "First you kill our Noble and then talk bullshit? Just kill me and be done with it! I will wait for you in the deepest layers of hell!'

Fujin didn't attack him and said, "Good play. I feel stupid for not considering such a simple trick. You knew I was going to come here. So you hid the real Noble and used a body double. Cool trick."

Kazuo's eyes widened once again. Thoughts ran through his mind trying to find the optimal reply. He wanted to convince Fujin that he killed the real Noble. However, he realized that he wouldn't be able to do so. The more he lied, the more Fujin would be convinced.

A grin broke on Kazuo's face. He spoke loudly with pride, "That's right. How does it feel to be tricked by the oldest trick in the book? Hahahahaha."

Fujin didn't mind his taunt. He wasn't petty enough to not give credit where credit was due. It was a fact that he was fooled. If the body double hadn't smiled kindly and behaved like any normal human being, he would have been fooled successfully.

He replied plainly, "Unfortunately, your plan has failed."

Kazuo replied with that huge grin still plastered on his face, "It hasn't. Even if you realized the plan, there isn't anything you can do. You don't know where the Noble is hiding. No one other than me does. And I will never say it.

You want to kill the Noble? Then you will have to kill every single person in this city. No, you will also have to scout the entire desert to check if he has been hidden outside the city. And you will also have to kill everyone in every village in the vicinity of this city! Tell me, did your motherfucking Masters from Konoha permit you to commit such atrocities? Hahaha."

He continued laughing loudly continuously. Fujin chuckled, "You think I'm from Konoha? Good. How about we make a deal? I will let you and your friends live. In exchange, you will tell me the location of the Noble. You can even tell Rasa that the killer is from Konoha."

Fujin's words stopped Kazuo's laughter. He became confused and wondered, 'Is he not from Konoha? Wouldn't that mean that someone else is trying to start a war between Konoha and Suna? No! I shouldn't doubt Rasa's intelligence. He might be saying this just to confuse me.'

He began laughing and said, "No. You can torture me however you want. I still won't tell you."

He thought, 'If I can delay him here until the Reinforcements arrive, then I can drag him to hell with me.'

Fujin's eyes turned towards the door of the room. He sensed multiple ninjas running towards the room. The fighting earlier generated some noise that attracted them. A couple of Shadow clones popped next to him and left to confront those ninjas.

Fujin said, "Unfortunately, torturing isn't my forte. Killing is. Don't worry, I'll let you die knowing what will happen in the future. After I kill you, I will torture the Noble's family in public. That should make him crawl out of his hiding spot."

Kazuo continued laughing and said, "Do it."

Fujin noticed how unaffected he was and concluded, 'As I expected. They are fakes as well.'

Fujin had no clue who the Noble was or how he looked. He entertained Kazuo for so long just to get whatever information he could. Now he had received most of the information he needed. He raised two fingers. Wind began flowing around them.

Kazuo's eyes widened as he realized, 'Wind Sword jutsu. I guess this is it for me. Sucks that he never came close to me. I hoped he got overconfident and got closer to torture me or beat me up.'

He closed his eyes and made the confrontation hand seal. Immediately, multiple tags on his body lit up. He looked at Fujin with a crazed look in his eyes and shouted, "I will drag you to hell."

However, Fujin was unmoved. Blades of wind shot out from around his fingers and hit every single Explosive Tag stuck to Kazuo's body. Every single Explosive Tag was destroyed before it could explode. The wind blades also left multiple deep cuts on Kazuo.

Kazuo was stunned. Even if he couldn't kill Fujin, he expected to at least injure him. However, he never expected such a result. Fujin said, "I respect your intelligence and bravery. I'd have allowed you to die in the way you want, but I need this mansion."

Kazuo's eyes widened as he saw Fujin transform into him. Fujin said, "Rest in peace."

A wind blade sliced Kazuo's throat. However, his eyes were glued to Fujin. As his brain slowly stopped working, numerous questions arose in his mind, 'How did he know I would explode? Why does he keep speaking in such a plain monotonous tone? Why didn't he get angry no matter how much I taunted him? And why does his face show no emotions at all?'

Unfortunately, he wouldn't get any answers. He closed his eyes and died without knowing the name or the real face of his killer.

