

Calamity 291

Naruto: The Wind Calamity

Chapter 291: Forgotten Job Offer

Before Fujin could nod, Homura objected, "That won't be appropriate, Hiruzen. Wouldn't we suffer a loss if he speaks something that is incorrect? Though I am impressed by his analytical ability, he needs to be a part of a lot more such meetings before allowing him that right."

Fujin looked at Homura. He wasn't offended as he completely agreed with his analysis. Choza silently agreed with him as well.

Homura looked back at Fujin and thought, 'I was even going to mention that he isn't strong enough to be given such a responsibility. But that might be demotivating for the young kid. Besides, Hiruzen should have enough confidence in his talent if he is giving him such a responsibility.'

However, Hiruzen dismissed his worries and said, "It's fine. After all, we old fellows can handle it if he messes up. You don't need to worry about failure, Fujin. Just do what you think is the best."

Fujin nodded and replied, "Alright. I'll try my best to not disappoint you and get more benefits for our village."

However, he couldn't help but feel that something was off. He wondered, 'Why is he in such a rush? I know that he isn't dying. Is Konoha short on capable diplomats? That shouldn't be the case as Konoha is the best at diplomacy as long as it doesn't involve Kumo.'

Don't tell me that he just doesn't want to leave me alone in the village when he is touring outside... No, that shouldn't be the case. After all, if I mess up, the potential costs will likely be much higher than the few Wind Crystals I use up.

I guess he really wants me to become a good negotiator. Though it'll take away some of my training time, it's fine. This seems fun and will be a good way to take a few breaks.'

Just like Fujin, Homura was confused as well. He wondered, 'Why is Hiruzen pushing him so much? Even though we are old, the younger generation still has Kakashi who is very smart at such things. And there is still Shikaku and Jiraiya who could help him out.'

Hiruzen smiled on hearing Fujin's reply and said, "Good."

Hiruzen knew that Homura would be confused, but he didn't care much. After all, Homura had rarely interacted with Fujin. He thought, 'My students' generation was almost wiped out by the two great wars. The ones who survived died during Kyubi's rampage. Though Minato's generation produced a few decent Elite Jounins, no one other than Minato and the Clan Leaders showed any interest in politics and diplomacy.

While Kakashi is smart and takes responsibility when necessary, he had a very upright upbringing. First under Sakumo's care and then under Minato's tutelage. He doesn't have the same selfishness and greediness that Fujin possesses.

In the future, even if Kakashi becomes the Hokage, Fujin should be the one responsible for leading Konoha's negotiations. Of course, it'd be great if Shikaku or Jiraiya aided Kakashi. Unfortunately, I don't see either of them willing to travel to foreign countries unless there is no other option. So I'll have to guide Fujin and have him prepared for this task before the next big war starts.'

As for Fujin's strength, Hiruzen didn't even bother considering it. After all, unlike Homura, he was quite aware of the reason behind Suna's headaches.

The group rested the night at one of Konoha's Patrol camps and travelled to the Land of Noodles the next morning. Just like in the Degarashi Port, the Daimyo and a few Nobles were waiting for Hiruzen's arrival.

However, the old Daimyo had retired and passed the seat to his son. The new Daimyo immediately greeted Hiruzen respectfully and enthusiastically. But before he could speak more, his eyes landed on Fujin.

His eyes sparkled immediately and he exclaimed, "Fujin, it is good to see you again. Have you considered my offer?"

Fujin looked at the new Daimyo in surprise as long-forgotten memories slowly resurfaced. He thought, 'Ugh, I almost forgot about him. I had only politely said that I'd consider it. Did he not get the message? Or did he get infected by shamelessness after inheriting the seat?'

Hiruzen and Homura were puzzled. Hiruzen asked, "What offer, Lord Daimyo?"

Chikara looked back at Hiruzen and said, "A few years ago, Fujin and his squad had helped our country to come out unscathed from a disastrous situation. I was so impressed by his performance that I invited him to join my Guardian team."

Hiruzen replied, "Oh."

He looked at Fujin and recalled, 'I recall Tamotsu leading a mission here. But I don't recall him saying this. Did Fujin decide to create external relations for some reason?'

He looked back at Chikara and said with a smile on his face, "Unfortunately I can't let Fujin go as of now. But, I have many capable ninjas under me. I'll assign one to serve as your Guardian."

Chikara was immediately in an awkward position. He wanted Fujin, not any other ninja. And if Hiruzen sent a ninja by his own will, Chikara wouldn't be able to trust that ninja. Especially if he decided to make some moves that were unfavorable for Hiruzen. Unfortunately, he couldn't reject Hiruzen directly.

He cursed in his mind, 'I messed up. I should have kept my calm. The boy doesn't even want to join my Guardian team! I just got excited as he came here just a few weeks after I took over.'

Hiruzen maintained a kind smile. He obviously wouldn't let Fujin waste time here. However, this was too good of an opportunity. He could openly put a pawn in the Daimyo's court. And even if he was rejected, Chikara would be very passive during the negotiations and he will try to compensate him for declining him earlier.

Fujin noticed Hiruzen's purpose as well. He sighed in relief as he thought, 'For once I'm thankful for how crafty this old fox is. I was afraid that I'd be put in an awkward position. Though I could refuse, it would have put us in a passive position. Now the situation is completely reversed.'

Chikara smiled and replied, "Thanks for the generous offer, Lord Hokage. I will be grateful to receive your help. However, let's discuss this later. Come, let's enjoy the feast that my chefs have created for us."

He quickly guided the Konoha ninjas in his mansion as he thought, 'I'll have to consult Father on this issue. I can't afford to offend him just after becoming the Daimyo!'

Once again, they had similar discussions along with a lavish lunch that had a large variety of noodle dishes. After a couple of hours of discussion, Konoha agreed to create a similar outpost on the border with the Land of Noodles.

However, instead of an Elite Jounin, the outpost would be overlooked by a Veteran Jounin. In exchange, the Land of Noodles agreed to supply 125 Fire and Wind Crystals each and 50 of them every year after it until the situation calmed down. In addition, they also agreed to sell Noodles at a discount in exchange for discounted meat imports from Konoha.

But, the biggest gain for Konoha was something else. Chikara informed the details of Hiruzen's offer to his father. The old Daimyo sighed knowing the error his son made.

He instructed, "It's fine. You don't have any threat from Hiruzen. But ask for someone who is young, preferably under 20. And say that he shouldn't have been a part of any black ops. In addition, stay on guard when with him. Especially if you plan on doing anything against Konoha's interest."

Chikara's father was well aware of Danzo's reputation. He trusted Hiruzen but had no intention of letting his son's life be in Danzo's hands. Though he wouldn't be able to verify whether the ninja was in the Anbu or not, he knew that Hiruzen would receive the message.

Chikara nodded. He put the same conditions to Hiruzen who agreed immediately. With all the matters settled, the Konoha ninjas bid farewell and left.

While they were back on their way to Konoha, Hiruzen looked at Fujin and asked in a teasing tone, "I wasn't aware that you had a job offer from a Daimyo. Why didn't you tell me, Fujin?"

Fujin shrugged and replied, "It was years ago. I completely forgot about it until I saw him again. Besides, I thought that Tamotsu reported it to you."

Hiruzen replied, "So Tamotsu knew as well? Weird that he forgot to report to me. Else I'd have remembered."

Fujin looked back at him and said, "Well probably for the best. We did gain a huge advantage today."

Hiruzen nodded. However, Homura thought, 'Yeah because we were lucky. It'd have gone a lot smoother if it was reported.'

Hiruzen began discussing the negotiations with Fujin and gave him more tips. This continued until late at night when they finally stopped in one of the newly created Patrol Camps in the Land of Fire.

Post the Uchiha massacre, Shikaku had ordered the construction of several Patrol camps deep within the Land of Fire. These camps weren't meant to patrol the borders. Instead, they patrolled important routes and at times went on random paths to patrol more thoroughly.

The group from Konoha stayed here to have a peaceful sleep. However, the night wouldn't be a peaceful one.

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Chapter 292: The Unluckiest Squad!

The ninjas in the Patrol camp were very respectful towards Hiruzen, Homura and Choza. Since Fujin was with them, he received the same treatment. They immediately made the best arrangements for everyone.

While eating dinner, Fujin thought, 'The normal food tastes kinda bland after enjoying two exquisite feasts. Oh well, at least it's much better than my cooking.'

Like Fujin, everyone ate dinner. Hiruzen even praised the cook and told some stories over the dinner to reignite the Will of Fire in everyone. Finally, the group went to sleep in the small camp. The ninjas in the Patrol camp guarded the camp with a lot of enthusiasm. After all, their beloved Hokage was resting in it.

At the same time, a dozen kilometers away, 6 ninjas were hiding in the forest. They were surrounded by thick forest cover as they sat around a map that was laid on the floor.

One of the ninjas asked authoritatively, "Are you sure that the intel is accurate, Naomasa?"

Naomasa replied, "Yes, Hideyoshi-sama. According to our intel, Konoha has established a new Patrol Camp here."

Hideyoshi took another long look at the map. After a couple of minutes, he said, "Good. Let's move closer. We will destroy the camp before continuing our journey."

His words shocked the group. One ninja immediately said, "But Hideyoshi-sama, our target isn't this camp. Why don't we just go around the camp and avoid it? It would be troublesome if Konoha begins hunting us."

Hideyoshi looked at that ninja and asked, "Kaname, are you the leader, or am I?"

Kaname immediately became nervous and said, "It's you. I am just worried that if they have any Hyuga or sensor, then we will be sensed and our mission will have to be abandoned."

Hideyoshi scoffed and replied, "You don't need to be worried about it. With me here, they won't have any opportunity to report us. Besides, I doubt a random patrol outpost will have a better sensor than Naomasa."

Kaname sighed secretly as he thought, 'Getting promoted to Elite Jounin has inflated his ego even more. Though Konoha is not as strong as it used to be, they still have many existences that can decimate us with ease. Especially since their Sannins randomly roam throughout the country. But he is right, we should be alright. Naomasa is a very capable sensor.'

