

## Calamity 371

Naruto: The Wind Calamity

Chapter 371: Failure!

Fujin didn't bother thinking about Danzo anymore and focused on his training again.

After four gruelling hours of relentless training, Fujin's body felt like it had been pushed beyond its limit several times. His muscles burned with a searing intensity, and every breath he took was a laborious effort.

With a deep, ragged exhale, he finally released the tight control he had maintained over his body. He collapsed backwards onto the training ground, his back making contact with the earth.

Drops of sweat glistened on his forehead before trickling down, mingling with the earth below. His chest heaved as he lay there, staring up at the sky. He muttered, "Finally done! What a fucking crazy training plan! And I have to put my body through this hell on a daily basis..."

Fujin closed his eyes and kept lying there, recovering both body and spirit. After around 5 minutes, Fujin finally got up. He stretched his sore muscles while thinking, 'No wonder the Eight Inner Gates isn't popular. Only a maniac can put his body through this hell for years.'

Still, there is no doubt that this will be very beneficial for me. I should have gone to Guy right when Renjiro's training plan began losing effect. I should also make a new Training Seal. I will be comfortable with the maximum limit of this seal in less than a month with this training.'

Fujin dispelled his clones and received their memories. A look of surprise appeared on his face. He thought, 'That's weird. None of my clones could think of a good AoE Vacuum jutsu...'

He began walking home while analyzing, 'The only decent idea they came up with was using several vacuum jutsu while using the Infinite Breakthrough jutsu at the same time. It would affect a wide range. But it isn't the same.'

It is merely spamming the normal Vacuum jutsu. Though it would appear as a similar effect, it won't be the case. Not only will there be a lot of gaps to dodge the attack, but it won't be stronger than my normal Vacuum attacks either. I need to think of something better.'

Fujin freshened up and had dinner before calling it a day. Lying in his bed, Fujin wondered, 'Now, what to do about Danzo?'

He stayed quiet for some time while recalling all the information he could about Danzo. He analyzed, 'From what I remember, Danzo stayed inactive since the Uchiha's massacre until he put Sai on Naruto's squad. He didn't make a move during Konoha Crush or for the 5th Hokage, either.'

While I can understand the former considering his actions during Pain's assault, the latter is very suspicious. Why didn't he try and claim the 5th Hokage's spot after Hiruzen died to his own student?'

Fujin analyzed for a while before concluding, 'The only reason I can think of is the fame and reputation of Jiraiya and Tsunade. Perhaps, even if he tried, the other council members would push for Jiraiya to take the seat. After all, in terms of fame and reputation, Jiraiya is in a whole different league than Kakashi.'

Even if he tried using Shisui's eye to influence the Daimyo, everyone would become very suspicious of such a decision. So his secrets would be out and would be far more detrimental for him in the long run.

Wait, now that I think about it, the Hokage's appointment needs a vote from Jounins. Without a crisis created by Akatsuki and an opportunity to create and lead a Shinobi alliance, he wouldn't be able to become the Hokage. No wonder he didn't fight for it.

But, since he is making a move now, there might have been a change I'm not aware of, or perhaps my existence is tempting him to make a move. Either way, he has the potential to create a lot of mess.'

Fujin was unaware of the fact that Hiruzen allowed Danzo to recruit talented orphans from the Land of Water into the Root. Though the Root was merely in the beginning stages of recruiting and the recruits didn't add any immediate power to the Root, it increased Danzo's hope. It also gave him an opportunity to exert some political influence in Konoha again.

Fujin analyzed, 'If Danzo begins interfering, then he has the ability to change the future events. If he does that, I will lose a lot of my advantage needlessly. Though he won't be able to affect Akatsuki's operations much, he could alter the future by interfering in Konoha's politics or worse, by interfering with Naruto and Sasuke. What to do?'

Fujin kept lying in his bed while thinking about the insane amount of complications that would occur if someone like Danzo began acting in a different manner than what he remembered.

After a long while, he let out a sigh and decided, 'The best case scenario will be if he doesn't interfere beyond a certain limit. But if he does, then I might need to interfere. Though killing him will be difficult and raise too many questions, I can cut off his arms by eliminating the few loyal Root ninjas he has one by one.

Without them, his ability to act will be severely restricted. And though Hiruzen has a soft spot, I doubt he'll give Danzo additional forces. He isn't that naive. But, I can't use Wind Release. Even though I can remove the traces, Hiruzen and Eagle have too much information about me. They will become suspicious and begin keeping tabs on me. Fortunately, I still have a hidden card...'

Lightning sparks appeared on Fujin's body before disappearing. Though Fujin's Lightning jutsus weren't as broken as his Wind jutsus, they were still strong enough to take on a Jounin. More importantly, they were backed by his fearsome speed and strength. Normal Jounin-level Root ninjas wouldn't stand a chance against him.

Fujin analyzed, 'No one is aware of my skill in Lightning Release. To avoid any suspicions, I didn't visit the Lightning Training Rooms. If I kill some Root ninjas using Lightning Release, Danzo will suspect Kakashi. Since Kakashi wouldn't do something so drastic by his own will, he will suspect Hiruzen. If a conflict between the two happens, then that'll be for the best outcome.'

Fujin yawned and muttered, "Enough planning for today. I'll have to wait to see what he does first."

He closed his eyes and fell asleep within a minute. The training had drained him entirely!

From the next day, Fujin followed this routine. He trained with the new training plan early in the morning. He would follow it up with a 3-hour-long Taijutsu spar with Guy. After lunch, he would experiment with the ideas he had for an AoE Vacuum jutsu.

This continued for 5 more days until Guy said, "The power of youth overflows in you, Fujin! Unfortunately, I have to take a mission tomorrow."

Fujin nodded and said, "Good luck, Guy. Let me know when you return. I am usually in Training Ground 23 or the large house next to it."

Guy gave Fujin a thumbs up and said, "Definitely!"

Fujin took his leave. Guy's trademark smile faded away as Fujin left. He thought, 'Suzuki Fujin... I never thought that someone so talented in Ninjutsu would be willing to undergo such a training regime for 6 days straight. His Taijutsu is already better than Kakashi's if he doesn't use the Sharingan.'

His grin returned as he exclaimed, "A junior is pushing himself so much! I need to increase my training even more. Before I leave, I will do a week's training in only a day!"

He immediately dropped down and began doing pushups at such a speed that his body looked blurry and left several afterimages!

Fujin didn't bother Guy anymore. He had another issue to take care of. While eating in Ichiraku, his mind was occupied by the issue he was being troubled with. He thought, 'It's almost been a week since I started. But I still haven't had any success in creating an AoE Vacuum Jutsu.'

Though I could create the idea I had, its effect was much lower than what I wanted. I won't be able to pierce a Sussano with this method. Unfortunately, I don't have any other good ideas.

Creating a large enough Vacuum Core for an AoE attack is not possible. Perhaps spamming Vacuum Cannon might be the only way to replicate Danzo's success against the Sussano. I wonder how he does it.'

Unfortunately, no matter how hard Fujin thought, he couldn't come up with a decent idea. It came as a surprise to him considering how quickly he could create the other Vacuum jutsus.

The next day, after consuming the soldier pill, Fujin decided, 'There is no point in wasting a lot of time trying to figure this out. With Vacuum Gatling, Vacuum Blade and Vacuum Slash, that Iwa army will be helpless against me.'

So I don't need to worry much about this. I will begin working on taking my Wind Release to the next level. Hopefully, I'll find some inspiration as I work on it.'

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Chapter 372: Wind Domain

Fujin was sitting on the training ground while waiting for his chakra to recover. His clones had continued working on the remaining seals. Fujin didn't bother visiting the training rooms because he was deep in thought. His mind was occupied with thinking about what he wanted to create.

Once his chakra recovered, Fujin got up. He began emitting chakra into the air from every chakra point on his body. As soon as the chakra was released, it transformed into the wind and mixed with the surroundings. If a normal person saw, he wouldn't feel anything different.

However, any ninja would immediately feel the high amount of chakra concentrated in the area. Fujin analyzed, 'Unlike the Wind Style Genjutsu, this can be easily detected. But doing what I have in my mind can't be done with that little amount of chakra.'

But, it shouldn't be an issue. Even though I'm sacrificing stealth, it will be compensated by the abilities of this technique.'

Fujin focused his eyes on a branch of a tree in front of him. More accurately, he focused on the wind around the branch which had his chakra mixed in. In an instant, the wind attacked the branch. The winds caused the branch to sway. A few leaves fell but no damage was inflicted to the branch.

Fujin furrowed his eyebrows as he analyzed, 'This will take a lot of time.'

He closed his eyes and continued emitting more chakra in the surrounding area. As he did, he also focused all his attention on sensing his wind chakra that was mixed into the surroundings.

After 5 minutes, he snapped his eyes open and exerted control on the chakra he had released. Immediately, winds began flowing around him. The branches of the trees around him began swaying in the wind and a few leaves broke off.

Fujin sighed and thought, 'It's very difficult to exert control over this chakra. Making it sharper is even more difficult.'

Though my control over wind jutsu is normally very good, it is because I manipulate it however I want before it leaves my body. Even though I have some more control over jutsus like Blades of Wind and Infinite Breakthrough due to Yin-Yang manipulation, it still has more to do with what I do before I launch the jutsu. As I speculated, this will be a rather difficult technique to create.'

Memories regarding his idea flashed into his mind. Fujin thought, 'It has been a long time since I wanted to create something like this. I first had the idea after seeing the rank E Wind jutsus.'

