Fuzzy Logic

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Fuzzy Logic

by deritine

Summary

AU time travel: The kyuubi no kitsune knew something was wrong, but couldn't put a paw on quite what. However, there are benefits to being a force of nature, including time itself bending to accommodate you. Anything goes, plots abound, and demons don't care about human business until suddenly they do.

Update: 11 June 2017- the remainder of the story (9 last chapters on FFnet) are going to be made into a sequel. They are the ones that need the extensive editing and why I hanged on Chapter 31 for so long. 13 June 2017- some more extensive edits, the timeline was still a little bit odd in this part.

Notes

There were a lot of things that lead to this fic, but the main one was I was tired of time loop fics where Kyuubi was a deus-ex for some other character but never for itself. It annoyed me. And then I got a hilarious idea of how it could work... and then another... and then my cousin told me I was an idiot and it would never be a coherent plot. I went “Oh yeah?!?” and got
super contrary and this fic was born.

Spoilers though anime Shippuden Gaara arch, manga 442 and it's consistent. Or later. I lost track of what the canon was doing long before I finished this story.

This story is complete and originally posted on FFnet. Reposting on AO3 with edits since you can’t easily download to epub or whatever on FFnet anymore (Hermionechan90 asked). I have no idea how long this will take me, so if you want to read the whole thing go over to https://www.fanfiction.net/s/4976492/1/Fuzzy-Logic

See the end of the work for more notes
The tiny humans scattered as she stomped a paw down towards their pathetic formations and roared. Her tails swatted some off her back and she let out a yip of excitement. The pitiful humans were no match for her now that she was free! Even the small one sitting on top of the samurai toad would fall before… wait a minute.

The kyuubi paused, one foot raised above a quivering band of shinobi. This situation seemed strangely familiar. She took a step forward over the fleeing ninja, bringing her face closer to the little yellow headed figure on top of the orange amphibian. She stopped just shy of the toad's brandished blade- it was large enough that it had to potential to hurt her- especially if she was fool enough to run her face right into it.

The human was waving its arms about in a manner that made the kyuubi feel fear in the pit of her stomach- an emotion that she shouldn't have felt ever, much less recently, but it seemed almost like an old friend. Or perhaps more accurately, like a smell that couldn't quite get purged from the den, no matter how many human corpses one found stuck in odd crevices and threw out.

As a great rush of water swept over her, followed by a tingling burst of electricity, she contemplated why she felt relieved giant arms weren't reaching for her.

Though, why was she killing all these humans, anyway? She was finally free and she attacked random mites? Sure, it was cathartic, but something was nagging at her… Something that seemed quite important…

She peered at the human again. His hair felt like it was the right color, but it was too long, and he wasn't cursing her at the top of his lungs. Somehow this was the last straw. Something was very wrong.

She turned delicately on her paws, putting her nose to the mysterious force that was trying to push her forward. There was danger in that little yellow headed human, she could feel it in her bones, and it was trouble that she didn't want to deal with again.

Again? When had she seen that human before? Since when could she recognize humans at all?

No matter. Someone had dared to call her to this world, and try to bind her to their will. She could sense them in her mind, could feel the way that the world had turned to black, red and white and the need to do the other's bidding. She felt her anger rising, images of humans with red eyes- a color which she normally approved- lashing across her vision and making her snarl. She had to bring them back… back where? No, she had to kill them all! Yes… though maybe they were all gone?

At least one remained, however. Only they knew how to control her majestic self. But the days where she would put up with such nonsense were long over. This demon had never let herself be subject to the whims of gods, much less some puny humans. She was going to live by her own will. Believe it!

OooOOO

Minato had just had the fright of his life. The Konoha police had been tasked with keeping the gigantic demon fox distracted, but for some reason the beast had suddenly gotten... bored with them and came right at the Hokage and his summons. He had had to break off the long and complicated set of seals of the modified Shiki Fuujin in order to counter-attack with a rather brilliant combination
of water-conducted lightening.

But the beast had just looked at him, the elemental jutsu having no visible effect. Its tails no longer lashing except for the occasional, almost confused looking flick. A nose as long as the Hokage tower was tall scrunched up a bit and Minato was pretty sure it wasn't because of the fifty foot blade in its face. The demon seemed as completely unconcerned about the boss toad's weapons as it had about the S-rank jutsus to the face. The demon seemed distracted by something only it could sense.

And then the damn thing had just run off.

"Hokage-sama… you saved us!" The cheer went up from the shinobi as Minato looked in disbelief at the retreating tails of the fox demon. As he released the energy for the sealing technique, a disturbing sigh of disappointment shuddered through his body and white, skeletal fingers released his soul.

"Er…" Minato wasn't quite sure what to say. It had been a very different encounter than the one that he had been imagining. Namely: he was still alive. He was definitely not sure how he felt about that. It was almost certainly a good thing, but he felt incongruously annoyed to have built up all that angst and have it end so anti-climatically. He shook his head and barked to the nearest jounin "Follow the beast at a safe distance, if you can keep up with it. Make sure it isn't doubling back."

"Yes, sir!" came the reply before the ANBU squad streaked off to follow the beast.

"The rest of you, bring the wounded to the hospital."

"Yes, Hokage-sama!"

As the ninja of his village scurried about in a much more cheerful way then they had been a few minutes ago, Minato sank to his knees on top of Gamabunta's head. "Was that normal demon behavior?" He asked the Toad Boss, bemused.

"No." Came the gruff voice in answer. "Not at all."

"I'm not hallucinating in the belly of the Death God, right? The nine-tailed demon fox, who can crush mountains or cause tsunamis by simply existing, stopped mid-havoc, gave me a sniff, and ran off?"

"That is what happened." Gamabunta confirmed.

Minato pulled his shirt away from his chest and smelled himself experimentally. He didn't smell marvelous, considering he had been sweating at the idea of voluntarily sending himself to hell, but he didn't smell that bad. He turned when he felt a familiar chakra signal land next to him.

"You're still alive!" Sarutobi said in ecstatic disbelief. "Did the Death God not require…"

"I didn't seal the kyuubi." Minato cut him off.

"What?" Sarutobi asked, his brow furrowing in confusion. "But…" He looked around at the battered villagers and the wounded they were carrying. The scenery was distinctly demon free.

Minato stood up and brushed off his robes. "I didn't say it made any sense." He replied, somewhat put out, but just starting to feel the first glimmers of exhilaration. Until he realized that now that he was going to live, he was going to have to do all that paperwork he had been neglecting as he researched the seal that was supposed to kill him. Oh…no... Minato thought in horror.
The kitsune could feel the pressure building. It was pressing all the colors out of the world except for tones of red. She snarled and skidded to a halt. The pressure was coming from below, so she dug furiously at the earth until a tiny mite burst from the wreckage.

The kyuubi spun to track the flash of human with a snarl, trying to smash it under her paws, but it was too quick. Suddenly the human's eyes seemed to expand, seemed to take over the entirety of what she could see. Spinning black pinwheels sucked her in.

No! This she remembered, this was how she had been trapped so long ago. Or, for so long? Or… didn't it not work on her anymore? She was so confused that she was almost fully caught in the technique before she came back to herself.

Not again, never again! What was the trick?

Possession! That's right, she had been behind a seal, and the sewers, somehow… But she wasn't possessing anyone anymore. Had she possessed someone? She must have.

But the only person available now was the little gnat trying to subdue her. Fine. Two could play these mind games. She would show the pitiful speck the danger of messing with a kami forsaken force of nature!

Instead of pulling back from the technique, she rushed forward, pouring herself into the human though his navel as he broke the staring lock between them in horror.

The kitsune yipped excitedly as she flew into the human body, compressing her chakra in a way that felt somewhat restrictive, but right and familiar at the same time. The familiar paths were before her, but she knew that she had to twist them. Yes… there were the doors, but this time she would be on the outside and the fool human could stay and rot. She felt the seal settle with a distinct thunk and she gazed happily at the human gaping at her from behind massive barred doors.

"What… what have you done?" The human asked, his eyes whirling almost too fast to separate the black from the red, but it no longer had any effect on her at all. The human could not even suppress her chakra from inside the seal.

"Ah, the human doesn't understand. What an unusual situation." She said sarcastically. She spun on a paw and skipped happily up out of the dungeons, ignoring the human's cries.

She opened her eyes and saw white puffy clouds sailing across a blue sky. One looked a bit like a rabbit. Mmm… rabbit. Her stomach growled appreciatively.