Hideyoshi instructed, "Naomasa, lead the way. Lead the way and sense them when you are in range."

Naomasa nodded. The group of six moved quickly through the dense forest until they were around 2.5 km from the Patrol camp. Naomasa made a hand seal and activated his chakra field. Immediately, a chakra field with a 3 km radius spread around him.

As the chakra field engulfed the Patrol camp, 4 sets of eyes opened instantly. Fujin got up and wondered, 'Are any other Konoha ninjas passing through?'

He didn't activate his own chakra field. Hiruzen, Homura and Choza also got up. The Anbu Guards were already up. As for the ninjas stationed at the camp, they didn't notice the chakra field.

Naomasa sensed everyone and frowned. He said, "Hideyoshi-sama, the camp has 9 ninjas. 4 are Genins, 3 are Chunins and 2 are Jounins. I believe there are 2 civilians as well."

His fellow ninjas were confused. Kaname asked, "Why does such an insignificant post have 2 Jounin ninjas?"

Hideyoshi thought for a bit and said, "It looks like Konoha is hiding something here. Or perhaps the Jounins are escorting 2 important civilians. Regardless, this could be more important than our mission."

He looked at Kaname and instructed, "Kaname, you will engage one Jounin while I will kill the other. The rest of you kill the chunins and genins and aid Kaname. Keep the Civilians alive. I want to interrogate them."

Everyone nodded. Not a single person had any fear on their face. After all, Hideyoshi was an Elite Jounin. And all the other 5 ninjas were Jounins! However, if they knew that the two civilians that Naomasa sensed consisted of an Elder of Konoha and the Hokage, they would have turned tail and ran until their legs couldn't carry them any further.

Fujin and Choza left their rooms and appeared in the open. They had both suppressed their chakra to Jounin levels. They were the ones Naomasa detected. As for the Anbu, they had completely hidden their presence. So Naomasa couldn't sense them.

Fujin's eyes glowed as he observed the surroundings. Surprisingly, he didn't see anyone. He said, "Looks like the Sensor is a bit capable. I can't see anyone in a radius of 750 meters."

Choza replied, "We have many sensor ninjas who can sense for over a kilometer. Especially in the Yamanaka clan. Let's wait for them to approach."

Fujin nodded. The four Anbu guards stayed behind to protect the camp while Hiruzen and Homura didn't show up outside.

In a minute, 6 figures appeared in Fujin's eyes. A look of surprise appeared on Fujin's face. Choza asked, "Who did you see?"

Fujin replied, "I don't recognize their chakra signature. But one has chakra high enough to be considered as an Elite Jounin and the remaining five have Jounin levels of chakra. But, I have remembered the chakra signatures of all Elite Jounins in Konoha. Did someone get promoted recently in secret?"

Choza got ready for combat and grabbed his Bo and replied loudly, "Not that I am aware of. I'll take on the Elite Jounin. You cooperate with the Anbu to take care of the rest. Others, move back inside the camp."

The ninjas from the camp were surprised to hear that. They didn't know what was happening but obeyed Choza. Choza's words were loud enough to be heard by the four Anbu. They immediately disappeared and hid themselves.

Naomasa sensed the movements and said, "The Chunins and the Genins have moved inside the camp. Only the two Jounins are waiting outside. I guess they noticed my chakra field. But they shouldn't be aware of who we are."

Hideyoshi said, "It's fine. It doesn't matter if they know or not. They will die very soon."

In a flash, they appeared in front of the camp. Fujin and Choza frowned. The ninjas were wearing Konoha headbands but they didn't recognize any of them. At the same time, the expressions of the 6 ninjas also became grim as they realized, 'It isn't just a Jounin. It's Akimichi Choza! An Elite Jounin and a rather famous one.'

Choza said loudly, "Identify yourselves."

Hideyoshi knew that he wouldn't be a match for Choza one on one. He instructed softly, "Change in plans. I'll keep Akimichi Choza occupied. You 5 kill that kid and then help me."

A smile formed on Fujin's face and a sword appeared in his hand as he heard his words. He thought, 'If there was a ranking based on luck, these 6 would definitely rank the lowest.'

A similar thought ran through the minds of every Konoha ninja. Of all places, they attacked the camp where their Hokage was resting despite having so few members.

Hiruzen observed the situation from his room and wondered, 'Who are these guys? Seeing their numbers, they shouldn't be here to assassinate me. But since when did the Land of Fire have such powerful rogue ninjas who impersonate Konoha ninjas?'

At the same time, his eyes moved towards Fujin as he thought, 'Though I have read all his battle reports, I have never seen him fight. This would be a good opportunity to see him fight.'

At the same time, Homura also watched Fujin. He was curious as to why Hiruzen was so interested in grooming him.

The six ninjas jumped towards Fujin and Choza at the same time. Choza gripped his Bo staff tightly as he took his fighting posture. At the same time, he unleashed his chakra. Their attention was immediately glued to Choza. Hideyoshi gritted his teeth. He cursed, 'His chakra is almost twice that of mine! But we have the advantage of numbers.'

Unfortunately, Fujin took advantage of the momentary lapse in concentration. He immediately disappeared.

Naomasa's eyes widened. He immediately grabbed his kunai and swung it in front of him and shouted, "Be careful!"

His shout attracted everyone's attention. They noticed a sword appearing in front of Naomasa. The kunai and the sword clashed. However, instead of hearing the clash, they saw the sword cut through the kunai as if it was hot butter.

Naomasa's eyes widened. He didn't have any time to move. He could only see as the sword cut his head off.

Except for Hideyoshi, the remaining ninjas immediately attacked Fujin. However, he continued with the momentum and moved a long distance away in the same direction. None of them could hit him.

Soon, a thud was heard. Naomasa's body fell on the ground and subsequently dragged along the ground due to his momentum. His head fell some distance away. At the same time, the transformation jutsu was dispelled and his real appearance could be seen. Hiruzen squinted his eyes on seeing the real face.

But the ninjas had no time to watch their fallen comrade. They looked at the ninja who they had thought to be an easy target. Disbelief could be seen in their eyes as they thought, 'Naomasa was a veteran jounin! He wasn't a weak Jounin like those from smaller villages. And he was one of the best sensors we had. How was he killed off so easily?'

However, they had no time to grieve for him. After landing on a tree, Fujin flickered back towards them. Choza engaged Hideyoshi and ensured that he couldn't move towards Fujin.

Seeing Fujin, one of the ninjas opened his mouth and shot out 6 Air Bullets at Fujin.

Fujin's eyes widened and he immediately jumped up in the air as he thought, 'Sealless jutsu? These guys are no pushovers. Luckily I caught the sensor off guard. It would have been troublesome if he ran away and hid his chakra signature.'

The remaining ninjas immediately began weaving hand signs while one threw shurikens at Fujin. However, they suddenly felt danger. 2 ninjas quickly moved away. However, the one who just shot out air bullets and the ninja who threw the shurikens couldn't react quickly. Two swords pierced through both their bodies.

Hideyoshi watched the scene through the corner of his eyes and was horrified. He attacked Choza fiercely while screaming in anger, "Why does this small post have a clan leader and four Anbu ninjas?"

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Chapter 293: Losses Keep Piling Up!

The two Jounins were killed by the four Anbu ninjas who were hiding. Their transformation jutsu was also dispelled. Half of the intruders were dead within a minute of beginning the clash!

Kaname gritted his teeth as he looked at Hideyoshi with pure hatred. He had led them all to their deaths! However, he had no time to curse him. A dozen air bullets were heading at him. He immediately dodged while looking at Fujin who appeared in front of him and swung his sword at him.

He thought, 'He must be using Wind nature chakra flow. Otherwise, Naomasa wouldn't have lost so easily.'

He grabbed a kunai and ducked down to avoid the sword. The sword passed harmlessly from over his head. At the same time, he jabbed the kunai towards Fujin's chest.

However, Fujin's cheeks suddenly puffed out. Kaname's eyes widened and he stopped attacking and instead rolled to the side. At the very moment he moved to the left, Fujin shot a Vacuum bullet at point-blank range. The bullet passed by Kaname's left ear and ripped it out completely! But, he still managed to survive and rolled away. However, such damage caused his transformation jutsu to be dispelled.

Fujin watched his real face with some respect in his eyes. He thought, 'He is good. If instead of ducking, he had moved away, he would have been dead. And if he continued that attack, he'd be dead again. But he survived on both occasions.'

At the same time, Kaname was in shock as he observed Fujin. He thought, 'Who is this kid? His attacks are relentless and uses Wind Vacuum jutsus without any hand seal. I don't even have any time to create a jutsu!'

Fujin was about to attack when he noticed someone moving extremely quickly. Kaname sensed that someone had appeared behind him and immediately swung his kunai backwards. However, his arm was blocked by a palm. At the same time, two fingers jabbed into his back and hit just behind where his heart was.

Chakra poured from the fingers into Kaname's chakra point and blocked it. At the same time, several other chakra points in his body were blocked. Kaname suddenly felt a wave of weakness. He fell to the ground.

Knowing that his life was no longer in his hands, he turned his head to see who the attacker was. His eyes widened in terror as he muttered, "Lo... Lord H... Hok... Hokage?"

Hiruzen didn't reply and jabbed two fingers into his neck. Kaname instantly lost consciousness and collapsed on the ground.

Fujin was surprised. He thought, 'The Gentle Fist of the Hyuga? He can replicate the effects of that as well? Did he memorize the locations of some important chakra points?'

While Fujin was dealing with Kaname, the other Jounin was also killed by the four Anbu ninjas. Only Hideyoshi was still alive. However, he looked at Hiruzen with horror in his eyes. No matter how arrogant he was, he knew that he wouldn't last even a minute against a Kage!

He stopped fighting with Choza and asked fearfully, "Why is the Hokage here? Don't tell me he was the civilian that Naomasa detected!"

He immediately regretted his decision to attack this camp and thought bitterly, 'Why did I decide to attack this camp?'

