

Out For Karma: Naruto

Chapter 46: Back to Konoha

Kakashi was leaning against the wall facing the double door of the operating table. He was reading his usual Icha Icha book as he would usually do outside missions and in public. Had one been attentive, they would have noticed that he had been stuck on the same page for the last six hours. Yugao was sitting down next to him, polishing her sword, her kunais and her shurikens. Nobody knew how many times she did that, not even her. She didn't care, she didn't even think about it. It was just her way to distract herself.

It was a miracle they had returned alive. Yugao had suffered many nasty cuts and nearly got decapitated. Twice. Kakashi had to use his sharingan and was almost out of chakra despite the fight being so short when he landed in the Botib. Jiraiya got his arm patched up quickly when they all went to the infirmary. It was only then 'Yu' and 'Ka' of team Yukari noticed the absence of their 'Ri'. Jiraiya just shook his head with a pained expression and their answer had been less than good to that. Especially Yugao's. The verbal fight that broke out was put to a stop when a huge toad popped into the infirmary and vomited Riku on the ground. The shock of the humans passed quickly and the woman was the first to act. She put as many healing tags as she had in her BoS on Riku's body or what was left of it, while Kakashi, who reacted a tad later, unsealed a crate. They put their teammate in it and sealed it and him inside his own Bos. They didn't know if he could be saved but he was still alive for the time being. Kakashi quickly went back to the main room to activate the time seal, like Riku taught him and returned to the infirmary to help Yugao with their wounds. They spend two days in the Botib to be operational or a bit less than a minute in the real world. Once fit to travel, they went back in all haste to Konoha. Jiraiya went to warn Tsunade of her disciple's situation while Kakashi and Yugao went to the third basement of the hospital. When the former warned the nurse at the desk that they had a code black, all hell broke loose. She quickly sent word to another nurse who immediately went to the last operating room available and made preparations for any surgery that would be needed. Unfortunately for Kakashi and Yugao it wasn't one of the rooms with a Time Seal in it, the one which did were already in use. As such they had to suffer the last six hours with uncertainty.

Tsunade, Shizune and even Karin had gone inside and there has been no words ever since.

"He's going to pull through." Hiruzen said as he came through the door of the floor's entrance to stand next to his former Anbu.

"He will." Yugao confirmed with determination but sadness replaced it quickly. "But I don't think he will be a shinobi ever again."

"His wounds were bad Sandaime-sama. I'm surprised he held on long enough for us to put him inside a seal."

"If there is one thing that I learned over the years is that the word "impossible" is only a suggestion or a choice for Riku, never a fact. And he likes proving people wrong."

"I hope you're right, Sandaime-sama. I hope so." replied the cyclops.

Fifteen minutes later Shizune got out of the operating room covered in Riku's blood.

"He's going to make it." she announced.

Kakashi let out the breath he was holding and Yugao silently cried tears of relief as she rested her head back against the wall facing the ceiling and her eyes closed. She had already lost Hayate, she wasn't ready to lose the one she had come to see, cared for and cherished as a little brother over the years.

"How bad is it?" Hiruzen asked.

"I can't tell you in detail but... bad." she answered in a sorrowful tone. "His career as a shinobi is over."

"Can't he use prosthetics?" Inquired Yugao. "Elder Koharu-"

"Received a prototype that Riku made. So far only he is able to make them. The seals needed for them are complex and while Karin may be able to draw them based on pure knowledge and theory, she doesn't have the chakra control refined enough for it."

"I see."

"You should all go home and rest. There is nothing more you can do for him."

With that said she went back inside the operating room and watched Tsunade and Karin sitting side by side looking at their patient. It was as if they were dead on the inside. Especially Tsunade. She found out she had a son a bit more than a month ago and she nearly lost him today.

"Tsunade-sama, Karin-chan, you need to rest. Riku won't go anywhere but his own room."

"The Botib." spoke up Karin. "The infirmary inside his Botib can do. We might use the Time seal."

"To what? Speed up his recovery? What is there to recover from at a fast speed? He's stuck in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. He has no legs, no eyes, no left arm, no reproductive organs..." Tsunade said in anger. She was ready to cry at any moment.

"I don't know! It's not like we're out of options! Maybe I can create a better healing tag?! Or... or... increased my chakra's healing abilities?! Or..."

Karin broke down in tears not knowing what to do or say anymore. She was out of ideas, the ones she had wouldn't work. Deep inside she blamed herself for not having succeeded in using her healing kekkei genkai through her chains. Because of it Riku had to bite her to heal but with him unconscious he couldn't. So they had to heal him the old fashioned way. Stopping the bleeding had been a pain, there were so many wounds that they had to use shadow clones and chakra pills to take care of all of them at the same time. Repairing his organs while doing so had on top of that been the rotten cherry on a cake of shit. There was only so much space around an operating table and they didn't have enough.

Shizune wanted to give her apprentice a comforting hug but the blood on her forbade it.

"Karin-chan. You need to go and rest."

"I can't! He-"

"Is resting too. Ino and Hinata need to know, don't you think?"

"I..."

She tried to protest but she had no excuses. Biting her lower lip hard enough to nearly draw blood, she nodded and exited the room.

"Tsunade-

"Stop it. I don't want to hear it."

"You had four shadow clones active. That's thirty hours of mental fatigue in total Tsunade-sama."

"I'm not leaving his side. Sensei can take back the hat for a bit."

"Then don't leave his side but rest. We'll put another bed in his room for you."

Seeing as her sensei didn't move one bit, Shizune played a card she swore to never use.

"Sensei, he wouldn't want you to stay here like that. You know that."

Tsunade turned her head to look at her with murder in her eyes. After a moment her features softened and she turned back towards Riku. She knew that if Shizune had played that card then she was probably right to do so. Taking a deep but shaky breath, she began to cry.

"I can't lose him, Shizune. I already lost too much, I can't lose more. Not... Not when He just entered my life properly."

"And you won't, Tsunade-sama. Riku is alive. Perhaps not in the best of condition but he's alive and not endangered anymore. Now come. Let's put him inside his room and find you a bed."

Tsunade nodded slowly and both transported Riku into a recovery room. Shizune had the nurse add a second bed next to his and her master simply laid down on it looking at her son. In a matter of minutes she fell asleep.

At the same time, back in the Hokage office. Hiruzen was sitting behind his former desk. In front of him were two members of Team Yukari and his own student Jiraiya. None of them wanted to go and rest until they made their report of the mission. Having heard everything, the Sandaime Hokage took a deep puff of smoke to process it all.

"Why didn't you use the bracelet on the spot?" he asked Jiraiya.

"I didn't know what it did. I'm not saying that I thought it was nefarious, but I was in sage mode and I didn't know how whatever it did would react with nature chakra."

"Why didn't Riku use his?"

"It was on his left wrist. It got destroyed at the same time as his arm." Yugao replied.

"Hm... That made the reverse summoning jutsu impossible for him to do too."

He dismissed Team Yukari but also the Anbu in the ceiling, leaving only Jiraiya and himself in the office.

"I'm not going to lie to you, Jiraiya. You're in deep shit. If Tsunade doesn't kill you for your recklessness it will be a miracle."

"I..."

"Don't tell me you didn't need help because clearly you did. Team Yukari, outside of Anbu and that's not even sure, is the best team of the village. She sent you the best to pull your ass out of danger and the most promising shinobi since Minato suffered from it. Your excuse for not using the Hiraishin on the spot has merit with me but it won't hold with her."

"I know she's attached to the kid but..."

"He's her son."

The blunt revelation felt, to Jiraiya like a smack from Gamabunta, the toad boss summoned with a height of 17m.

“How do you think she will react?”

“H-her son? But... How? Why didn't... She never said anything about it. And the kid, I thought he's been in the village since his birth? Who was the father? I can't imagine Tsunade... Not after Dan.”

“We can thank Danzo for that. He used one of Tsunade's ovum which only Kami knows how he got it in the first place and fertilized it with Minato's seed.”

“Minato?!”

“He had one of his agents carry the baby to term.” finished Hiruzen as he pulled the folder of Project Hokage from the desk middle drawer and tossed it to his student.

The toad sage caught the folder with his only arm and laid it on the desk. With his hand he opened it and began to read it. Turning page after page in silence until he reached the end and closed it.

“You should have-” the tall man began with a frown and disgust on his face.

“I know, Jiraiya. I know. There is not a day since he's dead that I don't regret my sentimentality. Everyday a new pile of shit is found out from his files. There are thirty years to examine and in a single month only one year has been done. Even Koharu and Homura are appalled at the length of his depravity. Regardless of what Danzo did, Tsunade has accepted him as her son. Hear my advice, stay in the village for a while but make yourself scarce.”

“Will he live?” Jiraiya asked as he stood up. Suddenly he felt like he had aged twenty years.

“He will. His life as a shinobi however is over from what Shizune told me.”

“You don't sound convinced.”

“Because I am not. For the past five years I saw him make the impossible possible. I saw him succeed in things that everyone thought couldn't be done and made it a fact of a life. I'm hopeful that if anyone could come back from such debilitating wounds it's him.”

Jiraiya nodded silently then left the office, this time through the door. Not long after his departure Shizune came knocking on the door.

“How is she?” Hiruzen asked.

“Considering? Alright. She’s asleep in a bed next to him. She used four shadow clones during the operation and is completely tired because of the mental fatigue. She’s not leaving the village if that’s what you’re worried about Sandaime-sama but I don’t think she will be very useful as a Hokage until Riku wakes up.”

“Hopefully sometime soon.”

“Hopefully.”

She left the office and Hiruzen stood up from his chair. He looked at the village outside the window like he did so many times before over the years. With Riku incapacitated Konoha had lost his best candidate for the role of Hokage after Tsunade leaving only Kakashi as a successor but not one of the same caliber. Riku’s idea of bringing back Minato seemed really appealing right now to the tired old man.

‘Should I talk to Tsunade about it? Should I even consider it in the first place?’

He closed his eyes and let out a long sigh. The day was ending and those questions were for the Hiruzen of tomorrow.

On the other side of the village, three 18 year old girls had gathered at one of them’s apartments. All had their mood down the drain and one of them was held down by golden chains.

“Let me go!”

“No! There is no point. He’s resting”

“I don’t care! I want to see him!”

“They won’t even let you in that wing of the hospital!”