Fujin looked at him and sighed, 'A shame that his strength was so weak. Had he been stronger, his name might have been famous throughout the ninja world.'

Fujin concentrated on his chakra. 8 Shadow clones appeared. One shadow clone took the disguise of the Genin he killed while one dispelled itself. The two Shadow Clones Fujin had created earlier received the memories and dispelled themselves. Fujin and his clones received their memories. Four Shadow clones transformed into the four ninjas that the clones killed. While the last two clones dived into the ground and moved towards the basement. The last 2 Suna ninjas were hiding there to protect the fake family of the Noble.

Fujin looked at the person who was disguised as the Noble and wondered, 'Why did he smile in such a way? What sort of life would one have to experience to smile at his killer without any hate?'

Fujin analyzed for a bit but couldn't come up with a definite answer. After all, he had no idea who the man was and what his life story was.

Fujin extended his hand towards his head. Yin chakra poured out of his hand and entered the dead man's brain. The Yin chakra gently began following through his neurons. Fujin kept at it for 3 minutes before the dead man's brain started to break down.

Fujin frowned and muttered to himself, 'I thought that the desire to truly know the memories could be a factor in reading memories. I guess not.'

Fujin sighed and gave up. He was very interested in knowing his backstory but had no means to know it. He stored the dead body.

Two days ago :

The news of the destruction of one Provision Depot had spread throughout Shunkuto. The people were very worried. Meanwhile, Toshio was concerned for his life. He thought, 'If this is done by the same organization that killed Nobles and their families in Wind Capital, then I could be on their hit list. No, my family is in danger as well!'

He immediately began thinking of a plan to ensure his survival but couldn't come up with any plan.

Meanwhile, Kazuo received a message from Sunagakure. He read the scroll and sighed thinking, 'Rasa has lost a lot of influence due to these recent murders. Whoever is doing this must be crazy strong. He doesn't even care about our lives and just wants the Noble to stay safe.'

Kazuo's impression of Rasa degraded a lot. However, as a loyal ninja, he was willing to sacrifice his life for his country. He wondered, 'But how do I keep Toshio safe?'

He thought for a long time before coming up with a decent plan. He walked towards Tishio's office while sighing, 'With this method, this old fellow will live. But I will survive only if I am extremely lucky. This really sucks."

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Chapter 269: When the World is against you!

Kazuo entered Toshio's office and said loudly, "Everyone, leave! I need to talk with Toshio-sama alone."

All the servants immediately left. Toshio was stressed thinking about ways to live. He looked at Kazuo with a hopeful look on his face while thinking, 'Maybe he can think of something.'

As soon as everyone left and the doors were locked, Toshio said, "It's good you came, Kazuo. I was about to find you as well. I have never been so stressed in my life."

Kazuo nodded and asked, "Worried about the assassination?"

Toshio nodded.

Kazuo replied, "You don't need to be worried. Lord Kazekage has asked me to ensure that you and your family stay safe."

A look of relief appeared on Toshio's face. He asked, "Did you think of a way?"

Kazuo nodded and replied, "Yes. Listen carefully. You and your family will move out of the mansion. All four of you will stay under disguise by using makeup, wearing ordinary clothes and moving to live in an ordinary house in the city. You won't have any servants or guards. No one other than me will be aware of your location.

In the meantime, decoys will have to be arranged to replace you and your family. If the assassin attacks, that decoy will die. As long as the decoy doesn't blow up your cover, you will get to live and the assassin will go away.

If your cover is blown, then you will have to stay hidden for a long time until that Assassin gives up. I'll probably not be alive by then, so your survival will entirely depend on you."

Toshio became excited after hearing the plan. However, he hid his excitement and put up a sad face and asked, "Do you have to risk your life?"

Kazuo easily saw through the fake concern and said, "It's the life of a ninja. Stop wasting time and prepare to move out and arrange for decoys. I am not sure how much time we have."

Toshio replied, "I already have decoys in mind. I'll arrange them for my family. However, I need your help to bring the one for me here. His name is Tetsuo."

Toshio gave him the address of Tetsuo and explained his circumstances to Kazuo. Kazuo nodded and left. Toshio immediately got to work. He made 3 people disguise themselves as his wife and sons and asked them to stay in the basement. They knew the consequences of disobeying him and agreed.