Hiruzen looked at him and said, "I am more curious as to what Sunagakure ninjas are doing in the Land of Fire and why you are attacking Konoha's Patrol camp."

Hiruzen was aware of the strength of the ninjas in the camp. If he had not stopped there, those ninjas would have died tonight. And considering the strength of the attackers, Konoha would have a very difficult time finding them.

Hideyoshi's eyes widened. He didn't expect Hiruzen to recognize them. He had no intention of facing Hiruzen or leaving his life and death to the Konoha ninjas. He immediately began running away. However, Choza immediately moved in his path and swung his Bo staff at him. Hideyoshi was surprised. He exclaimed, 'So fast!'

Hideyoshi didn't expect Choza to be as quick as him. He raised his arms in a defensive position to block the attack. He managed to block it, but Choza's physical strength was much higher. He was hurled backwards. Hideyoshi's expression became grim as he realized, 'He sent me flying towards the Hokage!'

Hideyoshi flipped in the air and landed on his two feet as he slid backwards while weaving hand signs. He turned around and continued his way towards Hiruzen as he screamed, "Don't underestimate me!"

'Wind Release: Blade of Wind jutsu'

He extended his index and middle fingers on both his hands as Wind flew rapidly around them. Fujin grabbed his sword and was about to intervene when he noticed Hiruzen's actions.

Hiruzen had extended the same two fingers on his right hand. Wind began moving around them as well. Hideyoshi's eyes widened. He immediately launched dozens of wind blades at Hiruzen.

Hiruzen merely responded by launching an equal number of wind blades. Fujin watched with widened eyes as Hiruzen's wind blades neutralized each and every wind blade launched by Hideyoshi perfectly. He muttered, "What the hell?"

However, the one who was most shocked was Hideyoshi. He thought, 'How can this be? This is my most skilled jutsu. I have trained it for over two decades! How can he be more skilled at it than me?'

Unfortunately, he wouldn't receive any answers. As soon as his jutsu ran out, Hiruzen disappeared and appeared in front of him and tapped his forehead with the same two fingers. A seal appeared on his forehead.

Hideyoshi was horrified! He tried using his chakra but he felt that his body had no chakra. He tried moving but he couldn't move a muscle. He wanted to speak but not a word left his mouth!

Fujin's eyes twitched as he saw this scene. He thought, 'What the fuck? Wind jutsus is what I excel in. But his control and preciseness far exceed mine. Even I wouldn't have been able to neutralize that attack this way. At the most, I'd have overwhelmed it by pouring more chakra into the jutsu.'

I can understand his Taijutsu being better than mine. But despite all my training, his speed still exceeds mine. And by such a huge degree. I won't be able to keep up with him in a head-on fight. And that Juinjutsu... What a freak!

Sigh, the last mission increased my confidence a lot. I thought I'd be able to at least run away from S ranked ninjas. But now... Luckily I didn't challenge Rasa. If I didn't manage to get reverse summoned in time, I'd probably be buried deep within the desert had I challenged him. Looks like there is still a considerable distance between my level and the S rank despite my high chakra.'

Hiruzen's little display gave Fujin a reality check. Though he relied a lot on his skill with Wind jutsus, his biggest reliance was his speed. The ability to keep up and run away from any opponent was what he felt was the most important skill for a ninja. However, Hiruzen's speed shook Fujin's confidence in his speed.

While Fujin was comparing himself with what Hiruzen showed, Hideyoshi's life flashed in his eyes multiple times. Hiruzen noticed the range of emotions in his eyes and said, "Don't worry. You won't be able to move."

He placed his right hand on his head. Chakra flowed from his palm into Hideyoshi's brain! Hideyoshi felt immense pain as Hiruzen began reading his memories. He wanted to scream in pain but the seal didn't allow him to make any sound.

In the next seven minutes, Hiruzen read most of Hideyoshi's memories. He let go of his head as he analyzed, 'I see. Sunagakure has already started creating plans to target the Nobles from our country. This was their first squad.

Unfortunately for Suna, they decided to attack this camp to do more damage to Konoha. Furthermore, their plans have a lot of inefficiencies.'

Hiruzen walked away from him and instructed, "Kill him and get rid of all the bodies."

The four Anbu Guards nodded and got to work. They knew that Hiruzen meant that there should be no proof of these bodies ever being here.

Fujin, Homura and Choza immediately realized the reason for this. If Hideyoshi was left alive, then Suna would demand him back. And it would be difficult for Konoha to refuse that request. Though Konoha could inform about these matters to the Wind Daimyo, it would deteriorate the relationship between the two countries.

Konoha wanted to maintain the alliance with Suna, even if it was just on paper. So keeping Hideyoshi, whether dead or alive, was disadvantageous for Konoha.

However, Fujin couldn't help but think, 'I killed one Elite Jounin and several Jounins from Suna during my promotion mission. And now another one of the Elite Jounins has died along with 4 Jounins. Their losses just keep piling up. At this rate, will they even have the necessary forces to launch the Konoha Crush?'

Fujin suddenly became worried. He thought, 'Shit, if the Konoha Crush doesn't happen, then a lot of future events will change. I might not have much advantage of knowing the future if that happens. Sigh, I hope Rasa doesn't get too intimidated.'

Hiruzen read Kaname's memories as well to gain any information that he could. He was disposed of the same way as well. Hiruzen analyzed the information and concluded, 'These two don't have all the information. I'll have to arrange strong patrol squads in the country. In addition, the security of Fire Capital has to be increased.'

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Chapter 294: Lying with a straight face

He quickly made some plans and let out a sigh, 'This is getting very complicated. I'll leave the planning and operations to Shikaku.'

He said, "We are leaving now. We need to get to Konoha quickly."

He looked at the ninjas who were deployed in that Patrol camp and instructed, "Keep up your good work. Clear all traces of the battles here. And don't tell anyone about what happened today."

The ninjas immediately nodded and said, "Yes Lord Hokage."

Hiruzen nodded and instructed, "Fujin, create shadow clones and sweep through the area. Check if there are any suspicious squads in a 20-kilometer radius."

Fujin replied, "Alright."

He focused on his chakra. His chakra began splitting into two. One had 40% of his maximum chakra while the other had around 59%. The 40% part of his chakra suddenly disappeared and 20 Shadow clones appeared around him. They immediately dispersed in separate directions.

Hiruzen left the camp along with Fujin, Choza, Homura and the Anbu Guards without waiting for Fujin's clones to finish the search.

While moving, Hiruzen's eyes landed on Fujin. He analyzed, 'I didn't see him much in action. Seeing that they were from Suna, I had to ensure that they don't die so that I could read memories with better accuracy. Still, just those few attacks show why he was so successful in Suna. With good control over Wind manipulation and the ability to take advantage of every little opening, he ends up killing his opponent before they have a chance to display their prowess.'

Unlike Hiruzen, Homura wasn't aware of Fujin's capabilities. He was shocked at how good he was. He looked at Fujin and analyzed, 'This boy... He is very good. Though I can't say for sure how strong he is. After all, he killed that sensor using a sneak attack by using the distraction that Choza created.'

But the ability to take advantage of such small opportunities is far more valuable than strength. After all, we are ninjas. The ability to kill is way more important than the strength we possess. If a Genin kills a Kage by injuring him with a poisoned needle or kunai, then that Genin is far more valuable than a Kage who sits in his village during a war.

Besides, he is still just 14. He can gain strength in the future. I can see why Hiruzen is putting such emphasis on this boy. He could become just as capable as Kakashi. Though I still don't see why he wants to make him a negotiator.'

Fujin suddenly gained several memories. He said, "My clones didn't find anyone else. It looks like those six were travelling alone."

Hiruzen replied, "Alright, good work."

The group rushed towards Konoha without exchanging many words. By the time the Sun rose, they had reached Konoha. Choza and Fujin left while Homura accompanied Hiruzen into his office. He wanted to know why Suna attacked Konoha. One of the Anbu guards left to call Shikaku.

After half an hour, Shikaku walked into the office while grumbling, "Why are they back so quickly? And why did he disturb my sleep? I have barely managed to sleep half my usual time in the last month."

Shikaku noticed Homura in the room. Hiruzen said, "It's good to see you up so early, Shikaku. We have new intel, come sit."

Shikaku's eyes twitched on hearing Hiruzen's words. He reluctantly sat down and asked, "What intel did you get?"

Homura said, "On our route back, the Patrol camp we stayed at was attacked by Suna ninjas."

Hiruzen added, "I read their memories. It looks like Suna is planning several more attacks. Though it might be delayed a bit after we eliminated the first squad."

Hiruzen informed Shikaku about the details of the attack and the intel he gained by reading memories. Shikaku's expression became serious as he analyzed the situation.

After a few minutes, he said, "Hideyoshi didn't have enough information. We don't know who will be in the other squads. And we don't know what routes they will take. Though it is doubtful that they would send more Elite Jounins, we should operate assuming that they send Elite Jounins to avoid getting caught off guard and taking unnecessary losses.

Creating more patrol squads will be a waste of manpower. Instead, we should plant some Anbu and a couple of Elite Jounins in the Land of Fire. They can make a move after the Suna ninjas expose themselves.

This wouldn't raise any suspicions. And once we have driven away a few Suna squads, we will ambush their rendezvous point that Hideyoshi was told about. We could disguise as Hideyoshi's squad to catch them off guard."

Hiruzen thought for a bit and nodded, "Alright, let's do this."

However, Homura frowned and asked, "But why is Suna attacking us? We are allies."

Shikaku knew that Hiruzen hadn't informed others about Fujin's actions. In fact, his mission report was already destroyed and replaced with a fake one. He said, "The recent events in the Land of Wind probably alarmed them. Whoever it was, they did a good job of directing the suspicions at us. Especially by burning the food storage facilities. That provides a lot of advantages to us. So some response is to be expected."

Homura frowned. He was very suspicious and thought, 'These two are definitely hiding something from me. At least Hiruzen is. The incidents in the Land of Wind are just too favorable for us for it to be done by Iwa or Kumo.'