The kitsune sat up and saw the trunk of a tree. The trunk? Say what? She followed the trunk up to the canopy and saw the light filtering through the branches. Rather pretty, but shouldn't she be seeing the canopy from above?

She rolled over onto all fours and felt distinctly awkward.

Ah. She had forgotten the less enjoyable reality of possession. True- no more being controlled by red spinning-eyed human annoyances, a problem she felt had some words or terms or something associated with it…. Anyway, no slavery, but it meant you had to be a human. Bipedal. With a grimace the kyuubi stood on two legs, shakily finding her balance and looking down at her clothes. Blech. Another annoying human necessity.

Still, some clothes were more tolerable than others. The red armor was ok, but this blue? Absolutely
unacceptable. And there were so many layers!

She pulled all the constricting fabric off and set about examining her body. It was alright, she supposed. It seemed more toned and fit than she was used to. Though what she was comparing it to, she wasn't entirely sure. But there was this dangly thing that seemed completely impractical, and she felt it had some sort of significance…

Oh hells no! She wasn't going to get stuck in a male body again. Again? Well, ever. The kitsune no kyuubi had enough problems with the other demons thinking she was male due to her booming, deep voice. Could she help that her chest was the size of a small mountain? No. You'd think they would know to use their noses, not their eyes, but sometimes demons could be as thick as humans. She'd had to crack more than a few of their skulls open so the concept could get past the thick bone.

Well, this simply wouldn't do. Fortunately, it seemed pretty easy to shift the bits around as she saw fit. For some reason her chakra flowed familiarly along the body, molding it to be that of a human female. It almost felt like she was healing a hole ripped in her chest, though the male condition wasn't painful or an injury, per se, the switch had the same degree of satisfaction.

The kitsune looked down at her chest. She now had two impractical dangling things. Honestly, had humans so lost touch with nature that they couldn't even manage to lactate properly?

With a put-upon sigh, the kitsune tore off a strip of the offensive blue material and tied the mammary tissue into place. As annoying as clothing was, she supposed humans didn't really have a choice in the matter, considering their unfortunate biology. She pulled the lower half of the blue garment back on, wincing at the color and vowing to get something red, or possibly black… or maybe orange! Hmm, orange would be nice. Yes, she vowed to steal something more suitable at the first opportunity.

The red armor seemed to be all in once piece, and she didn't have the faintest idea of how to modify it. Considering it was the only thing reasonably acceptable, she pulled it on, even though now it fit very strangely due to her changed figure. She tried walking and felt like her steps were strangely dulled. She tore off the hard things strapped to her feet and flexed her toes in the dirt appreciatively. Much better.

This would have to do for now. The kitsune shrugged and leapt off over the trees. It was pleasing to be above them again; even if she ended up crashing back through the boughs before she got the hang of landing on the branches instead of shattering through them.

OoOOooOooO

Back at the dug up crater that used to be a secret underground base, the ANBU team was bent over, holding their knees and panting heavily.

"I don't know where the kyuubi went from here, but the trail of destruction pretty much ends at this spot." The one with the tiger mask said when he was finally recovered enough to speak. The whole team had had to run full out for the better part of four hours, and still had arrived what looked like over three hours after the kyuubi. The damn demon was fast!

"Whoever was here, they certainly got an unpleasant surprise." Muttered the crane, kicking over a piece of metal that might have once been a door.

"Maybe it went back to er… the demon realm, after it tore something up." The puma shrugged.

"Don't be ridiculous." The crane scoffed.
"Well, stranger things have happened, like it showing up in the first place." The puma retorted.

"From the looks of this, though, someone might have been summoning it." The tiger said, making a sweeping arm gesture to encompass the scene of destruction. As he was finishing the motion, something fluttering caught his eye. In a flash, fatigue (mostly) forgotten, he was over to the scrap of cloth, lifting it up. It was a navy blue yukata, with a symbol on the back… the ANBU dropped it as if it had burned him.

"Was that… the Uchiha clan symbol?" The crane asked uneasily.

"We'd better report this to the Hokage." The tiger replied grimly, picking up the cloth and bundling it up under his grey armor.
Way Of Life

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The kyuubi was pleased- or at least as pleased as she ever could get with things being as they were. Being trapped was no fun, but at least she could change things a bit.

The humans thought that if she were bound and the pitiful human shell died, she would as well, but she knew better. She was an elemental force, not some being constrained to life or death. When the humans had tried this nonsense before, and it had only been a matter of time before she was back terrorizing the pitiful little things- with prejudice for trapping her in the first place.

However... this binding was different. She was an elemental force- true. But the human had woven the seal well. In order that the laws of nature would not be violated, time twisted around on itself and bent to touch itself back to the beginning of the seal in an infinite loop of space-time. She didn’t die, her soul was not taken by the Death God, but neither was she free.

At first she had just napped and left the brat to his own devices, but after the baby was killed and interrupted her sleep with resets an uncountable number of times, she’d had enough. There was a certain level of uselessness she expected from humans, but the brat was pathetically weak and helpless. It was boring and disgusting watching the humans commit infanticide over and over. And not even creatively!

This time around, though, she had managed to keep the stupid idiot from dying in all the infinite ways he managed to get himself killed before. Still trapped, life sucked. But- at least it was different. It wasn’t the most interesting iteration of the brat’s personality- but he was still alive after nearly six centuries. Changes that she now noticed and paid intense attention to, as she had nothing else to do. Still a blink of the eye for her, but the world had gone through some interesting changes. And so, she was relatively pleased.

In order to get the brat to this age, she’d had to learn the intimate details of running his body. It was actually kind of amusing, especially when there was a battle and his lungs were ripped out, he lost a limb, or something equally catastrophic. Though nothing that interesting had happened for over a century, sadly. Occasionally she would change the bodies of people he was close to for extended periods of time as a fun hobby, though again, there hadn’t been much of that lately. Probably for the best- she already knew more about the brat’s various wives and lovers than she would have been able to stomach- or really even want to think about knowing- prior to being trapped in this hell.

Suddenly the brat was choking. The kyuubi told the tubes in his chest to relax, and secrete lubricant and try to get the muscles to move properly to expel the… pretzel? Oh, honestly!

The kitsune wasn’t too worried until she noticed that the pretzel wasn’t moving fast enough. And the rest of the brat's body was starting to unravel as she was forced to divide her attention.

"Brat! Let me out!"

"No way you damn fox, you’re not going to trick me that easily."

The kitsune started to feel desperate as the brat’s body started to literally disintegrate around them. "This isn’t a trick you idiot! Do you want to die?"

"Yes…" came the soft reply, filled with such longing that were the kitsune human she would have
been moved to tears.

"What?" She said shortly, getting so angry she couldn't help bashing against the cage.

"Released from this torment... finally..." The brat's mind started to fade as his body completely shut down and began to fray at the distant edges. His fingers were turning white, then black, then to ash.

"No! Let me fix this! No!" The kyuubi howled in despair as the brat died finally.

She didn't remember why, but when it started again she was vicious in tearing up the pitiful village that she had lived in for so long, saved from untold natural disasters and wars, seen grow into a technological powerhouse. The death god's arms reached out to her...

OooooOOO

The kitsune shot upright, panting and looking around wildly. She grabbed her head and then looked at her hand in confusion. Hand... but not a man's hand.

She thought back- she had been leaping over the forest, ignoring the intense pain that was shooting through her head and the way her eyes were blurring. And then- nothing.

Well, not exactly nothing, she had remembered something...

She plopped down and let out a yipping laugh. She had passed out and had a dream- but a dream of her past life. She shot bolt upright again and started running gushes of chakra through her body in a way that she now knew why she was so skilled at. It was... amazing! She could use her entire self to flow about the puny human form, could slip into all the crevices. Nothing was holding her back this time. She viciously tore through the little tiny water bags and shifted them so that they were no longer disintegrating even as they were born. Changing them also got rid of the lingering fatigue.

"Why am I so worried about this human bug body, anyway?" She scoffed. And then twitched as her voice echoed against the little hairs in watery tubes in her ears and ricocheted around the curve of hardened bone of her skull. "Hnn." She starting walking slowly, looking up at the trees and watching the light filter between the leaves. "Well." She mused. "They can't control me in this form. Perhaps once I hunt all the ones with red eyes down, and kill the one that sits on the toad- maybe then I will be free." With that she felt a grin stretch wide across her face. The rush of little things in her blood felt good, so she increased them. She fell over drooling and then started cackling.

