

Calamity 581

Naruto: The Wind Calamity

Chapter 581: Best Pals!

Seeing the Anbu Captain leave, Fujin's clone smirked and thought, 'Homura will be busy with the mission report for some time. I guess I'll just continue annoying Koharu. Thanks to the image she created, she can't even say no without taking a significant hit to her reputation.'

He flickered a few times and reached his office. Yasushi and Haruma were slightly surprised to see Fujin arrive so early. Fujin's clone took his seat and said, "Bring all the files that appeared in the last couple of weeks. Also, send a messenger to call Katsuhiko. Ask him to see me immediately and bring the proposal with him."

Yasushi was surprised but nodded and got to work immediately.

While he did so, Monkey reached Koharu and informed her about what he needed. He even mentioned that all that needed to be done in three days. With an annoyed expression, Koharu scolded, "Boy, how many times do I have to tell you to not bother me for such small matters? I already told you to approach the other officials. Do you think I am free to attend every small matter?"

Monkey got a bit nervous. However, he recalled Fujin's words and thought, 'She acted just like he anticipated. Now, is this just an act or is she really annoyed? Sigh, I don't get paid enough for such a risky job.'

He bowed slightly and replied, "I apologize, Elder Koharu. However, Suzuki Fujin instructed me to make this request to you. He said that only if you take care of this will the kids get the best possible environment to train and become stronger."

Hearing his name, Koharu was annoyed even more. She cursed, 'That brat! He is purposefully annoying me! From what I know, he didn't approach Homura even once. It must be because I was the one to speak against him. Unfortunately, declining his requests isn't easy. If the issue blows up, I could lose my hard-earned reputation over a small matter, just like Danzo.'

Both Koharu and Homura were informed by Danzo about the injustice he had suffered. Both were shocked by how such a small matter had blown up. It had made the two of them look at Fujin in a different light. It was also one of the factors why Homura tried to dig up on his past and didn't argue when Hiruzen said that Fujin could scheme in the dark as well.

In the end, Koharu said in an unpleasant tone, "I'll look into it. However, ask him to not bother me again for such small tasks."

Monkey was surprised. He exclaimed internally, 'She accepted? I was sure that she would decline! Could Fujin be right? Could it be that this was really an act?'

He immediately gathered his thoughts and said, "Thank you, Elder."

He was still confused but decided to get the job done first.

Katsuhiko entered the Hokage Building and walked towards Fujin's office. En route, several eyes noticed him. He ignored them and reached Fujin's office. Even before he could knock, he heard, "Come in."

He entered the office and saw Fujin's clone going through several files. To his surprise, the clone closed the files and set them aside. Generally, the clone would make him wait until he was done reading the files he was going through. It was the first time Fujin's clone had given him any priority.

Fujin's clone looked at Katsuhiko and asked, "Have you made the corrections to the proposal?"

Katsuhiko answered, "I made the changes you suggested and made some changes of my own."

He handed Fujin's clone the file. Without saying anything, the clone began going through the proposal. Several times, disappointment appeared on the clone's face. It was visible to everyone in the room, including Katsuhiko.

Katsuhiko gritted his teeth in rage while trying to control his anger. He cursed internally, 'This demonic brat! How much will he humiliate me? This is the 8th time I have visited him and the 6th time I made changes to the proposal! Don't tell me he will tell me to make changes again! The Council Meeting is in a

few days. If we miss it, then I won't be able to put forth this proposal for several months again! Why doesn't he just admit that he doesn't want to pass this proposal and let me take this credit?'

The past couple of months had been extremely irritating and humiliating for Katsuhiko. It was so bad that he began suffering from high blood pressure!

Initially, Fujin had planned on using bureaucracy to keep pushing the proposal for a couple of years by using the tactic of denying Katsuhiko opportunities to meet with him and making him redo the proposal whenever he couldn't avoid a meeting.

However, after he had a change of heart and decided to increase his political weight while Hiruzen was still in charge, he decided to make Katsuhiko go through the years-long process in a couple of months. As a result, the old Elite Jounin was in mental agony. He often regretted listening to Danzo and picking up a fight with Fujin.

Fujin's clone sighed and muttered, "I'm disappointed in you, Katsuhiko-san. This is your 7th attempt. Why is the proposal still so full of mistakes?"

The way he spoke, everyone could easily feel the vast disappointment in his voice. Katsuhiko gritted his teeth hard and did his best to not lose his composure. He didn't want to show to everyone that Fujin had gotten under his skin. At the same time, Yasushi and Haruma were also doing their best. They had an even harder time controlling their laughter. Luckily for Katsuhiko, they somehow managed to do so.

Katsuhiko asked as calmly as he could, "What are the mistakes? I'll fix them again."

Fujin's clone shook his head and replied, "The Council Meeting is in a few days. If I let you continue making the proposal, who knows when it'll be good enough to be put forth. I'll take care of it. You can leave."

Katsuhiko was surprised by his sudden statement. He expected Fujin to continue using his delaying tactics. He never imagined that Fujin's clone would do the opposite. He should have been pleased by this development. Unfortunately, the joy was all sucked out since Fujin's clone hadn't given up the opportunity to insult him once again.

Katsuhiko controlled his anger while thinking, 'I was afraid that he'd keep pushing the proposal ahead. Looks like I was wrong. If he puts forth the proposal in the next council meeting, I can have a chance to lay a claim to his seat! I'll endure for now. He'll quickly realize what a grave mistake he has made.'

He said, "Alright. I'll leave it to you then."

Fujin's clone nodded without even looking at him. He didn't need to think much to know what Katsuhiko was thinking. However, Fujin didn't really see him as a threat. Any annoyance would come from the other council members. At best, Katsuhiko would be used as a tool like how Danzo tried. Even if Fujin eliminated him, they could just use someone else instead. So, he wasn't interested in spending any more time on Katsuhiko. Giving him sleepless nights and high blood pressure was enough punishment for aiming at Fujin's seat.

As Katsuhiko exited Fujin's office, he heard some soft voices...

"Look, it's Katsuhiko-sama. He visited Councilor Suzuki Fujin's office again."

"Yeah, he has been visiting here a lot. In the last two months, this is his sixth visit. I wonder why he visits him so often."

"I wonder about it as well. It's almost like they are best pals!"

"No way, he is like 30 years older than the Councilor, haha."

A few similar comments were passed by others. Fujin had become famous inside the building for showing up so rarely. Hence, whenever he appeared to work, it would gain everyone's attention. Some out of genuine interest, others out of jealousy. After all, who wouldn't like to work just once every 1 or 2 weeks?

And every time Fujin visited his office, Katsuhiko would show up. Quite a few eyes had noticed it and had become interested. Several speculations flew as to why Katsuhiko visited him every single time.

Katsuhiko gritted his teeth and continued moving while ignoring the small talk of others. He cursed, 'Best pals? I'd fucking kill him if I could do it and get away with it! Thankfully, no one knows what exactly happened inside the office. I'll just need to ensure that his two assistants stay quiet.'

Back in the office, Fujin's clone finished reading the proposal Katsuhiko had sent. He chuckled while thinking, 'Not a bad proposal, it is pretty much perfect. I just need to make slight changes to it so that I can include the clans as well. This way, even if they aren't happy with this, they still won't be offended as their ninjas will benefit as well. While they won't benefit as much as civilian ninjas, the clans can't complain as everyone gets the same benefits.'

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Chapter 582: A Shortcut!

Sitting in his basement, Fujin was looking at the proposal in front of him. He had figured out what changes he should be making to the proposal. However, he faced an issue when he started incorporating the changes into the proposal.

Fujin let out a sigh and muttered to himself, 'I now see why Tsunade hated paperwork so much. The changes I plan to make aren't a lot, but putting it on paper will take more than a day to complete...

No wonder Katsuhiko was that angry. I thought it was just due to the passive humiliating comments I kept passing, but now I guess that a good part of that anger was due to working on this proposal 7 times!' I don't even want to imagine how torturous that would be for someone who never worked in the Hokage Building before.

Fujin shook his head and got up. He created a few Shadow Clones and left the work to them. While he would still need to endure the headaches, at least he wouldn't be wasting his time. The new Shadow Clones began working on the proposal while the remaining Shadow Clones kept working on the seal.

While they worked, Fujin left his house and looked towards the building to his right. Winds suddenly picked up pace and began moving towards the building at a high speed.

Takeshi was relaxing in his room, going through one of the books he had taken from the library. Suddenly, he felt something and got on his feet with his alertness raised to the max as he muttered, "This chakra and the breeze..."

In Takeshi's closed room, Winds suddenly took the form of a person! He watched with a surprised look as the Winds transformed into a clone of Fujin and wondered, 'Holy hell! How can winds do something like this? Why is sensei's Wind Release cooler than my Scorch Release?'

He asked, "Sensei, is that you?"

Fujin's Wind Clone looked at Takeshi and said, "Meet me in the Training Ground immediately."

The clone quickly dispersed into the wind. In a few seconds, the air in his room calmed down. Takeshi muttered, "That was cool and freaky at the same time!"