“Then I’ll-”

“Ino, enough.” Hinata said with authority and went to hug her blonde girlfriend. “The only thing we can do is wait. Don’t think you’re the only one that wants to go to him. We all want to but can’t. We all need each other right now. Karin spent six hours saving his life. She needs us more and we can actually do something about it.”

Her words soothe Ino down. The blonde wasn’t happy about it one bit but agreed that comforting Karin and as a result Hinata and herself was the only thing she could do. She just hoped that the guy she fell in love with all those years ago would recover despite the odds not in his favor.

It took four days for Riku to wake up and Tsunade rarely left his side. He wasn't in critical condition, his wounds were all healed. He wasn't in pain either. She just couldn't bring herself to leave until he told her with his own mouth that he was fine.

"Can someone turn on the light?" he said with a tired voice.

Immediately Tsunade took his lone hand in hers.

"Sensei?" he called out.

"I'm here." she replied, squeezing his hand.

"I... It's not the light isn't it?" he said weakly realizing that with Tsunade holding his hand even in the dark he would be able to see her in a hospital room.

"No... It's not. Riku... Your wounds..."

"I... remember losing my arm then... then my legs..."

"You did. That and more."

His hand contracted and had Tsunade not channeled chakra into her own, he would have broken it.

"How... How bad?"

"Riku..."

"How bad?!" he asked in anger.

"Bad enough that you can't be a shinobi anymore."

"..."

The news left him speechless. She wished she could read his mind to know what he was thinking. That way she may find the right words of comfort he wanted and needed to hear. Her musings were interrupted when she felt his hand trying to escape her grip. For a second she hesitated, not wanting to let go but she ended up doing it. Riku touched the bandage covering his eyes then let his hand slide down over his nose then mouth where it rested. After a moment of reflection he extended his hand for Tsunade to take.

"I'm going to be Hokage, mom."

"Riku..." She couldn't say the words. That it was impossible for him anymore.

“Watch me.”

The conviction in his voice worried her. There was no way it could be possible, she knew that and more importantly Riku knew it too. She wondered if the news didn't simply break his mind to the point of being in strong denial.

“And I'll take your title of best medic in the world along the way. You'll see.”

“Riku... That's...”

A knock on the door interrupted her. Internally she was glad for it, relieved even for this interruption. Turning her head to see who it was, Riku was faster.

“Sandaime-sama.”

“Riku! Good morning.” the old Hokage greeted with a jovial tone.

“How did you...”

“The smell of tobacco, mom. Senses overcompensate when one is damaged. You know that.” Riku chided her with an amused smile that didn't fit his situation. “If you're interested in a hand shake or a thumbs war, I'm your man but for anything else, I'm afraid I'm a bit out of commission for a while.” The dirty blonde said to Hiruzen who chuckled.

“I both came to visit you and to tell Tsunade to go back to work.”

“Sensei!” The woman began to protest but was cut short by her son.

“Go on, mom. You have your duties, the village is counting on you.”

“Riku, I-”

“You're wasting your time here, mom. I appreciate your presence, love it even but now is not the time. Go.”

Tsunade nearly refused on the spot but Hiruzen's hand on her shoulder and Riku's easy going tone made her rethink it. Standing up from her chair she leaned forward to kiss her son on his forehead then whispered an *'I love you'* in his ear.

“I'll see you when I'll see you, mom.” was Riku's last words as she left the room.

Hiruzen sat down on Tsunade's now vacant chair.

“What do you need?”

“What makes you think I need something, Sandaime-sama?”

“I’ve known you personally since you became a genin. I know you never give up no matter what. You still have your thought process and your chakra so as far as I know, your situation? Just an obstacle to overcome. A challenge to beat.”

Riku smiled from ear to ear hearing the man.

“If only she had that much faith in me.” the jonin said with a sad tone.

“She’s shocked. You’re the only family she has left. An unexpected family at that. She’s not thinking, she’s feeling. She’s too scared to hope.”

“But you’re not.”

“No. I know better. Now what do you need? What’s going through that brain of yours?”

“Well... Three things. First my book of seals.”

“It’s over there on the table.” said Hiruzen, standing up, getting the book and handing it to Riku before sitting back down.

“Thank you. The second thing I need is the relay of a message to my loved ones. That I’ll get better soon and as fast as I can.”

“That I can do too. Young Karin, Ino and Hinata, Hum?” the old man teased.

“What can I say? I’m roguishly handsome.” chuckled Riku.

“Knowing your parents, you are.”

“Last thing I need is...” He paused there and bit his thumb to draw blood and extended his hand for Hiruzen to take. “Your hand.”

Understanding what he wanted to do and because he was curious, Hiruzen used his left hand to hold Riku’s right. In unison as if they had practiced for it, they made a short hand seals sequence and Riku slammed his hand on his stomach. Writings appeared around it and a puff of smoke revealed a very small Katsuyu.

“Hello, Katsuyu-chan. I’m in need of your help.”

Chapter 47: They’re alive! Alive!

When she learned that Riku had been reverse summoned to Shikkotsu Forest, Tsunade went livid. She verbally tore a new one to Hiruzen who didn't even bother to shrug to show his total lack of care about what she was saying. Every word she said to him went from one ear to the other.

She had summoned Katsuyu and had demanded her son back to which the slug for the first time gave her a resounding 'no' then threatened to not answer her summoning for a while if it was to make demands about Riku. Of course to add insult to injury the little slug reverse summoned herself before Tsunade could raise a single word of protest. That led the Hokage to go from livid to utterly murderous. After passing her nerves on two Anbu squads, the Anbu commander had called for the only one she thought could deal with Tsunade.

She called for Gai.

The jonin had been very ecstatic to have a 'youthful' spar with the strongest and most 'youthful' kunoichi in the world and reasonably gave his all, matching her blow for blow. After two hours, Tsunade had had enough and calmed down. She congratulated Gai for being a good sparring partner and left back to her office. Secretly, the Anbu commander wondered if she could push for more regular spar with the insane jonin instead of her subordinates.

Now two months later and Hiruzen had just broached the subject of bringing Minato's back to life. Not that directly of course but that was what he implied.

"I didn't wait for you to do that, sensei."

"You... didn't? What do you mean?"

"At the bottom of Root headquarters there was more than just... whatever Danzo did with my grandfather's cells. He had Kushina inside a pod full of medical fluid that preserved her body."

"That..."

"I know, no need to go on another rant about the bastard. Point is. Between Karin and Riku, they theorized that they could bring her back but also Minato. Everything is ready. Their bodies had been healed and more or less brought back to life or rather they're on life support."

"Minato has been buried for nearly two decades!"

"And yet his body was intact. They theorized that it was because of the Shinigami's seal because it's the only explanation that would make sense. Anyway the only thing missing to bring them back is Riku's modified version of the Edo Tensei. Karin is almost done with it."

“How did you release Minato’s soul from the Shinigami’s stomach?”

“Uzumaki clan secret I’m afraid.” she replied with a shrug.

“Ugh. Uzumaki and Shinigami... I fear for the worst.”

“Everything went fine.” she replied not being forward with the fact that Orochimaru had taken Minato’s place. “There is a problem with Minato though. His chakra network was destroyed when he used the Shiki Fujin to seal the Kyuubi.”

“And here I thought something would go right for once.”

“We may not have Minato back in action but he is an excellent teacher and a seal master **and** the village hero. His presence alone would boost everyone’s morale but more importantly, Naruto would appreciate it. Both at having a competent teacher and his father in his life. The same for Kushina though her chakra network is intact, she can still fight.”

“I never thought the day would come where this family would be reunited again and not be in the pure lands for it.”

“That makes me think that Naruto is mature enough to put in practice our training cheat.”

“Hm.. you think?”

“He made Chunin. That’s proof enough. Though Jiraiya still insists on him trying to master the Kyuubi's chakra.”

“You don’t agree?”

“No. I think Naruto should become a splendid shinobi first before that. What’s the point of having all this chakra if the only thing he can do is shadow clones and the rasengan? Sure he knows other jutsu, Kakashi took care of that between missions but it’s mainly his main arsenal. He’s currently trying to add his wind affinity to it but it’s proven difficult.”

“After nearly five years of training with Jiraiya he hasn’t learned how to use his nature affinity?! What was Jiraiya thinking?!”

“Sometimes, I wonder if he thinks at all, sensei.”

Their conversation was interrupted by Karin who came in in a hurry.

“I did it! I mean, almost, but I did it!” the redhead exclaimed.

“You mean the modification to the Edo Tensei?!”

“Yes, Hokage-sama. It took me a while to understand Riku’s notes and train of thoughts but I did it!”

“What do you mean almost?” a very interested Hiruzen asked.

“I know it works. In theory. If it actually works? I still have to find out. There is also a slight problem in the jutsu itself. I need a bit of chakra from each of them for it to work.”

Both Tsunade and Hiruzen looked at each other for a moment then turned back to Karin.

“I may still have a tri-pong kunai Minato used but as for where it is... Maybe Kakashi has one?” said the Sandaime.

“Kushina made plenty of seals...”

“Their house was destroyed during the Kyuubi’s attack, there is...” Thinking for a second, Hiruzen got up and went to the Hokage’s vault where he came back with a picture of Minato and Kushina together. Opening the frame from behind he pulled out a very old seal tag. “Here. It’s a tag that maintains the photo in pristine condition.” he said, handing it to Karin who took it.

“There is not much chakra on it anymore but that will do. Now all that’s left is the kunai.”

“Tora. Send word to Kakashi and Jiraiya, tell them to come immediately to basement 3 of the hospital and to bring with them one of Minato’s special kunai if they have one.”

“Yes, Hokage-sama.” the voice of an unseen Anbu resonated in the office.

The trio made their way to the one well sealed room in the third basement of the hospital. Karin and Riku had outdone themselves with the protection of the room. Nobody could enter without being keyed to the matrix or without someone keyed to it. Inside the room on two different beds were the bodies of Namikaze Minato and Uzumaki Kushina. Both were hooked on machines and covered in seals that maintained them alive.

Karin immediately brought out her sealing kit and began to draw on the floor a very complicated and complex seal matrix that Jiraiya couldn’t make any sense of when he arrived and started to examine it. That was of course after recovering from the shock of seeing his former student and his wife still ‘alive’. It took a while for Tsunade to explain everything to him and calm him down. Kakashi on the other hand, after recovering from his own shock, observed in silence.

When Karin was done she stood up from her crouching position and turned to her audience.