At the same time, Kazuo reached the outskirts of the city. He searched for a bit and saw an old house. Outside, a middle-aged man was sitting. He looked very tired and sick. Kazuo approached him and asked, "Are you Tetsuo?"

Tetsuo was surprised. He looked at Kazuo and immediately recognized him. His eyes widened as he got up in a hurry and bowed down, "Lord Kazuo. It's an honor that you know my name."

Kazuo nodded and said, "Come with me, Toshio-sama has instructions for you."

Without waiting for his approval, Kazuo turned around and began walking. Tetsuo immediately followed. However, he was confused and wondered, 'What would Lord Kazuo and Lord Toshio want from someone like me?"

Tetsuo's current state was horrible. His body was weak and he would frequently fall ill. Due to this, he couldn't work continuously and most of what he earned would be spent in the hospital. So his family's financial condition was very poor. And he was in a lot of debt. He wanted a good life for his family, but no matter how much he tried, it seemed like the entire world was against him.

They walked into the mansion. Tetsuo received a lot of curious gazes, making him feel uncomfortable. He did his best to ignore them. He followed Kazuo into Toshio's office and immediately paid respects to Toshio.

Toshio put up a kind smile and said, "Get up."

Tetsuo got up and asked, "I wonder why you called me here, Lord?"

Toshio got up and walked past Tetsuo. He looked through the window and asked, "Are you aware of the recent wave of assassinations, Tetsuo?"

Tetsuo nodded.

Toshio sighed and said, "I am afraid that I too will be targetted by him. I called you here as I have an important job for you."

He turned around and looked into Tetsuo's eyes and said, "I am willing to die. However, if I die, then our whole city will suffer. My children aren't capable enough to run a city yet. So I want you to disguise as me and take my place in the mansion."

His words shocked Tetsuo. Tetsuo involuntarily stepped back. But he crashed into Kazuo and fell to the ground. He looked at Kazuo who was staring straight into his eyes. Tetsuo became frightened as he felt that if he said no, Kazuo would kill him!

He immediately looked at Toshio and said, "Lord, I have a wife and 2 young children. Without me, they will become fatherless and no one will be able to look after them or feed them. I would have loved to sacrifice myself for our city but I just can't leave my family alone!"

Kazuo frowned. If Tetsuo was reluctant, then he wouldn't work as a decoy. Toshio looked at Kazuo and said, "It's fine Kazuo. Not everyone can give their lives for the city."

He painted Kazuo as the bad guy in Tetsuo's mind while showing himself to be a very just ruler. He looked back at Tetsuo and said, "Tetsuo, I am aware of your family conditions as well as your medical health. If you say no, I won't force you, but hear me out first."

Tetsuo nodded. Toshio said, "If you take my place, Kazuo and the other ninjas will be responsible for your safety. You won't die until they are alive. Irrespective of whether we get attacked or not, as long as you live, I'll reward you abundantly. I will clear all your debt, give you a stable job in the mansion and get the best doctors for you to improve your health."

He let out a sigh and said, "But if our luck is bad and you die, I will take care of your family. I will clear their debt and give them so much money that even your next nine generations won't be able to spend it."

Hearing the offer, Tetsuo went silent. He was well aware that he wasn't capable of providing for his family. But he loved his family and didn't want to leave them. He fell into deep thought. Toshio and Kazuo didn't disturb him.

After 20 minutes of struggling, Tetsuo let out a sigh and thought, 'Even if they protect me, I doubt they could stop the assassin. But irrespective of whether I live or not, my family will be taken care of. Though they will be sad about losing me, their sadness will fade away with time. And they will live a fulfilling life. Besides, my death isn't fixed. If my luck changes for once, I will live and my family will not need to worry about money!'

He got up. Kazuo looked into his eyes and was surprised. He thought, 'What determination!'

At the same time, he looked at Toshio and thought, 'This guy might be a scum, but he understands the human heart very well!'

In order to ensure that his family lived a good life, Tetsuo was determined to risk his life. No matter what, he wouldn't fail this mission.

Tetsuo said, "Lord, I am willing to be your decoy!"

Toshio nodded and said, "Shunkuto City will remember your bravery. Kazuo will instruct you further."