He quickly left his room and ran to the training ground opposite the compounds, where he saw Fujin sitting on a stump. He stopped right in front of Fujin and asked, "Sensei, are we beginning our training?"

Fujin replied, "Sort of. I'm a bit busy with Council duties. We will begin the regular training in a few days after the council meeting is over. I called you here because I mastered an interesting jutsu recently. I wanted to see if I could use it to teach you more efficiently. If it works, then it might be very helpful for you and a bit helpful to your teammates."

Takeshi became confused. He asked, "Why will it be only a bit helpful to the others and very helpful to me?"

Fujin answered, "It's because Scorch Release is a fusion of Fire and Wind Release, which are my strongest affinities as well. I don't have much expertise in Water and Lightning Release. So they will have limited help. Anyways, you'll understand once we try."

Takeshi nodded. Fujin said, "Sit down and calm your mind. For what I am planning, you need to be as calm as you can be. Otherwise, it'll be difficult to implement."

Takeshi became even more curious. He sat down on the ground and began meditating. Fujin thought, 'Luckily, he is the most calm one from his group. Now, let's see if this will work. Even though this jutsu has a lot of other uses and benefits, it was this ability that pushed me to ask for it from Hiruzen. I'll later try it with Ranmaru as well, though I'll have to do something about the seals I placed on him...'

While he was thinking, several Shadow Clones appeared next to Fujin. A couple stayed next to Fujin while the rest flickered in different directions and hid themselves. They would ensure that no one disturbs Fujin. The seals Fujin had placed in the Training Ground were activated as well. Even Hiruzen wouldn't be able to spy on the Training Ground until he deactivated the seals.

After a few minutes, Takeshi opened his eyes and said, "I am calm sensei."

Fujin nodded and said, "Good. Now, don't resist."

Fujin weaved a few hand signs. Takeshi's eyes widened as he noticed something leave Fujin's body. He wondered, 'Is that sensei's soul? Did sensei master Kato Dan's speciality? Isn't that a forbidden jutsu?'

Fujin's soul looked at him and said, "Calm yourself, Takeshi. And yes, this is Spirit Transformation jutsu, the jutsu Kato Dan created. Now, don't resist."

After saying so, Fujin's soul entered Takeshi's body. Takeshi felt slight unease and became uncomfortable but didn't feel anything else. Suddenly, he heard a voice directly inside his head, "With the Spirit Transformation jutsu, I can freely enter the bodies of other ninjas. I can take control of their bodies and even suppress or destroy their souls."

In this training, I'll be utilizing the first aspect. By taking control of your body, I'll use a jutsu that I have mastered but you haven't. You will pay full attention to your body and the way your chakra gets manipulated and have your body memorize it so that you can do so instinctively.

If it works like how I envisioned it, then you'll be able to master those techniques to a great extent within a few minutes. If not, then that'll be unfortunate. Your training will continue as usual.

Did you understand? No need to speak. Just think of the answer and I'll know."

To say Takeshi was shocked was an understatement. He could only think, 'Yes sensei. I understand. I never imagined that the Spirit Transformation jutsu could be used in such a manner.'

Fujin's soul chuckled and said, "There are several ways to use every jutsu. It just depends on how creative you can get and how good your control over the jutsu is. Always remember this when you train in the future.

Especially for your Scorch Release. Scorch Release is as flexible as Wind Release while being more destructive than Fire Release. How you can use it will only be limited by your imagination. You already know how Pakura from Sunagakure could use it. However, don't restrict yourself to her fighting style or my fighting style. Create your own style. If you succeed in doing so, then you will most likely become a rank S ninja in the future. Otherwise, an Elite Jounin will be the max you could reach even with my guidance."

Takeshi noted down Fujin's words in his heart. He would never forget such advice and thought, 'I understand sensei. I will create my own fighting style with Scorch Release.'

Fujin's soul said, "Good. First, display me your current jutsus so that I can get a hang of how you mold chakra inside your body. Then I could replicate it while using my jutsus."

Takeshi replied, 'Alright, sensei.'

He got up. While the two of them conversed, Fujin's clones had moved his main body away. Without a soul, Fujin's main body couldn't move. It needed to be protected by his clones. It was why he had increased the security in the training ground.

If someone actually attacked the training ground, the clones could buy enough time for his soul to return to his main body. Even if that couldn't be done, the clones could just teleport with the main body into his house. Fujin wasn't worried about anyone breaking into his house.

Takeshi asked, 'Which jutsus should I use, sensei?'

Fujin replied, "Use Great Breakthrough, Great Fireball and Extremely Steaming Murder jutsus."

Takeshi nodded and began weaving his hand signs.

'Wind Release: Great Breakthrough jutsu'

'Fire Release: Great Fireball jutsu'

'Scorch Release: Extremely Steaming Murder jutsu'

One by one, Takeshi displayed all the 3 jutsus. Fujin didn't care about the first two jutsu. It was the third one where all his attention was focused on. With his soul inside Takeshi's body, Fujin could feel how Takeshi's chakra was being molded as if it was his own!

Fujin thought, 'So that's how Fire and Wind chakra fuse to form Scorch Kekkei Genkai... As I calculated, the fusion has to happen inside my body. Otherwise, it can't be considered a Kekkei Genkai and will only be a combination jutsu.'

Still, even though I can feel it clearly, replicating this will still be difficult. The only good thing is that I now have a reference point. I might succeed in copying Scorch Kekkei Genkai with some practice!

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Chapter 583: Rasa's Troubles

Everything Fujin had said until that point, though true, was completely bullshit. The real reason why Fujin used this technique was to get a better hang of Takeshi's Scorch Release! Apart from being able to study his soul, this was the main reason why Fujin wanted this jutsu and willingly traded top-quality human puppets with Hiruzen to get it!

Of course, Fujin wasn't completely sure of its effectiveness. After all, if learning Kekkei Genkai was that easy, then Dan would have unlocked several Kekkei Genkai and would have likely been far stronger than the Sannins. However, that wasn't the case. On the contrary, he hadn't mastered any Kekkei Genkai. Nor had Orochimaru, who could use a more advanced jutsu.

'What should I do now?' Since Fujin didn't reply, Takeshi became doubtful. Fujin's soul answered, "It looks like I underestimated the difficulty of influencing your chakra and molding it properly. I will need to observe your chakra network for far longer. Continue using Extremely Steaming Murder jutsu."

'Alright.' Takeshi replied and continued creating more flaming orbs. Fujin just carefully observed. While he had seen the process and got some clues by observing the first time, he was still quite far away from understanding how to fuse it properly. As he had expected, even though experiencing it in this manner was extremely helpful, he couldn't learn it in an instant.

Fujin thought, 'Oh well. Even though it isn't instantaneous, I have a feeling that I'll master Scorch Kekkei Genkai sooner or later. After all, I can always refer to him if I ever face any issues or have doubts.'

After using the jutsu 5 times, Takeshi's breathing became heavy. He said, 'My chakra is running low. I can't use this jutsu again.'

Fujin's soul replied, "Don't worry. Continue doing it."

Fujin's soul placed his palm on Takeshi's soul and transferred some of his chakra to him. In the blink of an eye, Takeshi's chakra reserves became full once again!

Takeshi's eyes widened. He asked, 'Spirit Transformation jutsu can do this as well?'

Fujin's soul chuckled and said, "Yup. Don't tell others though. Depending too much on others at this age isn't a good thing."

Takeshi nodded. Fujin thought, 'Well, it's not like I'd ever transfer chakra even if someone asks. A shame that this jutsu doesn't allow me to absorb chakra. If I could, I'd have definitely made some chakra batteries. I could even issue missions for that purpose. Perhaps the lazy ninjas would have accepted for making some easy money...'

Takeshi ran out of chakra once again and was again refilled by Fujin. Fujin's soul thought, 'That said, I'm not at my full chakra level either. 70% of my chakra is with my clones. Fortunately, his chakra reserves are much lower than mine. I can refill it a few times. Then, I'll give him the reward. I'll only give him one jutsu at a time. That way, I will have reasons to keep doing this.'

Fujin refilled his chakra reserves four times when he felt that he wouldn't learn anything more from just observing him. He immediately had another idea. He said, "Alright, I have got a hang of it now. Relax, I'll take over your body. Don't resist."

Takeshi replied, 'Alright.'

He mentally prepared himself. A second later, Fujin took full control of Takeshi's body and said, "Feel how the chakra moves in your body. This will be an important jutsu for you."

He began weaving hand signs and softly said, "Fire Release: Fire Dragon Flame Bullet jutsu"

He took a deep breath and shot a Fire Dragon from his mouth. The Dragon, instead of moving forward, began revolving around Takeshi. Fujin's soul instructed, "While Fire Dragon Flame Bullet is generally an attacking jutsu, for you, it'll be an amazing defensive jutsu."

Takeshi thought for a bit and asked, 'How?'