But the idea was very vague back then. And I didn't have any idea of how to even start working towards it. That changed when I fought with Susumu. His application of Wind Release to cast Genjutsu gave me an idea of how I could start.

My idea is to emit chakra into my surrounding winds and control it. If it goes as I want it to, then I should be able to create extremely high-speed winds at will. I should also be able to make those winds extremely sharp. At a later stage, I should also be able to mix Vacuum blades in this technique.

Once it is completed, it will be akin to the Wind variant of the Raikage's Cloak of Lightning. Though it won't buff my speed or physical defense and attack like the Cloak of Lightning, the entire area around me will be a death zone.

I can use the Winds to tear apart anyone who enters in the range of this technique. I can also use the winds to defend against ranged attacks. And though I'm not sure whether I can use this to buff my speed, this could potentially aid me in another way. That is, the power of flight.'

A glint appeared in Fujin's eyes. The ability to fly and to create such a domain around him were among the top abilities that he craved. He thought, 'Considering the nature of this technique, it can't be called a jutsu. Instead, I will call this my Wind Domain! Once I master it, even Obito would be very wary of sneak attacking me in the middle of a battle. He can enter my domain, but he can't deactivate his intangibility while he is in it.'

Unfortunately, this technique will be very difficult to create. According to my calculations, I'll need at least a year of extreme training to make this technique workable. Raising it to a level comparable to Raikage's Cloak of Lightning will need even more time.

In addition, I will have to break this technique into several parts as trying to directly master it in its entirety will be doing too much at the same time. Also, these parts would help me keep track of my progress. As for what these parts will be...'

Fujin chuckled as he thought, 'They would be the rank E jutsus in the library. Wind Levitation jutsu, Projectile Control jutsu, Wind Retrieving jutsu and the rank D Propelling Winds jutsu will be ideal for creating this technique. It's just that instead of using my own chakra, I need to perform these jutsus with the chakra I have emitted into the surroundings.

Of course, these alone won't be enough. They can improve my control but won't help me much in attack. For that, I need to create Blades of Wind and later Vacuum Blades with the emitted chakra. In addition, I need to create a new jutsu.

The jutsu will be the ninjutsu variant of Wind Style Genjutsu. While maintaining the stealth aspect, I want to form an attack with the wind chakra I have emitted. Since the chakra will be very low, I can only create one attack. One simple cut with sharpened winds at the neck. I will call it the Silent Cut jutsu.

This will have two usages. The first one is obviously for assassination. The second is to use this to sneak attack anyone who detects my technique, stays a safe distance away and is able to defend against me.

Hmm... Though I have a few more ideas, this should be enough for now. I'll begin my training.'

Fujin created 5 shadow clones. Fujin and his clones spread out around the training ground. Each of them emitted their chakra into the air and tried using it to use the Wind Retrieving jutsu.

Fujin quickly became engrossed in his training. Though the jutsu had the potential to require a large amount of chakra, Fujin didn't have much mastery over it. So he and his clones only released as much chakra as they could control.

Due to this, Fujin's chakra regenerated at a much faster rate than he and his clones could use. So apart from needing a break after dispelling and recreating the clones working on Fuinjutsu, Fujin didn't need any other break. Fujin ignored everything else and continued his training.

Three days later, a ninja wearing a mask appeared in an underground tunnel. He walked towards a room and entered it. He knelt and respectfully said, "Danzo-sama."

Danzo looked at him and said, "Torune, report your observations."

Torune reported, "I tried keeping an eye on Suzuki Fujin for the last 10 days. For the first 6 days, he woke up at 4:30 AM. He went to training ground 23 at 5 AM. He stayed there until 10 AM. From 10 AM to 1 PM, he went to the training ground where Might Guy was at.

He spent 3 hours there before going to have lunch in either Yakiniku, Ichiraku or his house. He returned to the training ground 23 after lunch and spent another 4 to 6 hours there before going back to his house.

On the 7th day, Guy had to go on a mission. So Fujin stayed in the training ground 23 until Lunch time. But, in the last 3 days, he has stayed all the time in the training ground 23. He hasn't left for food or sleep. I believe he is using a soldier pill to train continuously."

Danzo was surprised. He thought, 'So much training? Is he preparing for something? Or is this how he always is?'

He asked, "What is he training in? And did you inspect his house?"

Torune answered, "I planted some of my insects to spy on what he and Guy were doing. They both sparred for 3 hours straight on a daily basis. Fujin's Taijutsu is very good. He uses the Senju Taijutsu style. In a pure Taijutsu fight, I don't think any Root ninja will be a match for him.

As for what he did in training ground 23..."

He took a pause before continuing, "I couldn't find out. He keeps his chakra field activated in the training ground all the time. I tried sending in some insects, but he detected them and even tried looking for me.

I planted some bugs in the training ground in the night, but he could somehow find and kill all of them before he began doing whatever he was doing. So I have no idea what he does there.

As for his home..."

Sweat gathered behind Torune's mask before he could give an answer.

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Chapter 373: Limitless Applications of the Wind Domain!

Danzo asked, "What about his house?"

Torune answered, "Whenever Suzuki Fujin leaves his house, he puts a Five Seal Barrier tag on the door. I managed to find two more tags within a day. But despite searching for a long time, my bugs couldn't find the two remaining tags around his house.

I can't say for sure, but I think that there are a lot more seals on and around his house. I got a feeling that if I had gone to inspect myself instead of sending bugs, I would have been discovered even if Fujin wasn't there."

Danzo was stunned. He began analyzing, 'Such carefulness while training and such protection for his house. Even the Uchiha clan wasn't so much on guard despite knowing that we could attack preemptively. What is he up to?'

Danzo became very suspicious of Fujin. No other Konoha ninja took so much effort to protect their secrets. The only one who did was Danzo himself.

Danzo analyzed, 'There shouldn't be anything fishy in what he does in the training grounds. Hiruzen can inspect them anytime he wants to. However, his house might contain a lot of secrets. But, why didn't Hiruzen look into it?'

Such behavior is even more brazen than what Orochimaru did. At the very least, he didn't do anything in his own house and created secret bases around the village. So why didn't Hiruzen look into it? Or could it be that he has given the boy his approval?'

Danzo analyzed for a few more minutes before concluding, 'I forgot that Suzuki Fujin is only 14 years old. What secrets can he hide? Apart from some sessions to learn Mystical Palm, he has no record of any expertise in Medical Ninjutsu.'

Hiruzen is likely using that boy to bait me. The seals should have been placed when Hiruzen understood that it was inevitable for his identity to be leaked. Once I make a move, he will get a reason to take the orphans I just recruited.'

Danzo looked at Torune and instructed, "Don't spy on him continuously for now. Instead, you will spy on him for two days once every fortnight. Select the days randomly."

Torune replied, "I will, Danzo-sama."

Torune left his office. Danzo watched him leave and thought, 'Though this might be a trap, I can't stop spying on him. There is a lot about this boy that doesn't add up. To recruit him, I will need information about his personality, values, ideology and his abilities. I can then find a way to drive a wedge between Hiruzen and him.'

A frown formed on Danzo's face as Hiruzen's face appeared in his mind. He thought, 'Hiruzen is up to something. He is hiding a lot about this boy. Despite pushing him so much in the last meeting, he refused to tell us anything about the boy's abilities that wasn't already mentioned in the Bingo book. Seeing how secretive he is, there should be a lot more to this boy.'

Unfortunately, Danzo had no way to know what was being hidden. He could only stay patient and wait for Torune to find something.

Though Fujin had an idea that Danzo's subordinates were likely spying on him, he didn't know who was doing the job. After the 1st mistake, Torune was extremely careful. He stayed long away and only sent scouting bugs to check on him. He avoided doing anything that could expose him. He didn't send his bugs when Fujin was inside the training ground and stopped planting bugs in the training ground during the night after Fujin got rid of them thrice.

As a result, Torune managed to stay hidden. But as a consequence of such carefulness, he wasn't able to get any information about Fujin's abilities other than his Taijutsu. He did collect some other data like the restaurants Fujin preferred to visit, his schedule and similar miscellaneous information, which was important as well.

However, Fujin was aware that there was no way of hiding such basic information about himself. So he didn't bother trying to hide them. Instead, he just raised his guard against any attempts to poison him.

Since Torune didn't expose himself again, Fujin stopped caring about him and continued his training. His progress with the Wind Domain was slow but he made rapid improvements in Taijutsu after Guy returned from his mission. However, his biggest gain was something else entirely.

Fujin was sitting in his basement, his mind completely focused. His eyes were glued to his left arm, which was entirely covered in various symbols. Under Fujin's control, the symbols began rearranging themselves, forming a seal on his left arm.

Fujin let out a sigh of relief. A smile appeared on his face as he muttered, "Four Symbols Seal imprint is done!"

He focused once again. The seal on his arm began moving to a point on his left palm. Within minutes, it completely disappeared.

Fujin observed his hand and thought, 'Finally I have a reliable method to deal with Jinchurikis. However, for it to be successful, I'll need to use the seal before they transform into their Tailed Beast mode. Otherwise, it might be very risky. However, I can't say for sure until I experiment.'

Experimenting on Tailed Beasts right now isn't possible. But I should try to experiment on other stronger beasts. Though the Four Symbols Seal is mostly used for Tailed Beasts, there is no reason why it can't be used to seal other beings.'