"The seal is ready. I just need-" Kakashi tossed her the special kunai that he had received from Minato as a gift when he made jonin without a second thought and she caught it. "Okay, thanks. Now comes the difficult part."

"Which is?" Jiraiya asked in a skeptical tone.

"The body needs to be at the center of the seal as such..."

"They need to be disconnected from the machines and seals that maintain them alive." understood Tsunade.

"Yes, but the effect of the seal will be immediate so just hurry up when you put them in position and quickly get clear of it. I don't know what will happen if someone is inside the matrix when activated."

Both Kakashi and Jiraiya moved to pick Minato up and Tsunade was ready to more or less unplug him.

"Alright." said a nervous Karin.

"Breath. Everything is going to be fine." Hiruzen advised with his grandfather's voice.

"It should." replied the redhead.

"It will. Have faith in yours and Riku's work. I know I do."

Karin looked at him for a moment and took a deep breath to clear her mind. She did it multiple times and signaled Tsunade to go ahead. Quickly, Jiraiya and Kakashi moved Minato as soon as he was free and laid him down at the center of the matrix. Once the space was clear, Karin stuck the kunai in a particular area of the seal and activated it with her own chakra. The whole matrix lit up in a blinding light, illuminating the whole room in white. When it went back to normal, Minato took what sounded like a very deep and painful breath.

Jiraiya and Kakashi moved to help him but Karin stopped them with her chains. What Minato needed was space to catch his bearing. His alert eyes looked around for a moment to make sense of what was happening to him. When he calmed down, Karin retracted her chains and let the two men move. This time, they did it with caution and not led by their emotions.

"Sensei... And... Kakashi, is that you?"

"It is sensei."

"We brought you back, kid." Jiraiya said with a grin.

"Brought me back? Wh-."

"Move!" Tsunade shouted and pushed with a bit of strength the two idiots blocking the way of a medic-nin to their patient.

"Tsunade?"

"Yes?" She asked, not looking at Minato, using instead a diagnostic jutsu to examine his condition.

"Why was I brought back? And how long was I..."

"Dead? 18 years. As for why you were brought back... It's a long story that will be told later. First we need to bring back Kushina."

"K-Kushina?!"

"Yes. She's over there." Tsunade said as she pointed her chin at the bed behind him.

"Okay, you're good. Nothing is wrong with you."

Being let go, Minato quickly got up and went to his wife to have a look at her.

"She's... She doesn't have..."

"It took months to repair her body. We also removed her post-birth belly while we were at it." Karin said. "Now if you don't mind letting us bring her back, please move away."

Minato looked at the redhead young woman and after giving a look to Tsunade and Jiraiya did as instructed. Once again everyone went to their post. Hiruzen taking Minato away and instructing him to not go inside the seal no matter what.

A blinding flash later and just like for Minato, Kushina drew a deep painful breath. Again Karin used her chains but this time to restrain Minato.

"W-wha... What happened? Where am... Minato?" a confused Uzumaki spoke.

"It's me, Kushina. We've been brought back."

"Brought back?"

"To life." Tsunade said as she began her medical diagnosis.

"But... How?"

“Give it a few minutes and I’ll answer any question you both have.”

Kushina nodded and Minato, who had been released, went to her to hold her hand in support. Once cleared, Kakashi and Karin took their leave but remained outside just in case they would be called in. Hiruzen pulled out his own book of seals and brought out a big coffee table with plenty of pillows to sit down on. He also unsealed a tea pot with hot tea and the tea cups that went with it forming a set.

“That’s really neat.” Minato commented, curious about the book.

“And so simple.” added Kushina.

“It is.” replied Hiruzen.

““Who came up with that?””

“My son.” Tsunade replied to the two seal masters.

““You have a son?!””

“I do. A story for later. Now let’s fill you in as to **why** you were brought back.”

The conversation was long. It included Akatsuki, the state of the village and many other small things.

“Also because... Why not? It was both a challenge for Karin and Riku and you kind of deserved it. So did Naruto.” Tsunade finished the explanation.

““Naruto!”” they shouted the name of their son as one, finally having a thought about him after the load of information Tsunade had dumped on them.

“The kid is fine. He’s currently on a diplomatic mission to Suna.” Jiraiya revealed.

“You let him go to Rasa?!” Kushina said with horror. She had heard of what that man did to his own son.

“Rasa has been dead for half a decade. His youngest son is the current Godaime Kazekage but is also close friends with Naruto. Being the jinchuriki of the Ichibi had allowed them to bond.” explained Hiruzen to Kushina’s relief.

“How... How was my baby’s life?”

“Lonely. I did my very best to keep my promise Kushina but I have the regret to say that I mostly failed. I had to take back the hat and I had very little time for him. The village didn’t see him as the hero he was and shunned him. Despite that, he grew up into a very kind young man. A bit naive and immature still but he’s a proud shinobi of the leaf

with plenty of friends. It hasn't been easy but he's happy. All thanks to his indomitable spirit."

"If you don't count the organization full of S-rank shinobi wanting to rip the Kyuubi out of him, he's in a good place." added the toad sage.

"Over my dead body they will get my son." the redhead said with rage and her husband nodded in agreement.

"Kakashi was his jonin-sensei and Jiraiya took him as an apprentice. He's strong but can become a lot stronger. Not much talent but his never give up attitude carried him far and will continue to do so. Bit by bit he's proving the villagers that they had been wrong about him. And of course he's addicted to ramen and dreams of becoming Hokage."

Minato snorted when he heard that his son, like his wife, was addicted to ramen. The snort turned to a weird strangled sound when Kushina sent him a very nasty glare.

"He's supposed to be back in a week. Plenty of time for the both of you to get to know about him. You can stay in the Senju manor in the meantime. Which reminds me... Your resurrection is going to be a secret for now until you're back to 100%, Kushina. " said Tsunade.

"Me? Not Minato?" exclaimed the redhead in surprise.

"You, yes. I'm sorry to say this, Minato but your chakra network was completely destroyed when we recovered your body to bring you back."

"That's because of the Kyuubi. When I summoned the shinigami I had to put half of the fox chakra in Naruto and take the other half in me. Since my chakra coils had already matured they couldn't withstand the strain of its chakra." The fourth Hokage explained.

"You told us about the why but what about the how?" inquired Kushina.

"You spoke of two names. Karin and Riku." Minato added.

"Karin is the redhead outside."

"She's an Uzumaki, she has the Adamantine sealing chains like me." Remarked Kushina.

"She is. She joined Konoha from Kusa five years ago under my rule." explained Hiruzen.

"She's an excellent medic and a seal mistress in her own right. Just like you, she specializes in barriers but also healing. A real genius in both. As for Riku..."

Tsunade took a deep breath and wondered for a moment if she should reveal the truth about him or not. She would have wished to know of him years before and it was her right yet she didn't. Minato deserved to know too in her opinion. She looked at Hiruzen and Jiraiya and both shrugged, which didn't help her at all.

"Riku is our son." she finally said, confusing the married couple.

"Our'?"

Tsunade pulled out her own book of seals and brought out the folder on Project Hokage from it. She had sealed it before she left the office to come here just in case she would need it. Hesitantly, she handed it to Minato.

To say they were not happy by what they read was an understatement. They didn't say anything but their facial expression said it all.

"I'm going to kill that guy!" Shouted Kushina, her hair beginning to rise in nine distinctive 'tails'.

"I hope you're speaking of Danzo and not my son." Tsunade replied with narrowed eyes.

"Of course! I mean.... I'm not happy that **my** husband has a son from someone else but it's not his fault, nor yours and certainly not your... son. Okay, it's going to take some time to get used to that."

"Good. Would have been a shame to put you six feet under when we just brought you back." Tsunade threatened and joked at the same time with a way too sweet smile.

"How...I mean... Should I..." Minato was at a loss for words.

"While this discovery is a few months old, Riku didn't show any interest in knowing you."

"He didn't?!" Minato said in surprise.

"Why? From what's written here, he's an orphan of Naruto's age. I mean... Isn't he a bit curious?" inquired the redhead.

"Mainly because you're an idiot." Tsunade said bluntly, trying her best to not laugh. Hiruzen and Jiraiya had no such compulsion and did.

"I'm an idiot?"

"He said of my great uncle and you that, and I'm quoting here ,*"they are just children who picked a brush and drew some silly doodles and pretended they were seals."*

Jiraiya went from chuckling to outright laughing his head off while Minato and Kushina's faces were priceless. The perfect imitation of a goldfish.

"It took two weeks for him to break down your version of the Hiraishin and uncle's and concluded you both didn't know anything about space-time fuinjutsu from your notes. One month to have the working theory down and three more to have a better Hiraishin."

"You're kidding." Kushina said in disbelief.

"Nope. Riku is a certified genius. The book of seals, you saw sensei and I use? He made that when he was ten. You must have read that in the file."

"Honestly Hime, we'll be here tomorrow if we begin to list your son's achievements with fuinjutsu."

"True. Let's say that the theory of bringing you back came from his mind. Karin was the one to free you from the Shinigami and she completed his research on the seal that was used for your resurrection."

"I'd like very much to meet him, if only to talk about fuinjutsu." Minato said and was echoed by his wife.

"Unfortunately, he's... indisposed. Karin is outside though so you can ask all the questions you want about it."

The conversation about Riku stopped there and switched to the couple's new accommodation and how they would get Minato outside the hospital when he couldn't use henge to disguise himself. The resurrected didn't know if their coming back to life was a good thing or not but they decided to make the most of it. For them, for the village but more importantly for their Naruto.

Chapter 48: The return

For Namikaze Minato and Uzumaki Kushina, life had been weird since their resurrection almost a month ago. They had met their son and the reunion had been very teary. Kushina had sobbed and cried everything she had when she saw Naruto and hugged him to death. The poor young man didn't understand what was happening until he felt a very warm but unfamiliar sensation from the hug. Instinctively he had hugged back and began to cry too. Minato, feeling left alone, joined them and made it a family group hug. They had talked for hours listening to their son and his life. Sometimes he had asked questions about theirs and they were very happy to answer him. In the end, Tsunade had allowed Naruto to temporarily move into the manor until his parents were ready to make their come back public.

Naruto had been shocked to discover he had a half-brother and a bit angry that Riku didn't say anything about it. Tsunade didn't blame him for it but argued that they couldn't stand each other much. Especially when the news of Riku capturing Sasuke and the Uchiha's subsequent imprisonment for life was made public. They didn't hate each other but they didn't like each other either and so Riku didn't deem it important and more of a hassle to share the knowledge of their blood relation.