Fujin's soul answered, "It's simple. After learning the Fire Dragon jutsu, you have to create a Scorch Dragon jutsu by using Fire Dragon as a base. And, you need to have amazing control over it. Once you succeed in creating it, improve your control over it and manipulate it in such a way that it can coil around you. When you succeed, very few ninjas will be able to fight you at close range. Most would be long dead before they make it through the Dragon."

Takeshi's eyes sparkled as he imagined how strong the defense would be. While it won't protect him against long and medium-range jutsus, it would be extremely effective against the ones who didn't have such options. As for the ones that stay at a distance, he could just run into them.

Fujin's soul exited his body and said, "Now that I have shown you how to do it, try to replicate the process and master the Fire Dragon Flame Bullet jutsu. You can approach me if you face any issues. I have refilled your chakra reserves again. So, you can practice it right away.

When you master it and begin attempting to create the Scorch Dragon jutsu, find me. I'll guide you to ensure that you don't make any mistakes or do something hazardous for yourself or others."

Takeshi immediately replied, "I will. Thank you sensei."

Takeshi was indeed very grateful. He never imagined that someone would go to such lengths to help him become stronger. Needless to say, Fujin's 'kind' act had created quite an impression on his young mind.

Fujin's soul nodded and said, "I'll be waiting."

He immediately disappeared and flew into his own body. Takeshi turned his gaze towards him. Fujin smiled before he and his clones disappeared. The seals in the training ground that blocked Hiruzen's crystal ball were deactivated as well.

Takeshi continued practicing while Fujin returned to his house. En route, he tried to replicate how the fusion happened inside Takeshi's body. He tried a few times but ultimately didn't succeed.

Fujin analyzed, 'It looks like it won't be that easy. That said, it was very helpful. I can feel that I have progressed quite a bit within a few minutes. If I were to try it by myself, I'd have needed several months or even years to reach this step.

I'll experiment with it again later. The next time, I will try to use Scorch Release while I am in control of his body. Experiencing how to do it through him will be much better than just observing.

Regardless, if I learn it, what should I do? Should I use it with Fujin identity? Though Scorch Release won't make me much stronger normally, it might give a huge boost to my Wind Domain. On the other hand, it might help me raise Shiden identity's combat power to rank S.'

He thought for a bit before deciding, 'Oh well, no need to think too much. I'll just use it with the identity that is forced to use it first. After all, Shiden is supposed to stay hidden and not fight.'

While Fujin was working on growing both his strength and influence, a particular individual was very annoyed due to Fujin's actions despite being over a thousand kilometers away from him. In truth, he wasn't aware that Fujin was the one behind the incident that troubled him.

In Sunagakure, Baki was in Rasa's office. Only the two of them were present in the office. Rasa asked, "Is there any update?"

Baki shook his head and answered, "No. We have exhausted all means of trying to find them or create contact with them. Unfortunately, nothing has succeeded. Our spies in Tanigakure got hands on a lot of their secret information as well. However, there is no mention of them. It's as if they have vanished entirely."

Baki paused for a few seconds before continuing, "It has been nearly three months since Yamakawa town was attacked. Since that day, we have completely lost contact with the ninjas stationed there. We can only assume that they were killed along with the Yamakawa family. The killers probably took their bodies with them."

A frown appeared on Rasa's face. He cursed, "Those ninjas included an Elite Jounin and a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster! Unless we recover their bodies, we can't assume their deaths. It's too costly for the village to face such losses just before our plan is put into action."

Not to mention, reports claimed that the town was attacked by puppets. It has worsened our relationship with Tanigakure. Since I didn't send anyone, it can only mean that it was someone else."

I had my spies collect information in the other hidden village to see if someone suddenly began training a large number of Puppeteers. However, no village has done so. It could only mean that it was Sasori!"

Rasa's words were full of hatred. Yamakawa was the perfect town to station his ninjas in. However, that town was completely ruined due to Sasori's actions. Not only were his losses grave, but the town had also become a hub for Konoha ninjas, increasing the difficulty in moving secretly for Suna.

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Chapter 584: Six Ninjas to watch out for!

Baki pointed out, "But Lord Kazekage, there are still some inconsistencies, due to which I'm not sure if it was Sasori. The reports say that nearly a hundred puppets were involved in the attack. A single puppeteer can't control so many puppets. It was why we suspected involvement of other villages."

Rasa replied, "It doesn't have to be him alone. It has been thirteen years since he went rogue. He could have accepted some students and taught them our secret technique."

I have confirmed with Orochimaru that Sasori is in Akatsuki. He has also trained a lot of spies. So it isn't far-fetched for him to have trained some underlings."

Baki's mood became heavy on hearing Rasa's speculations. He asked, "What do we do now, Lord?"

Rasa thought for a long time to decide what his next step should be. Baki waited patiently while thinking as well. Finally, Rasa said, "Sasori has to be eliminated. He is too big of a danger to be left alive. However, now is not the time. We can't divide our forces to find and fight him. For now, we will focus on crushing Konoha. That is more important for our village.

Since Yamakawa town has been destroyed and Tanigakure is hostile towards us, we can't use their towns to hide our forces. If we do so, Konoha might become suspicious as well and make better preparations.

We will only move small squads to the Land of Rivers a few days before the war begins. They will sneak into the Land of Fire and stealthily travel to Konoha a few days before I reach Konoha. When the signal is given, they will use Reverse Summoning to summon our Elites for a quick and deadly attack on Konoha."

Baki thought for a bit and nodded. That was the only option they had left. Rasa looked at him and said, "You should begin preparing as well. As planned, you will be leading Gaara's squad for the Chunin Exams. Your squad will be our Vanguard and also our secret weapon. Only with Shukaku can we buy enough time and avoid being swamped by Konoha ninjas. It's time to inform and prepare the kids. Call them here."

Baki nodded and left. A few minutes later, he returned with Rasa's children. Temari and Kankuro became a bit nervous upon seeing Rasa's serious expression. As for Gaara, he didn't care.

Rasa said, "Listen to what I say very carefully..."

Rasa informed his children that Suna would soon be attacking Konoha. He informed them about the plans that they needed to know. Temari and Kankuro were shocked when they heard Rasa order Gaara to let Shukaku lose when the signal was given! They wanted to protest, but one look from Rasa made them eat their words.

Rasa said, "That's all you need to know. I will emphasize this once again. Nothing that we discussed in this room should get out. Remember your roles properly. The future of the village will depend on whether you can do your job properly. If you fail, we will be surrounded by thousands of Konoha ninjas without any reinforcements to help us."

Temari and Kankuro were terrified upon imagining that scene. Both gulped nervously. On the other hand, Gaara was excited to kill more people and let 'mother' drink more blood. He didn't care how many enemies he'd be facing.

Rasa handed his kids a book and said, "This book has a list of Konoha's Elite Jounins. Memorize all of them, especially the first 6 ones. Every single one of them is extremely dangerous and will pose a great threat to our plan. If you meet them in Konoha, act naturally. Once the war begins, be careful of them. They might be able to even stop Shukaku's rampage."

This time, even Gaara was shocked. In Suna, there was just one person who could stop Shukaku. It was their father, the Kazekage. However, Konoha had as many as 6!

Temari opened the book while her brothers peeked into the book. The person on the first page was none other than Hiruzen, the Third Hokage. While they read his details, Baki said, "At his peak, the Third Hokage was nearly unstoppable. It had caused others to call him the God of Shinobi. Fortunately, he is much older now and has grown weaker."

The trio read his information before turning the page. The one on the second page was Shimura Danzo. Baki gave a short introduction of him as well and mentioned his injuries and the fact that he needed a walking stick to walk around. He did the same for Jiraiya and Tsunade, who were on the third and fourth pages respectively, while mentioning that neither of those two stayed in the village.

Temari and Kankuro wondered, 'What the hell is up with this village? Their Kage is an old man who should have long retired. There is another old man who is handicapped but still is said to have a lot of power in the village. But the two Sannins, who are at their prime, don't stay in the village?'

The two couldn't make any sense of the information and even doubted whether it was true. However, considering that it was their father who had given them the information, the two didn't have any choice but to believe it.

On the fifth page was the image of a silver-haired ninja who covered his left eye with his headband. While they read his information, Baki said, "He is Hatake Kakashi, also known as the copy ninja. With his Sharingan, he has copied over a thousand jutsus, which earned him his title. He was also the student of the Fourth Hokage, the Yellow Flash.

With his Sharingan, there is a chance that he could influence Shukaku, which makes him very dangerous for our plan. During the assault, I and others will ensure that he stays away from Gaara."

The three kids nodded before turning the page once again. Their eyes landed on a picture. The person in the picture didn't look unique like the 5 that preceded him. On first look, he looked like any other young man. However, there was one distinct feature that caught the eye of the trio. It was his eyes, they were as dark as the very abyss itself.

Their eyes moved from his eyes to his face. At first glance, his face, though handsome, was unremarkable. It was a face that would easily blend into the crowd. However, on closer inspection, they noticed subtle symmetries.

His jawline was very well-defined and his complexion was fair but held a hint of tan, which was a result of spending long hours training outside. His hair was spiky black and seemed to be waving in the winds while his expression was that of indifference. Everything combined together very well to give him quite a unique charm.