The scene of the gigantic whirlpool appeared in Fujin's mind. He shook his head and analyzed, 'But, unlike the Tailed Beasts, the other beasts can probably not be used as a Chakra Battery. The best way to use them would be a summoning contract. If they disagree or lack intelligence, then I can seal them with this seal and release them for rampaging around. They would serve as a good distraction.'

I also need to create the Eight Trigram Divination Seal. That would require some experimentation as well. Once that is done, I can begin working towards an original seal. I will have my clones working towards this after the remaining seals are learnt. Shouldn't be too long now. I should be done with this in the next round of training.'

Fujin left his house and went to the training ground to continue with the Wind Domain training. Fujin walked to the center of the training ground while inspecting the training ground with his chakra field and stood facing a tree.

After confirming that there was no one spying, he began emitting chakra into the air. Soon, the entire surrounding was filled with his chakra. Fujin concentrated on the chakra in front of him.

Winds formed and began moving towards the tree. However, instead of moving normally, the wind moved in a unique pattern. A large amount of wind concentrated together as if it was forming something. Soon, it took the form of a human hand. Its size was as large as a normal person and instead of fingers, it had sharp-looking claws.

Fujin controlled it and used it to grab a branch of the tree. Immediately, around a quarter of the leaves on the branch were pulled off. The branch itself was assaulted by the winds several times.

Fujin observed the attack and thought, 'Though I haven't made any groundbreaking progress in the Wind Domain, I am progressing steadily. This attack is a result of 3 weeks of training. I will call it the Ghost Palm.

Once I master it, I can use it to grab or just slash my opponent. If I grab it, then I can use it to either immobilize him or to shred him.'

Fujin controlled the Ghost Palm and pulled all the leaves that were broken off towards him. The Ghost Palm slowly dissipated while a few hundred leaves moved towards Fujin. The branch stopped swaying. Some of its bark was peeled off but the branch itself was largely unharmed.

Fujin analyzed, 'Its power is still lacking but I still have more than a month of vacation left. By the time it's over, this attack will be ready.'

Regardless, the Wind Domain has a lot more applications than I thought. Due to my chakra getting mixed with the wind, I get a lot of control over it. I can use it to concentrate the wind in one spot and decrease its density in the remaining places.

It's this ability that I used to form the Ghost Palm. And by doubling down on this, I can use the Ghost Palm to create an immobilizing effect. Even without the Ghost Palm, if I just increase the concentration of air around and above an opponent, he will feel immense pressure.

And, once the Wind Domain is properly developed, I'll be able to do the vice versa as well. Every ninja, barring Obito, Pain's six bodies, and maybe the likes of Kakuzu, Hidan and Sasori, needs air to survive.

Though this technique wouldn't be effective by itself as even an Academy student can move out of the range, if I combine it with a Fuinjutsu Battlefield, this will be an easy killing move! If my opponent doesn't have a space-time movement jutsu like Reverse Summoning to escape, they'll die helplessly!

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Chapter 374: The Promised Fight!

Fujin continued analyzing, 'The ability to control the wind and increase and decrease its density also has another advantage. My Projectile Control jutsu is on a whole new level inside my Wind Domain. As my control improves, I'll be able to use it to redirect my Vacuum Bullets and Gatling.

Though the control over them wouldn't be too high, it'll be sufficient to deal with anyone who tries to preemptively dodge them or barely dodge them by a few inches. Though this slight redirection can happen only inside the domain, it's fine as I could redirect them just before they leave the domain. And...'

Fujin's eyes sparkled as he had a terrible idea. He analyzed, 'If I can go one step forward and control individual gasses in the air inside my domain, then I'll reach a similar level of battle prowess as Hashirama and Madara despite having far lesser chakra. Controlling what my opponents breathe... They wouldn't even know how they died!

Unfortunately, I have no clue how to differentiate between gasses, let alone control them. The difficulty of learning how to do either of that will be insane. It'll be like trying to come up with a new Kekkei Genkai.

Leave it. This kind of thing can't be forced. It's like what Renjiro said for Kekkei Genkai. If I'm lucky and have the inspiration or somehow manage to merge the two elements properly instinctually, I'll learn the Kekkei Genkai. Otherwise, I might not learn one even after spending decades working on it.

Besides, even if I can't learn this, I do know how to learn a rank S jutsu that could neutralize almost all rank S ninjas if I hit them. The Rasenshuriken... Should I try to learn it?'

Fujin fell into deep thought. After a few minutes, he concluded, 'There are a lot of drawbacks. Though my body is strong, I doubt it compares to Naruto's in healing and resilience. The backlash I'll receive will be even more severe. However, I could circumvent that by just having my Shadow Clones use that jutsu until I am strong enough.

The other issue is time. Despite having the right idea, Naruto still needed several days or weeks with hundreds of Shadow Clones to learn this jutsu. Though this soldier pill is impressive, it is shit when compared to Kurama. Even if I assume that my affinity for Wind is significantly greater than Naruto's, I will still need a lot of time to master this jutsu.

And, these aren't even the main issues. How do I explain to Hiruzen how I learnt Rasengan? That bastard regularly peeks at my training with that perverted crystal ball. What's so entertaining about my training to peek so frequently? Can't he just watch girls like his perverted student?

Anyways, he will notice my training if I train anywhere other than my basement. But learning such a destructive jutsu in my house is a strict no. Even with barriers, I don't think my house will last for long.

I had hoped that the Rasengan would be in section A of the library. That would have given me the perfect explanation for how I know this jutsu. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. Apart from some scrolls about Minato mentioning this jutsu, there is no information about Rasengan or how to learn it in the library.'

Fujin began thinking again. Unfortunately, he couldn't think of any method that could work. He sighed and decided, 'Leave it. I'll learn this technique after I master the Flying Thunder God. I can just leave the village and create Shadow Clones to learn it where no one is prese...'

Suddenly, Fujin's eyes widened as he had an idea. He thought, 'Wait a minute! Why do I have to say that I replicated Minato's Rasengan? I'll use the same reason that Minato gave. I'll say that I was inspired to create this technique by Roshi's Tailed Beast Bomb!

I can even say that I thought that the Fourth Hokage's jutsu sounded similar to the Tailed Beast Bomb and was inspired to create it this way. Since I'll be trying to merge Wind into it to create something that Minato failed in, I can claim the Rasenshuriken to be my personal invention!

The only flaw in this line of reasoning is that it's been just around 8-9 months since I saw it. Minato needed 3 years to create this jutsu...'

Fujin thought for a few minutes again and decided, 'Screw Minato. Let Hiruzen think that I'm more talented than him. Or let him think that I got lucky and got the right inspiration quickly.

However, showing Rasengan will undoubtedly attract some suspicion from Hiruzen. I'll wait until I get the Flying Thunder God from him. After that, there isn't much that I'll want from Hiruzen.

The only things that come to mind are Edo Tensei and Eight Trigram Divination Seal. But the Eight Trigram Divination Seal isn't very complicated. I already have a basic idea and should be able to create it quickly. As for Edo Tensei, Hiruzen won't give it to me no matter what. So it's pointless to think about it.

Alright, after I get the Flying Thunder God, I will also begin learning Rasenshuriken. Until then, I'll continue working on my Wind Domain and Taijutsu...'

Fujin suddenly looked to his left. Someone had entered the training ground! A confused look appeared on Fujin's face as he wondered, 'Why is he here?'

A few seconds later, Hoka appeared in front of him. He had a serious look on his face. Fujin asked, "Hey. Did something happen?"

Hoka shook his head and replied in a serious tone, "Three years have passed since the day we made that promise."

Fujin became silent. He recalled the promise he made to Hoka in front of Mieko's grave. He also recalled the words they exchanged when they met a few months ago. Fujin said, "I am still a part of the Anbu. I can't go on a hunt right now."

Hoka replied, "It's fine. We can start once you quit. But since you are here, let's fight. I want to see how far I have progressed. If I beat you, we will begin looking for and hunting Uchiha Itachi."

Fujin asked, "You haven't ever defeated me yet. Are you confident in doing so now?"

Hoka took his fighting stance and said, "I have trained every day for the past 3 years. Don't underestimate me, Fujin. It'll be the worst if we meet a calamity in the future because you didn't take me seriously today."

Fujin was surprised by Hoka's words. He thought, 'So he figured that out? I wonder if it was time, experience or guidance that made him understand.'

Hoka was thinking about the same matter as Fujin. He thought, 'Three years ago, I was very impulsive and naive in wanting to hunt someone who could exterminate the entire Uchiha clan alone! Thankfully Fujin stopped me and put forth this challenge. I didn't completely understand him back then.'

But I now understand why he wanted me to defeat him before we could begin our hunt. I understand why Renjiro sensei didn't try to get revenge. If I can't fight Fujin equally, then we will stand no chance against someone like Uchiha Itachi. In order to kill someone like Uchiha Itachi, we need to be strong enough to defeat the entire Hyuga clan by just ourselves!

Fujin took a deep breath. He deactivated the training seal on his body. He grabbed a pebble, looked into Hoka's eyes and said, "Get ready. I won't hold back. We start when the pebble hits the ground."

Fujin tossed the stone into the air. Unlike Hoka, he didn't bother getting into a fighting stance. He didn't even bother looking at the pebble. Instead, he just stared straight into Hoka's eyes.

As soon as the pebble hit the ground, Hoka attacked!

'Eight Trigrams: Vacuum Palm'

Hoka thrust his right palm at Fujin's chest. A vacuum shell compressed with Gentle Fist style was fired at Fujin's heart. However, Fujin's figure disappeared and reappeared a meter to the left.