When Naruto was busy being trained by his father, who cursed Jiraiya for focusing on the wrong thing to teach his son, Kushina talked with Karin when she was visiting the manor or simply studied Riku's notes on fuinjutsu.

On a fine morning, Minato had found her in the living room already up and deep into fuinjutsu notes. He gave her a kiss on the cheek and put his hands on her shoulders as he stood behind her.

"Having fun?"

"Fun? I suppose. It's more like... I'm being taken to school to discover new things. I'm... excited more than anything. Most of his theories are...mind blowing. The lack of Time in a storage seal? The way to go around it? Brilliant. Purely brilliant. Did you take a look?"

"Only at his version of the Hiraishin."

"And?"

"And I'm an idiot." he replied with a smile and made her laugh. "It makes so much sense when I read his notes yet I never thought about space-time like that. It's like... I was thinking in two dimensions and he's thinking in three."

"Four if what Kakashi said about his control over time is true."

"Going back in time...how insane is that?" Minato shook his head.

"I supposed it's limited in a way but it's possible. My favorite so far is his shurifuins. So creative."

"I agree. He made tags mostly obsolete."

"Morning."

The sleepy voice that greeted them belonged to their son. Turning to look at him entering the room still in his sleepwear, they greeted him back. Kushina found him really cute with his toad boney cap on his head. He was quickly followed by Tsunade who, at Kushina's insistence, wore more appropriate clothes. Both Minato and Naruto had a nosebleed when they saw the blonde's bazoongas almost popping out of her kimono.

They greeted her too and soon enough Shizune came in with breakfast and served everyone who thanked her for it.

“So what are we training today?” inquired Naruto to his father.

“Jutsu or nature manipulation. Whichever you wish.”

“Actually, you’re going to do both.” Tsunade said and both Minato and Naruto raised a brow in question. Never has she interfered with Naruto’s training before. “A month ago, I decided to share with you a way to train way faster than anyone but since you were all reunited and getting to know each other I didn’t interfere. I believe today is the right time to do so.”

“Training faster? You’re not thinking of using that Time seal? That’s not really faster.” commented Minato.

“Although the idea is appealing, the only Time seals available are in the hospital or in Riku’s possession. No, I was thinking of Naruto using his ungodly amount of chakra to train with shadow clones.”

“What’s the point? They’re just clones.” said the young blonde. His parents however immediately understood.

““Holy crap!”” they exclaimed at the same time with eyes as big as saucers.

“Naruto! A shadow clone is mainly used for recon not fighting because when the clone dispelled his memories and experience is transferred back to you.” Minato explained with excitement but his son didn’t get it.

“With the exception of physical training, any training that a shadow clone does would be like you trained yourself. Let’s say you use one shadow clone to train your wind manipulation with you, by doing so you double your experience in it for the same amount of time training. A third shadow clone and you triple it and so on and so on.”

“Holy crap!” the jinchuriki mimicked his parents.

“There are downsides to such training. Most notably is mental fatigue, too much information in one go will damage your brain irreparably so no creating hundreds of them, okay?” Tsunade warned and Narurto nodded quickly, understanding the danger. “It’s also an S-rank secret so don’t share it.”

“Why? I mean, why is it an S-rank secret? Wouldn’t it be better if everyone trained like that?”

“It’s not. Quite the contrary in fact.” interjected Minato. “First off, you need a lot of chakra for this method to be effective. I think it would only be useful for Uzumaki or jinchuriki or

if you have big reserves somehow. Second, the shadow clone is a jutsu known across the elemental nations and while rarely used because of the chakra requirement If they learn that it allows them to train faster we will lose our advantage against the other villages. They will stop at nothing to get it from us.”

“In this case, Naruto, quality is better than quantity. It’s better to have a few strong shinobis train like that in secret than having many do it.” Kushina added.

“So far only Karin, myself and Riku train like that. Karin even combined it with the Time seal.” shared Tsunade.

“Why wasn’t I told earlier?”

“Two, no, three reasons. One you were away for nearly five years. Two you were a bit too immature to keep quiet about it and not abuse it. Three now that you are mature enough, well... Time didn’t allow me to share that method with you until now.”

“I wonder who came up with such an idea.” Kushina said aloud.

“From what sensei told me, Riku did less than a second after he explained the shadow clone to him a few months after his graduation from the academy. You should ask sensei for the full story. It’s hilarious.”

“Oh, I w-...”

Kushina stopped on the spot feeling a malevolent chakra she knew well. So did the other adults in the room and Naruto.

“That’s impossible, he’s sealed inside me!”

“Gods no! His yin half that I dragged with me into the Shinigami’s stomach! It must have been freed when I was!”

“We need to move!” Kushina said and Tsunade was already out on the patio ready to leave when an Anbu appeared out of a shushin.

“Hokage-sama, the Kyuubi is-!”

“I know. Find me Uzumaki Karin and bring her to me! Evacuate the people to the bunkers! Have the MP do it. Naruto, it’s the perfect occasion for you to change the villagers’ mind about you. I want you to make as many clones as possible and escort the people to safety. Minato, go with him so you can be seen by his side and calm down any stupid villager who could blame him. I want the MP to work with the clones. Kushina, be ready to assist Karin in restraining the fox with your chains.”

The Anbu left with his orders and so did Naruto, bringing his father with him since he couldn't use chakra anymore. Shizune left for the hospital and Kushina followed Tsunade towards the village wall.

"Any idea in who to seal it?"

"The best would be Naruto, the problem is that the seal is closed. To seal it we'd need to open it but the Yang half would come out. That only leaves me and Karin. Only an Uzumaki can hold it from what Lady Mito told me."

"Damn it!"

They reached their destination and watched with horror a red cloud of chakra concentrating on itself and slowly taking form.

"Tsunade!"

Hiruzen along Homura and Koharu landed near her, all garbed in their battle attire.

"What is happening?! Naruto is everywhere in the village yet..."

"Minato sealed the yang half in Naruto all those years ago because he couldn't handle more of its chakra. The Yin half was sealed into Minato and joined him inside the Shinigami. When we freed Minato, the half with him must have been released too."

"Minato was released from the Shinigami?!"

"More than that, Homura. We brought him back to life. Him and Kushina which you clearly missed since she's standing right next to me."

Both Elders' jaws dropped to the ground when they saw the redhead wave at them.

"What's the plan? We don't have much time." asked Hiruzen looking at a fox shape beginning to become clearer and clearer by the second

"So far, Kushina and Karin will restrain it with their Adamantine sealing chains. As for the sealing, we don't know who will-"

"I will do it."

Everyone turned around to see Karin make her arrival.

"I will. My chakra coils are not yet completely mature enough to be destroyed. Kushina-san's on the other hand are. She's also an S-rank Shinobi while I'm A-rank at best. It's an easy decision."

“Then we need to prepare you for the sea-”

A fully reformed Kyuubi let out a resounding roar. It was obvious it was full of anger but it was overwhelmed by the malevolence and hatred of its chakra. Tsunade began to make hand seals to summon Katsuyu when the slug appeared in a puff of smoke right in front of the fox at her full height. The next thing everyone saw was the Kyuubi being sent flying up backward high in the air and landed a hundred feet away. Every shinobi present was stunned by what had just happened under their very eyes.

“RIKU!” Tsunade yelled, discerning her son on top of Katsuyu.

He was whole. Standing on his two feet and with two arms. She was only seeing his back but she was sure he got his eyes back too. The sight made her want to tear up in relief despite the dire situation everyone was in.

“Hiruzen!”

“What are you doing, you old monkey?!”

Everyone turned their head towards the former Hokage to see him sitting down comfortably in a chair and lighting his pipe in a relaxed manner. For a moment they wondered if their former leader didn’t simply lose his mind.

“What? Riku got this. No point in worrying.” was his nonchalant answer.

“You have too much faith in him!”

“And you don’t have enough, Koharu.”

“It’s preparing a Bijudama!” Homura yelled.

Indeed. The Kyuubi had opened his maw and black chakra began to gather and compress inside of it.

“Everyone to the ground!” Tsunade shouted while the two redheads by her side used their chains to create a protective barrier which they hoped would hold against the attack. Meanwhile Riku and Katsuyu didn’t move. Neither did Hiruzen who was watching with fascination and trepidation.

The Kyuubi fired its attack, a pure black ball of chakra, in the direction of Konoha. Tsunade stopped breathing when Riku didn’t dodge but instead threw something at the ball. In a green flash, it disappeared.

“See? Have a little faith.” Hiruzen said with a grin.

Seeing that another bijudama was coming, Riku acted again. He made a clone that disappeared on the spot to reappear next to Tsunade while the original made an inhuman jump and punched the Kyuubi in the face with enough strength that the fox fell down to his side.

“Riku!” the Hokage exclaimed. And just as she was about to hug him she noticed the very familiar marking on his face and a shining diamond shaped seal on his forehead. “Byakugou?” she said dumbfounded.

“Not exactly. The seal doesn’t contain my chakra but nature energy.”

“““You’re a sage?!”””

“Yep. Don’t you see the green markings around my eyes?” he replied pointing to the said marking with his finger. “Anyway. Boss can keep the fox occupied for a bit but a bit only. What’s the plan with the sealing? ‘Cause so far, beyond sending it into another dimension with the Hiraishin, Boss got nothing.”

“I’ll seal it inside of me.” Karin shared.

Riku looked at her for a moment and nodded. He didn’t want her to have to do it but he understood that it was the best option.

“Then we need to go find a secluded place for the sealing. The difficult part would be to protect you right as the Kyuubi is entering the seal.”

“I can create a barrier big enough with my chains for that.” Kushina said.

“Alright. We will use Katsuyu-chan to communicate. Be ready.”

The clone dispelled and soon enough the giant slug separated into many smaller slugs. One of them reached the wall and separated again into slugs small enough to attach themselves onto someone's shoulders and the two Uzumaki moved to begin the preparation for the sealing. Meanwhile, the original Riku had been battling the Kyuubi with what seemed to be everything he had in a fist fight. The forest around them was completely gone.

“At this rate, your son is going to replace you sooner than later, Tsunade.”

“Good, because I’m done with paperwork.” she replied with a grin, completely oblivious of the shinobis around her having a gobsmacked expression on their faces. That tidbit of information would spread and by tomorrow at the same time everyone in the village would know the relationship between Tsunade and Riku.