As for his body, it was a testament to discipline and training. His arms showed how toned his body was, showcasing the countless hours spent training. They weren't bulky by any means, but the muscles were clearly visible to the Kazekage's children.

He wore Konoha's headband on his forehead and was wearing the standard Jounin vest. The shirt underneath as well as his pants were black in color. On his forearms were bracers and his hands were covered in fingerless gloves with metal plates covering the back of his hands.

After seeing his appearance properly, the three of them began reading his details. Baki spoke once again, "He is Suzuki Fujin. He is just a bit older than you guys and gained fame a year ago when the Third Tsuchikage announced that he was the Spectral Swordsman.

Even though he is very young, he is still extremely strong. He specializes in Wind jutsus and can even use the Wind Vacuum Technique that Lord Second created. He is well known for his blinding speed and assassination skills. In addition, he is also a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster, which could give him some means to deal with Shukaku."

The trio was surprised. Kankuro said, "Seriously? He's just a couple of years older than me!"

Rasa ignored his elder son and looked at Gaara while saying, "We also suspect that he was the one to injure you and kill Susumu. If he attacks you for some reason, always ensure that your sand is defending you."

Gaara's eyes widened. The memory of him bleeding resurfaced in his brain. At the same time, Temari exclaimed, "Wait a minute! Uncle Susumu died two and a half years ago! Do you mean to say that he killed Uncle Susumu and injured Gaara when he was just 13 years old?"

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Chapter 585: Delusion

Shock could be heard in Temari's voice. Kankuro was shocked as well. A minute ago he was wondering whether he'd be as strong as Fujin when he turned 16. However, he soon discovered that he was far inferior to a younger Fujin! Temari had similar thoughts as well considering that Fujin was just a year older than her.

To their surprise, Rasa didn't say anything and just nodded. Baki said, "Well, we only suspect it is him. We aren't entirely sure as he never used any Vacuum jutsus during the fights. However, if what the Tsuchikage said is true, then it was most likely him."

Baki's words weren't reassuring. While they had relaxed after learning that two of Konoha's strongest ninjas weren't in the village and two more were old and past their prime, hearing about Kakashi and Fujin made Temari and Kankuro nervous.

Rasa could see it and said, "You don't need to worry about these ninjas. I'll be making arrangements to deal with them. I'm just informing you so that you three don't engage with them. There are still other names in the book. Though they aren't as strong as these six, they have the Elite Jounin rank as well. Go through them as well."

Temari and Kankuro nodded. The three of them looked through the remaining names. There were over a dozen ninjas which included the likes of Guy, Asuma, Renjiro, Katsuhiko, the Clan Leaders and others.

Once they were done reading, Rasa said, "The success of this plan is critical for the prosperity of Suna. Keep that in mind and train seriously for the next few months. All three of you should qualify for the last round of the Chunin Exam."

Temari and Kankuro nodded while Gaara went back to being indifferent. The three of them left Rasa's office. Once the door closed, Kankuro said, "Man, Konoha is scary! Their 13-year-olds can attack Gaara and kill Uncle Susumu!"

Temari corrected him, "It was just one ninja. Others should be ordinary. Otherwise, Konoha would have conquered the entire world by now."

Kankuro replied, "Yes, you are right. But still, that's scary. Gaara, how did he injur..."

"Shut up!" Gaara, whose memories of that day had resurfaced, unleashed his blood lust, scaring both Temari and Kankuro. With a crazy expression on his face, Gaara exclaimed, "Next time, I'll kill him!"

The bloodlust Gaara was oozing quietened his siblings. Not wanting to provoke him, they silently went away from him.

Back in the office, Baki asked with uncertainty, "Do we really have plans to deal with all of them? Even though the Hokage is old, he should still be extremely strong. If one of the Sannins appeared, then we would lose our advantage. If both appeared, we would be at a disadvantage."

Stopping Kakashi and Fujin will be a challenge as well. I can stop one of them, but the other will likely cut through our ninjas and stop Shukaku."

Rasa replied, "I'm aware. Don't worry. Though he didn't tell me why, Orochimaru is certain that Tsunade won't return. He is also certain that Danzo won't participate in the defense unless we attack his Root Headquarters. Jiraiya will most likely return, but we can handle him and Hiruzen as I'll have Orochimaru assisting me."

For Fujin, Orochimaru said that he has a capable subordinate from the Kaguya clan. He'll be responsible for stopping the boy. I'll be inspecting that Kaguya clan ninja before we start our plan. Orochimaru said that he'll be having one of his subordinates face Kakashi as well. Only if he fails, you'll have to ensure that Kakashi doesn't use his Sharingan on Shukaku.

Even though we will be outnumbered, we'll gain the upper hand by taking advantage of Shukaku's rampage. In addition, we will force them to disperse their forces by attacking with Orochimaru's snake summons from all directions."

Baki calmed slightly after hearing Rasa's preparations. Unfortunately, neither of the two was aware of the fact that they hadn't considered a ninja who was on par with both Fujin and Kakashi! Not to mention, they were completely in the dark regarding Orochimaru's real intentions or the fact that Konoha had got wind of their intentions!

A couple of days later in Konoha, the leaders had assembled in the Council Room! Most leaders were slightly confused. Under normal circumstances, the Council Meeting should have been conducted around 3 months later because it had been just 3 months since their previous meeting.

While council meetings could be called impromptu in emergency situations like when the Root Headquarters was blown up or when Fujin was inducted into the Council, nothing of that sort had happened in recent times. Even though the village was tense post the explosion, nothing happened after Danzo's political power was stripped away. The village was very peaceful.

As such, everyone was curious. Only Fujin had an idea while Shikaku was aware of the real reason why this meeting was being conducted.

Hiruzen was the last one to enter the room. He took his seat and said, "Let's begin the meeting."

Since Hiruzen didn't say anything, the meeting began normally. Everyone informed Hiruzen about their status. Reports about border patrol were shared. Any incidents that stood out were reported. The trading and agriculture statistics as well as the number of bandit attacks were discussed.

When the discussion on the routine things was finished, Aburame Shibi asked, "Is there any follow-up on the attack that took place inside our village a few months ago?"

Since the civilian council members were present as well, Shibi didn't take Root's name. The civilian council members became curious as they had been kept out of the loop.

Hiruzen shook his head and answered, "After taking the precautions and increasing surveillance, no attack has taken place inside the village.

I have kept an eye on the other villages as well. However, the ones who we were suspecting haven't made any suspicious moves. There is just one village that is acting suspiciously, a village none of us suspected."

Hiruzen's words intrigued the room. Inoichi asked, "Which village is acting suspiciously?"

Hiruzen replied, "Sunagakure. It is also the reason why I called for an early Council Meeting."

Hiruzen's words surprised most of the people in the room. Senju Hiromasa sighed, "Of all the people, the suspect has to be the one major village allied with us."

Others had grim expressions as well. The alliance between Suna and Konoha was an important deterrent against Kumo and Iwa. Without it, Konoha could be attacked by 2 or 3 villages and would be stretched extremely thin. The losses they would suffer in such a situation would be horrendous. Except for Fujin, everyone in the room was worried.

Hiruzen continued, "This is related to the incident in Yamakawa town we just discussed. We discovered a part of the deep scheme that they are plotting."

Tsume said, "The town that Sunagakure attacked? What was the reason behind their attack?"

Hiruzen replied, "That attack wasn't conducted by Sunagakure."

The eyes of the people in the room widened. Every piece of evidence in the town pointed towards Sunagakure. In fact, Konoha had officially reported to Tanigakure that Sunagakure was the one to attack the town and slaughter the Yamakawa family! Yet, Hiruzen said the opposite.

Koharu looked at Hiruzen and asked, "Did we set them up or was it someone else?"

Hiruzen answered, "It is deeper than that. Even though Sunagakure wasn't behind the attack, it was a ninja from Sunagakure. The attack was conducted by Sasori of the Red Sand.

I'm not aware why he attacked the town or why he eliminated the Yamakawa family, but we discovered something interesting from their mansion. Underneath the mansion, a secret hideout was constructed.

The hideout contained the dead bodies of more than 20 Sunagakure ninjas. Those bodies also included an Elite Jounin and a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster. Their deaths happened at the same time as the attack.

We read the memories of the head of the Yamakawa family to understand what exactly happened. We discovered that he had entered into an agreement with Sunagakure to allow their ninjas to hide under his mansion.

We read the memories of the Sunagakure ninjas as well. Unfortunately, they didn't know much. The only important thing we discovered was that they were planning to hide several hundred ninjas inside the town."

The entire room became silent. Everyone who wasn't already aware was shocked. There were two main reasons for the shock. The first was that a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster had died! Every village treasured them. The death of a Fuinjutsu Grandmaster was even more rare than the death of a rank S ninja!

The second reason for the shock was the location of Yamakawa town. It was located right at the border of the Land of Fire. Having several hundred ninjas so close would mean that Suna could launch a surprise attack while giving Konoha very little time to react!