Kazuo nodded and left the room with Tetsuo. As soon as they left, a cruel smile appeared on Toshio's face. He thought, 'It's hilarious how gullible these fools are! Take care of his family? Hehehe. If he lives, I'll kill him so that no one will know that I hid in the face of danger. If he dies, then I'll burn his body and never tell anyone that he died. His family will think that he just abandoned them. As for what happens to them, how is that my concern?'

Unfortunately for Tetsuo, even in his final moments, the world still stood against him. He died without being able to provide his family with what he desired!

Present :

Fujin put his thoughts about the man behind him and sighed, 'What a mess... Just when I thought that the mission was too easy, its difficulty rises to an insane level.'

Despite complaining, a smile could be seen on his face. He enjoyed fighting intellectually. He thought, 'I don't know who created this plan, but it's time to dismantle it. I'd have just killed the Noble and left. But now, I will make this plan backfire splendidly on Sunagakure. But I need to be careful. I have to prepare an escape route in case Suna sends reinforcements.'

Thoughts ran rapidly through Fujin's brain as he calculated a devious scheme.

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Chapter 270: A Drama

Fujin's clones entered the basement and killed the last two Suna ninjas in the city. The people who were disguising themselves as Toshio's family were horrified. They immediately began screaming and begged, "Please let us live! I promise we won't tell anyone what happened here!"

Despite the fear, they didn't expose that they weren't related to Toshio. They knew that if they did, their families would suffer for generations and Toshio would kill them even if the assassin didn't.

Fujin's clones ignored their screams. One clone weaved a few hand seals.

'Boufura no Ekirei jutsu'

Terror could be seen on their faces. However, nothing happened. The look of terror faded away and instead, they became confused. Some wondered, 'Did his jutsu fail?'

Suddenly, they got a weird feeling. They felt a slight squirming in their stomach. In an instant, that squirming turned into a sharp pain. They felt as if their stomach was infested by hundreds of maggots. The maggots began eating their way from inside their bodies. The sharp pain soon turned into agony as they felt every mouth ripping and eating the skin, tissue and tendons.

Everyone held their stomach while screaming in pain and horror as the two clones watched. One person couldn't take it anymore and yelled at the top of his lungs. The people around him looked at him. Their eyes widened in horror as his stomach was torn open and hundreds of maggots spilled out and began writhing on the ground. Soon, they too faced similar fates.

Fujin's clones watched as every one of them fell unconscious. However, there were no maggots on the ground, no blood and no torn stomachs. The attack was just a Genjutsu.

Boufura no Ekirei jutsu was one of the Genjutsus Fujin learnt during his time in the Anbu. It was a very disgusting jutsu. However, against a ninja, its usage was limited. Any experienced ninja would know that they are in a Genjutsu and disrupt their chakra.

So its main usage was to disturb the enemy by causing a weird feeling and pain in their stomachs and use that disruption to attack them. Of course, there was one exception. This Genjutsu was disgustingly effective when used by the Aburame clan ninjas!

Fujin's clone thought, 'Now they won't wake up for a while. Though I could have used a different Genjutsu, this one ensures that they won't wake up for at least half a day. In addition, the horror they experienced will force their brains to forget about this event and the events before they went unconscious. This will make it very difficult for Suna to get the exact information from them.'

Fujin could have just killed them. But he had killed too many innocent people during this mission. If he could avoid killing more, he would take that option.

The clones transformed into the two Suna ninjas they killed, stored their bodies and returned to Fujin. Fujin had finished completing his plan.

16 Shadow Clones popped around him. However, one immediately dispersed. The plan immediately was transmitted to all the remaining Shadow Clones. The 15 new clones immediately transformed into random people Fujin came across and flickered out.

8 clones rushed out of the City. They spread away at equal distances and formed a perimeter. All of them activated their chakra field simultaneously, monitoring the city from all sides. If reinforcements from Suna arrive, they would send the message back to Fujin, who would withdraw immediately. The remaining 7 clones mixed with the common people in the city.

Inside the mansion, Fujin and his clones, disguised as Suna ninjas, left the room. The servants in the mansion were all hiding in fear after the sounds of the fighting spread throughout the mansion. Though the sounds had stopped, they weren't sure who won. Seeing the Suna ninjas walk around the mansion relieved them.

Fujin's clones looked at them and said, "The assassin is killed. You can relax."