For fifteen minutes everyone looked at the fight with rapt attention. Homura and Koharu had decided to join Hiruzen by sitting on the ground. Finally, both Riku and the fox disappeared in a green flash and reappeared three miles away near a mountain.

"The sealing is beginning!"

At Karin and Kushina's location, the former had used her chains to carve a seal into the ground. With a mix of sealing ink and her blood she was able to design a very solid seal that even baffled Kushina by how good it was but from what she could understand it wasn't a seal to imprison the Kyuubi inside of the younger redhead.

"It's not. It's to summon the Shinigami."

"What?!"

"Don't worry it's not the same as the Shiki Fujin. The contract is different."

"Contract? What contract?"

"I offer him a soul and he helps me seal something. I paid in advance when I released your husband so the Shinigami is going to do the sealing more or less for free this time. It was Orochimaru!" Karin quickly added at the end when she saw her clan woman's horrified face.

Kushina had many questions she wanted to ask but Riku teleported in with the Kyuubi. Immediately both Uzumaki used their chains to subdue the biju properly. Creating more chains, Kushina created a barrier to encompass everyone in the area and Karin activated the seal. The fox tried to get itself free but between the chains suppressing his chakra and the grip of the Shinigami it could do nothing. Every drop of chakra it was made of was sucked inside the seal on Karin's abdomen.

Riku immediately went to the new jinchuriki to catch her and interrupt her fall. The effort it took for her to seal half of the strongest biju inside of her had been tremendous and the damage to her chakra coil, while not permanent, was consequent from what he could tell.

"You did it." he whispered to the redhead with a smile.

"Of course I did." she answered weakly.

"Go on, rest. I'll bring you home."

Karin nodded slowly then closed her eyes and fell asleep. Riku picked her up in his arms. Extended a free hand to Kushina who took it and they flashed away back to Konoha's outskirts. From there, they shushined back to the wall and met with everyone.

“She’s going to be fine.” he said to a worried Tsunade.

“The seal?”

“The seal is fine too from what I could see at a first glance. The Kyubi is sealed away and is not getting out any time soon if ever.”

“I’m saddened to see for the third time someone taking the burden of the Kyubi inside themselves but I’m happy to see the next generation’s courage and determination in protecting the village. She may not have been born in Konoha but her Will of Fire is burning as brightly as I have ever witnessed.” commented Hiruzen.

Ever the shrewd leader, the Sandaime Hokage’s little speech wasn’t totally genuine. Its ulterior motive was to present Karin in a good light in the eyes of all the shinobis present. He didn’t want a repeat of what happened with Naruto. If the villagers couldn’t get to see her as the hero she was, he was hoping that at least they would be thankful for her sacrifice and would not treat her too badly. Somehow, with her relationship with Riku who fought on equal ground with the Kyubi and won, he didn’t think the worst scenario would happen. Nobody wants the ire of the man who defeated the Kyubi, especially one they had shunned in his youth and who was revealed to be not only a Senju but the current Hokage’s son and the Shodai’s great grandson.

“Alright, Riku, bring her back to the manor. Kushina, go with him. The three of you earned yourself some rest. Everyone else, stay alert. That fight was felt far and wide, and enemies could use the confusion to infiltrate the village. It’s time to reassure the villagers inside the bunkers and bring them out.”

“And celebrate.” interjected Riku. “Last time the Kyubi attacked, it was a disaster. This time there was no destruction and no casualties! Konoha has become stronger!”

That was a bit of bullshit. The previous time the Kyubi appeared right in the middle of the village. This time it appeared outside. It couldn’t be compared. However to the civilians it wouldn’t matter. The Kyubi had come again and was soundly defeated without anyone dying. That was what they would focus on. Riku’s words were just propaganda. The cheers of approval he got was proof that it had the desired effect.

“See you back home, mom.” Riku said as his markings on his face disappeared.

Tsunade nodded and smiled at him. She looked at him with pride and joy, and couldn’t wait for the day to be over. She knew that when it was time to go to bed she’d have perhaps the best cuddling session ever.

Chapter 49: Eureka

For once, it was Tsunade that was trying to bury herself into Riku's chest and not the other way around. She was happy as hell and just wanted to melt into her son. Cuddling with him did her a lot of good the previous evening when she came back home. She had had to deal with the fall out of the impromptu Kyuubi's attack and that tired her to no end.

As expected some people blamed Naruto for it but her staunch denial, Minato's appearance and their explanation of what happened and why had calmed most of everyone down. The revelation that Naruto was the son of their greatest hero had finally broken down the villager's irrational hatred for him for the most part. He still has been a pranking little shit in his youth and the people still remember that despite not having made a single prank since he graduated and became a genin.

When the villagers lauded Minato for defeating the Kyubi again, he categorically denied any involvement with that. One of the shinobi that had been present on the wall, shouted that it had been Riku who had done it and Tsunade confirmed that it was indeed her son who did the deed. Minato didn't hesitate to reveal his relation to the dirty blonde too. And an explanation about how that could be possible was given. That had been the second slap on the face for the villagers who realized their mistake towards the "son of a traitor".

Lots of guilt had been going around but Tsunade declared that today and tomorrow would be a day of celebration for Konoha emerging victorious against another challenge that life sent at them. Everyone got behind the idea immediately and the mood in the village did a total 180.

Because the event had been very public, the subject of Karin becoming the Kyubi's second host had been talked about. Again, reassurances were given and Karin was presented as a hero by the three kages for willingly sealing the fox inside herself to protect the village.

That night, Riku's, Naruto's and Karin's names were heard all around the village when toasts were made. Hiruzen was glad to see that his village was finally returning back to what it used to be and what it should be. Without hatred.

"Mom, we need to get up."

"Nooooo." she whined trying to bury herself deeper into his chest.

"Come on, it's late and I'm sure everyone has-"

"RIKU!"

The door to Tsunade's bedroom burst open and one familiar redheaded kunoichi made her entrance. On the spot Karin used her chain to separate Tsunade from her boyfriend

while tying up the said boyfriend. The commotion had gathered every inhabitant in the manor just outside the door to witness the tongue lashing of the century.

“You’re ballsy! To leave your hospital bed and the village without saying a word of goodbye to me! However you seemed to be under the delusion that there wouldn’t be any repercussions for that!” she began yelling.

“K-karin-chan.”

“Don’t Karin-chan me! You’re a bastard, ya know?!”

She was so furious that her hair separated in nine different locks and began to defy gravity by going up. She even lost control of her verbal tic.

““Holy crap!””

Both Minato and Naruto were familiar with what was happening because of Kushina doing the same when she was really angry. They knew Riku was in very deep shit. For her part the older redhead had a grin on her face, proud that apparently it was now a thing but more importantly, proud that Karin had a verbal tic. A proper Uzumaki in her opinion.

“What?! You two idiots have something to say? Then say it if you do, ya know?!”

Karin was on a roll. She had switched targets from Riku to Naruto and Minato who quickly ran away to save their lives. Kushina simply began to laugh and followed them at a leisure pace.

“And my happy, peaceful morning is ruined.” Tsunade said with a sigh and ordered Karin to release Riku. “Lovers quarrel later, breakfast first.”

Giving him one nasty look, the redhead let her boyfriend go and he immediately swept her into his embrace.

“What ar-”

He gave her one hell of a kiss while molesting one of her buttocks and melted away her anger. Soon enough she had one leg behind his own ass and she was pushing him towards her.

“I said breakfast first!” shouted the Hokage who hit her son and probably her soon-to-be daughter in law on the head. She then separated them and dragged them out to the living room where three additional faces were present. One belonged to Hiruzen. Two belonged to Ino and Hinata. The latter was relieved more than anything to see Riku healthy and the former was relieved too but also very very angry. Ino proved it right

when she rose from her seat, slapped the shit out of Riku then grabbed his collar and pulled him down for a very intense kiss.

"You better not disappear on us again like that! Got it?" Ino's voice was colder than the Land of Snow.

"Yes, Ino, I promise."

"Wait, I thought you two broke up?!" Naruto exclaimed dumbfounded.

"Why would you think that?" Ino replied flatly.

"Because he's with Karin-chan?!"

"He's also with Hinata, so your point is?"

"Say what?!"

"Hm... We're all in a relationship with each other, Naruto-kun." revealed Hinata and if Riku didn't know any better he would have sworn there had been a bit of vindictiveness in her voice.

"B-but.. That's not... That's not how it's supposed to work!" the orange clad blond pointed out.

"We don't care." the bluenette simply replied and brought Riku to sit next to her. "We're happy and that's all that matters."

To the side, Hiruzen was amused and a bit envious. So was Minato but he liked to live so said nothing in the presence of his wife. He did mentally high-five his son though. Kushina was frowning but said nothing, it wasn't her business and while she didn't approve, she was open to the possibility of love really being shared between the four.

Shizune came in with breakfast and Riku, by force of habit, helped her set everything up. After eating the most important meal of the day and cleaning up they began to talk about how Riku healed.

"Well... I theorized that through the use of nature energy it may be possible for me to regrow my missing limbs. So I-"

"Hold on! Missing limbs?" interjected Minato.

"With the exception of my right arm I lost every appendage while on a mission to save Jiraiya's ass from his own stupidity."

"I'm pretty sure such healing is impossible from nature energy. I should know I'm a toad sage myself."

"Yet here I am. There is also the possibility of my chakra being special, I'm an 8th Uzumaki after all but I don't think it played much in my healing process. I just channeled nature energy in combination to my medical chakra to slowly regrow everything. Eyes included. It's like... Hm... Like a plant regrowing itself, I suppose. My cells simply didn't divide, they knew how to divide themselves in a way that would regenerate my limbs. Which is another point confirming there is more to a cell than what the world currently knows, mom. As if the whole body's blueprint was stored in every single cell." he finished by looking at Tsunade.

"We'll look into that."

"One thing I wonder is how come you didn't have any slug physical change?" Kushina asked. "Minato's eyes become like those of a toad."

"I think that's because you learned senjutsu with the toads the toad way." he replied looking at the Yondaime. "While I did learn under Katsuyu-chan she let me find my own way and offered me no help beyond some advice. As such I wasn't influenced by her physically. The toads use their special oil, don't they? I think that's why you get toad traits when entering sage mode."