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Chapter 586: Shikaku's Brilliance

"Damned Sunagakure! Their intentions are nefarious!" Tsume cursed. If not for the incident, Konoha would be completely oblivious to Sunagakure's schemes. It could have resulted in a catastrophe for Konoha if they failed to act appropriately.

Of course, not everyone thought so. The remaining clan leaders and Elders looked at Hiruzen, trying to gauge his reaction. There were some inconsistencies in his story.

Homura thought, 'There is more to this story. It seems like Hiruzen was already aware of Sunagakure building a hideout there. The ninjas we sent after Tanigakure's request only reached a couple of days after the incident. By then, most of the memories would have dissipated.

Not to mention, Tanigakure sent ninjas before us. They would have discovered Sunagakure ninja's bodies before our ninjas reached there. The only way for things to develop this way would be if some Konoha ninjas sneaked into the town right after the attack had taken place.

However, that would only happen if Hiruzen was suspicious and sent someone there beforehand. The squads he sent should have witnessed the attack and likely took advantage of the situation.'

Since Fujin had asked Hiruzen not to expose the fact that he was the one in the Yamakawa town who confronted Sasori, Hiruzen changed the story slightly. However, the experienced ninjas quickly understood how the events had happened. Only the civilians were clueless.

Shikaku added, "To make matters worse, Sunagakure seems to be preparing for something. Their village has been closed off for a few months, making contacting the spies very difficult. Even though we aren't sure, we need to be prepared to deal with any stunts they might try to pull. We have to deal with whatever they throw at us swiftly and with minimal losses. Otherwise, things can become ugly very quickly."

Hiruzen said, "Thankfully, the civil war in Kiri is still at a very high intensity. Kumo won't do anything until that civil war ends. As for Onoki, he won't start a war by himself. Regardless, what Shikaku said is correct. We will need to deal with their schemes quickly.

If possible, we will still need to find a way to maintain our alliance after dealing with their scheme or come to a new agreement after defeating them. We will need to do that before the civil war in Kiri ends."

For the first time, Fujin was surprised. He thought, 'Seeing his attitude, it's no wonder Konoha let Suna off so lightly after the war. While I can understand that Kumo and Iwa are as strong as us, it's not like they don't have any enmity between themselves. Is there a need to be so passive?'

Fujin wasn't on board with staying so passive. After all, what if Sunagakure didn't follow the agreement once a war broke out? If Rasa hadn't died and continued being the Kazekage, he'd definitely take advantage of such a moment.

That said, Fujin didn't speak up despite not agreeing with Hiruzen's methods. After all, it didn't have much to do with him. He already knew the future. He knew that there wouldn't be any war between Konoha and Kumo or Iwa. And he knew that Konoha and Suna would be very strong allies once Gaara took over. Of course, that was assuming Gaara still becomes the Kazekage!

Inoichi asked, "Do you have any speculations about what their scheme might be?"

Shikaku answered, "We have very little information as of now. So it is hard to say anything for sure. I did calculate several actions I could have taken if I were the Kazekage, but I failed to come up with any plans where they would confront us and not end up suffering.

The only instance where they would benefit is if they ally with another major village. However, Kiri is embroiled in civil war while Kumo and Iwa haven't made any movements. Our spies haven't informed us of anything happening in those villages either. So, it is difficult to say.

With that option out of the way, there are only two other strategies through which they could benefit. However, both are extremely risky and not something I would have done.

The first is making a sudden attack on the Land of Fire. Using the element of surprise, they can eliminate our patrol units and capture some of our land. If they succeeded in catching us by surprise, then we would need some time to respond. They could use that time to entice Kumo into making a move against us, forcing us to fight on two fronts.

However, this plan hinges on whether Kumo would respond in time or not. If they don't, then Suna will suffer heavily.

The second strategy is to do something during the Chunin exams. It could be a sudden attack with Elite troops. Or it could also be an attempt on Lord Hokage's life. The only problem is that they would be surrounded by Konoha's ninjas and would have to endure our assault, making it extremely risky unless

they were planning on sacrificing their lives. Regardless, we need to be careful when they visit during the Chunin Exams."

Everyone thought for a bit and nodded. No one could think of any other possibility. Even Fujin was impressed as Shikaku had guessed Rasa's strategy despite having so little information. He thought, 'Apart from guessing Orochimaru's involvement, he has guessed everything. I wonder what Rasa would think if he knew, hehe.'

Choza said, "Since they were creating a hideout in Yamakawa town, they could have also tried to do so in other towns that are along our border. We need to check the Land of River properly."

Hiruzen replied, "They haven't. I suspected the same thing and sent Jiraiya to investigate. He didn't find any such hideout in other towns. I have even dispatched several Anbu squads to check whether they created any other hideouts along the border. We didn't discover anything. I believe that Yamakawa town was their first attempt and since it resulted in such losses, they haven't tried it again. Even so, I'll continue investigating."

Since Jiraiya was involved, no one suspected the information. Only Fujin thought, 'Ugh! I hope Hiruzen doesn't send them to investigate deeper into the Land of Rain. Though the Anbu ninjas won't be able to detect it due to my seals, Jiraiya will immediately feel something off if he gets close enough. Though even if he does find it, I doubt he'd attack them. However, he'll report it to Hiruzen, which would make it difficult for me to move...'

Seeing that no one had anything else to say, Hiruzen said, "We will maintain our high alertness. Since we have been maintaining it since the attack, it won't raise any suspicions and won't show Suna that we are aware of their schemes. We will keep it that way and catch them off guard."

Start increasing the preparedness of your respective clans. Everyone will need to act immediately if Suna dares to make a move. Our counterattack has to be swift and deadly. The losses we inflict on them have to deter anyone else from having similar thoughts.

If they dare to invade our territories, then we will dispatch an army within hours and will attack them within 24 hours. Even before any other village thinks of moving, we will force Suna to retreat not only from the Land of Fire but also from the Land of Rivers.

If they make a move during the Chunin exams, I'll kill Rasa myself. You guys will ensure that no Suna ninja inside Konoha is able to leave in one piece!"

Despite being veterans of several wars and quite old, Hiruzen's words raised the morale of everyone in the room. Even Fujin was slightly impressed and thought, 'Now that's more like it. Almost makes me wish that they invade the Land of Fire. It's been a while since I have fought unrestrained...'

Hiruzen looked around the room and asked, "Does anyone have anything else to discuss?"

He wasn't expecting anyone to reply as the village had been peaceful. To his surprise, Fujin took the initiative to speak for once! Even Shikaku was surprised as Fujin said, "I have a proposal that will be helpful for our village. Considering what you said, it might probably be the best time to implement this."

Fujin activated the storage seal on his bracer and withdrew a few files. Looking at more than a dozen files in front of Fujin, Shikaku wondered, 'Since when did this troublemaker start working?'

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Chapter 587: Guidance Hall!

Everyone looked at the files Fujin had placed on the desk with curiosity. Fujin said, "Some time ago, Katsuhiko had come to me with a proposal. Even though his proposal had a lot of flaws, it pointed out an important flaw in our current system and also gave quite an ingenious solution."

Shikaku squinted his eyes and thought, 'Katsuhiko? That Elite Jounin who has been frequently visiting his office?'

Others in the council knew about his visits to Fujin's office as well. It wasn't something that could be hidden. Besides, Fujin didn't particularly care about it. One of the civilian members thought, 'Katsuhiko was working with him on a proposal? Why did he keep dropping hints that he wanted Fujin's seat if that's what he was doing?'

Fujin continued, "The issue he pointed out was that ninjas who belong to ninja clans get guided by their seniors. Considering the varying specialities of everyone, they can get help in any area they want to.

However, civilian ninjas don't have the same opportunity. Even though the jutsus are available in the library, without a proper teacher, learning the jutsus isn't easy. When one tries by himself, then mistakes can occur and injuries can happen.

Even though everyone is assigned a sensei while graduating from the academy, a majority of the senseis are just ordinary Chunins who aren't that knowledgeable. Even if a Jounin is assigned as the sensei, he or she won't know everything. Not to mention, once their sensei dies in battle, they no longer have anyone they could ask for guidance."

Everyone in the room subconsciously nodded. What Fujin said was true. Even so, most of the clan leaders raised their guards slightly. They still remembered the changes Fujin had recommended for the academy. Hiruzen had started implementing some of Fujin's recommendations. And now, Fujin was proposing something that would reduce the difference between clan ninjas and civilian ninjas even further.

Though Fujin noticed it, he ignored it and continued, "Katsuhiko came up with an ingenious solution to solve this issue. He suggested that we make a Guidance Hall in the center of the village.

The basic idea is that civilian ninjas can put up requests in the Guidance Hall for the jutsus or techniques for which they need guidance. For instance, if someone wants to practice Fire Dragon Flame Bullet jutsu, he or she can put up the request in the Guidance Hall. If a veteran civilian ninja who has mastered that jutsu wants to teach it to that ninja, then he can do so.