He said, "That isn't acceptable. If it has nothing to do, then we should engage in a dialogue and make them stop their actions. Otherwise, we would suffer as well just like how Suna did."

Hiruzen rejected his idea by replying, "I just killed one of their Elite Jounins. If you want to talk now, we would have to pay a big price. Besides, considering how much they suffered, it seems impossible that they didn't catch anyone. Though Suna is incompetent, they shouldn't be that useless. I'm sure they already know who the culprit is and are just using the opportunity to create trouble for us.

Regardless, the situation is very beneficial for us. We just need to kill some of their ninjas. Once they realize how high the risks they have to take for these attacks are, they will stop immediately."

Homura became quiet. He thought, 'His words make perfect sense. But I know that something isn't right. Sigh, I don't think he will tell us the truth.'

He looked at Shikaku, but Shikaku looked like he would close his eyes and fall asleep at any second. Having seen Hiruzen's ability to bullshit for so many years, Shikaku didn't feel anything at the lies he made up. Homura couldn't find anything from Shikaku's expression.

He nodded and said, "Alright. I'll take my leave."

Since he wasn't getting any information, Homura left. Hiruzen instructed, "Along with this situation, also decide which ninjas to deploy in the new camps that we have to build along the borders of Tea and Noodle countries. If needed, you can temporarily move them to assault any Suna infiltrators."

Shikaku nodded and left. After closing the door, he sighed and muttered, "Why does my workload keep increasing? And we aren't even at war!"

Shikaku immediately got to work. Unlike Shikaku, Fujin had no responsibilities. He rested for a day and got back to his training. His clones worked hard to master more seals. They had already learned all the new symbols that the scrolls had. And they had mastered all seals in 18 of the 58 scrolls.

As for Fujin, he recalled how 'magnanimous' Hiruzen was and absorbed the energy in the Wind Crystals faster than ever!

After a week, he was finally called to the Anbu Headquarters. Fujin walked to the headquarters while thinking, 'Looks like they finally arranged subordinates for me. Still, I haven't led a squad since the Uchiha massacre. I hope I haven't gotten too rusty. Granted the first missions will be easier ones. I can't wait to make them police the streets, hahaha.'

When Fujin reached the headquarters, he saw Eagle, the commander of all Anbu ninjas, waiting for him. Eagle said, "Follow me."

Fujin nodded and followed him to a room. On entering, he noticed 3 masked Anbu in the room. One wore a Cat mask with 3 red stripes. She had long straight purple hair. Another wore a Dog mask. He had golden hair. The last one had short black hair. Unlike the other two, he was much younger and wore a sparrow mask.

Eagle said, "He will be your team captain. Hawk, I'll leave them in your care."

He disappeared from the room leaving Fujin alone with his new subordinates.

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Chapter 295: Subordinates

Fujin looked at his new teammates and thought, 'I didn't think Yugao would be assigned under me. Shouldn't she be a part of Yamato's unit? Looks like my unit isn't made of newly selected ninjas. Makes sense I guess considering how many people Hiruzen recruited two years ago.'

He removed his mask and took a seat and said, "Take seats, make yourself comfortable and introduce yourself. I'm Suzuki Fujin. You can call me Captain or Haw... No, Turtle."

Fujin tossed his Hawk mask in the open box that contained dozens of masks while thinking, 'The Hawk mask along with my swords is just too well known. Fame is not good for Anbu missions. I need a new disguise.'

Fujin had seen a turtle mask at the top of the box. Wind suddenly began flowing in the closed room. The turtle mask soon began floating in the air and moved towards Fujin. Fujin grabbed it and said, "I specialize in Wind Release and Swordsmanship. I prefer ranged battles and using hit-and-run tactics."

Yugao and the blonde Anbu weren't surprised or impressed by Fujin's display. However, the third Anbu was quite impressed. He thought, 'That's cool!'

Yugao removed her mask and said, "I'm Uzuki Yugao. My codename is Neko. I am currently training in various Sword styles. I specialize in Wind release as well. In addition, I can also use a few Fire and Water jutsus. And I can sense up to a distance of 800 meters. As for the battle, I don't have any preference for tactics. I can adjust to any battle style."

Fujin raised his eyebrow and thought, 'Apart from Water jutsus, her skill set is almost identical to mine.'

At the same time, Yugao wondered, 'When Lord Hokage said that I could learn from my new captain, did he mean that I could improve my sword styles and wind jutsus by observing him?'

The blond ninja removed his dog mask and said, "I am Yamanaka Fumito. My codename is Inu. I specialize in Yamanaka clan secret techniques. I can sense up to 1700 meters. My affinity is Wind as well. My secondary nature is Lightning. I prefer hiding and sneak attacking the enemies."

Fujin nodded. Fumito looked to be as old as Yugao. Considering that they would have been ninjas for close to a decade, it wasn't surprising that they decided to learn more than one element.

Finally, the last ninja removed his mask. A smile was plastered on his face. Fujin felt that his face looked familiar, but he didn't recognize him at first glance. However, soon, Fujin was surprised. He thought, 'This guy became an Anbu?'

Though Fujin didn't show it, he was genuinely surprised. The ninja introduced himself, "I am Handa Bunjiro. My codename is Sparrow. My affinity is Water and I am learning Wind jutsus as my second nature. I have also learnt the basics of being a sensor. But currently, I can only sense up to 80 meters. As for combat style, I don't have any fixed style but I prefer to drown my enemies from a distance."

Fujin nodded and analyzed, 'Yugao and Fumito have Wind as their primary element whereas Bunjiro has it as his secondary element. In addition, all 3 are sensors. And Yugao also uses a sword. Looks like my team will specialize in hitting from a distance or assassinations instead of engaging in combat directly.'

But, considering all the elements, the team does cover all elements. These 3 just miss the Earth element, but Hiruzen and Eagle should know that I can use Earth jutsu. The only major issue is Bunjiro. How did he go from Academy to Anbu in just 2 years?'

Though Fujin also managed to do the same, his circumstances were completely different. Fujin had learnt the basic exercises of Chakra control during his first year in the academy. He had graduated at the top of his year and could already use two elements. After graduating, he was guided seriously by an Elite Jounin and even received training from Hiruzen. As for Bunjiro, he hadn't even tried the Tree Climbing exercise until a few months before the Graduation exam.

Fujin wondered, 'Was he trained seriously by someone as well? Regardless, though this feat is impressive, his chakra is far lower than Yugao and Fumito. His strength should be weaker as well. It makes the squad unbalanced. Did Hiruzen force him into my squad just because I taught him in the past?'

Fujin thought for a bit, but couldn't think of any other reason. He asked, "Good. Do all three of you know the rules and protocols of Anbu?"

All three nodded. Yugao and Fumito were already a part of Anbu, whereas Bunjiro was informed by Eagle.

Fujin looked at Yugao and asked, "You know where the Anbu training ground 9 is, right?"

Yugao nodded. Fujin said, "Good. Take Inu and Sparrow there. I'll come in half an hour. Use that time to discuss how to coordinate properly with each other and form decent teamwork. When I come, you three will fight me."

Yugao, Fumito and Bunjiro were surprised. Fumito thought, 'He will take all of us on at the same time? Sigh, why did I get such a young captain who is so arrogant? If it wasn't for my horrible luck, I'd have been an Anbu Captain myself!'

Bunjiro wondered, 'Does he think that I'm as weak as I was 2 years ago?'

Only Yugao looked at him meaningfully. She and Fumito walked out while Bunjiro followed them.

Fujin saw them leave. As soon as they were out of sight, he flickered and appeared in front of Eagle. Eagle wasn't surprised to see Fujin and asked, "Do you need something?"

Fujin nodded and replied, "Yeah. Give me their files. I wanna know everything I can about my team."

Eagle nodded and handed Fujin 3 files and said, "Feel free to read but leave them here. The information regarding the Anbu can't be allowed to exist anywhere else."

Fujin nodded. He opened Yugao's file and began reading. After he was done, he concluded, 'She is good. She was first part of Kakashi's squad and then Yamato's squad. And she has already begun her training under Hayate. But, if all the information here is true, then her power is already equivalent to an Anbu Captain. Why wasn't she allowed to take the promotion mission?'

Fujin began reading Fumito's file. He was surprised as he discovered, 'I see. He has already tried a promotion mission but failed to pass. His power should be at the Jounin level as well. No wonder I saw disdain in his eyes when I said that I will take on all 3 of them myself.'

Fujin placed his file down and began reading Bunjiro's file. This was the one he was most interested in reading. As he read, Fujin thought, 'Though I guided the five of them, I didn't have much expectations from any of them. At most I expected them to reach Low Chunin levels. After all, none of them had the talent or determination to get stronger. Guess I was wrong. I wonder what happened to the remaining four.'

He read all his information and analyzed, 'I see. He and Tatsuya were placed in the same squad under a Jounin who took an interest in guiding them properly. And he is quite hard-working as well. He managed to become a Chunin around 6 months ago. But he was the only one from his squad who got promoted.

Not bad. No wonder he managed to join the Anbu. But his strength doesn't compare to the other two and is probably average among Chunins. Though he is 6-7 years younger than the other two. Still...'

Fujin looked up at Eagle. Though he couldn't see his face due to the mask, he could see that Eagle's eyes were glued on him. He thought, 'I don't understand my team. One is ready to be promoted to Anbu Captain, one has failed the promotion mission and the third is a newbie. What does he aim to achieve by giving me such an imbalanced team?'

Eagle asked, "Is there any issue?"

Fujin handed over the files and said, "No. I do have a question though. Since my team is newly formed and has a new member, we will have to Police the Village for a few months, right?"

Eagle was confused by the question. He replied, "No, who told you that? You will be assigned field missions right away."

Fujin asked, "Won't that be risky with an inexperienced ninja?"

Eagle replied, "The other two of your subordinates are quite strong. And Lord Hokage believed in your strength as well. So I believe that his safety wouldn't be an issue."

Fujin replied, "Alright."

He left while thinking, 'As I expected, Hiruzen was behind such a weird team. Though Eagle's logic makes sense, it is very flawed. Knowing Hiruzen, he should have other motives. Unfortunately, I can't guess them.'