"Hashirama-sama didn't have any animal trait when he channeled nature energy. He had markings yes, and his eyes changed color to yellow but nothing else." shared Hiruzen.

"Hold on! Why wouldn't Katsuyu help you? She adores you to hell and back!" pondered Tsunade.

"Because she's not **my** personal summon. She's yours. And should you undergo senjutsu training she will help you with more than just advice. You should by the way. I think it's possible to not only alter your cells' degenerescence but also reverse it. You could technically live forever or be young forever."

"Why didn't she tell me that?!"

Quickly, Tsunade rose from her seat and went to the patio to summon Katsuyu and have a few words with her. No one who knew the blond was surprised by how vain she showed herself to be.

"But isn't it the same principle as your **Boobie Expansion Jutsu**?" Karin wondered aloud to everyone's confusion.

"The what jutsu now?!" exclaimed an outraged but secretly very interested Kushina.

“That... was the name I gave to an experimental jutsu that... well... Grew mom’s breasts the first time I hit her with it. It’s now called Iryoken. Basically by hitting someone with my medical chakra I can rejuvenate the cells and push them to divide at a very fast pace. When I hit mom, I gave a second puberty to her chest. I was thirteen and suffering from a concussion, okay?!” Riku quickly defended himself under Kushina’s less than impressed gaze.

“And it works wonders now.” Karin pushed him deeper in the shit by grabbing her boobs from under them and lifting them up to show them to Kushina.

“Technically I can do that for any part of the body. It’s a long and very meticulous process.”

“Can you do my butt?”

“Ino, it’s perfect.” Hinata replied. “You don’t need to change it.”

The conversation drifted off from there and everyone did his own thing. Hiruzen, with his curiosity satiated, left the manor. So did Hinata and Ino who had things to do. Karin stayed and talked with Kushina about being a jinchuriki and seals. Minato took Naruto outside for training and invited Riku who agreed since he didn’t have anything better to do.

Naruto began to make a dozen shadow clones and all of them began to make a rasengan.

“What is he trying to do?” Riku asked from the side, looking at his half-brother.

“We’re trying to add his wind nature to the rasengan.” answered Minato, who was watching Naruto attentively.

“The rasengan? Looks to me like that thing the Kyuubi did.”

“It is because I got the idea from that attack. It’s called a bijudama by the way.”

“So... from what I can see... You compress chakra into some kind of vortex into the shape of a sphere?”

“That’s pretty much it. The flow of chakra must go in all directions but at the same time fast enough to have any effect.”

“Why is it so big?”

“Pardon?” Minato was confused.

"The sphere, why is it so big? Isn't the whole point of the jutsu to compress a maximum of chakra into the smallest sphere possible to maximize its explosive power when the sphere breaks? Naruto is wasting a lot of chakra in my opinion with the way he does it now and underpowering it."

Minato looked at his eldest son with an open mouth. He was shocked. It was the point of the rasengan but he believed he was done with the jutsu when he created it. The fact that he didn't work on it further and just made it bigger by pumping more chakra into it, made the whole jutsu pointless. Minato had succeeded in creating a very powerful jutsu but completely went against the very principle it had been created on when he used it.

"That's... True." he admitted.

"It's difficult to make in the first place, ya know?!" Naruto said as he approached them to hear what they were talking about. "I had to use a clone to help me shape it at first. My chakra control was that bad."

"With how big your chakra reserves are, it's no wonder. Wait! Did you say you used another clone to make it?"

"Yeah! I needed more hands to shape the sphere."

"Then why aren't you using a clone to help you put your wind nature into it?"

Both Naruto and Minato's jaws dropped at the simple idea.

"You guys really need to begin thinking with shadow clones in mind. Now let's see this rasengan."

Riku held his palm face up and started to gather chakra in it and spinned it. He got a flat disk at first then tried to move the chakra to make a sphere. His first result was a vertical disk but quickly understanding how it worked bit by bit the chakra took the proper shape. He heard Minato whistle indicating he was impressed.

"That's really hard. I have the chakra control but I'm not used to manipulating it that way."

"You'll get it with practice." Naruto said.

"Now, let's try compressing it further."

Concentrating on the task at hand, bit by bit the sphere began to shrink to the size of a marble.

"Okay, that was easier than making it in the first place. Hard but easier. Now I just have to think of a way to throw it and-"

““Throw?””

“Well, yes. I don’t want to be near **that** when it detonates. Didn’t the Kyubi shot its version?”

“That’s a valid point. I guess the rasengan is far from being a complete jutsu, more than just adding nature affinity in it.” Minato conceded.

“Hmm...” Naruto looked closer at the marble and using a finger, flicked it away with strength. The rasengan flew with speed from Riku’s palm and hit a tree that immediately disappeared in an explosion of chakra and so did his friends in a ten feet radius. The three blondes looked at the damage done in silence, completely dumbfounded.

“Somehow... I don’t think that, out of the five nature, adding wind to the rasengan would be good for ourselves if we don’t find a way to use it from a distance.”

“Yes.”

“Shadow clones it is.” replied Minato and Naruto respectively.

Training resumed for his brother while Riku decided he had done enough ninjutsu for the day. He told the others he was going back in to research some fuinjutsu and Minato actually followed him, interested in that. They found Kushina and Karin talking about seals and joined them. Quickly it turned into a teaching class with Riku as the instructor.

“So basically if you want to do something related to space-time you better use a barrier to make things simpler by limiting the space you want to affect. Especially for Time.” Minato said, tapping gently the top of his pen onto his lips.

“Yeah.” replied Riku absentmindedly doodling in his notebook.

“Wait. If a barrier creates a new closed space disconnected from the outside then it’s possible to manipulate the space inside of it in whatever way we want, no?”

Riku took his book of seals and tossed it to his step-mother.

“Page 33. Better unsealed it on the patio’s ground.”

Raising a brow in curiosity, Kushina rose from her chair and did as instructed. When the Botib came into view, Minato got curious too and joined his wife. She just opened the closet and gasped in shock when he got to her.

“HOLY...”

“You expanded a subspace?!” exclaimed his father.

“Yeah. A few years ago.”

“But how?!”

“The wood, Minato! Look!” Kushina pointed out very thin black lines going through the wood of the closet, both inside and outside. Getting close to take a better look and by squinting his eyes, the former Hokage saw tiny little lines of seals that couldn’t have been done by hand.

“I’m... stumped. Clearly the walls outside and inside of the closet are lined up with seals but I don’t understand how you could write them so small.”

“That’s a very good question. Let me give you a hint: the seals I wrote were no smaller than this one.” Riku said and showed them a healing tag from the table. It was a bit bigger than a regular handwriting size.

Both parents began to think for a while. Minato’s mind went to the seal themselves shrinking by the effect of another seal while Kushina went in the other direction.

“It’s not the seals that changed size, at least not directly, it’s the wood?”

“HumHm. Go on.”

“You... expanded the wood somehow, wrote the seal on them, then returned the wood to its normal size and the seals shrunk with it in some blurry lines. It is the opposite of a tattoo deforming when the skin expands.”

“Correct. I needed more room for bigger seals that I wanted to put in my book. The only way I could think of was to expand the paper then shrink it back. And since paper is made out of wood, it worked for it too. In the case of the Botib, I expand the inside of the wood and carve more seals to maintain the expansion.”

“How big is it inside?” asked Minato.

“Hmm... There is an infirmary for four beds, a bedroom for six beds. A bathroom, a kitchen, a training room as big as the main room that you see now then the main room. In theory as long as the chakra is in enough quantity it’s possible to make that space infinite. Now that I know of nature energy I’m going to incorporate a draining seal that would use nature chakra in the environment to power everything.”

“Anbu must have a field day with this.”

“They do. The Anbu commander has been trying for years to get the Sandaime then mom to authorize the creation of an Anbu affiliated only R&D seal division with me as its head. Instead they just get what I can make in my spare time.”

“At least once a month we treat her at the hospital for trying to drink herself to death because Tsunade-sama keeps refusing her request.” enlightened Karin with a chuckle.

“Can we get a tour?”

Riku nodded to Kushina’s request and showed them the inside of Botib. It didn’t take long, ten minutes at best, before they returned to the main room to take a look at the weapon corner.

“Why is it called Botib?” the redhead asked.

“It stands for Bigger on the Inside Box.”

“That’s so lame!”

“I told him!” Karin’s voice came from outside. “He didn’t want to hear anything!”

“Well, I personally think it’s a good name.” Minato said.

“Of course you would, Mister “Halo Frozen Dessert Hair Whorl Jiraiya Twin Formula Sphere.”

“The what now?” Riku wondered, confused.

“The rasengan’s name before I named it the rasengan.” replied Kushina.

“... Shit, did I get the bad naming sense?”

Kushina snorted and Minato let out a dry embarrassed chuckle. Riku let them study the Botib on their own by telling them the do and don’t about it. Most notably to not destroy the walls or touch the time seal in the middle of the room. He gave a heartfelt kiss to Karin and left to visit his teammates. Kakashi, as usual, was difficult to track down so Riku went to see Yugao instead. He was in luck as she was home. When she opened the door and saw him, she took him in her arms for a nice hug.

“I’m glad to see you alright. The last time, you were bleeding from everywhere and almost dead.” she said.

They retreated inside and Yugao made some tea that she served him.

“I got lucky by having good teammates. And by the toad that was still there to catch me during my fall and reverse summoned to Jiraiya. I’m glad to see you too. Mom, told me Team Yukari was disbanded with me out of commission, soooo what did you do?”

“Kakashi reformed Team 7 with his students. For my part I... took missions here and there with Anko and Kurenai or Izumo and Kotetsu. Though I’ve been wondering for a while about becoming a jonin-sensei.”

“Not returning to Anbu, then?”

“No, that part of my life is over for good.”

“That’s reassuring. You’d make a good jonin-sensei with your no-nonsense attitude. Your students would get their naivety beat out of them.”

“True.” she replied with an amused smile.

They talked further about what happened in the village during his months of absence but also in the Elemental Nations as a whole. From what she heard here and there Iwa lost both of his jinchuriki and Kumo one of them. Akatsuki was getting busy and the two members they captured had disappeared from inside their own cells. Nobody found out how and it was worrying. Both the MP and T&I were pulling out their hair because of it. That gave Riku an idea and the vacant look in his eyes he had when that happened was not missed by Yugao who knew him well.

“Go.” was all she said.

“Hm?”