Hoka's eyes widened. He thought, 'So fast?'

Fujin disappeared again. This time, he was moving rapidly towards Hoka.

Hoka slammed his hands on the ground.

'Earth Release: Stone Shuriken jutsu'

In an instant, hundreds of stone shurikens formed and were fired at Fujin. They targeted Fujin as well as his escape routes. However, contrary to Hoka's calculations, Fujin didn't retreat. Instead, he continued moving forward while easily navigating through the gaps in between the hundreds of stone shurikens flying towards him.

Hoka was surprised once again. He analyzed, 'His speed has increased too much. But why is he closing the distance between us? I calculated that he'd stay far away and tire me out with clones and long-range jutsus.'

Fujin's approach to the fight was completely different from any of his previous spars with Hoka and Mieko. It made all of Hoka's plans useless. But, it wasn't an issue with Hoka's strategic skills.

Logically, Fujin should have maintained a distance from Hoka to avoid getting his chakra points blocked by Gentle Fist style. If he doesn't, then he'll be allowing Hoka to use his speciality against him. But for some reason, his approach to the fight was completely opposite of his normal fighting style.

Hoka thought, 'All my plans were to force you into a close-range fight. But if you want to fight me with Taijutsu yourself, then I don't need to bother with any distractions and complicated tactics either. Regardless, you are in my range.'

He immediately took his stance.

'Eight Trigrams: Thirty-two Palms'

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Chapter 375: Fujin Vs Hoka

As soon as Fujin appeared in front of him, Hoka unleashed a barrage of strikes. He didn't increase his attack step by step and directly unleashed 32 consecutive strikes. Fujin looked at the flurry of incoming attacks and thought, 'Correct response.'

His arms moved at an even faster speed than Hoka's. But instead of attacking, he blocked all 32 consecutive strikes from Hoka. Hoka didn't manage to block even one chakra point on Fujin's body!

After blocking the last strike, chakra concentrated on Fujin's right fist as he punched towards Hoka. Hoka's eyes widened as his Byakugan noticed the high amount of chakra concentrated on Fujin's fist. He immediately moved backwards and released chakra from all of his chakra points and immediately began spinning.

'Eight Trigrams: Palm Rotation'

Fujin followed him and punched the protective shield around Hoka. The rotational force of Hoka's jutsu repelled Fujin's attack with an equal amount of power, forcing Fujin back a couple of dozen meters.

Hoka wasn't spared either. The force of Fujin's punch was too high and he didn't have enough time to reach his maximum rotation speed. As a result, he felt the full impact of the force as well and was sent flying backwards towards a tree.

Hoka flipped at the last moment and landed on the tree's trunk on his feet, before jumping back on the ground.

Fujin shook his right hand while looking at Hoka and evaluating him. He analyzed, 'Not bad. I would have been disappointed if 32 Palms was the best he could do. I wonder how he learnt it. Did he copy it like Neji or did Hiashi teach him for some reason?'

He said, "Palm Rotation, the secret Taijutsu of Hyuga's main clan. It's impressive that you learnt it."

Hoka was in no mood to hear Fujin's praise. His mind was in shock at how good Fujin's Taijutsu was! Not only did he take on the 32 Palms head-on, but he also made a dent in his best defense.

He asked, "Did you ever take me or Mieko seriously in a spar, Fujin?"

Fujin answered, "I always take all my fights seriously. I just prefer fighting in a way that has the least amount of risk."

Hoka immediately realized, 'He is fighting in this manner so that I won't be able to complain about not being able to use my forte in the spar.'

Fujin said, "Don't get distracted."

He disappeared and appeared behind Hoka and attacked him with a kick. Hoka barely managed to dodge the kick and counterattacked with Gentle Fist.

Both entered into an intense Taijutsu fight. Hundreds of punches and kicks were exchanged every minute. Neither Fujin nor Hoka made a single unnecessary movement. All their strikes were precise. Fujin had an advantage in speed and power. However, Hoka relied on his Gentle Fist style to counter all his attacks and forced Fujin to pull his attacks back several times, despite having the advantage, to avoid getting his chakra points blocked.

After 4 minutes of intense fighting, Fujin finally created an opening. He had blocked Hoka's arms and Hoka was barely off the ground. He immediately kicked towards Hoka's chest. Hoka saw the kick and cursed, 'Shit! I won't be able to block or dodge it.'

He immediately emitted chakra from the chakra points on his chest. Fujin ignored it and his kick landed on Hoka's chest. Hoka immediately coughed blood and was sent flying back.

However, Fujin had a thoughtful expression. He analyzed, 'I was planning on decreasing the amount of chakra I concentrated on my leg to not kill or injure him badly. But, I didn't expect him to emit such a large amount of chakra from his chest to soften the impact of the kick. He has improved a lot. However, it isn't enough.'

Though Fujin wasn't known for his Taijutsu, it was at a very high level as well. Sparring with Guy for a couple of weeks had resulted in rapid improvements due to how rarely Fujin had sparred in Taijutsu prior. As such, Fujin was sure that no one in the Hyuga clan, barring Hiashi, would be able to defeat him in a Taijutsu fight. By giving Fujin such a close fight, Fujin was sure that Hoka was one of the strongest among the Hyuga clan despite his young age.

Hoka, who was flying backwards, gritted his teeth and ignored the pain and blood as he began weaving hand signs.

'Water Release: Water Dragon jutsu'

Hoka spat out a large amount of water as soon as he landed on the ground. It immediately took the form of a Dragon and began moving towards Fujin who was just observing it. Fujin analyzed, 'His Ninjutsu is the biggest surprise though. To be able to create such a huge Water Dragon so quickly.

Combined with his Taijutsu, he is definitely at the Jounin rank. However, he is still some distance from the Elite Jounin rank. As for rank S...'

Fujin sighed and muttered internally, 'That's just too far.'

Just like Fujin, Hoka was thinking a lot as well. He had a bitter expression as he thought, 'My plan was to use Ninjutsu to force Fujin into fighting me with Taijutsu or at least his sword. To think that I'm the one resorting to Ninjutsu in order to buy some time.'

The Water Dragon reached Fujin. Fujin ignored it and just flickered out of its path. Though the jutsu was impressive, it was just too slow to be of any threat to Fujin. He flickered again to approach Hoka. Hoka's Byakugan were glued on Fujin.

As soon as he saw Fujin, he immediately attacked the spot he was moving towards with the Vacuum Palm jutsu.

Fujin immediately sidestepped it, but Hoka continued spamming the attack to target Fujin. Fujin continued dodging while getting closer to Hoka step-by-step. He wondered, 'Did he take inspiration from my Wind Explosion jutsu? Not a bad tactic, but he doesn't have my chakra reserves to support such a high chakra expenditure.'

In order to spam such tactics, the basic requirement was that your chakra reserves had to be higher than your opponents.

As Hoka fired the Vacuum Palm jutsus rapidly, he concentrated chakra under his feet. His eyes followed Fujin closely. After Fujin dodged the last attack, Hoka thought, 'That's it!'

He immediately jumped towards Fujin at blinding speed. At the same time, he shot the last Vacuum Palm. A smile formed on Fujin's face as he thought, 'As I expected. He was trying to lure me in.'

He dodged the incoming Vacuum Palm and got ready for Hoka's attack. Hoka took his stance and muttered, "You are in my range."

Hoka attacked Fujin twice, but Fujin blocked his wrists and didn't allow Hoka to hit him. Hoka followed with 4 strikes, 8 strikes, 16 strikes and eventually 32 strikes, his momentum increasing each time. However, Fujin blocked all of his attacks perfectly.

Hoka gritted his teeth and began attacking with even more ferocity and speed!

'Eight Trigrams: Sixty-Four Palms'

This attack finally forced Fujin to his limit. However, instead of being bothered, a smile appeared on Fujin's face as he continued blocking the attacks and thought, 'Now that's more like it.'

Fujin's arms moved at the same speed as Hoka's as he continuously blocked every strike that Hoka did. Hoka had a grim expression. He had already attacked 48 times without any success. He gritted his teeth harder and pushed himself to his utmost limits.

Fujin finally started having trouble keeping up. He barely managed to block 12 more strikes. However, just after he had blocked the 61st strike, Hoka's right arm passed through his defenses.

Hoka's eyes lit up. He thought, 'Finally!'

His right palm reached very close to Fujin's chest. However, before he could hit Fujin, blood sprouted out like a fountain!

Hoka was shocked! The blood that erupted was from his right arm. He didn't understand how he was hit. The sight and pain made him stop momentarily. Fujin used that small opening and kicked his stomach, sending him flying across the training ground once again.

This time, Hoka couldn't recover. Though Fujin hadn't concentrated chakra in the last kick, the attack had caught Hoka completely off-guard and stunned him. In addition, he was mentally and physically tired from using the Eight Trigrams: Sixty-Four Palm jutsu. So he couldn't brush off the kick and fight back like the previous times.

Hoka slammed into a tree and dropped to the ground. Fujin observed him and realized, 'It looks like he isn't used to using the 64 palms attack. All his focus was on the attack and he didn't have the capacity to focus on anything else.'

A frown formed on Fujin's face as he thought, 'I expected him to get much stronger than this. Did he lose the conviction that he had on that day? Or did he think that his current level was sufficient?'

This time, Hoka didn't get up. Instead, he just sat there while coughing. Though the kick hadn't done a lot of damage and the cuts on his arm were shallow, Hoka understood that he would have died had Fujin concentrated chakra on his leg. He muttered in disbelief, "I lost."