OoOooooO

Minato stared down at the Uchiha clan symbol on the torn piece of cloth. On the outside he was calm, collected, and professional. On the inside his mind was stuck on a loop of expletives. He absently bounced his newborn son Naruto on his knee as his dry, red rimmed eyes slowly lost focus. Even as disastrous as this was, he seized on the opportunity to deal with something other than his wife's death.

The only Uchiha that was unaccounted for was the (until recently) presumed dead Uchiha Madara: incidentally the only one known to be able to control the kyuubi. "Thank you, ANBU. You are dismissed." The Hokage said, looking at the smooth porcelain masks with his own in place.

"Yes, Hokage-sama." They bowed and left. Minato closed his eyes and gulped when Naruto let out a happy chortle that sounded too much like his mother. His late mother.

Minato shook his head to clear his thoughts- he needed to focus on the problem at hand. It seemed that if Madara had been controlling the fox, but it also seemed that his control was not as absolute as
It had once been. Maybe the bastard had even been killed by the demon. But it was dangerous to really believe that. Minato needed to either prove that this shirt was from another Uchiha, or go on high alert for Madara. He wasn't sure which would be the better outcome - that he had one Hokage-level traitor out there somewhere who could summon the most powerful of the bijuu, or that he had two traitorous Uchiha on his hands.

OoOoOoooO

The kitsune was lost. She was also extremely hungry. This was not something that usually would concern her, but she didn't want to pass out again. And unless she wanted to run the body entirely on chakra, which could probably work for a while - until the body disintegrated, then she needed the body to take care of some of the repairs on its own.

She came down from her leap onto the nest of some sort of bird. The kitsune grinned and snatched it before it could register anything more than shock and popped off its head. She sucked the blood out of it and grimaced. It tasted much better when one was a giant manifestation of hate. She peeled the skin off and chewed through the meat. Then she poked some holes through the eggs' shells and sucked out the insides. She let out a sigh of happiness when her stomach stopped yelling at her. Now if only the human bug trapped behind the seal would shut up as well.

She jumped up over the trees again and used chakra to make one stride as a human equal her natural body's. She cackled gleefully as she felt the weightlessness and the human's visceral fear at being up this high.

At the peak of her jump she could see a cluster of buildings in the distance. Perhaps the humans would be able to tell her which direction the Leaf village was.

She landed in the center of the village on feet glowing red with chakra to absorb the impact, her toes spread into the dirt. She looked up to see the humans staring at her with wide eyes and open mouths. She frowned and over half of them passed out.

"Demon!" shrieked one, before the whole bunch of humans turned into a screaming, noisy mess.

The kitsune could feel her eyebrow starting to twitch without her conscious control. "Excuse me, I was trying to find the Leaf…" the humans were stumbling over each other in their attempts to escape her. She flashed over to the nearest one and grabbed it by the back of the neck. "I was talking to you, pathetic mortal! You should be thrilled that I am taking the time to do so." The human suddenly smelled even worse. The kitsune's hand spasmed shut in disgust, crushing the pathetic thing's neck. She dropped the thing soaked in its own urine (and now blood).

With a sigh the kitsune dusted her hands off on her pants. She scanned the toppled bodies - all she'd done was look at them, by the first fox! - with bored disinterest. Until a flash of color caught her eye. Chittering in excitement she went over to the human who was wearing a bright orange shirt. A female human, no less! She quickly ripped off the blue and red nonsense that she had been wearing and gently maneuvered the shirt off of the female. The kitsune cocked her head to the side when she saw that the human was wearing something else underneath the shirt. It was an acceptable pink color, but what was the purpose?

Her hands deftly moved through the motions required to remove it, and flashes of naked human flesh secreting fluid and flushed with blood just under the skin flickered at the edges of her thoughts. At first she thought it was from her memories, but she quickly found it was her prisoner. She sneered and altered the seal in her belly to bar him from any control whatsoever. Sadly, she still didn't know how to shut him up.
With a shrug she pulled the lacy thing on around her chest, securing it with some small amount of trouble as the angle was different than she was used to. Or was used to observing… whatever. But it was significantly more comfortable than the blue cloth squashing everything flat to her chest. Over that she slipped the orange shirt. The girl's pants were a green-blue, though, and unacceptable. Another human supplied black pants with red stripes down the sides, and a third some wraps in a peach color. The kitsune crooned her approval as she wrapped the peach wraps over her legs and secured it in place- this should stop the annoying flapping the pants did around her calves. Most of the humans were wearing things strapped to their feet and she scoffed at their weakness. How were they able to properly balance in those things?

She took off again, leaping several miles away and delighting in how the wind whipped through her new attire.

OoOoOoOoO

The Hokage was not amused.

The former Hokage looked like he could barely keep his perverted thoughts to himself.

Minato gave Sarutobi a warning glare- he should at least try to restrain himself when he was cradling a newborn- before turning back to Eumhun and his three genin students. "So let me get this straight. You went out on the urgent medical call to Pulcho and found that the village was claiming a woman fell from the sky…"

"A demonic woman." Nanori, one of the genin interrupted.

"I think they said a succubus…” Kun, another of the genin interrupted.

"Regardless- that a female of some persuasion fell from the sky, choked one of them to death."

"We were able to save the man's life, Hokage-sama. Though he will always have a rasp to his voice." Eumhun corrected gently. Fortunately the man was a medical genius otherwise the civilian would have been a fatality not just a casualty.

"Almost choked the man to death, and then somehow knocked out half the village, stripped the top and bra off of one woman, and the pants off another." Minato finished, his teeth starting to grind together.

"Yes, Hokage-sama." Eumhun said, bowing.

"Thank you for your valued service and for saving a life today." Minato sighed. The team bowed and left.

"Uchiha Fugaku confirmed that everyone is in the village?" Sarutobi asked. He shifted his grip on the baby so that Naruto could drink the dregs of the bottle.

"Yes." Minato said, his voice somewhat muffled from the fact that his forehead was pressed against the pile of papers on his desk. He was so tired- he had problems letting anyone help him with Naruto, even Sarutobi, which was idiotic, really. Yet every time the baby was out of his sight he was afraid that he would lose his child as well as his wife.

"Well, last time I heard, Uchiha Madara was not a female, though I have heard him called a demon before." Sarutobi said cheerfully. More cheerfully than Minato thought was entirely proper- but the old Professor was probably thinking about both the topless girl and the fact that he didn't have to deal with all of this. "Too bad Jiraiya isn't here." The retired Hokage mused.
Minato just whimpered.

OoOoOoOoO

The kitsune sat in a tree, munching on a bit of bear and frowning. Obviously she needed to do a better job of appearing human. If she was going to expect to get close enough to find and kill the humans she needed to in order to exit this body and go about her business, instead of just rampaging and hoping for the best. Step one would probably be to change the color of her chakra- she did seem to recall that had always freaked out humans when the brat had called on her power. She dropped the gnawed thigh and settled back against the tree trunk and closed her eyes.

Immediately the kitsune was in the sewer in her proper form. She flounced down the hallway on all fours to the giant gate and the tiny human behind it. He was still yelling.

"You can't do this to me, you're just a demon! I am the great and powerful Uchiha Madara, and I am your Master!"

"Yeah, yeah." The kitsune yawned. Though… Uchiha… that was familiar. Hmm, that was the name of the red-eyed humans. Excellent. But not what she came for. She tweaked the seals so that they disappeared and caught the tiny human below her paw when he tried to bolt. She tilted her head this way and that before reaching down and ripping all the pitiful thing's chakra from him, including the dot things in his soul-matrix. The human was screaming and screaming- definitely an improvement over the yelling.

The kitsune kicked the human back into the cave, tightened the seals back up and opened her eyes. The blue strands were still in her mouth. She spit it out onto her hand and set about gluing the circles onto their respective parts of her body. Happily, they snapped into place with minimum fuss. She gathered chakra into her hand- it was magenta. She groaned.

OoOoOoOoO

Some amount of time (and another bear, two raccoons and a school of fish) later, she had it- her chakra appeared blue, and felt human. It was still almost entirely her own, but she had figured out how to get the bits she had stolen from the human to filter hers and turn it into innocently human energy. Excellent.

Now all she had to do was find the hidden village. She sighed. It seemed impossi…

A group of ninja ran by on the periphery of her senses. Aha!

The kitsune hopped up and chased after them, this time going branch to branch in the more normal ninja fashion so as not to overshoot them. She bared her teeth at the humans in a way that she hoped was close enough to the brat when he was trying to be friendly. She watched as the three shinobi halted so quickly that one slammed into another and knocked the first off the tree branch. The kitsune pretended to not notice, in the spirit of trying to get the humans to do what she wanted them to.