Of course, doing it on a one-by-one basis will not be feasible. So, the Guidance Hall will be responsible for gathering all the requests and collating them. That way, a veteran can guide multiple youngsters at the same time. If it is implemented properly, then we could help a large number of Chunins become Jounins."

Hiruzen was surprised. He immediately thought, 'Hmm, not a bad idea. I had been thinking about this issue for some time as well. Unfortunately, I couldn't come up with anything. That said, there are some major flaws.'

As Hiruzen expected, Hiashi said, "While it sounds good on paper, creating a Guidance Hall in the center of the village is unfeasible. The cost that will be required to move the shops and other buildings currently there would be enormous."

Inoichi added, "That's right. It might be worth several years of our budget. While the idea is good, such costs aren't something we can afford."

The civilian council members immediately began calculating how they could argue against them. However, to everyone's surprise, Fujin nodded and said, "That's true. In fact, it's not just about the cost. Creating the Guidance Hall there will also cause Konoha to lose an excellent opportunity. It is one of the major flaws that were in Katsuhiko's proposal. Actually..."

Fujin suddenly stopped talking and let out a sigh of exhaustion. Hiruzen's eyes immediately twitched as everyone in the room glanced at him. He cursed, 'This brat! Why is he sighing exactly like I do? I worked hard for decades and my hair turned gray before I began using it! You think you can use it after working on just one proposal?'

"Katsuhiko's proposal had too many flaws. It was too idealistic as well for it to work properly. I had to work hard for weeks to fix all the flaws. I almost gave up a few times but continued remembering how much it would benefit the village." Every single word Fujin spoke showed how exhausted he was! While speaking, his elbows were resting on the table and his shoulders and head drooped to further emphasize his exhaustion!

Thankfully, Katsuhiko wasn't in the council room. If he was, he wouldn't have been able to restrain himself from lashing out. Needless to say, no one bought Fujin's little act. However, no one could speak it out loud either. A few almost wanted to chuckle on seeing how Hiruzen was staring at him but managed to hold themselves back.

Shikaku asked, "What opportunity would we have lost?"

Fujin replied, "I'll come back to it later. One of the major issues in his proposal was that there was no incentive for veteran ninjas to help the young ninjas out. While we can easily say that they should do it out of compassion, what was stopping them from doing that until now? Even though the Guidance Hall will provide a platform, it will still result in very limited involvement from them.

In order to overcome this flaw, I decided to change the nature of the Guidance Hall. Now, while youngsters can go and put in requests for the jutsus they want to learn, we will also allow Veteran ninjas to make an offer about the jutsus they are willing to teach. In order to incentivize them, they'll be allowed to put a price for which they will guide the youngsters.

Another way of looking at this can be that veteran ninjas can treat these like missions while the youngsters will be their clients. Since the main method of earning money is completing missions, it can create a virtuous cycle.

The youngsters will be more motivated to take and complete missions as they can use the money they earn to take their guidance, master new jutsus and strengthen themselves. On the other hand, veteran ninjas who have semi-retired can contribute to the village in a risk-free manner. Guiding youngsters will also help them stay in shape and could reignite the fire in some of them.

Of course, certain checks have to be put in place to ensure that no one misuses the system. Every veteran trainer who wants to teach has to first prove that they can perform the jutsu he or she wants to teach properly and have adequate knowledge of the same. This task can be left to the Anbu to ensure that there is no monkey business.

We will also need to maintain a feedback system where we can ask the youngsters how effective the guidance was. We could go a step further and inspect how well they can perform the jutsu. That could allow us to rate the ninjas who guide the youngsters, allowing them to choose the appropriate guide and will also motivate the veteran ninjas to give their best.

The techniques that they teach will have to be monitored as well. I'm sure we can all agree that secret techniques and Forbidden jutsus shouldn't be taught through the Guidance Hall.

In addition, we will also have to put limits on the amount of money they charge and the number of youngsters they can teach at the same time. This will ensure that no one gets too greedy. After all, the Guidance Hall is for guiding the youngsters and not to make a fortune."

Fujin's words made all the ninjas in the room fall into thought. Some were trying to find any flaws in his idea. After a couple of minutes, everyone in the room was left impressed. There was nothing they could pick out. Unlike Katsuhiko, Fujin's idea was flawless. Of course, that didn't mean that he would have everyone's support.

Hiruzen said, "That is very well thought. I agree with these methods. Continue."

Fujin nodded and said, "The second major flaw is restricting the Guidance Hall to just civilian ninjas. While it is true that currently civilian ninjas don't get much guidance, that's no reason to keep the clan ninjas out.

While the clans represented by the people in this room are relatively well off, there are several clans that are too small due to the losses they took in previous wars. They will benefit from the Guidance Hall as well. Even the larger clans can benefit. For example...'

Fujin gazed towards Hiashi and continued, "I have never met any Hyuga clan ninja who knows any Taijutsu other than Gentle Fist. So if any Hyuga clan youngster wanted to pursue any other form of Taijutsu, then the Guidance Hall would be a great help."

Since Hiashi was the first one to speak, Fujin decided to target him. He continued, "Besides, there could be other things that ninjas in your respective clans don't know. Or even if they know, they might not know it as well as someone who has devoted a long time to mastering that particular technique. So, even the ninjas from your clans can benefit.

That's why, I changed the proposal to make the Guidance Hall open to every Konoha ninja irrespective of their background."

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Chapter 588: A New Economic Center

Fujin's words caused the clan leaders to lower their guard slightly. Just like the changes he recommended to the academy, Fujin hadn't excluded the Clans from his proposal.

Even so, there was no doubt that his proposal would benefit the civilian ninjas a lot more. It would contribute a lot to decreasing the gap between clan and civilian ninjas. It would decrease the political power the clans held with time.

Shikaku thought, 'Not bad. He has included us as well. Due to this, rejecting this proposal would cause resentment to form among our ninjas against us. After all, this proposal would help them as well. Not to mention the thousands of civilian ninjas who will resent us for blocking this proposal. Unless there is a major flaw, Fujin's proposal can't be stopped.'

Seeing that no one was saying anything, Fujin continued, "As for the opportunity, it is rather simple. If the Guidance Hall is successful, it'll result in several ninjas visiting there on a daily basis. It might become the second most busy building in the village after the Hokage's Building.

Though creating such a building in the center of the village might be the first idea for everyone's convenience, it will cause us to lose a good opportunity.

Right now, the village is very crowded. More and more houses are being constructed on the outskirts on a daily basis. However, every major economic activity happens near the center of the village, forcing everyone to try to get a home closer to the center of the village.

We can use the Guidance Hall to create a new Economic Center in the village. Instead of the center, the Guidance Hall will be constructed on the outskirts of the village, at a place where there is nothing around. Since a lot of people will visit it daily, it'll provide the village with an opportunity to create another economic center around the Guidance Hall.

New shops and businesses can open up around it. Once these activities reach a certain level, residential places can also be constructed close to the Guidance Hall so that people can stay there. It'll relieve the pressure on the village as the people who work there will choose to live around there. I'm sure all of you have got the idea. All of you should know more about economics than me."

It was as Fujin had said. Everyone in the room had already begun imagining ways to increase the income of their respective clans and families by expanding their businesses to the Guidance Hall.

Combined with the fact that their ninjas would benefit as well and that stopping this proposal would be very difficult, everyone began thinking about the maximum amount of benefits they could gain instead of thinking about ways to stop the proposal.

Fujin sighed internally while thinking, 'It's all about the benefits... Oh well, I can't complain either as that'd be rather hypocritical of me.'

Homura asked, "Did you choose the location of the Guidance Hall?"

Fujin nodded and opened one of the files to a page that had the map of the village and pointed towards a marking he had made. As soon as he did so, a strange expression appeared on everyone's face. That included Hiruzen as well.

He looked towards Fujin and wondered, 'Since when did this kid become so selfless? Is he scheming something? Did he do something in the dark that'll benefit him somehow?'

The other clan leaders looked at him as well. Inoichi thought, 'I was sure that he would put the Guidance Hall close to his new compounds. That way, the prices of his compound would have skyrocketed. It would also increase his influence tremendously as everyone would be reminded that it was he who started the Guidance Hall whenever they saw his compound. It would also allow the civilian ninjas to approach him more easily.'

However, why did he choose a location that is almost at the other end of the village? That doesn't make any sense!'

Hiashi wondered, 'There haven't been any major transactions in the village recently... Has he bought lands close to that area through proxies? That could help him earn a lot.'

Shibi decided, 'We need to properly inspect the land around the site first. It'll be a good opportunity to get a lot of profits. It wouldn't do good if only one person or force gains from it.'

Every single person in the room had similar thoughts. As someone who proposed it, it was a no-brainer that Fujin should have taken advantage of it. However, there was nothing to see in the open. As a result, they began wondering whether Fujin had played any hands in the dark.

Seeing their expressions, Fujin could easily anticipate their thoughts. He thought, 'Even though making it close to my house can increase the value of my land, what use is that to me?'

If anything, it'll make future expansion more difficult as everyone will rush to buy all available land. It'll also attract a lot of crowds close to my place, allowing perfect cover for others to spy on my compound. It'll be troublesome.