While Fujin was thinking, his new subordinates had discussed and planned for a few minutes before stopping and waiting for Fujin. Yugao and Fumito were sitting in a meditative position while Bunjiro had a frown on his face.

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Chapter 296: Establishing Clout!

Bunjiro looked at Yugao and Fumito who were just sitting in the training ground. He asked with a frown on his face, "Shouldn't we discuss more strategies and work on our teamwork?"

Yugao and Fumito just talked about their abilities and asked Bunjiro to do the same. After knowing everyone's abilities, Fumito formed a very basic plan and Yugao agreed without any arguments. Bunjiro wondered, 'What the hell? This is even worse than when we were put in a Genin squad! Aren't they supposed to be experienced Anbu ninjas?'

Fumito shook his head and replied, "We won't be able to improve our teamwork much in 30 minutes. So it's pointless. Just ensure that we don't get in each others' way while fighting and we will be good. After all, our opponent is someone who has just been promoted to Anbu Captain."

Bunjiro wasn't convinced. He said, "But..."

Yugao cut him off and said, "He is right. Captain could have given us more time to prepare to form better teamwork. But we aren't Genins. As an Anbu, we may spontaneously be asked to team up with other Anbu ninjas, or other Anbu teams or even operate solo. So we have to be prepared to form good coordination with any other ninja. Consider this as a part of your training."

Bunjiro thought for a bit and replied, "Alright."

He sat down as well and joined his new teammates. Yugao's mind wandered as she recalled the meeting she had the previous day.

One day ago :

Yugao appeared in the Hokage's office. Only Hiruzen and Shikaku were present in the room. She respectfully asked, "Lord Hokage, what are your orders?"

Hiruzen waited for a few seconds and said, "Yugao, your Anbu Team will be changed. I'm placing you in a different Anbu unit."

Yugao was surprised. Her eyes lit up. She asked, "Am I getting promoted to Anbu Captain, Lord Hokage?"

Hiruzen smiled and said, "No, not yet. We have observed your improvements and you have been performing very well. But it's not yet the time for your promotion."

Yugao became silent. She was confused. She thought, 'Captain Yamato said that I'm ready for the Promotion mission. Why did Lord Hokage say the opposite? And why am I being shifted?'

Hiruzen continued, "This change will be beneficial for you. Your new Captain will be Suzuki Fujin. I believe you will learn a lot from him."

Shikaku handed her a file that contained some basic information regarding Fujin but didn't mention anything about his abilities or mission record. Yugao glanced through the information. A look of surprise appeared behind her mask as Yugao noticed Fujin's age.

Hiruzen explained, "He is quite strong, but is very young. And he tends to go a bit extreme during the missions. While working with him, you will also be responsible to stop him if you feel that he is doing something that will have very adverse implications."

Though Hiruzen was impressed by what Fujin did in his Promotion Mission, neither he nor Shikaku wanted to see him do anything of that scale once again. His actions had almost broken the delicate balance of the ninja world. Hiruzen wanted the current peace to extend for as long as it could.

Yugao was surprised by his words. She asked, "By stopping, do you mean?"

She didn't complete her question. Hiruzen replied, "No, just talk with him. He is very reasonable. He is still your Captain. So you aren't allowed to fight or backstab him."

Yugao sighed in relief. She didn't want to attack her comrade. She nodded and said, "Alright. I'll do my best."

Hiruzen smiled again and said, "If you keep up your good work, I'll allow you to take the Promotion Mission after a year."

Yugao replied with determination in her voice, "Thank you. I won't disappoint you."

She left the office. Shikaku watched her leave with a serious face. Hiruzen hadn't informed him of his plans. He analyzed, 'That's strange. She is strong and experienced enough to be promoted. Yet, she wasn't.'

He recalled the names of the Anbu that would be assigned to Fujin and began analyzing all information. Suddenly, it clicked. He looked at Hiruzen with surprise as he realized, 'I see. Yugao is confirmed to be an Anbu Captain. So is Fumito. As for Bunjiro, Hiruzen said that Fujin had guided him in the academy. With his talent, he should reach the Jounin level as well.'

He asked, "You are planning to increase Fujin's clout?"

Hiruzen wasn't surprised that Shikaku figured it out. It was the main reason why he had called him there. He nodded and replied, "Yes. Though his strength is impressive, his reputation is almost non-existent. He might be more famous in Kumo than in our village. His relationships aren't much either.

The only one with significant influence that is close to him is Renjiro. Even in the younger generation, the only ones close to him are Hyuga Hoka and Senju Teru. Though they are talented, they won't be anywhere near enough to support him in the future. Compared with Kakashi, he is highly lacking in both aspects."

Shikaku nodded. By giving Fujin three talented subordinates, Hiruzen had set up an easy path for him to gain influence. Yugao and Fumito will remember that Fujin was their captain for some time. As for Bunjiro, he was guided by Fujin from the time he was in the academy. So he would become another one to support him. And since Yugao and Fumito would be promoted very soon, Fujin would be given newer subordinates to increase his influence in the Anbu.

Shikaku asked, "Are you confident that he can become a Hokage?"

Hiruzen shrugged and said, "It's tough to say. But there isn't any harm in helping him. If he lives up to our expectations, then he could compete with Kakashi for my seat in the future. And since neither of them is hungry for political power, it shouldn't create any internal conflict in the village."

Shikaku nodded and said, "I agree. But, increasing his reputation will be a bit problematic. Both the Kumo incident and this mission can't be revealed to the public. We will have to create more opportunities in the future like we did for Kakashi."

Hiruzen replied, "It's fine. He is only 14. Let him stay in the dark and keep accumulating his strength. When the time is right, we can create multiple opportunities for him to gain fame. Even the Anbu Commander post can be handed over to him if need be."

Shikaku nodded. Raising someone's reputation wasn't very difficult for them. Especially if that someone was worthy of that reputation. He discussed the Sunagakure matter with Hiruzen and left the office.

Alone in his office, Hiruzen looked at a scroll lying on his desk. There were many scrolls on his desk at all times, so Shikaku didn't pay any attention to that scroll. Hiruzen thought, 'I was initially planning to give Fujin a couple more months off. Learning Advanced Fuinjutsu is difficult and very time-consuming. But with Shadow Clones, he should be able to do the symbols and the easier seals in 3 months. But...'

Recalling the contents of the scroll, Hiruzen shivered involuntarily. He thought, 'I thought I had hinted it to him quite clearly. But, why did he increase his consumption of Wind Crystals? Did he get the wrong

message somehow? Don't tell me he thought that my buying more Wind Crystals from other countries was a message to keep using as many as he wants. Sigh, this kid is too good at giving me headaches.

If I let him be free for another couple of months, Konoha might actually begin running out of Wind Crystals! And that would invite scrutiny from the Council. Though I might be able to handle it, it will bring a lot of unnecessary attention to Fujin and his access to them in the future will be limited heavily. So I can only send him on missions and limit the amount of time he has to spend in the training facilities.'

Present :

Fujin waited for 30 minutes and appeared at the training ground. Yugao, Fumito and Bunjiro got up and got ready. Fujin looked at them and said, "In order to cooperate properly, we need to know where everyone's strengths lie and what everyone's weaknesses are. There won't be any killing or maiming in this fight. But give it your all. You won't stand a chance against me if you hold back."

Though Fumito was a bit skeptical, he planned to give it his all. Yugao and Bunjiro also became serious.

He picked up a stone and tossed it in the air and said, "The fight begins once the stone hits the ground."

Yugao grabbed her sword, Fumito grabbed a few shurikens and Bunjiro held 3 shurikens in each hand.

As soon as the stone hit the ground, Yugao rushed forward with her sword while Bunjiro launched all six shurikens at Fujin. Meanwhile, Fumito stayed back and weaved hand signs to take advantage of any openings Fujin provided.

The six shurikens ripped through the air and hit Fujin's body. Bunjiro's eyes widened. He thought, 'So easy?'

However, he saw the Shurikens passing through his body and Fujin's image dispersed a bit before dissipating completely! He asked, "When did he create a clone?"

Fumito's expression was serious. He said, "That wasn't a clone. It was an afterimage!"

Fumito didn't see Fujin move at all. He closed his eyes and activated his chakra field. All his previous disdain was tossed out of his mind.

Yugao was serious as well. She only saw the general direction of where Fujin had gone. She turned her head to her right and shouted, "Incoming!"

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Chapter 297: Displaying his Might!

On their right, a gigantic dragon made of wind was flying towards them. Yugao immediately jumped forward and out of its way. Fumito sensed the attack as well. Only Bunjiro was caught off guard. Fumito grabbed his arm and jumped in the opposite direction.

Hiding among the trees, Fujin observed their movements and thought, 'Not bad. I was expecting Fumito to dodge by himself.'

The Dragon suddenly turned towards Fumito and Bunjiro and chased after them. Fumito let Bunjiro's arm go and said, "Use a Water jutsu to stop it."

He began weaving hand signs himself while moving backwards. Bunjiro also did the same.

Just when the Wind Dragon was about to crash into them, Bunjiro released his jutsu.

'Water Release: Water Wall jutsu'

A wall of water appeared in front of the dragon. Fumito immediately launched his jutsu as well.

'Lightning Release: Lightning Net jutsu!'

Lightning began flowing through the water wall and a blue net could be seen sparkling inside it. Bunjiro's eyes widened in shock, 'He created a perfect combination attack on the first try?'

At the same time, Yugao traced the Wind Dragon's path and tracked Fujin's location. She tried approaching him sneakily but Fujin spotted her immediately. Since stealth was of no use, Yugao approached him openly and jumped in the air. She swung her swords in a circular motion, leaving a trace of afterimages behind.

'Hazy Moon Night'

Yugao moved at a remarkable speed, forming a blur as she closed the distance between her and Fujin in the blink of an eye. In one swift motion, she unleashed a slashing strike aimed directly at Fujin's neck.