"Michi- isn't that the woman…"

"Sh!"

The kitsune felt her eye twitching. She didn't think that comment had been soft enough for even a human to have missed what was said. Not that she knew what they were talking about.

"Um… ma'am…" The one who had been knocked off the branch said hesitantly as she pulled herself back up level. The kitsune turned to look at her. She gulped. "Would you mind terribly
coming back to Konoha with us?" Konoha- that was the Leaf village! Most excellent.

The kitsune felt her grin slide into being one of actual pleasure. The three shinobi tensed even more. "Nothing would please me more." She said with complete honesty.

She followed mostly content behind the one called Michi, one of them behind her and the other ranging about. The pace was pathetically slow, so the kitsune amused herself by seeing how many threads she could pull out of the vest the human in front of her was wearing (with her carefully "human" chakra) without him noticing. So far she had taken out one out of every ten threads, and the vest was starting to look rather see-through. She switched to surreptitiously starting to change the armor plating from iron to fragile balls filled with air. It was tricky to keep the weight exactly the same. By the time she had finished that, the forest was starting to give her flashes of déjà vu.

"We'll stop here for the night." The one behind her said.

The kitsune stopped and looked at the human. She sniffed the air. She was fairly confident that she could at least get herself going in the right direction… "Hn." She grunted, then leapt in the direction that they had been traveling.

She quickly regretted her impulsiveness as she landed in a section of forest that was less familiar, rather than more. The damned ninja must have been traveling in some sort of bizarre pattern to confuse pursuers… and prisoners.

The kitsune growled before calming herself. She turned completely around and leapt back toward where she had left the shinobi. They were not where she landed. The kitsune thought with some chagrin that it might be better if she walked in a more human fashion if she wanted to figure out where she was going. But she wasn't used to actually trying to get somewhere. Usually she would just destroy whatever was around- it didn't matter too much to her what she smashed, so long as she could set it on fire later. Or during. She felt a wide smile stretch across her face at the thought.

With a sigh she sniffed the air, hoping to catch a whiff of the humans. Nothing. She closed her eyes and let her chakra seep out of her body until it hit the ground, then spread it out from her as far as she could reach. She didn't feel any humans on the ground, so she slid up the trees- aha! There were the shinobi.

This time she hopped between the branches, much faster but in the same way that she had traveled with the humans. She burst through the foliage and grinned as she saw the humans. And then frowned. There were four of them, and three of them were really short. And only the tall one was wearing a vest.

"Hello lady!" Said one of the little ones.

"Hello." She cocked her head at the four humans.

"We're coming back from helping some old lady in the woods. She had a lot of sheeps, and they got lost." The little one grinned, showing a missing tooth.

"I see. How kind of you." The kitsune said absently. Well, this was probably as good a way to get to Leaf as any.

OoOoooOOOO

"Hokage-sama!"

"Shh!" Minato hissed, but it was too late, the noise had awoken Naruto. Minato picked up the baby
and crooned to him as the cowed shinobi came into his office. Minato nodded to them over the small blond head to show them to continue.

"We encountered the woman that you put out the alert on when we were patrolling the Southern border."

"The Southern?" The kyuubi had attacked from the North, the hidden bunker found far to the North-West, and the village was to the North-East.

"Yes, Hokage-sama." The chuunin, Boshi, continued, "We asked her to accompany us to the village, and she agreed. But when we stopped to rest for the night she…"

His teammate Michi took up the story. "She just… leapt into the air. Despite racing after her, she was gone."

"What did she look like, exactly?" Minato asked, cooing to his son.

"She had long hair past her shoulders. It was a very dark brown, almost black, really. It was a bit wild, with sticks and other debris stuck into it. She was about five foot six, approximately seventy five kilos. Her eyes were a very dark brown, too dark to really see her pupils. Pale skin, no obvious scars or clan markings. She was wearing the same clothes that were reported stolen from the village, though they were unwashed and there was a lot of what looked like dried blood down her front."

"Thank you, Michi." Minato said. The kunoichi grinned and then handed the Hokage the full mission report. Once the team of chuunin had left, Minato leaned back into his chair, tipping his hat down to cover his eyes and settling the baby against his chest. He only meant to shut his eyes while he thought about this latest odd development, but sleep took him before he even fully leaned back.

OoOooooOOO

The kitsune wasn't sure if she was amused by the bouncing human kit or annoyed. The little thing kept calling her 'lady' and would not stop her constant stream of anecdotes.

"Megane! Stop pestering the poor woman." The older human said, looking exasperated. "I'm sorry." She continued, talking to the kitsune now. "I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name…?"

"That's odd." The kitsune replied. The human looked at her even as they all continued to jump through the branches. The demon was mildly impressed. It showed a minimal amount of skill. But she was certainly not impressed enough to give the human information. Especially information that didn't exist. A name? She had never really had one. 'Damn fox' probably wouldn't go over well… nor 'lady'.

"Who's pestering her now?" Megane asked cheekily.

The kitsune turned to smirk at the kit when suddenly the forest in front of them gave way to show a large wall surrounding a thriving village nestled underneath a huge cliff with four faces carved on its face. The kitsune gaped and then turned around. Behind her was a long, flat road. There was no way she missed this from the air!

"Hey, lady, what's wrong?" Megane asked, stopping and turning to look at the kitsune.

"Were we… wasn't it a forest?"

"Forest?" Megane looked at the other two erstwhile silent children.
One took advantage of the chatty kit's silence to speak. "We've been on the road this whole time." The kid wiped its nose on a sleeve.

"Halt!"

The demon turned and saw a large group of humans with white porcelain masks over their faces.

"Come away from her." The ANBU said, hurriedly pulling the children away from the demon.

The kitsune looked at the group of them placidly. She was in the village, but these were neither the man on the toad, nor the… hello!

Another group of shinobi had arrived- these were all in a black uniform of sorts. "What are you doing here. This is the jurisdiction of the police, not the ANBU."

"This subject is wanted for questioning." The ANBU replied tonelessly.

The kitsune was delighted when her suspicions were confirmed when the shinobi who had spoken to the ANBU's eyes burst into red color. The kyuubi rocked onto the balls of her feet, preparing to attack. The single comma spinning in the right eye and the two in the left annoyed her and… wasn't right. The kitsune paused. There should be three in each, not three total. As she stood there undecided, the eyes of the two flanking the main one burst into red as well, both with one in each eye. There were so many! The kyuubi rocked back onto her heels and pouted.

"Come with us, please, ma'am." The ANBU said. The kyuubi sighed and complied. She certainly didn't want to go near those red eyed freaks before she knew exactly how many there were- it wouldn't do to miss one.

OoOoOoOoOOOO

"Minato." Sarutobi said quietly from beside the desk. Even with so gentle an awakening startled Minato and he reached for a kunai before he felt the weight on his chest shift and he instinctively secured his precious bundle. Who was thankfully still asleep.

"No one wanted to wake you, though I gather there were a few photographs taken." Sarutobi said with a twinkling smile.

"Wake me?" Minato yawned. "Why?"

"They found the woman. She came in with Shirabema Kotoba and her genin team."

"What?" Minato asked, just barely restraining himself from leaping up from the chair. "How?"

"They say that she just appeared in front of them, then walked with them into the village. She seemed confused that she was not in the forest."

Minato smirked. "You implemented the seal, then?"

The former Hokage nodded. "When the kyuubi mysteriously left I activated it while you were…" Sarutobi trailed off.

Minato closed his eyes and gulped. While he had returned to his wife's side with the wonderful news that he hadn't had to use the seal and sacrifice his soul; only to find the top medic-nin who had been confidently working to stop the post-parturient bleeding slowly shaking their heads. "Well, it works, then." Minato said, deliberately stopping that thought process.
"Amazingly well." The former Hokage confirmed. "Anyone not wearing a Konoha headband cannot find their way into the village unless they are being escorted by someone who is."

"Where is she now?"

"She is being interrogated."

Chapter End Notes

Names that you don't recognize in this chapter are common Japanese words. The OCs in question will not show up again.
Q&A

The Uchiha jerk always betrayed the brat. At first she had found it amusing to see them become close to each other and then ultimately see his poor hopes and blooming confidence in the friendship smashed.

But then it became pathetic.

And then it was just annoying.