“You have an idea in mind. Don’t deny it, I know you do. I know that look you have. I also know that you won’t focus on anything else until you deal with that idea, so go.”

Riku nodded, finished his tea and stood up. He gave her a loving kiss on her cheek and quickly left her apartment after thanking her for her hospitality. Quickly he made his way to the Hokage Tower to speak with his mother. Hiruzen and the elders were also present and were talking about the ramification of Minato and Kushina’s news of being alive, and how it would play with Iwa and Kumo. When she saw Riku coming into her office, Tsunade recognized the look on his face and immediately dismissed the Anbu and activated the privacy seals.

“I haven’t said anything yet.” Riku said a bit disturbed by his mother's action.

“I know you. Now what kind of S-rank secret are you going to blurt out?”

“I heard about the disappearance of the two Akatsuki members who were into our custody.”

“You know what happened?”

“Not exactly but the odds are high that space-time ninjutsu was involved.”

“Ninjutsu? Not Fuinjutsu?” asked Hiruzen.

“It’s possible but I doubt it. The knowledge required to pull that off with a seal is... Someone would need to be at least on Minato’s level. No, my idea was to, one: incorporate the Hiraishin into Konoha’s barrier, that way it would be possible to act very fast. Two: to actually put a special hiraishin seal onto each prisoner and put an anchor in their cells. They escape? The barrier corps activates the seal and the escapee are locked back again in a more secure cell. All ready for T&I to ask questions about how they broke out in the first place.”

“Hm. The second option is actually a very good idea. The first would necessitate tempering with the village barrier and so far only Lady Mito knew anything about it.” Homura said.

“Not surprising, she made it.” Koharu commented.

“Speaking of Hiraishin, I thought you couldn’t use it offensively, yet you did yesterday.” His mother noted. He picked from his back pouch a shuriken and tossed it at her.

“Wood?”

“I see. You expanded the wood, wrote the whole seal and shrunk it.” said the Sandaime in contemplation.

“That’s quite clever. It may not do any damage at all but that’s not the point of it so it doesn’t really matter.” realized Homura.

“Cherry on the cake, since the chakra needed for the teleportation comes from a central anchor point and not the shurifuin itself, I can safely combine them with the **Shuriken Shadow clone Jutsu**. Also less expensive and easier to make than Minato’s tri-pronged kunai.”

“Make the seals for the prisoners and you can have a look, just a look at the barrier.”

“I’m on it! Be done by the end of the week.” Riku replied as he left.

“You know... Maybe testing children at the academy for an affinity with fuinjutsu wouldn’t be a bad idea.” thought aloud Hiruzen.

“Sensei, Riku is a genius.”

“You can’t expect to find a fuinjutsu prodigy in each class, Hiruzen.”

“There is merit to the idea. Obviously we can’t expect another seal master but maybe more shinobis inclined to the art? With how many seals Riku and Karin are coming up with, they can’t do everything alone, even with shadow clones. Kushina could help of

course but she's another seal mistress. Do we really want them to spend their time on mundane seals when they could do research for more important ones?" Homura suggested.

"Hm... No, we cannot. Riku has too much on his plate currently. Supplying Anbu and T&I, finishing the Hiraishin completely, finishing to seal the third basement of the hospital... I'm pretty sure I'm forgetting some things. We really need more people dealing with low level seals. Maybe I could ask Minato? Since he can't be a shinobi anymore he may as well teach the new generation. Both Fuinjutsu and the shinobi arts."

"That's an excellent idea, Tsunade." commented Koharu.

Back with Riku, he quickly made it home and created dozens of Shadow clones to work on the new tasks Tsunade has given him. He retired to his Botib (with the door opened in case someone wanted to talk to him) and picked up his brush.

"Ugh. It's so debilitating." A clone grunted putting to the side his twenty second seal.

"Yeah. Why can't we come up with a clone jutsu that would just clone the seal?" another whined.

"It would be a clone, it wouldn't last." said a third.

"What we need is someone else doing this for us. Our life expectancy is way too short and I don't want to spend it writing seals!"

"Yeah! I'd rather do the dishes or any other chores. At least I would feel useful by seeing something that I accomplish."

""""Yeah!""""

"I agree guys, except there is no one but us to make the seal and it's not like it can duplicate itself on its own."

"..."

All the clones and Riku raised their heads from the seals they were working on and were contemplating this last thought.

"Holy shit! We're idiots!"

""""Yeah!""""

They all arrived at the same conclusion, the same idea. Thus, all the clones popped themselves knowing they were free of the task at hand while Riku began to cackle so loud that both Kushina and Karin popped their heads through the door.

“Does he do that often?” the older Redhead asked.

“Only when he has a very, very brilliant idea.”

They observed Riku (still cackling) writing furiously with his brush on a huge page made of chakra paper as if he was possessed. In less than five minutes he was done and held the seal he had just made in front of him to examine it.

“KAAAARRRi- Oh, you’re here! And Kushina-san too! Perfect!” he began to yell but saw his girlfriend present at the door and tone it down.

“What do you need?” inquired Karin getting inside the closet.

“Please look at this and tell me what you think.”

She did and so did Kushina. After examining the seal from every angle, Karin put down the page and looked at Riku with wonder in her eyes.

“You made a seal that would make seals!” Kushina exclaimed.

“Yeah! You put a blank tag on the middle part and the pre registered seal in the matrix is applied to the tag! No more slaving away with making seals in large quantities!”

“That poses a problem with chakra supply. There will come a point where chakra will run dry.” Noted Kushina.

“Not if we use the chakra battery seal! More complex would be to create a seal draining and stocking the nature energy on the surrounding. It would be self sufficient!”

Karin grabbed his head and kissed him violently before pulling back.

“You handsome man! You just did away hours of work for me! No more medical tags to do! I can work on my research!”

She pulled him up by his hand and dragged him to the bedroom area. In less than a few minutes, Kushina quickly left the Botib, closing the door behind her.

“Kushi-chan? Is something wrong? Your face is all red.”

Minato had just come inside from the backyard and had caught her fleeing her step-son’s sexual escapade (not that he knew about that). Not saying a word, she used her chain to tie Minato up and dragged him away to their own bedroom.

Chapter 50: Akatsuki struck again

After making a self-creating seal for each of his shurifui, his Hiraishins, medical tag and some more seals, Riku suddenly had a lot more free time. He had yet to share the news with Tsunade but nothing was urgent. He knew that she would give him more work and he wanted a bit of a vacation. Ever since he had reversed-summoned himself to Shikkotsu Forest to heal he has been either working or training non-stop. The first thing he did with his free time? Visit Ino.

Entering her family flower shop, he barely put a foot inside that he found himself on his back and with a very hot blonde raping his mouth and throat with her tongue. Riku loved it but that was hardly the place for that. Fortunately her mother was there and she pried her daughter off of him.

"You could at least let him come inside properly, Ino! Everyone in the streets saw that!"

"I hope so! I need all the sluts out there to know he's mine!"

"...Fair point. Go on, dear." her mother said releasing her from her grip.

"Thank you!"

"Wha-Humphff!"

Riku, who was getting up, was back to the ground and being molested under everyone's eyes. When she felt Riku's log all hard under her pussy, she knew it was enough and pulled away.

"What the hell, Ino?!" Riku said, catching his breath. "Do you want to get pregnant in front of everyone? Because that's how you end up getting pregnant in front of everyone!"

"If that keeps all the bitches away, why not?" the blonde bombshell replied.

"I wouldn't mind grand-babies to spoil."

"See? Mom agrees!"

"I'm stopping you right there! There is an order of things. First: meeting your parents properly, then engagement, then marriage. Babies come later."

"Then hurry up!"

"I've been wanting for Ino to invite you for dinner for months, young man."

“How about a picnic instead?” Riku suggested as he raised himself from the ground, Ino had moved off of him.

“Oh! That’s an excellent idea! Way more fun and so novel!” she said and went back inside the shop leaving the two love birds alone.

“You just don’t want to be stuck in my home with my father.” Ino said flatly.

“Of course! I may be mad but I’m not suicidal.” he replied seriously and she rolled her eyes.

“My father is not that bad.”

“Then he’s not a good father.”

“He is.”

“Then I have everything to worry about. Anyway, I came to visit to...”

“To?” she asked since Riku stopped mid-sentence.

“I don’t know. I have some free time and I just... thought about you. You really bewitched me well.” he said in realization and Ino just smiled in happiness.

“I told you that very morning after our first time together. You. Are. Mine.” she reminded him as she invaded his personal space and let a finger glide on his chest from up to down.

“You wouldn’t have said that if I was still...”

“I would have.”

“A sexual dynamo like you married to a cripple without a dick? I doubt it. And even if you did...” he quickly added before she could place a word in. “I would have let you go. That’s no married life.”

“Married?” she said, perking up at the word. It was the second time in five minutes he had used it. This time however it was alone and very explicit in the meaning, not a part of a list to go through.

“I... hope. One day? I mean... Half the reason I left to heal was for you.”

“Riku... Are you proposing to me?” she teased but she was very interested in his answer.

“You’ll know when I do, love.” he whispered with his lips neary touching hers.

"I'll be waiting then."

"Perhaps I could entertain you in the meantime with not one, not two but three threesomes with Anko?"

Ino's answer was immediate and she gasped in surprise.

"No way! How did you manage that?!"

"I killed Orochimaru, I removed her cursed seal and I gave her the opportunity to kill Orochimaru again."

"Best. Husband. Ever." she squealed in delight, kissing him strongly on his lips.

"Husband already?"

"I'm waiting, so it's a done deal. I'm just getting used to it."

"Hm. Should we practice for the honeymoon then?"

"I'd love to but I have work to do. I do have enough time for a snack." she said in a sultry voice, putting her hand on his crotch and caressing it to make him hard again.

"I don't think I'll stop myself after just one snack."

"It sounds like a you problem not a me problem." she replied and dragged him behind the shop.

She had been so hungry that Riku barely lasted five minutes. It took more time for his legs to stop feeling like jelly. Whipping the bit of seed on her cheek with a finger and swallowing it, she gave him a peck on the lips and went back to work with a happy gait in her steps.