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Chapter 376: Harsh Truths!

Fujin sighed on hearing Hoka's words. He flickered next to Hoka and tossed him a bottle stored in his bracer. Hoka caught it and began drinking the water. After a minute, he said, "Thank you."

Fujin nodded without replying. He wasn't sure what would be the appropriate thing to say in that situation. Both stayed there silently. After a couple of minutes, Hoka said, "You have become very strong, Fujin. I managed to defeat my father for the first time in the last month. I even learnt several Ninjutsus to improve my medium and long-ranged fighting abilities. So I thought that I'd at least be able to fight equally with you. I never imagined that your Taijutsu would be as good as mine. And..."

He looked at the cuts on his right arm and continued, "And that it would be so good that I forgot about your Wind jutsus during our fight."

Fujin extended his palm towards his arm and began healing him while replying, "You have grown strong as well. Palm Rotation would have been an obstacle if I had used Ninjutsu. And I heard that only the Main family in your clan can use the 64 palms attack."

Hoka nodded and said, "I haven't yet mastered it. I managed to push myself to the limit in the last week as our challenge was close and barely managed to learn it. I still can't do it successfully every time. That said, I didn't know you learnt medical ninjutsu."

Fujin stopped healing him as the cuts had already closed up. He replied, "Just the Mystical Palm jutsu. It is a handy skill to have. Especially if you get trapped in enemy territory. It can save your or your teammates' lives. You should learn it as well. You can ask about it in the Hospital when you go to check your chest and abdomen. With your expertise in the Gentle Fist style, you should pick it up very quickly."

Hoka chuckled and said, "We Hyuga ninjas already serve as the best support on any squad due to our Byakugan and ability to protect ourselves. If we learnt Medical Ninjutsu as well, then our clan would be known as the support clan, hahaha."

Fujin chuckled as well and commented, "Yeah, that's true."

Hoka said, "Well, at least I didn't lose to you in just Taijutsu and forced you to use a Wind jutsu. I would have been extremely embarrassed if that happened! Hahaha."

Fujin didn't join in his laughter and had a peculiar expression. Hoka immediately noticed it. His eyes widened as he cursed, "Asshole! Don't tell me you held back!"

Fujin replied awkwardly, "Well, not exactly. It's just that I could have just stepped back to avoid your attack which broke through my defense. Even though we were clashing using Taijutsu, it wasn't a reason for me to defend against every attack. And seeing how much attention and energy you had to put into the Eight Trigrams: Sixty-Four Palm, you'd probably be defeated quickly with my counterattack."

Hoka's expression immediately fell. He muttered, "You don't want to leave me any dignity, do you? Why did you use Ninjutsu if that was the case?"

Fujin shrugged and replied, "You didn't have any guard up. So I couldn't resist the temptation of using it. Besides, I have defeated you several times by exhausting you to your limits. I didn't want to do the same this time."

Hoka's head fell due to being depressed. He muttered, "I didn't have any chance, did I?"

Fujin didn't reply. The two fell silent once again. After a couple of minutes, Hoka looked at Fujin and asked in a serious tone, "Fujin, since you are so strong right now, why are you still against hunting Uchiha Itachi? If you catch him off guard, you can kill him with a single Vacuum Bullet."

Fujin didn't answer Hoka's question and instead replied with another question. He asked, "You were recently dispatched to the Land of Waterfall, weren't you?"

Hoka nodded. Fujin asked, "Do you know why our armies were dispatched there?"

Hoka furrowed his eyebrows. He didn't understand where Fujin was going with this. He answered, "We were dispatched due to some weird movements made by Iwa. They first kidnapped a large number of civilians and later released most of them and tried to pin the blame on Konoha. However, I have no idea why they did that or how they were discovered."

Fujin nodded and replied, "They were discovered by my squad."

Hoka was surprised. He hadn't expected that the situation would have anything to do with Fujin. Fujin continued, "I fought with Kitsuchi in the Land of Waterfall."

Hoka's eyes widened. He exclaimed, "You mean the Tsuchikage's son-in-law? The rank S ninja?"

Fujin nodded and continued, "He can barely be considered a rank S ninja. Kinda like the previous Uchiha clan leader, Wicked Eye Fugaku. But due to his Sharingan, I believe that Fugaku would be a much more difficult opponent on the battlefield."

Hoka nodded. He had frequently struggled against Mieko due to her Sharingan. By comparison, he had a much easier time against others at her level. He asked, "What are you implying by this?"

Fujin replied, "If I had fought against Kitsuchi in a one-on-one battle to the death, I would have most likely been the one to die. Uchiha Itachi killed someone stronger than him along with the rest of the Uchiha clan ninjas at the mere age of 13! Just like how we became stronger in the last 3 years, it is very likely that he has gotten stronger at the same rate."

Hoka became silent on hearing Fujin's words. He sighed internally. Hoka's entire basis for revenge was Itachi getting overconfident and cocky and not becoming any stronger than he was 3 years ago. He thought, 'Though I want to deny it, what Fujin said is true. If Itachi became stronger, then we might die without even getting a chance to escape.'

Fujin continued, "We probably can't even beat the Itachi that killed his entire clan. Even if we assume he hasn't grown even a bit since that day, our chances of victory are very low. To make matters worse, we don't know what skills he might have been hiding back then or the new skills he might have picked up since then.

We also don't know what he has been up to since going rogue. I did try to look at his information in the Anbu, but there was no news about him. If he is alone, we could try to test him out. But if he has made any allies or created a base, then the matter will become far more complicated."

Hoka stayed silent. What Fujin said wasn't a lie. The Anbu had no record of Itachi's movements after he went rogue. Though Hiruzen knew about Itachi's movements and Akatsuki, he hadn't passed the information to anyone other than the elders. Even Shikaku was kept in the dark though he had some

estimates. As for the abilities of his Mangekyou and his spirit weapons, Fujin wasn't sure whether even Hiruzen and Danzo were aware of either of them.

After some time, Hoka sighed and said, "You are right. Trying to attack him with our current ability and information will be suicidal. I will continue training. But, how strong do you think that we need to be to hunt him down?"

Fujin replied, "We will both need to be at least rank S ninjas. That will allow us to fight and retreat several times so that we can force him to expose all his cards one by one and create strategies to eliminate him. Killing him will take several rounds of battle. And that is assuming he has no help. But if we are both at rank S, then we could even test out his allies."

Hoka sighed and said, "Rank S is more difficult than I thought it to be."

Fujin nodded and said, "Even your clan leader isn't a rank S ninja. To become one, you'll have to defeat him at the very least."

Hoka winced at that thought. Though Hiashi didn't use the threat of the curse seal liberally, it always stayed in the back of the mind of every branch family member of the Hyuga clan. He sighed internally and thought, 'Becoming stronger than the clan leader himself... I hope nothing bad happens.'

Fujin looked at the expression on Hoka's face and immediately understood his dilemma. He sighed internally, 'What teammates I received... One whose death was a certainty and another whose life and death aren't in his own hands. Though there isn't a record of Hiashi abusing this power, who would like to leave their life and death in someone else's hand?'

Fujin understood Hoka's internal struggle. The main job of the members of Hyuga's branch family was the safety of the main family. The clan leader was always looked at as the leader. If a member of the branch family gained higher strength or higher influence than the clan leader, then that member could be looked upon as a threat. For this reason, the Hyuga were kept out of Anbu, Root and any high-level positions in the village.

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Chapter 377: Hoka's Resolution and Fujin's Reasoning

Despite his complicated feelings, Hoka said, "I will train even harder, Fujin. Though our target is very strong, I'll be disappointed in myself if I don't even try to avenge our friend."

Fujin nodded and said, "Good luck. You will need to train a lot more. The difference between a Jounin and a rank S ninja is very high. A couple of years of training isn't enough to bridge that gap. In addition, you will also need a lot of strong fights during missions to help understand what you lack."

Hoka nodded and smiled. He said, "I believe you aren't too far from that level. Good luck, Fujin. I am sure sensei will be proud of you for becoming one so quickly."

Fujin smiled and said, "Thanks. But I still have a lot to grow. Don't count on me to slack off just so that you can catch up to me."

Hoka grinned and replied, "I will be disappointed if you do that. If that happens, then it won't be satisfying to finally defeat you."

Fujin chuckled and said, "Don't forget to visit the hospital. I don't have much expertise in detecting or healing internal wounds."

Hoka nodded and took his leave. Fujin looked at his back and thought, 'Though I was a bit harsh, it was needed. Mieko is already dead. There is no point in meaninglessly joining her. Though he is strong, if I give him false hope and he tries to go after Itachi by himself, he will die without a doubt unless Itachi convinces his partner to leave him alive. If Hoka doesn't surpass Hiashi and reach the rank S, then it is pointless for him to even think about revenge.'

As he left the training ground, Hoka sighed and muttered to himself, 'I thought that I was training too much for the last three years. My parents as well as clan elders frequently told me to take it easy. But Fujin...

How hard did he train for his Taijutsu to become better than mine? And the information in the Bingo book says nothing about his Taijutsu! Meaning that his Ninjutsu skills should be even more fearsome. I will have to train like a crazy person if I am to have any hope of catching up to him. After all, he doesn't have anyone to tell him to take it easy!'

Fujin was lost in thoughts as well. After Hoka left the range of his chakra field, Fujin sighed. He thought, 'Though everything I said was what almost everyone believes to be true, I didn't tell him that I am probably the one who knows the most about Itachi's abilities.