Though her sword movements were irregular and her speed very high, Fujin had no issues in seeing her actions clearly. A sword appeared in his hand. He raised it just in time, meeting Yugao's blade with a resounding clash!

Yugao had expected Fujin to stop her attack. She intended to use the impact to halt her momentum and swiftly transition into her next series of attacks. Yet, to her surprise, she found herself unable to feel the expected resistance from Fujin's forceful strike.

Instead of blocking, Fujin parried her blow and sent it veering to his right. The sword harmlessly passed by him. Yugao, carried by the momentum of her own strike, continued her movement and found herself dangerously close to Fujin's flank.

In one fluid and precise motion, Fujin continued the natural flow of his sword and slashed her thigh, cutting the straps of the weapon pouch attached to her right leg.

Yugao stopped a few meters behind him. Her right leg had a shallow sword cut causing it to bleed. She turned around to look at Fujin. Shock could be seen in her eyes as she thought, 'He parried my attack? But how? Even Hayate-senpai never managed to do this. He could only dodge or block my attack.'

A bit away, Fumito and Bunjiro were able to stop the Wind Dragon with their combination jutsu. However, before they could relax, they heard, "That's impressive."

Both immediately jumped forward and turned around and saw Fujin standing with two balls of wind in his palms. Fujin's shadow clone fired two Wind Explosion Spheres at Fumito and Bunjiro. Neither had sufficient time to use a jutsu. So both of them jumped out of the way. Though they dodged, the spheres exploded and sent sharp winds flying in all directions. Both received several minor cuts on their chest, abdomen and arms.

Both had frowns on their faces. Fumito realized, 'He can hide his chakra perfectly. I didn't sense him at all. If this was a mission, we would have died.'

Bunjiro was dumbfounded. He thought, 'I got injured by a rank D jutsu? I thought that I had reduced the difference between us. But now... How much is he holding back to fight with just C and D rank jutsus?'

Despite their emotions, both attacked immediately. Fumito shouted, "Distract him! I'll get him with Mind Body Switch jutsu!"

He extended his arms towards Fujin's clone and waited for an opportunity. Bunjiro ran towards Fujin's clone while weaving hand signs quickly.

'Water Release: Water Shuriken jutsu'

Dozens of water shurikens appeared in front of Bunjiro and flew at Fujin's clone. He dodged them while thinking, 'Since when did Anbu start having ninjas that shout out their tactics? Besides, even though that jutsu is overpowered, it is useless without the aid of a Nara or excessive support.'

He dodged a few dozen water shurikens, but more kept appearing around Bunjiro and launched at him continuously. The Clone's eyes began glowing and landed on Bunjiro. Bunjiro was continuously releasing his chakra. The chakra in his body was moving in the same way it did after he weaved the hand signs.

Fujin's clone analyzed, 'I see. Though he needed hand signs for the first time, he has learnt to control his chakra well enough to keep spamming that jutsu without the need for repeating or maintaining any hand seals. My previous analysis of just an average Chunin was wrong. He should be able to perform this jutsu without any hand seals very soon.'

Fumito observed Fujin's clone moving around at high speeds. He had no chance to use his jutsu. However, he didn't mind and waited for an opportunity.

A bit away, Fujin and Yugao were clashing with their swords. Neither used any jutsu. Yugao was breathing heavily. In just a few minutes of clashing, there were dozens of cuts on her body. On the contrary, there wasn't a single cut on Fujin's body.

Behind her mask, Yugao had a bitter smile. She muttered to herself, 'I understand what Lord Hokage meant. I have used every style, every dance that I know, but he countered all my attacks without using any sword style. No wonder he was promoted to Anbu Captain at such a young age. I'm not even worthy enough to make him fight seriously.'

Knowing that competing with swords will be pointless, Yugao sheathed her sword and made a hand seal.

'Multi Shadow Clone jutsu'

3 Shadow clones appeared next to her. Fujin saw them weaving hand signs and sighed, 'I should avoid sparring in the future. My natural instincts have completely been honed to kill. All 3 of them have provided me with so many openings that it has been a challenge to restrain myself. Anyways, I have seen enough. Time to end this.'

Yugao's clones completed their hand seals.

'Wind Release: Great Breakthrough jutsu'

'Fire Release: Fireball jutsu'

Fujin saw a giant Fireball that was being deconstructed into flames and spreading along the wind, heading towards him. He immediately moved out of the range of the attack. However, the last clone and Yugao followed him.

'Wind Release: Air Bullet jutsu'

'Water Release: Water Bullet jutsu'

Both shot a dozen bullets each at Fujin. However, Fujin rapidly moved towards them while dodging the bullets with ease and leaving multiple afterimages behind. Yugao tried targeting Fujin's path but was unsuccessful.

Fujin appeared behind her as chakra gathered on his palms. Yugao and her clone tried moving away while grabbing their swords. However, Fujin hit their abdomens with his palms.

Yugao's shadow clone dispersed due to the damage. Yugao herself was sent flying and slammed into a tree! The damage caused her remaining clones to dispel as well.

On the other side, Bunjiro realized that Water Shurikens won't help him resolve the situation. He weaved a few hand seals quickly.

'Water Release: Raging Waves jutsu'

Bunjiro supercharged the jutsu by pouring most of his chakra into it. He spewed a large amount of water that rushed towards Fujin's clone like a giant waterfall!

Fumito was waiting for such a move. Lightning appeared on his palms and a beam was launched into the Water that Bunjiro released, electrifying it!

Fujin's clone noticed the combination attack and smiled, 'Not bad. He bluffed when he said he wanted to use the Mind Body Switch jutsu. He was waiting for Bunjiro to try and drown me. Looks like I won't have to worry about them dying easily. Oh well, time to establish my prestige in this team.'

The electrified water wave appeared in front of him. Fujin's clone refined his chakra instantly and attacked.

'Wind Release: Infinite Breakthrough jutsu'

Fujin's clone exhaled very strong winds. It clashed with the combination jutsu and overpowered it instantly. The electrified water was sent flying towards where Yugao's clones had lit a fire. The winds created deep scars in the ground. Many trees were cut while a few were uprooted.

Bunjiro created a water wall to protect himself. However, it kept crumbling at every second. He desperately put all his chakra into the Wall to ensure that it protected it. He gritted his teeth and thought, 'Fujin is this strong? This is crazy! Luckily this attack isn't targeted at me. Otherwise, even if there were a hundred of me, we would have died!'

Fumito escaped into the ground without any hesitation. He was horrified by the attack. He cursed, 'What the fuck? How the hell can a 14-year-old use such an insanely strong attack? That too with just half his chakra! Anbu Captain my ass. His level should be far beyond it!'

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Chapter 298: Chaoter 295: Doing Paperwork with Enthusiasm!

Yugao got back on her feet and grabbed her sword. However, Fujin raised his palm and said, "Enough. That's sufficient combat for today."

Yugao nodded and sheathed her sword again. Suddenly, she looked behind her. At that instant, a strong wind blew through the area. Numerous branches were broken. Yugao struggled to keep standing. A massive amount of water suddenly landed on the fire that was spreading, dousing it and covering the area with steam.

After the winds passed, Yugao asked, "What is that?"

Fujin replied, "Looks like my clone decided to end the battle. Let's go and check on them."

Just like Fumito, Yugao also sensed the fight happening at the other place. But she was still surprised that Fujin could unleash such destruction with just a clone. Both flickered towards where Fumito and Bunjiro were.

The winds had finally calmed down. Fujin and Yugao saw Bunjiro sitting on the ground while breathing heavily. Despite wearing a mask, they could see that he was scared. Sensing them, Fumito climbed out

of the ground. He looked at Fujin. This time, there was no disdain in his eyes. Instead, there was admiration and respect.

Fujin looked at his clone who dispelled himself in response and passed all the memories to Fujin.

Fujin said, "I have seen enough for now. We will end the fight here."

Neither Bunjiro nor Fumito objected. They didn't want to be on the receiving end of such a devastating jutsu again. Fujin looked at Bunjiro and said, "Take a good rest, your chakra levels are very low."

Bunjiro nodded and replied, "I will."

Fujin looked at Yugao and Fumito and said, "Though the cuts on you are shallow, get them healed as well. We will meet back in our room after 3 days. I'm not sure when we will be assigned missions or which missions we will be assigned."

He looked at Bunjiro and explained, "Generally speaking, easier missions are assigned when a new Anbu joins the unit. But, Yugao and Fumito have a lot of experience. So we may be given tougher missions to start off. So be prepared."

Bunjiro nodded again and said with confidence, "Don't worry Captain. I'm prepared."

Fujin nodded and said, "Good. Let's meet later."

He flickered away leaving his three subordinates together. Bunjiro said, "I never thought that the gap between an Anbu and an Anbu Captain would be so strong."

Fumito shook his head and said, "You are overthinking. He is just too strong. I don't think my old Captain would stand a chance against him. I wonder how he trained to be so strong at just 14. And why isn't he famous? I never heard of him until today."

Yugao said, "I guess he did missions that were classified. So he never got any credit for them. Still, I didn't think that I'd be so outclassed in swordplay. I'll be returning to my training."

Fumito nodded and said, "I will be doing the same. Bunjiro, after you heal and rest for some time, visit the training facilities. Instead of resting at home, meditate in the Water Training rooms. Considering how strong our captain is, our missions might be very difficult."

Bunjiro replied, "Alright. Thank you for the tip, Fumito-senpai."

The three visited Konoha Hospital before going their own ways.

Meanwhile, Fujin had created 60 Shadow Clones to continue learning the seals while he went into the Wind Training room to meditate. While meditating, he analyzed, 'Hiruzen gave me quite a strong squad. Yugao's swordplay is as good as I expected. But her skills with Elemental jutsus were a surprise.

As for Fumito, despite being a Yamanaka, his skills with Lightning jutsus and his ability to form combination jutsus with allies is very impressive. And he didn't show any Wind jutsu which is supposed to be his main element. But I guess that is to be expected. After all, advancing to Jounin rank with just the Yamanaka secret techniques is extremely rare. And it is even more difficult to become an Anbu Captain.