So she decided to change the timeline more drastically. She gave the brat his memories from one of his previous iterations. The explosion of change that radiated from that one act was surprising, to say the least. The brat had actually attempted to save the entire Uchiha clan- and failed, of course, but from that he became ridiculously powerful so rapidly the kitsune was hard pressed to keep his growing body from breaking apart under the stress.

The brat ended up killed earlier than she was really happy with, but the ride had been much more fun than she possibly could have anticipated.

So she did it again, testing out various permutations on when she gave him the knowledge, and how she let him grow up before she gifted it to him. Sometimes she revealed herself as the source of the knowledge- and he would either let her out more than she ever had before, or become the recipient of intense hate when the brat denied the visions or said that she lied.

Eventually, though, even those games became monotonous and repetitive.

And she was still trapped.

oOOoOOOOoooo

"I came from Uchiha Madara." The kitsune said again, shaking her head in annoyance. She knew that humans had short memories due to their short lives, but surely even they did not need to have so many repetitions? At this point she didn't even have to think of the answers to questions anymore... boring!

"Who is your mother?"

She had no idea what they wanted her to say. "Amateratsu?" That was probably as accurate an answer as any.

"Who is your mother?"

"The earth?" The human tendency toward violent emotion? The intense heat at the heart of a volcano? Lightening? Elements don't have parents. "I don't know."

"Where is your father now."

The kyuubi assumed they meant Madara. "The kyuubi consumed him." She repeated the truth, though she never said who the kyuubi currently was, of course.

"Where is the kyuubi now?"

"Gone." The kyuubi replied. The amusement over this question had long since faded. Probably around the time when they had decided to try to make her start change her clothing (more than once!)
to loose grey nonsense. She was back in orange now, after after a clothing strike and lounging contentedly naked, trying to see if she could get the nose bleeds to make poetry on the walls (almost). She had been worried that she would need 'clothes' and the game would be up, but as she wasn't jumping anywhere the mounds on her chest weren't bothering her.

The Konoha-nin had yet to manage to get her to put on the 'shoes' they seemed so fond of.

She slid down onto the table, laying her head on her arm and peeling the surface layer of metal off of the table and turning it into various gases in small enough concentrations she was pretty sure the human couldn't see it.

"What is your name?"

"Musume." She replied. The first time they asked she had thought to try to make a cutesy combination of her true form and Madara-like Kyuara or something. But just referring to herself as they were was so much easier. After the first time they called her Madara's daughter, she had taken the term for herself. Musume- in their olden language; it means daughter.

The human just looked at her. "Where did you come from?"

"Ok, that's it." The kyuubi said, getting up from the table so quickly that she knocked the chair over. "You've asked me these questions before."

"You haven't said anything that we can confirm as true."

"How am I supposed to confirm anything? You expect all of your traumatized victims to understand everything that happened to them?" The kyuubi left off the part where she was traumatized by being sealed inside a baby over and over again until her lifespan trapped almost eclipsed her memory of being free… they could think she meant being the product of rape raised as a soldier for a missing-nin.

"We…"

She growled and went to the door, letting out some of her anger by melting the entire thing into a puddle of slag and stepping through.

There were shouts behind her, mostly "holy shit!" and "but she has fourteen chakra disruptors on!" but she ignored them.

The building was something of a maze, so she continued to make doorways in the walls. Finally one of the melted holes lead outside and she took off in a large leap skyward.

The village below her shimmered out of existence causing her a flicker of panic and a great deal of consternation. All she could see were trees stretching endlessly in all directions. Fortunately she had jumped almost straight up, so after several minutes of freefalling in confusion she fell back into Konoha. She looked up in bemusement, only now seeing the underside of the chakra array.

Gasps at her sudden entrance pulled her attention to a few adult humans and what appeared to be a play group of some sort for human kits. The adults were half way to pulling their kunai when she saw him.

A happy grin split her face- it was the same brat that had faced opposite the bars. Over and over. Eternally. But seeing him here- there were no bars. Here they were both out in the world, smiling under the sun. Alone and without her, the child blinked up at her in curiosity. He had no fear, he had no opinion on her at all. She practically fainted from pleasure.
She scooped the boy up and the various humans froze, hands on their weapons.

"Hello there, brat." She cooed at him.

He giggled. "Are you here to p'tect me, too?" He asked.

"I came here by accident, but I'll give you a gift."

"A gift?"

"Yes, a very special present."

"I like presents! Is it a nin-da thing?"

The kyuubi smiled down at the small boy. "Absolutely." She let her chakra flow out of her body and into his- it was a bit strange doing this from the outside, but it was similar enough that she didn’t even hesitate. It was practically second nature to her now; before she had learned to do this the baby had died over and over before a month was out. But now, as then, she delicately stretched out his chakra coils until they took up more space than was actually in his small body. She compressed them and warped them into pockets of other-space, tucking everything neatly in place.

"That felt weird." The boy proclaimed, twitching his nose and sneezing.

"Did it?" She replied, not really paying attention. Somehow the light had gone- it was now night. And the ninja surrounding them were different than the ones that had been before- and they looked quite a bit more formidable.

"Dad!" The boy cried, squirming to be let down. The kyuubi was barely able to set the boy's feet on the ground before he was darting over to a man in a strange red and white get-up. The hat looked ridiculous. "The nice lady gave me a present!"

"Naruto." The human was shaking as he gathered the kit in his arms.

The kitsune didn't deign to acknowledge the various weapons pointed at her vital areas.

"Where'd everyone go? And why's it dark?" Naruto asked, frowning.

"It's time for bed. Uchiha-san will take you back to the house, ok?"

Uchiha! The kitsune's attention perked up and she snarled as the black robed shinobi took the kit and started to carry him away. The one in the silly hat crouched lower, ready to spring and she sniffed. Well, little could harm the brat at this point (though without her to guide the healing it would be less adaptable) so she let them take the brat without more than a token protest.

More worrying, this particular Uchiha was different again than the three she had seen at the village entrance. How many of the bastards were there? The brat didn't usually have much interaction with the red-eyed clan before they were all nicely massacred. She had also never let Naruto save more than one or two of them, so she had never quite known that there were so many.

"Why don't you come with us. We promise to ask you different questions." The kitsune sighed, but the kit was gone, the new scene was over. She felt doomed to eternal repetitions. Maybe she should just go into demon form and rampage through the village… no, she hadn't killed anyone yet. It would just repeat again...

OooOoOoooO
"How did she get out?" The Hokage snarled, angrier than anyone had ever seen the normally stoic man. "What did she do to my son?"

"We're not sure yet, but she came quietly back to Interrogation…"

"What good is that going to do if she can disappear whenever she wants and end up in our preschools?"

"Sir, she melted through the door with pure fire elemental chakra, even wearing fourteen of our highest strength chakra disruptors. She had just come out of her longest 'episode' yet- it had been nearly a month and we were afraid she was going to die from dehydration when she suddenly started responding. Less than a minute later she was out the door, and a few minutes after that she was outside and gone." Inoichi reported the facts to the Hokage, not trying to explain or ask for sympathy. "She is currently in Holding 4B-e…"

He sighed when the Hokage left in a flash of yellow. The Yamanaka pressed his hands together as well and shunshined after his leader. It took him considerably longer considering he had to actually cross space (albeit too quickly for the human eye to see) whereas the Hokage had collapsed said space by activating the seal in the interrogation room observing area. When Inoichi arrived the Hokage was glaring through the window into the cell where the woman was sitting, staring at the table.

"I'm going to go talk to her." And with that, Minato took the more traditional route of walking to the door in order to enter the interrogation room.

OoOooOoO

The kyuubi looked up at the man as he entered the same room she had been in for so long. He was still wearing the red and white outfit. So… this was Naruto’s father, then? Something about that tickled her mind. She frowned as she tried to sort out all the overlapping memories of human details.

Something sizzled over her skin and she shot upright in her chair. Naruto’s father was pressing his hand to a seal that he had drawn onto the table. His fingers were touching one side of the seal, and hers the other. She quickly snatched her hand back and crossed her arms over her chest. "What was that for?"

The man's eyebrow quirked. "I needed to get your attention." He replied.

"Fine, you have it."

"How did you find my son?"

The kyuubi smiled, happily recalling the scene. "I fell onto him, I guess."

"You fell?"

"Sure. I wasn't trying to find him. But it was nice to see him."

The man leaned forward, looking about as dangerous as a human could. "Explain yourself."

The kyuubi frowned and looked up at the ceiling. Why had it been nice? It was great to confirm that they were separated, of course, but there was something beyond that, too. She was vaguely disgusted with herself to realize that she was sort of fond of the brat.