Though I am quite strong, and probably could even barely be considered a rank S ninja or at least extremely close to it thanks to the jutsus I learnt in the last 2 months, defeating Itachi is still pretty much impossible.

He can neutralize me at a glance using Tsukuyomi. Though I am confident in my speed, if I mess up and get hit by Amaterasu, it would be deadly as well. Now that I think about it, I should make a seal imprint for sealing Amaterasu. It could be useful if I do end up fighting him or Sasuke.

Anyways, in addition to being vulnerable to his attacks, I have no methods of piercing through his Sussano. Even if I did, he still has the Yata Mirror to block anything I can throw at him. That asshole is full of cheats! And that's not even considering Kisame or Jozu who might be with him.

Anyways, what's the use of killing someone who is suffering himself, be it mentally or from a deadly disease? He is already dead inside and isn't even the true culprit behind the event. If there is a culprit...'

Fujin looked in the direction in which he had sensed the bugs around 3 weeks ago. A frown formed on his face as he thought, 'Danzo, I hope you don't give me a reason to eliminate you so soon. Just keep hiding in the roots and wait for the death I have planned for you. I promise you, it will be a death in every possible meaning of that word!'

Fujin stopped thinking about Danzo and Itachi and returned to his training. However, there was a bit of restlessness in him, a restlessness to become stronger quickly. Fujin suppressed it and continued his training. Unfortunately, it didn't diminish much even after he was done with his training.

While eating dinner, Fujin sighed and thought, 'This restlessness is similar to what Ryo had pointed out. I was already upset at being countered that badly by Iwa. I haven't even gotten a chance to repay that Tailed Beast Bomb Roshi shot at me. And now Hoka brought back memories of Mieko and reminded me of the abilities of those crazy bastards...'

Fujin sighed once again and thought, 'I hope the opponent in my last Anbu mission gives me a good fight. I have been itching for one ever since my fight with Roshi. That said, I need to return to Mount

Muteki to calm myself a bit. Impulsiveness and restlessness are the bane of any ninja. A moment's distraction is all that is needed to lose my life.'

The next day, after sparring with Guy, Fujin informed him that he would be away for a few days and returned to Mount Muteki to meditate and calm his mind. He spent 3 days at Mount Muteki, mostly flying extremely high in the sky while meditating on Kaito's back. He also used the environment to improve his control over the Wind Domain at a much faster speed.

After returning from the small break, Fujin returned to his routine of training to his limit. Though the progress he made wasn't visible on a day-to-day basis, the massive amount of hard work he put in finally started showing results.

One week before the end of his 3-month long vacation, Fujin was training in the training ground along with a dozen Shadow Clones.

Standing facing a tree, Fujin extended his right arm ahead and made a grabbing motion. In an instant, a claw formed around the trunk of the tree. Following the motion of Fujin's hand, it grabbed the trunk as well. The sharp winds that made the claw immediately pierced into the tree, breaking it in two!

A smile formed on Fujin's face. He analyzed, 'The Ghost Hand is finally ready to be used in combat. It also provided me with a lot of insights into the entire Wind Domain. The reason why I managed to make the ghost hand sharp so quickly was because of the increase in the concentration of air to create the ghost hand.

Though it's good enough for the Ghost hand, I don't want to do this with the Wind Domain. If I have to concentrate the air in one place to make it sharp, it will make the process very slow. And anyone will be able to sense the change in air density, making dodging the attack much easier.

For the Wind Domain to be as effective as I want it to be, I need the wind blades to be created spontaneously without any signs or a lot of time. Als...'

Fujin suddenly received a bunch of memories. So did his Shadow Clones. Immediately, everyone stopped training. An elated expression appeared on Fujin's face. A massive grin broke on his face. He muttered, "It's done! I'm a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster!"

Fujin's clones had learnt each and every seal in section A of the library! He had fulfilled the requirements of becoming a Grandmaster in Fuinjutsu!

Fujin almost began moving towards Hiruzen's office to demand the Flying Thunder God jutsu when his foot stopped. A frown appeared on his face as he realized, 'Though Hiruzen unknowingly promised me the Flying Thunder God after the Chunin exam, knowing how cunning he is, I doubt he will hand it to me so easily. How do I ensure that he does so?'

Fujin dispelled the Shadow Clones in the Training Ground. At the same time, he created a new Shadow Clone and dispelled itself. Immediately, the clones that were still in the basement received a message. One by one, they dispelled themselves as well after short intervals.

While he received their chakra and memories, Fujin sat down on a rock with his chin resting on his right hand while thinking about how to approach Hiruzen to raise the probability of his success as much as he could.

Fujin's mind was completely focused. He completely exerted himself and extracted every last ounce of shamelessness hidden in each and every cell in his body to come up with arguments to confront Hiruzen and create contingency plans in case they didn't work!

When the last clone dispelled himself, Fujin decided, 'There is no foolproof way. I did think of 2 arguments to appeal to him emotionally and another 5 to appeal to him logically. I can only hope that they work.'

If he still denies me the jutsu, then that would mean that the chances of getting this jutsu in a fair manner will be very low. Or rather, he would only give it to me when I make a huge contribution to the village. But, there is no significant event that is about to happen for me to make such a contribution. And when one happens, Hiruzen will be the one kicking the bucket unless my actions change the future. And getting it from Tsunade or the elders will be even more difficult as I have little to no connection with them.

So waiting obediently is out of the question. If he doesn't give it to me willingly, I can only force him to give it unwillingly. As for the method...'

A sadistic smile appeared on Fujin's face. If Hiruzen had looked at Fujin's expression at that moment using his crystal ball, he would have shivered involuntarily!

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Chapter 378: A Feeling of Emptiness!

Fujin decided, 'If Hiruzen doesn't give me the Flying Thunder God jutsu at all costs, I will take Naruto under my wing. I will first teach him the Shadow Clone jutsu and then teach him the Wind jutsus that would be perfect for pranks.

And since he is so gullible, I'll convince him that in order to become a Hokage, he will have to successfully prank the current Hokage one thousand times!

Though I don't think Hiruzen would refuse to relent after that, if he does, I will drop hints of intending to teach Naruto the Great Breakthrough jutsu and also of teaching him how to supercharge it.'

Fujin almost laughed in an evil manner while imagining the scene of a thousand Shadow Clones spamming a supercharged Great Breakthrough jutsu! He seriously doubted whether Konoha would continue to remain standing. There was no way Hiruzen wouldn't take that threat seriously.

He began walking towards the Hokage Building. En route, he thought, 'Maybe that's why Kakashi never taught Naruto any jutsu to take advantage of his ridiculous chakra levels. But still, it's such a waste to know 1000 jutsus if you aren't going to use them yourself or teach them to his students. Could have at least given Naruto a few jutsus that weren't too destructive in nature.'

Fujin stopped thinking about Naruto and went over the plans he had come up with to convince Hiruzen. After all, Naruto was his last resort. He'd prefer getting the jutsu directly from Hiruzen on that very day. If he failed, then he could think of all the nefarious plans for however long he wanted to.

Soon, he arrived at the building and knocked on his door. Hiruzen looked towards the door and wondered, 'Why is he here?'

He put a smile on his face and said, "Come in. Why are you here, Fujin?"

Fujin entered and put up the same smile as Hiruzen. He said, "Grandpa, I have something to tell you. But it has to be alone."

Hiruzen wondered, 'Alone? Did he figure something out about Iwa's intentions? Or is he here to ask me for some favor?'

Due to his previous interactions with Fujin, Hiruzen was on a high alert! He nodded and said, "Sure."

His eyes moved towards the ceiling. Immediately, all 4 Anbu Guard flickered out of the room and shut all doors and windows. Hiruzen activated the seals and said, "Speak."

Fujin said in an excited tone, "Grandpa, I have learnt all the seals from the Library. I'm now a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster!"

Hiruzen immediately understood. He thought, 'So that's why he is here. As I guessed, he wants something.'

Knowing what Fujin wanted, Hiruzen relaxed. He said, "That's good. Have you created an imprint for the Four Symbols Seal as well?"

Fujin nodded. He extended his left arm. Immediately, a seal spread out from his left palm and covered his left hand and forearm. Hiruzen observed the seal imprint and analyzed, 'Hmm, this is good enough. Since he could create a Seal Imprint for such a complicated seal so quickly, I don't need to test all his remaining seals.'

Hiruzen nodded and said, "You have done a good job. Congrats. You are the 11th Grandmaster in Fuinjutsu in our village."

Fujin immediately replied, "Thank you, Grandpa."

Hiruzen asked, "Do you want to keep this a secret, or should I make your status as a Grandmaster in Fuinjutsu public knowledge?"

There were quite a few advantages of making the knowledge public. As a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster, Fujin's status would be on an entirely new level. His prestige would increase. A lot of ninjas and even the clan leaders would try to create good relations with him.

Though it would put a mark on Fujin's back, Fujin already had a 50 million Ryo bounty. So, by no means would it make his situation any worse. And, unlike most Grandmasters who focused entirely on Fuinjutsu and hence had limited combat strength, Fujin's main focus was Ninjutsu. So he didn't have that weakness just like Hiruzen, Jiraiya and Danzo. However, Fujin still preferred keeping his cards hidden.

He replied without thinking much, "Keep it a secret. If need be, we can make it public anytime we want to in the future."

Hiruzen nodded and said, "Alright."

Fujin said, "Actually, there is one more thing."

Hiruzen thought, 'Here it comes.'

Fujin continued, "After I became a Chunin, you promised that you would teach me the Flying Thunder God jutsu after I became a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster. So could you teach it to me now?"