Bunjiro is the biggest surprise though. Though rank A and S jutsus seem cool, in a battle, the most effective jutsus are the ones that can be spammed or affect a huge area. With Water Shuriken and Raging Waves, he covers both these areas. Though he will have to improve his movement and reaction speed. But, that will improve as he goes on difficult missions.'

While Fujin was analyzing his team, one person had a very dark face. Sitting in his office, Hiruzen was watching Fujin with his crystal ball. He thought, 'I gave you a team. Go hang out with them, train with them, and make friends. Why are you back in the training rooms? All that effort only managed to keep him away for an hour?'

Hiruzen immediately began doing his paperwork while thinking, 'I need to find a suitable mission for his team. A mission that will keep him away from the village for at least two weeks.'

Takao, who was helping Hiruzen with the paperwork, looked at him in surprise. He wondered, 'Why is Lord Hokage going through his paperwork with such enthusiasm?'

The next day, Hiruzen sat in his chair while looking at 3 files on his desk. All these 3 files had a mission that needed an Elite Jounin level ninja to lead. Hiruzen looked at the first file and thought, 'This mission will be a long-term deployment in the Land of Water. It would have been an excellent mission to test how good Fujin is beyond fighting and killing.'

Unfortunately, I don't want to risk sending him on another long mission in a major village. I'm afraid he might drag Konoha into that civil war. I'll let Renjiro take care of this.'

He opened the second file and thought, 'Suna and Iwa are signing some sort of treaty or at least an understanding in the Land of Birds. Considering the current situation, an alliance between them could prove troublesome for us. However, Onoki should see the bigger picture and realize Kumo's threat.'

Fortunately, Onoki and Rasa aren't meeting. Still, it will be best if this meeting goes bad. But Suna should be hunting for Fujin. It's not a good idea to send him there. I'll let Eagle lead 3 Anbu squads with former Root ninjas here.'

Finally, Hiruzen opened the last file and thought, 'The leaders of the Ide family and Kagawa family from the Land of Grass are going to meet in Ide territory. Though very few in the Land of Grass support Iwa, Ide is one of them. In fact, they are the most significant.'

They control a large territory along their borders with the Land of Earth. Shikaku believes that this meeting is a trap to kill the head of the Kagawa family who supports Konoha.

I'll send Fujin's team here to ensure that the head of the Kagawa family returns safely. Since this meeting is supposed to last for over a week, they will be away from the village for at least 2 weeks.'

Hiruzen decided to assign the mission to the Land of Grass to Fujin's unit.

While Hiruzen was picking out a mission, Yugao was training extremely hard along with Hayate. Sounds of swords clashing could be heard for hours in their training ground.

Finally, Hayate said, "That's enough for today. You need to rest."

Yugao stopped and sheathed her sword. Both went out to grab a meal. Hayate asked, "What's gotten into you today? I haven't even seen you train with such intensity?"

Yugao sighed and said, "I was assigned to a new team yesterday. The Captain arranged a sparring session. He parried my Hazy Moon Night slash with ease. During the fight, I couldn't land a single hit on him."

Hayate was surprised. Even though he was teaching Yugao, her strength wasn't far from his. He asked, "He sounds very powerful. Who is your new captain?"

Yugao replied, "Suzuki Fujin."

Hayate tried recalling, but he couldn't remember anything. He said, "I don't think I have ever heard of him. Is he a Veteran ninja who keeps a low profile by hiding in the Anbu?"

Yugao shook her head and replied, "No. He is just 14 years old. I looked up his information as well. But I didn't find much on him other than the fact that Senju Renjiro was his teacher and that he was the champion during his Chunin exams."

Hayate was shocked. He asked, "A 14-year-old boy defeated you in swordplay? Which style did he use?"

Yugao had a bitter smile as she said, "None. I couldn't make him use any."

Hayate was left speechless. He thought, 'Seeing the intensity of her training and her voice, she should have been defeated very thoroughly.'

He muttered, "A 14-year-old genius who is already an Anbu Captain. Looks like our village will have another strong ninja in the future."

Yugao nodded. To cheer her up, Hayate changed the subject and talked about the stuff she liked.

Just as Hiruzen expected, Fujin's name would slowly be known among the generation that was around 6-8 years older than him. These were the batches that had graduated from Academy right after the Third Great Ninja War and hence had very high numbers. Due to this, Fujin's reputation would slowly build up in the village.

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Chapter 299: A Boring Mission?

On the day Fujin was supposed to meet with his team, an Anbu ninja showed up at Fujin's house and passed him a message.

Fujin frowned as he thought, 'A mission on the very same day we decided to meet? That old fox must be spying with that perverted ball again.'

Fujin and his team met in their assigned room at the decided time. Fujin looked at his subordinates and asked, "Are any of you still injured?"

Everyone shook their heads. Fujin said, "Good. Lord Hokage will assign our first mission today. Follow me."

Fujin walked towards the Hokage's building. Yugao, Fumito and Bunjiro followed him while lost in their own thoughts.

Bunjiro was excited. He thought, 'Wow! I never expected that Lord Hokage would assign my first Anbu mission himself. I lucked out by joining Fujin's team. Though I hate Daisuke, I am so glad that he led us to meet Fujin!'

Fumito thought, 'A mission after such a long time. And this is assigned by Lord Hokage as well. I have to perform properly and show Lord Hokage how capable I am. Only then I will have any chance of becoming an Anbu Captain.'

Yugao's eyes were glued to Fujin's back. She was interested in finding out more about Fujin and his skill with the sword. The group soon entered Hiruzen's office.

Hiruzen looked at Fujin's Turtle mask and asked, "Why aren't you wearing the hawk mask?"

Though Hiruzen had seen that Fujin used the turtle mask during sparring, he thought that Fujin would go back to the Hawk mask during normal Anbu missions.

Fujin replied, "That mask gets identified quite quickly. So it kinda loses its purpose."

Hiruzen nodded but he was surprised. Though it was a very logical move, most ninjas wouldn't do it unless the mission demanded a high degree of anonymity. After all, who wouldn't want to build their fame and be well-known and respected throughout the ninja world?

Hiruzen explained the mission details to Fujin's team. Fujin analyzed the details and thought, 'Looks like this will be another long and boring mission. Sigh, I wanted to continue training.'

After understanding the details and importance of the mission, Team Fujin left the office. Fujin said, "This will be a 2-3 weeks long mission. Pack up the supplies and meet me at the village gate in 30 minutes."

Everyone nodded and dispersed. Twenty minutes later, Team Fujin left the village and moved towards the Land of Grass. A day later, they entered a town under disguise. The street was bustling with a high number of people who were going about their lives in a happy mood.

Fumito looked around the town and said, "Looks like the Kagawa family is doing a great job. This town is very peaceful and prosperous and the citizens look happy and content."

Yugao nodded and said, "Yeah. Their family has a few Jounins. So the city should be safe in times of peace."

The group walked to a location from where they could watch the central Mansion very clearly. Fujin's eyes glowed as he saw a bunch of people in the courtyard. They were all flocking around a man in his fifties. He muttered, "So he is Kagawa Noriyuki, the leader of the Kagawa family."

Fujin instructed, "Lord Hokage should have sent him a message mentioning that we will be protecting him from the shadows. So we won't be coming in any direct contact with him unless trouble really happens.

According to our information, he will leave the town after 3 days. Though unlikely, Iwa could send an assassin to kill him while in the city. So we will take turns to keep an eye on him. I and Bunjiro will keep an eye during the day. You two will keep an eye during the night."

Yugao replied, "Alright. We will investigate the city a bit before getting some rest."

Fujin nodded. Fumito and Yugao left. Their experience in the Anbu was longer than Fujin's. So he didn't need to give them many instructions.

Fujin and Bunjiro hid themselves while keeping an eye on the mansion. Bunjiro was a bit nervous. Even though Fujin had guided him earlier, he had provided guidance to the entire group at the same time. He had never interacted with Fujin one on one.

After some silence, Bunjiro couldn't hold it anymore and decided to talk. He asked, "Aren't we in peacetime? Why is Iwa trying to create trouble right now? Wouldn't that cause a war?"

Fujin looked at Bunjiro and wondered, 'What would he think if he knew what I did in the Land of Wind?'

Fujin shook his head and said, "The peace you see is only on the surface. In reality, this peacetime is a continuous war between the Anbu of various countries. Every action we take is to increase our advantage in the next war. The village that does this the best while building its military power will likely be the one to win the next war."

Bunjiro was shocked by that answer. His understanding of the world shattered. He muttered, "Doesn't that mean that the next Great war is a certainty and the peace is only temporary?"

Fujin nodded, "Pretty much."

Bunjiro's mood became a bit depressed. He asked, "Does that mean we will be fighting Iwa ninjas for sure this time?"

Fujin replied, "Not really. Fighting between Anbu can become very complicated. This might just be a false alarm. Or perhaps Iwa faked information so that we would waste our time protecting him while they attack someone else. Only around 30% of the missions actually involve any combat. Life and Death battle is even more rare. But, it is better to just assume that we will be in a Life and Death battle in every mission."

Bunjiro nodded and the two became silent once again. After a while, Fujin asked, "How are the other 4 doing?"

Bunjiro wasn't surprised by the question. He replied, "Tatsuya was in the same Genin team as me. Though he failed last time, he is participating in the current chunin exams and has qualified for the last round. He should be able to become a Chunin.

Daisuke, Ryoma and Buncho were put in the same Genin squad under a Chunin sensei. But, we had an argument after the graduation exam. So I don't know much about what happened to them later. I heard that they participated in this chunin exam but were eliminated in the 1st round."

Fujin was surprised. He asked, "You five used to be so close to each other. Why did you suddenly argue?"

Bunjiro let out a sigh and answered, "After you guided us for the last time, they just practiced the 3 basic ninjutsu and didn't train any further. But me and Tatsuya began learning the elemental jutsus and hence gained a better rank in the exam.

So after the exam, they blamed us and said that we trained in secret instead of training at the same speed as them. They stopped speaking to us after it."