The servants all smiled. One said loudly, "I knew that any assassin couldn't kill Sunagakure ninjas! We are the strongest ninja village!"

Fujin's clone chuckled and asked, "Is that so? Then why were you hiding?"

The servant immediately became nervous. He thought, 'Shit, I was just trying to get in their good books. Why is he making it difficult for me?'

The servants around him also stared at him. They were quite sick of his bootlicking ability.

The servant said while stuttering. "I... I... I was..."

Fujin's clone chuckled again and said, "It's fine. I have a job for you guys. Leave the mansion and spread the message. The Assassin who kept killing the Nobles is dead. There will be a huge announcement made. So everyone, who can, should arrive around the mansion."

The servant immediately said, "I will immediately inform everybody."

The others also nodded. Fujin's clone added, "If you find others hiding, inform them as well."

They agreed and left. Fujin's clones found the others who were hiding and gave them the same job.

Meanwhile, Fujin began going through items in the mansion. After searching for a bit, he found a photo album. Looking at he muttered, "So this is how this Noble called Toshio looks. And this is his family. Though, trying to look for him actively will be pointless as he should be wearing a disguise to hide from civilians."

Fujin created another Shadow clone and dispelled it. The memories transferred to all his clones. The 7 clones that had mixed among the civilians began to keep an eye out in case they saw someone who looked familiar.

The news spread through the city quickly. The news that an assassin was killing the Nobles was already well known. To know that the assassin was killed in their city was a matter of joy and pride! Within minutes, thousands of people crowded around the mansion. Fujin watched it and wondered, 'Will this be sufficient to make the noble crawl out of his hiding spot?'

Fujin and his clones scanned the crowd for two minutes. Unfortunately, they couldn't spot him. Fujin, who had transformed into Kazuo, stepped forward. He said in a loud voice, "Quiet Down."

Kazuo was well-known in the city. The crowd went silent.

Fujin continued saying, "An hour ago, Toshio-sama was attacked by that scum assassin. Unfortunately, he encountered me."

The crowd listened in anticipation as Fujin looked at them. He shouted, "I KILLED THAT COWARD!"

The crowd instantly erupted in joy. The entire mansion was drowned in roars. The cheers were heard throughout the city. The ones who couldn't make it regretted not being there. However, they were cheerful as well.

Fujin waited for the noise to lower and said loudly, "Tonight, the entire city will celebrate! So come to the mansion in the evening. We will have the largest buffet ever! When the fireworks go off, drop everything you are doing and come here to celebrate!"

The crowd cheered even louder.

"Long Live Toshio-sama"

"Kazuo-sama is Mighty"

Such slogans were shouted continuously. Fujin looked around with a smile on his face and slowly retreated into the mansion. The crowd lingered for a while before leaving.

The news of a buffet spread through the city. Everyone was happy, except one person. Toshio was sitting in a restaurant. A lot of makeup was applied to his face. The people in the restaurant couldn't recognize him. A frown formed on his face as he cursed, 'Why is Kazuo spending my money?'

His face became ugly at the thought of his money being wasted on commoners. He wondered, 'Should I return to the mansion? That bastard has already killed the assassin. So why didn't he call me back?'

He thought for a bit and decided, 'No. I have cooperated with Kazuo for a long time. I'll give him the benefit of the doubt for now. As for the money, I can earn it back in no time.'

He got up and began leaving the restaurant.

As soon as he did, he heard two people speaking.

One guy said, "Hey, did you hear? Toshio-sama hid in the city while a decoy took his place. I didn't expect Toshio-sama to be so cowardly."

His friend replied, "Yes. I was very disappointed. I had higher expectations from Toshio-sama."

The first guy said, "Yeah, everyone is disappointed. I heard that Lord Daimyo is upset with Toshio-sama. And a new Noble would be elected."

His friend nodded and said, "Yes. I hope Kazuo-sama becomes our new Noble. Under him, we might become the strongest City in the West."

The first guy chuckled and said, "I say the decoy should become the new Noble. After all, he has the guts and the will to sacrifice himself for us. That's how a Noble should be!"

The two continued talking while moving away. Toshio's face became very ugly. He almost lashed out at the two but controlled himself. He thought in rage, 'I should have known! That bastard tricked me! He is using this opportunity to usurp my power!'