He looked at Hiruzen with a hopeful look on his face as thoughts clashed at the speed of light in Fujin's head to counter anything Hiruzen might say to decline his request.

Hiruzen sighed internally and thought, 'I just said it so that he would stop bugging me. How would I have even known that he would become a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster from nothing in less than four years? It almost feels like he already knew that this was a requirement and baited me into saying it.'

Hiruzen couldn't help but wonder, 'I wonder what Sensei would think if I started giving the Flying Thunder God as a reward for breaking a record in the Chunin Exams.'

Hiruzen could imagine Tobirama lecturing him on making promises so carelessly. He thought, 'Well, this won't be the first time I have disappointed Sensei.'

As Fujin expected, Hiruzen shook his head! However, Hiruzen's words were something he never imagined!

Hiruzen said, "I have no talent for Space-Time Ninjutsu. The only ones I can use are Summoning and Reverse Summoning jutsus. So I can't teach, guide or even help you in this regard. But, I'll hand you the scroll for learning the Flying Thunder God jutsu that the Second Hokage created and the Fourth Hokage improved. Whether you can learn it or not depends upon you."

Fujin was stunned by Hiruzen's words. He thought, 'That's it? He isn't going to make me work to get the scroll? And he isn't going to give me a Will of Fire lecture for 3 hours?'

Hiruzen continued, "I will arrange the scroll for you in a week. You can take it from me after you return from your next Anbu mission."

Fujin was still speechless. He had calculated numerous schemes and arguments for so long. He never imagined that Hiruzen would just hand it to him. He just nodded absentmindedly.

Hiruzen asked, "Anything else Fujin?"

Fujin gathered his thoughts. He shook his head and said, "No. Just keep this a secret as well."

Hiruzen nodded and replied, "Of course. You have done very well, Fujin. Though no one knows it yet, Konoha is proud of you. If you manage to learn the Flying Thunder God jutsu, then you will be a beacon of hope for our village, just like the Fourth Hokage was. Even if you don't, you are still doing very well. So don't force yourself too much.'

Fujin nodded and replied, "I will, Grandpa. Thank you. I will see you later."

Hiruzen nodded and Fujin took his leave. Fujin didn't talk to anyone and just began walking back to the training ground at a slow speed. He was still processing his thoughts. Finally, he let out a sigh and thought, 'I should be happy and ecstatic for receiving this jutsu so easily.'

But for some reason, it feels like I have just suffered a great defeat. It almost feels like there is an empty feeling in my heart. Why is that?'

Meanwhile, in the Hokage's Office, Hiruzen continued his work. He recalled his earlier interaction with Fujin and chuckled. He thought, 'Does he still think that he is eleven or that I don't know him? I could smell his intention to fight for that jutsu from miles away. Why would I even bother making things difficult for myself when I intended to give him that jutsu eventually in any case?'

Though Fujin had tricked Hiruzen four years ago, Hiruzen didn't mind it. In his view, Fujin was already capable enough to receive a jutsu like the Flying Thunder God. After all, he had given it to Minato when he was even younger and weaker than Fujin. Though he would preferred to make Fujin contribute more to Konoha before giving him the jutsu, Hiruzen decided against it after recalling Fujin's actions in the Land of Wind and the Land of Grass and his way of 'contributing'.

Fujin reached the training ground but was still a bit down. He shook his head and thought, 'Ah, screw it. I got the jutsu. That's all that matters. I'll teach Naruto some Wind jutsus to compensate for the emotional roller coaster Hiruzen put me through. Besides, I will need some entertainment in my retired life. But since Hiruzen gave me the Flying Thunder God jutsu without any trouble, I'll leave out the Shadow Clones, supercharging and the part about pranking the Hokage a thousand times.'

Having cheered himself up, Fujin returned to training!

Naruto: The Wind Calamity

Chapter 379: The Mole in the Anbu!

In one of the many training grounds inside Konoha, it looked like a calamity had struck. Hundreds of trees were broken. The ground had dozens of craters. In fact, the entire training ground was covered in cracks.

In this training ground, two individuals sat on broken stumps while breathing heavily. Guy said, "You are growing very rapidly. Small quantities of chakra have already started infusing into your body."

Exhaustion could be heard in Guy's tone. Fujin's breathing was even rougher. He said, "It's thanks to your training plan. I already feel much stronger. In another couple of months, this process should reach the initial completion stage."

In the last month, Fujin visited Yoshi in the Konoha hospital several times to confirm that the process wasn't harmful to his body. Though he trusted his analysis and Guy's intentions, there was no harm in being more careful. Fortunately, the process was very safe and beneficial for him.

Guy nodded and said, "Yeah. Your progress will slow down once you reach that stage. But don't be discouraged. As long as you keep training, your body will keep getting stronger."

He grinned, gave Fujin a thumbs up and said, "There is no limit to how much our bodies can improve!"

Fujin nodded and thought, 'Yeah. Who'd have imagined that this crazy guy would nearly kill Madara who was at a level far beyond what he was in his prime.'

Fujin said, "Don't worry. I'll keep working on my body."

He chuckled and added, "I'd hate it if I couldn't make you go all out in our spars."

Guy chuckled as well. Fujin continued, "But, we won't be able to spar for a few days. I'll be going on a mission."

Guy replied, "Actually, our spars will have to become less frequent."

Fujin raised his eyebrow and asked, "Why?"

Guy grinned and said, "Because I'm gonna be a sensei."

Fujin acted surprised and said, "Ah, I nearly forgot that a new batch will be passing out from the academy."

He chuckled and teased, "But I didn't think you were the sensei-type, Guy. Hahaha!"

Guy ignored the teasing tone and claimed proudly, "My squad will have a very promising youngster. In the future, he may even give you a tough time, Fujin. So don't get too comfortable with your power."

Fujin waved his arm dismissively and replied, "I'm still a few days away from my 15th birthday. So, I am still in my youth and have a lot to grow. It's you and Kakashi who are getting older and have to be worried about being surpassed."

Guy immediately stood up and exclaimed passionately, "Don't underestimate the power of my youth!"

Fujin chuckled and said, "I'll see you around, Guy. Good luck with your new students."

He disappeared from the training ground. Guy muttered in annoyance, "Did Kakashi send him to me so that I wouldn't challenge him anymore?"

He snorted and exclaimed loudly, "Kakashi! My eternal rival! We need to have another competition before we both become Sensei!"

He disappeared from the training ground as well!

Fujin returned to his home. Since it was the last day of his vacation, he decided to rest so that he would be at his full strength during the mission.

Fujin analyzed, 'This vacation was very fruitful. I created an array of new Vacuum and Wind jutsus that compensate for my previous weakness. Though a new counter can be created for my new fighting style, it will be more difficult and take a longer time. More importantly, they would have to know about these new jutsus. And I have several methods of keeping them hidden.

Beyond that, my biggest gain was becoming Fuinjutsu Grandmaster and creating Seal Imprints. My Taijutsu has also made massive improvements. And, I have made my idea of the Wind Domain a reality, though it still needs a lot of work.

After I quit Anbu, I will have to keep working on my Taijutsu and Wind Domain. Along with them, I'll have to work on learning the Flying Thunder God and creating the Eight Trigram Divination Seal.

Of these 4, the Eight Trigram Divination Seal should be the easiest. Once I'm done with it, I'll create its seal imprint and then begin working on creating a Battlefield as Uchiha Sora did. Sigh, the next year is going to be as hectic as my last 3 months. And that's without considering any outside interference.'

Fujin rested for the remaining day. The next day, he returned to the underground Anbu Headquarters after 3 months. As usual, the Anbu headquarters had several Anbu moving around it. A few glanced at Fujin before continuing with their work. Fujin noticed their glances and didn't mind them. He just entered his assigned room.

Unknown to him, one Anbu ninja became serious about seeing Fujin. However, he didn't glance at Fujin for more than a second, due to which Fujin didn't notice anything odd. He thought, 'That's Suzuki Fujin, the Spectral Swordsman. Though he is wearing a mask, I can easily identify him.

Danzo-sama said that he had taken a 3 month-long vacation. Since he is back, he should be taking a mission today.'

He immediately moved towards Eagle's office.

Inside his room, Fujin met up with his team. He looked at all 3 and asked, "So, did you enjoy the vacation?"

Bunjiro grinned and answered, "Of course. I was afraid that my sensei would have broken his ties with me had the vacation been any longer."

Hearing his words, Yugao's expression also became weird. She had made Hayate teach her so much that he had fallen sick. Fortunately, she was wearing her mask. She and Fumito nodded.

Fujin said, "I would have loved to spar with you guys once again. But we will be hitting the ground running. Our next mission will be completed by you three. I will be just observing you three and will only interfere if you can't handle the mission."

Yugao replied, "You can leave it to us, Captain."

Fumito nodded and added, "I have been wanting to test my skills for some time as well."

Fujin nodded and said, "Good. I'll go take a mission from Eagle. You three wait here. By the time I return, decide on which disguise you want to use during the mission. We will be completing the mission under disguise."

After the last mission, Fujin didn't want laziness to be the reason for getting caught in another trap. Though maintaining transformation jutsu all the time strained chakra reserves and concentration, it wasn't unbearable.

The trio nodded. Fujin left his room.

While Fujin was talking with his team, Danzo's subordinate entered Eagle's office and approached him. Eagle looked up and asked, "Tiger, does your team want to go on a mission again?"