Once Riku had recovered from the ordeal, he thought about the conversation they had about marriage. The idea was appealing. Ino always made him happy when she was there and despite his fears, she never failed him. Quite the contrary, she has always been supportive and surprisingly patient with him about the speed at which their relationship was going. He had no doubt that she loved him. Truly. That single thought made butterflies in his stomach and made him smile stupidly from ear to ear. Yes, he was ready for the next stage of their relationship. They didn't have to get married immediately, they could just be engaged for a while but something told him that Ino wouldn't accept that and neither would he if the feeling of wrongness he had about it was any indication. Marrying Ino brought a problem or rather two. Hinata was fine being a concubine even though she deserved better and to be recognized as a proper wife. Karin, he didn't know what she wanted. Sure she had loved him for years (and so did he) but their relationship was rather new. She may be okay with sharing now, but who's

to say she won't change her mind later? Or that she wasn't fine being a concubine and wanted to be a wife? Many questions he didn't have the answers to and knew would give him a nasty headache if he thought about it too much.

Not knowing what to do with himself he simply went back home. He knew his moon princess was busy today, Karin had told him so. That meant that all the people he wanted to spend time with were unavailable (Karin working at the hospital).

When he entered the living room he saw Minato surrounded by books, scrolls and papers full of notes. He gave a look to Kushina who was sitting in front of her husband and she shook her head.

"You do know that lunch is soon and that we're eating on this table, right?"

"Hm?" Minato said as he raised his head from the scroll he was reading. Riku waves with his hand the mess and his father got what he meant. "Oh! Sorry! I..."

"It's fine and it's not the end of the world. I'm curious as to why you're... Is that a book about the basics of chakra?"

"It is! Tsunade asked me if I wanted to teach at the academy and to keep an eye for people with a bit of talent in fuinjutsu."

"That sounds nice. Do you really need to study all this though?"

"Not at all, I'm just making a good course for the children. I found the current curriculum... Too easy?"

"I agree with you on that. Graduating with only the henge, kawarimi and the basic clone? I know we're at peace but that's just asking for a beating." Kushina said.

"I think so too. It would be good if they knew their nature affinity, at least one C-rank elemental ninjutsu and one genjutsu."

"I think it's less about their jutsu arsenal and more about the way you need to explain things. You'd get better results that way."

"How so?" Asked Kushina, intrigued.

"Well... the leaf exercise? The instruction is to put the leaf on your forehead and use chakra to make it stick. It sounds simple but it leaves the whole process out of it. 'Use chakra' is way too vague. Some may channel chakra from their forehead to the leaf which will push it away. Some will cover the leaf with their chakra and make it burn because it can't handle the amount. The right process is to channel your chakra on your forehead, imagining it's like a glue. I guarantee that children would get the exercise way faster if you explain it like that. Or any other exercise if you're detailed enough. I'm of

the belief that if by the end of a class **all** your students didn't at least understand what you taught them, then you're not knowledgeable enough about the subject and shouldn't have taught it in the first place."

"Hm... That makes sense." Minato pondered.

"In the end, the number of jutsu you know and can perform means way less than chakra control which must always be trained."

"With their growing chakra pool, they would need to practice their control often and be more attuned with the need to adapt it by the time they graduate." Kushina said.

"Yes. Sadly the curriculum is more theory oriented. Naruto's teammate became Kunoichi of the year because she's a nerd who got full marks. Everything else was substandard for a genin."

"It really changed for the worse. When we graduated, physicals were the most important." His father shared.

"The success rate is 33% for the genin test. Of the two other third who failed, most end up in the genin pool while the others are sent back to the academy. All because their education is substandard. Iruka-sensei tries but he's only one guy and is in charge of the last year. He's excellent but still only one man. You should meet with him."

"We already did. Naruto spoke often about him. Quite the dedicated young man." commented Kushina.

"That he is. Was it not for him... No, I would have pulled through and out of the genin pool, it would just have been harder."

"**You** were in the genin pool?!" the redhead exclaimed in disbelief.

"Yep." Riku said as he went to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water.

"The jonin senseis who were interested in having me in their team knew that the other two students would fail, meaning I would have been sent in the genin pool regardless. They couldn't offer me an apprenticeship because I was politically a pariah, thanks to my mo... to Sora. And Danzo. Finally the three jonin-sensei who didn't want me, did not because they were... selfish? Asuma wanted to recreate the ino-shika-cho combo so he wouldn't have to work much. Joke was on him; he had to work even harder in the end. Yuhi Kurenai wanted Hinata in her team for personal reasons and built a team around her. Credit is due where credit is due, she got the best results of the three teams. Lastly was Kakashi. You'd have to ask him about it because I don't know."

"That should not have happened." Noted Kushina with a frown.

"Nope. The smart thing to do would have been to start making rotating teams during the last year. At the end of it, enough data should have been gathered to make teams based on facts rather than desire."

"You're giving me a lot to think about." his father said.

"I hope so. You're going to teach the future of the village, you can't go there and just wing it. Now, on a totally unrelated topic. What are you going to do, Kushina-san? Go back to active duty or work on seals?"

"I haven't decided yet. Returning to active duty means less time with Naruto but the village got an S-rank kunoichi."

"It's not like you're pressed by time, honey."

"And it's not like we can't deal with any threat already without you involved. You gave enough by hosting the Kyubi for years and giving your life to stop it when it was released. The way I see it, Konoha can't really ask you for much more."

With that said. Riku finished his drink and went back to the kitchen to wash his glass. When he came back, he sat out on the patio and began to meditate. He had used a lot of nature energy when he fought the Kyuubi and he needed to replenish his seal reserves.

His time with Katsuyu had really been informative. He had learned a lot about chakra in detail. Chief among them was nature chakra. It has not been difficult to balance nature energy with his spiritual and physical ones. He had perfect chakra control after all. What had been difficult was using it efficiently. He couldn't stop in the middle of a fight for a few moments to feel the nature energy around him and take it in. He needed to have some at disposition from the start. That's when his mother's seal, the Byakugo, came across his mind. She had taught him how to make the seal but he found it very inefficient and added it to the least of things to work on and make better but never got around to do it. Where the original seal would need to be made slowly by storing his own chakra in it and this being limited by his own chakra reserves, nature energy was all around and he could store it without pause.

He was almost done filling the seal completely when an Anbu appeared in a kneeling position in front of him.

"Senju-sama, Hokage-sama is summoning you urgently."

Riku blinked in confusion, hearing the way he had just been referred to, then nodded his acknowledgement of the message. The Anbu immediately departed and Riku stood up from the wooden floor. He focused on the Hiraishin bracelet his mother was wearing and teleported. His arrival was so sudden that Tsunade threw a punch to her side without even looking. He had been ready however and blocked the attack with his palm.

“Kami! You nearly gave me a heart attack!”

“Sorry, mom. The Anbu you sent said you wanted to see me urgently so I came as fast as I could. What do you need?”

“Suna has been attacked. Days ago.”

“Akatsuki again?”

“Yes. They took Gaara but this time from the description of the event, the leader of the organization came himself to do the job. And he was thorough. Suna is no more.”

“What do you mean no more?” Riku repeated in shock. He needed more information.

“Just that. Completely leveled into the ground. The few survivors immediately sent a message but it took time. They’re still trying to find others among the sand and the rubbles.”

“What do you want me to do about it?”

“Go there, offer some... humanitarian relief. You’re a sage, you will be able to sense and find people buried alive.”

“Should I use Karin’s seal to bring people back?”

“...If you can. Suna is not our only ally but the greatest, without them we’re weak against an alliance between Kumo and Iwa.”

“Kiri?”

“They got out of their civil war two years ago. They’re not ready to go back into the open. Especially with us with how the previous wars went between us.”

“I’m going to need a lot of manpower.”

“Take Naruto and Kushina with you. Temari is in the village, and she will want to go too.”

“Karin?”

“No. We need at least one jinchuriki in the village and more importantly one seal master or in that case seal mistress. She’s not yet accustomed to her huge increase in chakra reserves and her control is completely botched. You’ll have with you a few medic-nins.”

“What about food and medical supplies?”

"I have Anbu gathering everything inside a book of seals that you will be given. You are allowed to use your Botib and the Time seal to heal injured faster and get more manpower by doing so. You are **not** allowed to answer questions about it."

"The crates?"

"I'm reluctant to reveal their existence. Can you make a gigantic one? That way they will think that it's only usable on a large scale?"

"Yes, but I'll need to make a really big box. It would be too chakra extensive to use my expansion jutsu on one."

"... Then take Yamato with you."

"Yamato? Why?"

"He's... the result of Orochimaru's experiment on the Mokuton. The only survivor out of 60. He can use it well but not to the extent of my grandfather."

"Alright. He can always use shadow clones and feed it chakra pills. What about Akatsuki? We can't stay on the defensive anymore. If one man was able to level an entire village like Suna..."

"I know. I'm having a meeting in a few minutes with the elders and sensei for a plan of Action. Jiraiya is supposed to come back from Kiri with news of the Sanbi and Rokubi. The Gobi is missing, so is the Nanabi."

"So that leaves us and Kumo with a jinchuriki for sure. It sounds really bad, mom."

"It does. Now go. You're on a time table. You're leaving in one hour and you're in charge."

"One hour? That's such a short notice. Not enough time to gather supplies for a whole village."

"We'll be using our reserves. When I took the hat, I ordered to store in seals any surplus we didn't need in a regular manner for bad days. We have enough."

Riku nodded, kissed her forehead and flashed away back to Senju Manor. The whole Namikaze family was there enjoying their meal and he felt bad for what he was about to say.

"Naruto, Kushina-san, you need to prepare yourself for an urgent humanitarian mission to Suna." he said in a grave voice.

"Suna? Why?" Asked Naruto, swallowing the ramen in his mouth.

“The village had been completely destroyed a few days ago by whom we believe to be the Leader of Akatsuki. We just received a message from the survivors requesting for help. It’s bad.”

“Gaara?”

“Taken.”

“Damn it!” shouted the blonde ramen lover in anger.

“I’m not on active duty, why do I have to go? Not that I don’t want to!” she quickly added, realizing how bad she had sounded. “I’m just curious as to why I’m being drafted.”

“Your chakra reserves mostly. Suna’s population is roughly the same as Konoha, so we’ll need a lot of shadow clones. Your knowledge on seals could also be useful.”

“Alright! When do we leave?”she asked with enthusiasm.

“In 55 minutes.”

Both Uzumaki rose from their seats and quickly went to their room to pack up. Riku didn’t to Minato’s wonderment.

“You already have everything you need?”

“Book of seals.”

“I really need one of those.”

Riku smirked at the grumbling tone his father had used.