As for earning money, I could have used this opportunity to earn a few hundred million or perhaps even over a billion Ryo. However, I don't really need any money. There are so many nice Gentlemen in this world who are extremely willing to aid me whenever I need help. They can easily donate a few billion Ryo to my just cause and willingly work hard if I need more.

So why should I even bother competing with the clans? That said, since they weren't on board with 'my noble idea' until I shared benefits, you guys shouldn't dream about earning money through my idea either.'

Fujin's eyes moved towards Hiruzen, who immediately noticed it. Hiruzen immediately got on guard while thinking, 'My suspicions were right! That's the look he gives me whenever he wants to ask for something unreasonable. What is he going to ask this time?'

Having dealt with Fujin for years, Hiruzen was very sensitive towards any changes in his mood and expression. Thankfully for him, this time his instincts were wrong. Instead, Fujin had a rather great gift for him.

In the council room, everyone was left thoroughly confused by Fujin's choice. Each one had their own speculations based on their personalities and their impression of Fujin and were calculating how their respective forces could get an advantage.

Seeing everyone in deep thought, Fujin said, "Well, that's all I have to say. Read the proposals and let me know if there are any errors or if something can be improved."

He pushed the files in front of him towards the other Council Members. A file appeared in front of each Council Member. Everyone opened the files and began going through it.

Needless to say, there weren't any flaws in the proposal. Katsuhiko had modified the proposal seven times! All errors had been removed by him. Fujin had several of his clones inspect the proposal as well to ensure that he hadn't missed anything after he made the changes.

In a few minutes, everyone had roughly read through the proposal and noted the important points. Koharu said, "You have done a great job, Fujin. We will inspect the proposal and put it to vote in a week."

Everyone subconsciously agreed with her. However, before anyone could do so in words, Fujin asked, "Why wait a week?"

Koharu answered, "This is something that will have a great impact on the village. We can't afford to make any mistakes here. A week will be needed for everyone to go through the proposal and ensure that everything is right. It will also provide an opportunity for newer ideas that could be incorporated into the proposal."

Fujin replied, "Hmm, there is no reason why everyone can't read through the proposal properly right now. If there are any changes that are recommended, we could conduct another meeting to make the changes. However, we should vote on finalizing this proposal before this meeting ends."

Fujin's insistence on getting the voting done right then surprised the room again. Seeing his behavior, everyone in the room, including Hiruzen and Shikaku, thought, 'Looks like he has made arrangements to earn a fortune...'

Senju Hiromasa shook his head while thinking, 'While it is good to get gains for yourself, you should learn to share the pie with everyone. Otherwise, everyone will oppose you. In the end, you might not get anything.'

Not wanting everyone to gang up on Fujin, Hiruzen said, "Fujin, there is no need to rush through such things. A proposal like this has to be properly analyzed."

Fujin replied, "While I understand that, the reason I'm pushing for it to be done now is due to the nature of this proposal, or rather the economic and financial aspect of it."

Once the site of the Guidance Hall is made public, the prices of land around that site will skyrocket. Most of the landowners will refuse to sell and will wait for it to inflate due to the demand. It might increase the cost of this proposal significantly. And, it will definitely slow down the economic development that should happen around the Guidance Hall."

Once again, the entire room was surprised. What had been just on their minds had been spoken by none other than Fujin! Even Hiruzen was lost for words and wondered what exactly Fujin was thinking.

Fujin activated another seal on his bracer and another file appeared in front of him. Everyone curiously looked towards it and wondered what it contained.

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Chapter 589: Hiruzen's Joy!

As everyone was looking at the new file, Fujin said, "This file consists of the land deeds to all the open lands at the chosen location and around it. I represented the village and made deals with every landowner in and around that area in the last couple of days. The prices agreed upon are as per current land rates and only Lord Hokage's signature is left to complete these dealings.

If this proposal is voted on and agreed upon in this meeting, then we could complete these deals today as well before the details are leaked to the public. It'll help us save a lot of money.

It can even help us raise money by selling the land in the future at the right time, striking a proper balance between profits for the village and development around the Guidance Hall.

If we don't and these guys come to know of my proposal, then they will want to renege on my terms as the deals won't be finalized until the council approves of the proposal for obvious reasons."

Silence engulfed the council room once again! This time, it was absolute silence! Every single one was staring at Fujin with a stunned expression. Fujin had done something that not a single one of them had thought of!

Except for one person, everyone looked at Fujin as if he had just snatched the food from their hands, just as they were about to eat it! The fact that Fujin was the one to put the food in their hand didn't make it any easier to digest.

As for the only person who wasn't thinking that he was looking at Fujin with his eyes full of disbelief. Hiruzen still couldn't believe it! He thought, 'Is that real? Did he just do that? Did Fujin do something that would actually benefit me???''

Having always been on the losing end due to Fujin's antics, Hiruzen couldn't believe that it was real. Even when he had some gains, he'd be forced to compensate in some other manner. For instance, when he won 120 million Ryo by betting on Fujin in the Chunin exam, Fujin immediately made him get the

swords he wanted and also made him spend several weeks teaching the Wind Vacuum Technique to Fujin. However, just now, Fujin had given him something that could allow the village to gain hundreds of millions of Ryo with little effort!

Seeing that Fujin didn't suddenly say something that would cost him a kidney, Hiruzen almost wanted to cry tears of joy. He thought, 'Finally! My years of investment and hard work have paid off! First the puppets and now this! I don't remember the last time I was so happy!'

Even though Fujin noticed that Hiruzen was pleased, he didn't know how pleased Hiruzen was. If he could read Hiruzen's thoughts, he would have definitely tried his luck and asked for the Edo Tensei jutsu.

Hiruzen's blissful state was broken when one of the civilian council members said, "I think it'll be better if we wait unt..."

He was mercilessly cut off by Hiruzen who said, "You are right, Fujin. You have done a great job. We will analyze the proposal right now. The meeting will end only after we have voted. If any corrections are needed, we will make them later."

The civilian council member who was speaking just looked awkwardly at Hiruzen. He wanted to speak before Hiruzen did, but never expected to be cut off so harshly and be completely ignored. Everyone else who planned on taking advantage of the situation just sighed and gave up.

Trying to take away benefits from Fujin and trying to do the same against Hiruzen were two completely different things. Since Fujin had handed everything to Hiruzen on a silver platter, there was no way Hiruzen would share it with anyone else.

Of course, it was the village that would be gaining and not the Sarutobi clan. Hence, no one tried to argue any further and just began reading the proposal thoroughly while lost in their own thoughts.

The civilian council member who had opened his mouth cursed, 'This dumb kid! Why did he give everything to the village? Couldn't he have just claimed some benefits and left the rest for us? Wouldn't everyone be happy then?'

At the same time, Senju Hiromasa wondered, 'Did he do so due to his naivety? Or did he do this intentionally? But why would he refuse to curry favor with everyone in the council? Everyone would have been grateful to him for the opportunity. Then again, we already owe him a favor for taking down Danzo.'

Shikaku, who was the one who knew Fujin most clearly out of anyone in the room other than Hiruzen, analyzed, 'No, Fujin isn't naive. Currying favor with everyone else would have been more beneficial for him than just giving all benefits to the Hokage. After all, the Sarutobi clan would have benefitted as well.

Seeing Hokage's eyes, I'd say he didn't expect it either. So, he didn't influence Fujin to do this. I guess that just leaves two possibilities. I know that Hokage has been helping him with his training. The Wind Vacuum Technique which he is known for comes from him as well. It might be his way of thanking him. Or...'

Shikaku glanced at Fujin and thought, 'Or he felt that the council members who he gave such a chance wouldn't be thankful. Instead, several could have acted together to get as many benefits as they could, leaving him with very little. It could have also resulted in others seeing him as a soft target when political plays were concerned. After all, he has no experience in these matters.

From that perspective, his move is near perfect. After all, he has made a major contribution to the village, be it economically or militarily. Once the news spreads, almost every ninja in the village will be grateful to him. Though I guess Katsuhiko deserves some credit as well. Hmm, now that I think about it, his involvement is quite surprising. I didn't ever see him as the type of guy who would come up with something like this...'

Hiruzen had a similar thought. Even though he was joyous due to Fujin's gift, what had given him joy wasn't the money Konoha would earn, but rather the fact that it was Fujin doing something beneficial for him. While thinking about that, he inevitably thought about Katsuhiko and soon felt the same as Shikaku.

Hiruzen wondered, 'That's right, I almost overlooked this... Since when did Katsuhiko begin coming up with such good ideas? In the forty years he has been a ninja, he has never given any such suggestions...'

Hiruzen immediately became suspicious. Soon, his eyes widened before going back to normal size. He thought, 'I nearly forgot! The Anbu ninjas I had placed to keep an eye on Root reported Katsuhiko visiting Root a couple of times after Danzo was removed from the council.

If he is involved with Danzo, then it might be possible that this idea came from Danzo and not Katsuhiko. That is far more plausible. However, why would Danzo make Katsuhiko help Fujin after what happened?'