Tiger nodded. He was an Anbu Captain just like Fujin. Of course, he was much weaker. Eagle quickly handed him a mission.

Tiger read the mission information and asked, "Can I look into the other missions as well, in case there is one that suits my team more?"

Eagle nodded. Anbu ninjas picking out missions for themselves during peacetime wasn't strange. Pretty much everyone did it regularly unless there were special instructions from the Hokage or a mission required a particular set of abilities.

Tiger quickly looked into all the available missions. After a couple of minutes, he shortlisted two. He analyzed, 'A diplomatic mission to the Land of Grass. Danzo-sama said that Fujin was frequently given diplomatic missions in the last year. So he could be given this mission. But...'

Tiger looked at the second mission and analyzed, 'But the situation in the Land of Waterfall is more important. We have to eliminate an entire Noble family because they are planning for a deep

cooperation with Iwa. They will have a few Jounins protecting them and Iwa ninjas could also be involved. With his past record, Fujin would likely be sent here.'

Tiger said, "I want to take this mission to the Land of Grass."

Eagle replied, "Alright. Your team can take it."

Tiger nodded and left. As soon as he left, he created two Shadow Clones. One Shadow Clone went out to inform his teammates while the other Shadow Clone snuck into the Root facilities hidden underground. He himself kept waiting in the hall.

His Shadow Clone reached Danzo's office in a minute. Danzo noticed him and asked, "Did Suzuki Fujin appear?"

Tiger nodded and said, "He and his team have appeared in the Anbu Headquarters. I believe they will take a mission today. I checked up on all the missions. There were two that I thought he would be given. I have taken one of them. So he should be dispatched to the Land of Waterfall to eliminate the Yanagi family."

Danzo nodded and analyzed, 'The Yanagi family. They are trying to enter into an alliance with Iwagakure due to the previous events. A good mission. The presence of Iwagakure ninjas wouldn't be seen as suspicious.'

He said, "Good work. Return to your duties. Send me a confirmation when you see him leaving. After that, just complete your mission properly."

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Chapter 380: Danzo's Treacherous Scheme!

Tiger nodded and dispelled his Shadow Clone. Danzo got into action as well. He dispatched a couple of Root squads. Both squads consumed soldier pills and travelled straight to Iwagakure. Their goal was to inform Iwagakure of the fact that Fujin was sent to eliminate the Yanagi family.

Danzo saw the two squads leave and thought, 'Iwagakure suffered heavily at Fujin's hands last time. They should understand that his threat is far greater than the benefits of befriending the Yanagi family. So Onoki will use this opportunity to set up a trap to lure and kill Fujin.

But, according to my calculations, they will fail. Onoki and the Jinchurikis can't move. They can only send Kitsuchi and more Jounins. Though I'm not sure what training Fujin did, considering how intense and secretive it was, I believe he should have trained in a way to counter Kitsuchi and other Iwa ninjas.

So Fujin won't die. But the same can't be said about his teammates. However, losing 3 Anbu ninjas in exchange for dozens of Iwagakure Jounins is beneficial for the village. This clash, in addition to the previous one, will significantly weaken Iwa's morale and confidence.

More importantly, getting ambushed for the second time will make Fujin question Hiruzen and the Anbu organization's competence and intentions. I can use that to recruit him. Hiruzen has been giving Fujin diplomatic missions and taking him along for negotiations. Such a waste of his potential. Only under my guidance can he contribute the most for Konoha!

Danzo's strategy was extremely treacherous. Even more impressive was that he came up with it in mere minutes. His scheme would cause heavy damage to Iwagakure and create a deep wedge between Fujin and Hiruzen. If everything went according to his plan, then he could get a very capable subordinate. Even if calculations were inaccurate and Fujin ended up dying, Danzo wouldn't suffer any losses or lose any sleep over it.

Fujin was unaware of the treacherous trap targeting him. Though he had taken sufficient precautions against Danzo, he never imagined that Danzo would use such an unconventional method to create trouble for him. He entered Eagle's office. Tiger, who was near the office, noticed him entering.

Eagle saw Fujin and said, "It's good to have you back."

Fujin nodded and said, "It's good to see you again as well. We will be hitting the ground running. Have any good missions?"

Eagle nodded and handed Fujin the mission to eliminate the Yanagi family. Fujin read the information and analyzed, 'Hmm, a typical elimination mission. They have 2 Jounins, but they are from Taki and not one of the 5 major villages. It won't be any challenge to eliminate them.

However, since Iwagakure is involved, a couple of their Anbu could also be hiding there. That could make things interesting. But...'

Fujin sighed internally and thought, 'It'll be a rather lousy mission for my last Anbu mission.'

Fujin placed the mission file back on the desk and said, "It's not good enough. Do you have any rank S mission?"

Eagle was confused. He said, "This is a rank S mis..."

Fujin interrupted him and said, "It's too easy. I want a tougher mission to test my team. Something that will have multiple Jounin level ninjas in the enemy ranks."

Eagle wondered, 'Is he upset that his team wasn't much help in the previous mission and wants to put them to the test?'

Suddenly, Eagle's eyes widened. He asked, "Do you intend to..."

Fujin nodded and said, "It's time. Yugao and Fumito are already very capable."

Eagle nodded and said, "Alright."

He went through his files and grabbed another file. He handed it to Fujin and said, "This is a mission from the Land of Hot Water. Their southern territory has seen a lot of attacks from Rogue ninjas from Kirigakure. The high number of attacks shows that there is some sort of cooperation among those rogue ninjas.

Lord Hokage believes that Kirigakure itself is involved in these attacks and these rogue ninjas are just a front. As we aren't sure of the situation, we were planning to send 3 Jounin squads left by 2 Elite Jounins to deal with this situation.

However, since you want a more difficult mission, your squad can take it. But, you will ascertain the situation first. If it is beyond what you can deal with, you can retreat. We will be sending the units we planned one week later. You will cooperate with them to get the job done."

Fujin went through the details in the file and said, "Alright. We will take this mission."

He tossed a seal to Eagle and said, "If we can't complete the mission, this seal will burn."

Eagle took the seal and said, "Alright. Good luck. Meet up with the Daimyo of Hot Water to get updates on the situation. They could have already found out the location of any enemy bases in their country."

Fujin nodded and stored the file in his bracer before leaving. He quickly met up with his team and they left the Anbu Headquarters. Tiger noticed their movements and thought, 'I was right.'

He quickly sent another Shadow Clone to Danzo to inform him about Fujin's team's departure. Unfortunately, despite making an excellent plan on the go, Danzo failed to consider that Fujin would refuse the assigned mission and take a mission that required several squads to complete and wasn't supposed to be an Anbu mission!

So the Root ninjas he deployed moved in the complete opposite direction of Fujin's squad. While Tiger could glance a few times at Fujin inside the Anbu Headquarters, he didn't dare to chase Fujin outside to keep an eye on his movements. So Danzo would stay unaware of the real mission that Fujin took for a few days, making it too late for him to do anything about it.

Fujin's team moved rapidly through the Land of Fire. En route, they had used Transformation jutsu to disguise themselves. No one would be able to link them to Fujin and his team. They rested at the border between the two countries at night and continued moving the next day. At noon, they reached Yugakure.

They quickly flickered in front of the Daimyo palace. The samurai guards were startled to see 4 masked ninjas suddenly appearing out of nowhere. Before they could ask anything, Fujin tossed a file and said, "We come from Konoha regarding the mission Lord Daimyo issued. Inform him of our arrival."

The Samurai caught the file and looked at it before replying, "Alright, stay here for a few minutes."

He immediately sent a servant inside to deliver the message. Opposite the Daimyo palace was a small shop. As soon as Fujin's squad arrived, his eyes immediately moved towards them. He observed them and within a second turned them away.

He thought, 'From Konoha, eh?'

If Fujin had known that the words he spoke were heard by a shopkeeper across the street, he would be surprised. After all, though he wasn't too soft, his voice wasn't loud enough to be heard on the other side of the street.

The shopkeeper analyzed, 'Two fatties, 1 skinny and 1 with a slightly decent build, all 4 men. Lord Raikage had said that the squad he is looking for has one girl who has long purple hair, a blond man and two with black hair. And none of them were fat. This isn't the squad he is looking for.'

He went about his business and didn't look at the Konoha ninjas again. Unknowingly, Fujin had dodged two menacing bullets in two days! Had he known about it, he'd be amused and be thankful that luck was finally with him. Unfortunately, he had no way of knowing the two devious schemes he avoided unknowingly.

After a few minutes, Fujin and his team were invited in. They were escorted to the conference room. On entering the room, Fujin noticed the Daimyo sitting on the farthest seat from the door. Several Nobles were also sitting in the room. In addition, there were a few Samurais in the room. There was a familiar face as well.

Fujin looked at a large man sitting next to the Daimyo and thought, 'Tokuhei... Since when did he start sitting next to the Daimyo? Is there a change in the internal politics of this country?'

Tokuhei was one of the few who advocated for more funding for the ninjas in the Land of Hot Water. On the other hand, the Daimyo and most of the Nobles wanted to completely stop funding for the ninja academy due to numerous reasons.

Though Fujin was intrigued, he didn't have any time to investigate it. The Daimyo said, "This mission will require more than just four ninjas. And it will be a joint mission with our ninjas. Why did Lord Hokage send just the four of you?"

Fujin replied, "Lord Hokage believes that Kirigakure might be the ones backing the rogue Kiri ninjas. So this mission could be far more complicated than what you imagined it to be."

[Alternate Title: Dodging Two Bullets]