Fujin shook his head in disappointment and replied, "I see. That's a bad attitude. But seeing how strong you have grown, I guess it was good for you."

Bunjiro nodded. After the argument, he had become very careful in choosing his friends. He only befriended the ones who worked as hard as him and pushed him to be better. He looked at Fujin and secretly sighed in relief.

He thought, 'Daisuke said that he was friends with Fujin from the time that they were very young. I was afraid that Fujin would get angry at me since I abandoned his friend. Luckily he is moral and just and doesn't blindly side with his friends.'

Bunjiro felt that his worries were just. After all, Daisuke was the one who brought their group to Fujin and he claimed that he had played with Fujin since they were 2 years old. However, Fujin had long forgotten that. After all, he wasn't sure whether he could even consider those memories as his. He had agreed to guide them just as an experiment.

Since they didn't have anything to do, Fujin began talking with Bunjiro about his abilities. Sensing the chance to gain additional guidance, Bunjiro told him everything about himself.

Fujin made a few comments on how he could improve further. After learning everything about him, Fujin thought, 'Looks like Renjiro isn't the only one who trains his students very seriously. He lucked out by getting a Jounin sensei who was dedicated to raising the next generation.'

Fujin said, "Your progress is very good. Your control over Water jutsus is good. But, you should focus on improving your speed. Work on your Body Flicker jutsu. Learn how to do it without making any hand seals and sustain it for longer distances. When you combine that speed with your sustained Water Shuriken offense, you will see far better results."

Bunjiro immediately nodded. He recalled how Fujin had disappeared in front of their eyes and his clone had appeared behind them. If he could replicate the same, then his attacks would become much more deadly.

Fujin asked, "Do you use a Training Seal?"

Bunjiro nodded and replied, "Yes, Sensei bought one for each of us a few days after we became his students. It exerts pressure and resistance up to 125 kg. I can currently handle up to 69% of the maximum pressure."

Fujin replied, "That's good. Focus on maxing it out. When you do, I'll make a new one that can exert pressure up to 500 kg."

Bunjiro said, "I will do it. Thanks, Captain!"

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Chapter 300: Ambush!

As the sun rose, casting its golden rays upon the town, a sense of anticipation filled the air. Many people gathered along the streets, their faces beaming with excitement and curiosity. Vibrant banners fluttered in the gentle breeze, displaying the emblem of the town and symbols of its proud heritage. The atmosphere was charged with a mixture of admiration and reverence.

At the center of the commotion stood Kagawa Noriyuki, adorned in regal attire, radiating an aura of authority. Accompanying him were a retinue of influential nobles and skilled ninjas, each exuding a sense of confidence and purpose. Their presence commanded attention and respect.

The townsfolk lined the streets, their eager eyes fixed upon the procession as it made its way through the heart of the town. Cheers and applause erupted from the crowd, echoing through the bustling thoroughfares.

Among the crowd stood Fujin and his team who had disguised themselves. It had been over three days since they arrived in the town. Fujin observed the procession and thought, 'Not bad. He converted this meeting into some sort of festival. This will increase his prestige and reputation. And all he had to do was put up a display while leaving the town instead of just leaving silently.'

Fujin was impressed by Noriyuki's intelligence and methods. Standing next to him, Yugao said, "The ninjas wearing those fancy vests are the 8 Jounins protecting this town. Even the leader is supposed to be at Jounin level."

Fumito commented, "Only 3 of them can barely be considered at the Jounin level. The rest, including the leader, are at the Chunin level."

Fujin nodded and said, "Still, it's impressive considering that it is just a town in the Land of Grass."

Not long ago, Fujin had raided the Western cities in the Land of Wind. Of the five cities he attacked, 4 didn't have any Jounin protecting them.

Yugao observed properly and said, "The man standing next to Noriyuki is Hoshino Ryoichi. He is hiding his chakra but is quite strong. He is said to be among the 3 strongest ninjas in Kusagakure. In the Third Great Ninja War, he held back a division of Iwagakure to save a city."

Fujin nodded. He already knew about him. After recruiting Kasai Shigeki, Fujin began looking for information on talented ninjas outside the five major villages. Hoshino Ryoichi was among those ninjas. Fujin was wondering how he could recruit him. Unfortunately, Fujin didn't have any means of recruiting or controlling him. He was hoping to get some additional intel on Ryoichi during the mission.

After passing through the main streets in the town, the entourage left the city and slowly disappeared in the distance. In the mansion, 5 people stood on the balcony and saw the entourage leaving with worry in their eyes. They were the family of Noriyuki.

Considering the danger during this trip, Noriyuki hadn't taken any close family members with him. Instead, he had made all preparations to ensure that his son would succeed him if something happened to him. The ones who could pose a threat to his son were all made to accompany him to the meeting.

Team Fujin followed the entourage from a distance. Bunjiro sighed and said, "They are moving slower than even the trade caravans!"

Fumito nodded and said, "It's because they have many civilian Nobles. Those bunch are the slowest when it comes to moving long distances. But learn to be patient. As an Anbu, you may have to spend weeks or even months doing nothing but keeping a watch."

Bunjiro nodded. They followed Kagawa and his group for over a day until they reached the banks of a magnificent river! Across the river was Mizukoshi, the Westernmost town in the Land of Grass and the town where the Ide family held power.

The river, teeming with turbulent waters, surged with a forceful current. A normal civilian wouldn't be able to swim in the river. Fortunately, a sturdy bridge spanning the width of the river was built by the Ide family.

The Kagawa family entourage crossed the bridge and was immediately welcomed by the people arranged by the Ide family to greet and welcome the Kagawa family.

Observing them from a long distance, Yugao said, "That bridge looks like the perfect ambushing spot. Other than ninjas, everyone would die immediately."

Fujin nodded and said, "Well, our task is just to ensure that Kagawa Noriyuki stays alive. So if they are ambushed here, focus on killing the ambushers rather than defending."

Yugao and Fumito understood Fujin's intentions and nodded. However, Bunjiro was shocked! He looked at Fujin once again and thought, 'But wouldn't that mean that every civilian will be dead? There are over 30 people in that group who can't use their chakra. Do we have to be so heartless?'

Despite his doubts, Bunjiro didn't question Fujin. As an Anbu, obeying the instructions of his superior without any question was the basic requirement. Otherwise, the success rate of Anbu missions would drop drastically. If he had any questions, he could ask them after the mission was completed.

Team Fujin infiltrated Mizukoshi and stayed there for the next week while keeping an eye on Kagawa Noriyuki. However, not a single incident happened during that week and no one tried to attack Noriyuki. Finally, after completing all meetings and discussions, the Kagawa family entourage left Mizukoshi.

Bunjiro saw them leaving and muttered softly, "Looks like Shikaku-sama's analysis was wrong."

However, the eyes of Fujin, Yugao and Fumito were glued to the water around the bridge. Yugao muttered, "He is right once again."

Fumito asked, "Should we make a move?"

Fujin replied, "No. We don't know whether they are enemies or not. We would create trouble if they have any other purpose. But stay ready. We will make a move as soon as they do."

Though they could see the chakras, they couldn't see to whom the ninjas belonged as they were hiding underwater. If they weren't Iwa ninjas and instead were from the Ide Family, then Fujin would have to

reassess how to make a move. After all, it would then be an internal conflict rather than a hidden conflict between Konoha and Iwa.

Though Fujin had killed various forces from the minor villages, all had been done with utmost secrecy. If he openly killed them in front of an entire town, then it would be disadvantageous for Konoha diplomatically. The loss would far exceed the gains made by saving the Kagawa family. Even if he used disguises, it wouldn't take a genius to figure out who the external forces protecting the Kagawa family were.

Bunjiro heard their conversation and was confused. He asked softly, "What do you mean?"

Fujin replied, "16 ninjas are hiding in the river. Be ready to flicker."

Bunjiro immediately became serious and mentally prepared himself for a fight.

The group watched as the entourage began crossing the bridge. Despite walking on it, none of the Kagawa family ninjas detected the ones hiding underwater in the strong water current.

Without leaking any chakra, everyone in the group underwater grabbed a kunai with an explosive tag attached and threw it at the entourage. At the same time, one ninja made the confrontation hand sign. Immediately, the explosive tags attached to the bridge began glowing.

Since no incident had happened, most of the people in the entourage had become lax. However, Hoshino Ryoichi was on guard and noticed the kunais. He threw a couple of shurikens to intercept them and shouted, "Watch out!"

Immediately all ninjas became alert. However, it was too late. Other than the kunai Ryoichi deflected, the remaining explosive tags all went off at the same time!

The people from Mizukoshi, who were watching the entourage leave, watched in horror as the bridge that connected them with the rest of the Land of Grass blew up! Many immediately began screaming in horror. A few ran away as chaos spread in the town!

At the same time, a smile crept on the face of Ide Tomoki, the leader of the Ide family. However, he soon hid it and shouted, "We are under attack. Everyone prepare immediately! We will save our fellow countrymen!"

Ide Tomoki looked at the explosion with ecstasy in his eyes. He thought, 'Great! I was getting worried by how rapidly the Kagawa family was spreading their influence in recent years. Even my interests were being compromised. But with them out of the way, we will no longer have any threat. And by showing how quickly I decided to help them, my prestige will increase uncontrollably.'

Team Fujin didn't move and just observed the smoke. Soon, 15 figures jumped out of the smoke and stood on top of the river. They were Kagawa Noriyuki, Hoshino Ryoichi, 8 Jounins and 5 Chunins. Fear and horror could be seen on their faces. Apart from them, everyone was dead! Even Ryoichi had a grim expression.

Bunjiro thought, '6 chunins died to such a lame attack? These guys aren't worthy of being called Chunins.'

Immediately, the ninjas hidden in the water came out and assaulted them. Fujin saw their headbands and said, "Rogue ninjas. Kill them all!"

Since they weren't wearing the headband belonging to Kusagakure, Fujin could just kill them and claim that the Kagawa family had issued a mission to Konoha to ensure their protection. Since the attackers had disguised themselves as rogue ninjas, no one could question them. All four flickered at the same time.