"Ouch!" The kyuubi cried, as she was shocked again. She looked at the man and glared, then
blinking when she noticed that her fingers were on the seal again. She snarled and sat on her hands.

"Explain why you liked seeing my son." The human said, in a fairly impressive growl.

"Explain why you keep shocking me." She retorted.

"I can't get you to answer questions when you start meditating." He snarled.

"Meditating?" Hmm... what did he mean by... "Hey!" This time the human had poked her in the head. "Don't touch me!" The human looked vaguely surprised.

"Like I said, pay attention." He seemed a bit calmer now. The kitsune wondered why.

"When you ask a question, it's usually understood that you need to wait for an answer." The kitsune huffed.

The human actually smiled a bit, though the expression was wan. "It usually doesn't take people days or weeks to think of an answer."

"What?" The human had lost her.

He leaned forward, serious and becoming annoyed again, she could tell. "Every time I activated the seal, that was after trying to rouse you with physical means. In the past, the ANBU have resorted to every method they could think of, but you have never responded. It took me several days to create this seal," and here he tapped the table, drawing the kitsune's attention to the array, "which taps into space, time, and some other technical things I'm sure won't interest you. It does its job, however, which is bring you out of that state."

The kyuubi was shocked. She felt her jaw drop open and was too distracted to close it. The human leaned forward and looked like he was going to poke her again. She dodged him and snarled, "Give me a second to think already." She pulled her hands out from under her butt and crossed them again.

"How long have I been in here, anyway?"

"Twenty-three months."

The kitsune gaped at him again. She definitely did not like feeling as stupid as he made her feel. Maybe she would add him to the list of people to kill: all the Uchiha, the one who sits on the toad, and this one. She twitched at the thought of killing Naruto's father... and then had an odd sense that she was missing something... "Argh!" She growled as she was shocked again. She glared at the man. "How long was it that time?"

"Twelve hours. I left to go take care of something." She also noticed that he had gotten himself a cup of tea. "So. Why are you interested in my son?"

"I like his hair." She quipped. Which was true. One needed yellow to transform the best color of red (blood red, fire red) to the amusing orange.

The man's eye twitched, and he set down his cup with a decided click. "What did you do to him?"

The kyuubi raised her eyebrows. "You mean that it's been, what, almost a day?" What nonsense-spacing out like that. Although, she supposed the humans weren't really worth her attention... she snapped back to reality before she could get shocked again. She eyed the man's hand hovering over the seal with trepidation. "And you don't know what it is yet?"

"What?" The man looked at her, confused and a bit miffed.
"You don't know what I did and it's been almost a whole day?" She repeated.

"You really don't notice the missing time, do you?" The man looked bemused. "And of course we know what you did. I just want to hear what you were trying to do."

"I wasn't trying to do anything- I succeeded in expanding his chakra coils." The kyuubi said smugly. She twitched her nose- the tea smelled amazing. And if it had been almost a day that would explain why she was thirsty… actually would explain why she always seemed ravenous and dehydrated whenever they fed her… "Don't." She glared, as the man was reaching for the seal again. "That couldn't have been that long."

"I'm tired of poking your head." He smirked in reply. The kitsune noted sadly that the tea was now gone. She really needed to make an effort to be aware of time passing. Or her surroundings at all, really. Habit of an infinite number of lifetimes, she supposed- in the brat she hadn't needed to pay attention- he ran the everyday boring stuff, and as herself she had merely manifested when she felt like destroying something.

"Gods be damned!" She howled as she got shocked again. The human smirking at her made her even less amused. His relationship to Naruto was rapidly becoming a moot point compared to her desire to melt him into a steaming, flaming pile of human goo.

"It's been almost thirty hours this time, in case you were wondering. I took the opportunity to get some sleep and catch up on my work." He steeped his fingers in front of his face and stared at her. "Let's just cut to the chase, shall we?" He asked finally. "Are you an enemy of Konoha?"

She eyed him warily. "No." Not particularly. At least, no more than she was the enemy of all things that lived and breathed. She kept her smirk from showing on her face, however. That would probably not go very far in making her look truthful.

"Do you have any intentions to harm the residents of Konoha?"

Well, yeah. She wanted to massacre a whole clan of them, but technically, weren't the Uchiha wiped out on order of the village? She thought maybe she remembered that happening. Although, by not being in the brat, things were different… "Ow! I probably wouldn't be too upset if I killed you right now."

The man glared, and she could feel the weight of his gaze on her skin. "Answer the question."

"I won't, though, as that would make the brat unhappy." She smiled. How to phrase this? "And I won't harm any other citizen of Konoha unless they endanger me." She paused, in the normal human manner. "Or if they are trying to endanger anyone else." Which an Uchiha trying to control her would be, because then she would have to raze the whole village just on principle. Hah!

"You obviously have problems and there doesn't seem to be much that we can do with you here. I'm going to release you to the Uchiha clan, as you claim to be one of them." The man said, standing up.

"I don't want to go with the Uchiha!" She protested.

"They aren't particularly pleased about it, either. But you will be secure with them, and you insist that you are one of them. If you wanted to be placed somewhere else you should have claimed to be part of another family." He looked like he wasn't really concerned about what happened from there.

"I'm not claiming anything. I am an Uchiha." That made her pause, though- did this mean she would have to kill herself? If she did so, would that release her like the previous sealings had done, or would it loop her back like Naruto's had, seeing as she had used the same one… "I will pluck off
your arms and shove them down your throat!" She yelled as she was shocked again.

She blinked when a stern man with dark hair and eyes was sitting across the table from her.

"I am Uchiha Fugaku. I am the clan leader and you will obey me."

The kitsune narrowed her eyes. "No."

"You will obey me!" His eyes turned red, three commas in each. Ah, that was more like it.

"You will need eyes that are a bit more powerful than that if you want to press me into service." She gloated. And even that wouldn't work anymore! Ah, human shells.

"Being controlled by that monster has changed you, I see." The red eyes narrowed.

The kitsune glared.

"Follow me." And with that, he left the room.

She debated whether to follow or not, and almost let herself lapse into a 'meditative state' as Naruto's father had called it, but then remembered the seal on the table next to her. Even so, she was tempted to sit where she was. But not tempted enough to let this chance for something different slip though her claws. Er… fingers.

She easily caught up to the human, who was walking. Since she didn't feel like blasting her way out again, she decided to modify his clothing like she had done with that other ninja.

She changed the fan symbol on his vest to a fox face with its tongue sticking out, and started turning the color of the threads to red and made it spell out 'kick me!' in yellow. She snickered to herself and looked up. They were in a part of Konoha that didn't look familiar. The people she didn't recognize, either, but all humans tended to look alike (though these perhaps were more homogenous than some other populations). Buildings, however, stuck out in her memory. She liked to contemplate the most satisfying way to destroy them.

Fugaku stopped and turned. The kitsune was sad to see her handiwork leave her sight, though the shocked gasps coming from behind the stuck up Uchiha made her grin. He frowned at her. "You will be staying here, with Uchiha Inabi." The kyuubi yawned, and looked over at the young-ish human. He looked pretty similar to all the other Uchiha.

"Don't cause trouble." The human- Inabi- said before he turned and gestured for her to come inside. The kitsune twitched her nose and smelled something cooking, so she followed him in easily enough.

"Food?" She asked hopefully. A Cup-o-Ramen was shoved into her hands, along with a pair of chopsticks.

"Don't complain." Inabi scowled, before pouring boiling water into another one.

Complain? About ramen?!? She took in the first slurping bite and her eyes closed in bliss. How could anyone complain about ramen?

"Don't eat so fast."

The kyuubi glared at the human and wondered if he could speak in anything other than the imperative. She happily slurped her ramen up. But once she was finished the two of them stared at
each other. The kitsune wondered if he was waiting for her to start some small talk. If so, he would be waiting a long time. Though, the thought was somewhat amusing.

"You will go to the room we have provided and sleep there. Do not leave the house without permission."

The gods-forsaken imperative again. The kitsune sighed. Apparently he had a speech impediment or something. Regardless, if the Uchiha kept commanding her, he might have to end up her first Uchiha victim. With that happy thought she went off to bed.
"Why do you let them control you like that?"

_The kitsune stretched out and yawned before looking the much smaller cat in the eye. "Why not? They summon me and I get to destroy things without having to bother figuring out where to manifest. I always seem to manage to end up inside a mountain or out in the ocean somewhere."

"Most demons either learn how to target better, or just reappear somewhere else."

"Ch. By that time I'm pissed off. I'm not going to run away like some damned dog with its tail between its legs."