Knowing his old friend, Hiruzen immediately smelled a scheme. Thoughts ran through his mind. In just a couple of minutes and while he was going through the proposal, he figured out most of Danzo's plan!

He glanced towards Fujin and thought, 'This was a trap. A trap for Fujin. Danzo likely expected him to steal credit. Even if he didn't, the proposal would have made the clan leaders see Fujin as a threat.'

However, Fujin didn't steal the credit. Seeing his nature, that wasn't surprising. There are a lot of things that he can take credit for but he instead prefers to keep them a secret. And thanks to the changes he made to Katsuhiko's proposal, the clan leaders don't see it as much of a threat as they would have otherwise.

Fujin avoided one trap due to his nature and nullified another due to his diligence. That's a relief! However, he is oblivious to these schemes.

For Danzo to do something like this, it'll only mean one thing. He wants to replace Fujin with Katsuhiko on the council. If my guess is right, he will now try to give the credit for the proposal to Katsuhiko, making the ninjas grateful to him instead of Fujin. That might give him just enough capital to threaten Fujin's seat. Hmph, I'll strike first. Let me see what you'll try then, Danzo!'

Even though Hiruzen's guesses were accurate, he didn't know that Danzo had stopped supporting Katsuhiko after the incident as he wouldn't be able to use the council to make a comeback. Katsuhiko was planning on progressing the plan by himself.

As a result, Katsuhiko would soon find himself competing against a Hiruzen who thought that he was facing Danzo! Not to mention, Fujin was unaware of the fact that Hiruzen had connected the dots. Nor was he aware of whether Danzo was still helping Katsuhiko or not. Hence, he had his own plans which he would be putting into motion very soon after the meeting ended.

Katsuhiko, who had just spent two miserable months being forced to correct the proposal again and again, was unaware of the misery that still awaited him.

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Chapter 590: Reward Fujin?

The council went through the proposal carefully, inspecting every single point and seeing whether they could find any flaws or any scope for improvements that might help them delay the proposal a bit. Unfortunately for them, there were no flaws and making any improvements would require a lot of time to ponder. It wasn't something they could come up with on the spot.

In around an hour, everyone had gone through the proposal a couple of times. Seeing that everyone was done reading, Hiruzen asked, "Does anyone have anything to add to it?"

No one said anything. Hiruzen looked around once before saying, "In that case, let's put it to vote. All those in favor, raise your hands."

After Danzo was removed from the Council, the number of people in the Council had gone back to 16, as it was before Fujin became a part of the council. It meant that if there was a tie, Hiruzen would get an additional vote for the tiebreaker. In addition, the Clan Leaders only had 7 out of the 16 seats, meaning that they were in the minority. 9 votes would be needed to fail the proposal.

As the one who put forth the proposal, Fujin raised his hand. Hiruzen raised his hand as well as the idea was extremely beneficial for the village no matter how he looked at it. Koharu and Homura supported it for the same reason and raised their hands.

Apart from these 4, there were 5 civilian council members. Each of them was bitter that Fujin had taken away a chance to earn millions from them. However, the proposal was for the benefit of the civilian population as even the ones who weren't ninjas wanted their children to become one. If they dared to vote against it, they would be booted out of the council within days. None of them dared to risk that and all 5 raised their hands.

Among the clan leaders, Senju Hiromasa was the first one to raise his hand. In fact, he was even quicker than the Elders and raised it alongside Fujin and Hiruzen. He was the only clan leader who didn't have any reservations about Fujin's proposal and would have wholeheartedly lobbied for it if Fujin didn't have enough support.

Shikaku and Choza didn't particularly care much about the proposal and raised their hands as well. The remaining 4 clan leaders had reservations, but seeing that voting against them would be pointless, they raised their hands as well. As a result, Fujin's first official proposal was unanimously passed!

Hiruzen smiled and said, "A unanimous vote after a long time. I suppose that shows how important the Guidance Hall will be for our village. Great work, Fujin. I'm glad that we decided to induct you into the council."

Fujin nodded while commenting, 'Of course you are, you old fox. What's the use of words? Just ask me what reward I would like!'

Since joining the council, Fujin had gotten rid of Danzo's influence and gave two ways to strengthen our village. He also gave a nice little boost to the village's finances and economy. Any leader would be pleased.

Unfortunately for Fujin, Hiruzen had become too smart to say anything in regards to that. He turned his eyes back to the council and said, "I have checked the land deeds as well. They are properly documented and priced. I will sign them now. The construction of the Guidance Hall will begin immediately. The funds will be assigned within a couple of days and this project will be given the highest priority."

Everyone agreed. Hiruzen signed the land deeds. Since no one had any other proposal, the meeting finally ended and everyone dispersed.

Hiruzen returned to his office. Even though he had signed the papers, he still had some work to do, such as actually paying the ones who were selling the land. He quickly got to work and dispatched his subordinates to bring them to the office while he ran the numbers.

After analyzing everything, a smile appeared on Hiruzen's face. He thought, 'The village will need to spend around 60 million Ryo to purchase the land. Building the hall and some surrounding infrastructure will require another 40 to 50 million Ryo.'

However, the village will earn at least 300 million Ryo by reselling the lands at the appropriate time. If I want to be aggressive and time them appropriately, then it could even exceed 1.2 billion Ryo.

That said, there is no need to do so. It's more beneficial for the village to focus on economic activity. In time, the returns would be much higher due to that. Not to mention, the people will be more happy.'

Hiruzen let out a sigh of satisfaction while thinking, 'I didn't think that greedy brat would give me such a nice gift. I was almost tempted to let him choose a reward...

Thankfully, I managed to resist the urge after remembering what happened every time I said those words. Considering his current level, he'll likely directly ask for the Scroll of the Forbidden Seals.

However, it is better if he doesn't come into contact with unethical jutsus just yet. I don't want to repeat the same mistake I made with Orochimaru. I'll wait till Fujin matures sufficiently before allowing him access to jutsus like Edo Tensei. It'll ensure that he doesn't get influenced by them at a young age.'

While Hiruzen had been quite liberal in teaching Fujin jutsus so far, he was adamant against teaching Fujin any jutsus that could lead him down the dark path. He decided to wait until a few wars took place and see how the wars would impact his personality before deciding whether to allow him access to such jutsus.

Hiruzen thought, 'Even though I can't reward him directly, it doesn't mean that I can't do anything for him.'

A clone appeared next to Hiruzen and immediately disappeared from the office. He entered the Anbu Headquarters under the office and entered Eagle's office. Eagle was surprised to see his father so suddenly and asked, "Did something happen?"

Hiruzen's clone answered, "Well, nothing very serious. Anyway, listen carefully."

Hiruzen's clone informed him about the Guidance Hall proposal that Fujin had proposed and explained to them all its features and advantages. Eagle was surprised to hear everything.

He said, "I never have heard of anything like this. This will be very helpful to the village. Even beyond increasing the strength of the youngsters, it'll also improve the relationship between the younger and the older generation. The benefits will be endless."

Hiruzen's clone nodded and said, "I know. That is why the proposal was accepted unanimously. However, there is a hidden play. I need you to take care of it."

Eagle's expression became peculiar upon hearing that Hiruzen wanted to suppress Katsuhiko from whom the idea had originated. He became serious after hearing a possible link between him and Danzo and what Hiruzen speculated was Danzo's plan to replace Fujin with Katsuhiko.

He sighed and said, "Elder Danzo never gives up, does he? I understand. I'll ensure that the village knows the 'truth'!"

Hiruzen's clone smiled and said, "Good. I'll leave it to you."

He dispelled himself. Eagle immediately got to work. He summoned some of his most trusted subordinates and informed them about the situation. A few minutes later, a couple of dozen Anbu ninjas exited the base and mixed into the common people under disguise.

As Hiruzen had expected, Katsuhiko was doing the same. Right after the meeting ended, he met up with one of the civilian council members and asked him about the details of the meeting.

The council member looked at him peculiarly while wondering why he was so enthusiastic about the meeting and the proposal. Even though Fujin had given him the credit for the idea, he had also said a lot of other things...

Even so, he informed Katsuhiko about everything that had happened. His expression became ugly after hearing how Fujin described his proposal! He almost vomited blood when he heard that Fujin worked hard for a couple of weeks to correct his proposal. His rage increased his blood pressure once again!

Even so, he was surprised when he heard about the changes Fujin had made to the proposal. Especially the financial aspect, it was something he had completely overlooked.

He thought, 'I underestimated this boy. Even though the basic idea of Guidance Hall came from Danzo, the number of changes he has made almost makes this look like a new proposal. Even though he mentioned my name, he will get the main credit. How did he even do all this in just 2 days? Was he just messing with me?'

He shook his head and decided, 'It doesn't matter. I will make him pay. Even if the council gives you credit, what matters is what the people think! Even though opening the Guidance Hall to the clans increased its chances of being accepted, it also gives me a weapon against you! I'll completely ruin your reputation! That would put enough pressure on the Hokage and the Council to appoint me to the council!'