"You're always pissed off." The blue cat sighed, closing its glowing eyes. "You don't have to explode all the water or earth around you, though. That causes trouble for all of us."

"What do I care about anyone else? I'm an incarnation of destruction, not fuzzy happy feelings. Hah! Like something like that could exist... or be strong enough to even end up with a corporeal body, anyway. Can you imagine what the demon of love would look like?" The kyuubi started laughing, her bass tones rolling out through the ethereal countryside. The cat hissed and moved when the fox almost crushed her.

"You are impossible!" She yowled. The kyuubi just smirked at her. "And more- you're lazy!"

"Your point, cat?" The kitsune said, stretching out on her back.

OoOOoOOo

She was startled from sleep by a booming yell coming from outside. She struggled out of the nest of sheets she had made for herself and hopped to the window ledge. Below was the grumpy older human... er... she'd forgotten his name. He was waving the vest she had changed and yelling, however.

She dropped out the window and he turned to face her. She scratched her ear as he postured, unconcerned with what he was trying to say. She frowned a bit when her hand hit some snags. Perhaps this 'regular grooming' they had made her do at the other place had some merit.

"...destroy you!" Her interest perked up- destruction was always good. "We're going to the training grounds now and I will show you why you do not make a fool of Uchiha Fugaku!" Fighting was good... the kitsune wondered if it would be alright to kill him, since he challenged her.

"Father, let me talk to her." The kitsune turned to the quiet young human beside the red faced and screaming one. A jolt of fear shot through her. She knew this one... he was...

"Itachi, I will deal with this myself."

Yes, Itachi. He was one that had the pinwheel red in his eyes. The kyuubi regarded him warily. The young human looked at her with something like surprise in his eyes.

"I'll fight you, old man. But don't think you'll come out of it alive." She paused and put her hand to
her chin. "Actually, if I defeat you, does that mean I get to be clan head?"

The human's teeth were grinding so loudly that she could have heard it even if she hadn't fixed her body with superior senses. "You will not defeat me." He bit out.

"Father, I don't think…"

The elder Uchiha backhanded the younger. The kitsune was surprised when it actually hit. She regarded the youngster thoughtfully. Had he deliberately not dodged or was he really that useless? If he were so unskilled, perhaps he didn't have the special eyes yet. One could only hope! Not that it mattered; he was dead either way.

"Training grounds, now." Fugaku bit out, before pressing his hands together before running away in a swirl of leaves at what she was sure he thought was extreme speed.

"Hmm. Does he expect me to know where those are?" Or follow him? She supposed she could do that. Or maybe she could do a demon hop? She shook herself before she started contemplating if she could do that possessing a human or not and got lost in her thoughts. "Mah, I don't really care about him." She turned back and looked the younger Itachi over. His eyes narrowed. Unless… "If I defeat him, do I get to be the new leader?" She asked Itachi.

"No." Itachi said quietly.

"Well, what the hell is the point then?" She huffed. "Not even if I kill him?"

"No." The boy's eyes narrowed at her. "The leader of the clan is voted on by the clan- they must be the strongest for the needs of the clan, only part of that is being the strongest ninja."

"Hmm." That sounded like a lot of work. But if she could manage to become the head of the clan… then maybe she wouldn't have to kill them all. She could instead use them to trap the rest of the bijuu. Hah! That might be an interesting idea… the dream last night reminded her how much that cat annoyed her… wasn't she trapped in some human already, though? That could prove troublesome.

"Do you need directions to the training ground?" Itachi asked, still looking wary but being polite enough. The kitsune was rather bemused that he had turned out to be such a stick in the mud later in life. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that most of his attacks involved him standing around staring at people.

"No. I don't feel like killing any Uchiha today." She tapped a hand against her arm. "Do you know where I might find Naruto's father?" Maybe he would know an easy way to become clan head that didn't involve all this respect nonsense.

"Namikaze Naruto?" Itachi blinked. "Do you mean the Hokage?"

The kitsune stared at Itachi as many things clicked into place. She remembered now- Naruto's father was the fourth Hokage, and he had sealed her into his own son. And Naruto had summoned that same giant orange frog that the jerk who had been trying to seal her had been riding. "That bastard." How was she going to kill him now?

She frowned. What was stopping her, she could take him. Probably. If she didn't start thinking in the middle of the battle about something else. Like how she was killing her favorite human's father. Although, what did 'favorite' even mean? That she would try to avoid killing him if she was destroying nearby structures? That she would actively defend his body? His happiness? It seemed like she had gotten into more than a few bad habits.
A punch sent her flying backward and out of her musings.

"Ouch." She muttered, pulling her jaw back into alignment and healing it. She glared up at the irate Uchiha clan leader.

"I said come to the training grounds." He said, his voice icy.

"Like I know where those are." She shot back. "Your son was going to give me directions..." She looked around and saw that Itachi was nowhere to be seen... and the sun seemed considerably higher in the sky. She sighed. So much for not spacing out.

"We were told you weren't right in the head." He mused. The kitsune got up and dusted herself off. When she looked up at him she proceeded to turn his eyebrows pink. She only got half done before he was moving and shoving her. She was so affronted that she let him. "March. I will tell you where to turn."

She allowed the human to continue to push her along, though she started to walk faster and faster until they were both almost sprinting as fast as he had been when he did that silly leaf swirling thing.

She felt more than sensed the fireball approaching her. The skin of her back started to tighten under the intense heat and she was rolling out of the way before it had even fully registered. She sprung to her feet and bounced around to face the grumpy clan head. She balanced on the balls of her feet and waited for him to make the next move.

The man swung his fist at her and she dodged it, but his foot was following close behind. She jumped over that as well but it left her right in the path of the second fireball. She huffed in annoyance as the flames washed over her. Fire attacks couldn't really hurt her usual body, though this borrowed one was only mostly resistant. Another kick came through the flames and connected with her stomach. She wrapped her body around his shin and bit his thigh. It didn't do much damage until she remembered to weave in the chakra. She felt her teeth getting sharper and made an effort to restrain the energy to be purely filtered blue.

"You little bitch!" The man yelled, bashing her on the head with his fist. She felt something crunch and the world seemed fuzzy until she dissociated a bit from the biology of her vessel. There was a little tube that was spurting blood against her skull and squishing the grey stuff that helped one think. She healed it, annoyed.

She let the next shake of his leg send her flying. She flipped about in the air and landed on all fours and smiled at him with her teeth stained red with his blood.

He rushed forward and she tried to punch at him, but it was like she had been watching fights her whole life and had never actually been in one. Her arm felt awkward and stiff, and the punch went wide. She wrinkled her nose in disgust and hopped back from a kick and then ducked under a punch. She was certainly fast enough to avoid the human, but what happened to her own body? Hadn't the previous tenant been a fighter? Shouldn't it retain that 'muscle memory' or whatever? "Hrn." She mused. Maybe not if the body was completely remodeled, down to it's smallest parts, and then controlled by a completely different consciousness.

"You aren't even fighting seriously. You are no Uchiha!" The human was babbling again. "Sharingan!" He called out, and suddenly his eyes were the petrifying red, though the three commas were not connected, nor were they spinning.

She was so frazzled and the human's speed had increased so much that his next punch connected solidly with her nose. She felt it crunch and a bit of something fly back into her skull. Fortunately
between pulling back from the brain earlier and the improvements that she had made before coming to this sorry excuse for a town, the fragment didn't immediately kill her like it otherwise would have. But she was having a lot of difficulty fixing it enough to properly see and coordinate her body while at the same time avoid another blow from the significantly faster human.

She leapt over the human's head and lashed at him with fire. He dove out of the way successfully, but didn't reengage right away. She used that brief respite to absorb the little piece of bone and set the rest of the bleeding to healing itself. Something needed to be done about this goo between her ears- it was too important and yet too prone to injury. And it was just different enough from the brat's set-up that she actually had to pay some attention to fixing it.

The man came at her again and she shuddered a bit in despair. Destruction was good, but only when she was causing it, not being beat up by some human bug. Maybe if she could do some of those things with the hand seals…

The human used another technique and suddenly she was in a place she didn't recognize, being stabbed over and over by a multitude of copies of the human.

Two could play at this game, though- she knew a way to make copies of herself. Or rather, the brat had used something most lives where he'd copied himself… what were the things he did with his hands? It was too hard to concentrate! They were stabbing her, but she couldn't heal, and they wouldn't leave her alone.

Fuck the ridiculous hand gestures- the chakra had felt like… this!

She couldn't see that anything had happened, though suddenly there was a lesser pain in her cheek.

She blinked and the copies of the red-eyed bug were replaced by copies of herself ripping up plants, attacking anything that moved (including some of the humans, she was pleased to note) and setting fire to various buildings.

A poof of smoke drew her attention to her side where her cheek was still a bit sore.

Itachi was there, kunai in hand as he stabbed behind him and dispelled a shadow clone. His eyes were red and the kitsune's heart felt like it skipped a beat before she saw the somewhat less intimidating three commas. Only somewhat less intimidating as his brother had managed to somehow knock her unconscious behind her seal by just looking at her host with those same eyes.

"Dispel your shadow clones." He said, his eyes feeling like they were filling her whole world.

"No!" She shouted reflexively, jerking away. This was unacceptable! She needed to figure out how to kill these red-eyed nuisances as soon as she possibly could. She was shocked when her refusal worked; she had been expecting that to be an eye-enforced command.

"Please." Itachi said, reaching out a hand to her.

"I…" She frowned in confusion. Why didn't he just make her?

He spun around and dispelled another clone, but not before some fire had burnt off a chunk of his hair. He turned back towards her. "My father left once he had trapped you in the genjutsu. He won't come back to stop this."

"Good." She huffed, folding her arms over her chest and watching with a smirk as her clones spread even farther out and managed to make a few structures collapse. Genjutsu… that was that mind stuff. Oh first fox's balls on a stick! She'd been trapped in a pathetic illusion. "Where does he live, I'll send
more to burn down his house, too."

Itachi looked almost frightened at the thought. The expression made him look more like a kit than a
grown human. "No." He said, though with a bit of a waver to his voice. "Sasuke…” slipped out of
his mouth, too low for anyone not a demon vessel to make out.

The kitsune's eyes narrowed at the name- that jerk was almost always a power hungry ass. At her
scowl Itachi fidgeted a bit. "How old are you?" She asked angrily, meaning it to be a hint for him to
act his age.

"Eleven." The Uchiha answered back defiantly.

Eleven. Fantastic, he was a kit. A kit perhaps three years away from killing all his den. That took the
fun right out of destroying the doomed section of the village. The rest of the shadow clones poofed
out of existence and even the memories of them tearing things up and flinging them about wasn't
even enough to cheer her up. "I'm going to bed." She announced. She flung her body into the not-space
and back out in the room they had given her.

Realizing she could demon-travel brought a bit of a smile back to her face, however. Especially since
her targeting had actually worked! She hadn't ended up inside a wall, or underneath a pile of rocks
or… she coughed a few times and then retched. She felt something coming up and caught it in her
hand. It seemed to be… a wad of paper?

There was a soft noise and the kitsune tried to turn around, only to trip, fall, and break some bones in
her foot. She looked down to see that her legs were merged with a pile of fabric and that half her left
foot was inside the wood floor. Grumbling under her breath she phased enough to pull the sheets out
of her limbs and get her foot on top of the floor. She healed the fractures as she turned to the source
of the noise. It was an older looking human female against the back wall with one hand over her
chest.

"You gave me quite the fright appearing like that! The sudden flash of light made me drop the clean
sheets!" She tutted. "You would think I would be used to it, living in a ninja village and being a
genin myself, wouldn't you?" She chuckled.

"Right." The kitsune looked at the sheets and then back at the woman.

"Well, you look like you could use a bit of something to eat, dearie."

"Ramen?" The kitsune asked hopefully.

"Are you sure you don't want to eat something more… healthy?" Considering that the kitsune could
run her body on dirt, she wasn't sure what the human meant. "Well all right, ramen it is, Musume,
dear."

The kitsune grinned.

"The only problem is that our bakery and restaurant were set fire to this afternoon in an unfortunate
accident. So it seems I can't make you any.” The woman said 'unfortunate accident' while looking
right at the kitsune.

Who was appropriately horrified, though probably not for the exact reasons that the woman was
hoping for. "I burnt down the ramen stand?!"

By the time the kitsune had helped the woman, who turned out to be named after some kind of
rice… and her husband… Teriyaki? Something like that- the kitsune resolved to remember their
names at least, she was feeling a bit tired. It had taken a while to fix up the damage to their property, even with liberal rearrangement of materials so it went faster. Even seven bowls of ramen hadn't fully restored her energy though it had done wonders for her mood. What with her body had been broken and healed and almost died at least twice, as well as the destruction and re-construction, she had used an actually noticeable portion of her chakra.

She waved good-by to the two older humans and took the long way back to the room, though she jumped up to the window rather than try to figure out how to unlock and/or smash through the door and its wards. She curled up in her clean bedding with a bit of a sigh- it didn't smell like her but rather like some sort of fruit. And she had to rearrange it back into a comfortable circle. But at last she was able to drift off to sleep.

OooOoOO

The kitsune took to wandering about the city to keep herself from getting bored (and to avoid the humans who were trying to conscript her into fixing their homes). She had found another ramen stand after her feet carried her there without her intent- it seemed ridiculously familiar.

As an added bonus they had given her a free bowl of miso ramen when she gave them a pathetic kicked fox kit face, but after that had made her do dishes to pay for subsequent bowls. She suffered through the indignity because, though she felt a bit guilty saying so, it was the most heavenly thing she had ever tasted. Much better than Uchiha Uruchi's. Though perhaps that was to be expected; they were primarily bakers, after all.

"Nartuo-kun! Hokage-sama!" She heard the called greeting from the back and poked her head through the doorway. She grinned at the sight of her two favorite blonds.

She wiped her hands on her pants and rushed out to the customer side of the stand. "Hey, brat!" She greeted, ruffling the kit's hair. "And brat's father." She smirked at the older Namikaze. "You wouldn't let a poor orphan starve to death when it is within your means to provide her ramen, would you?" She asked the kit's father, widening her eyes and giving him the cute face.

"Watch out for that look, Hokage-sama." Teuchi laughed. "It's deadly."

The older blond chuckled. "So it is. I'll pay for you to eat with us." He said.

The kitsune sat down next to the man and looked at him with tears in her eyes. "You are truly a noble individual." She said sincerely. She decided that buying her ramen bumped him up to now being a favored person in his own right, not just for being the kit's sire. She worried briefly that she was going to end up sparing the whole village at this rate before she remembered that the Uchiha would rather gouge out their brother's eyes than be nice to someone.

"Here you three go, three beef ramen." Ayame said, plunking down the large bowls in front of them.

"Let's eat!" The three called out in unison, eating relatively happily side-by-side. The kitsune noticed that all of them were eating at speeds that she had previously thought only demon carriers could manage and tried to race even faster. A gleam came to both blond's eyes and they increased their speed as well. All three finished almost the same instant and grabbed the new bowls presented by the shop keeper, who was apparently used to this behavior from the brat and his father.

Naruto dropped out first, his little belly extremely distended. The kitsune finished her last round of bowls far ahead of the faltering sire and slurped down Naruto's leavings as well. Naruto complained weakly.
"Brat, if you ate one more drop, your tiny kit belly will burst." She said affectionately, picking up the youngling and pulling up his shirt to display the round, taut skin. She drummed her fingers on it, then put her ear to his belly. "I think I may hear an echo, though... your stomach might just be an intricate system of caves, specifically carved out for ramen storage." She said seriously. Naruto giggled and pulled his shirt back down. The kitsune felt the weight of the kit's father on her and looked at him sideways. "Yeah?" She finally said.

He just shook his head and smiled, slurping up the rest of the broth.

OOOoOoO

"Hey, Musume-chan!"

The kitsune turned around with a grin, seeing her favorite fox kit bouncing along the street towards her. It had been a while- the brat's father had passed her off to some family who was supposed to help her with her 'toiletries' and 'deportment' or some such. All she knew was that the Hyuuga head had deserved his present after being such an ass.

"Hey, brat. What are you up to?"

"Heh heh! I joined the Academy today."

"Oh yeah?" She asked. "Was it fun?"

He pouted. "Of course not." Which did not surprise her. "They were saying stuff that Dad's already made me learn. I don't care about the same stuff! I want to learn new things!" The sentiment didn't surprise her, though his knowledge did. Although, she supposed it shouldn't. The kit did have his father and no demon inside him, after all.

"Well, you'll just have to skip ahead in years then, won't you brat?"

His eyes widened. "I can do that?"

"Sure." She shrugged. "Why not? Lots of kids graduate early. Why not you?"

Naruto grinned. "Heh heh! Good idea. How do I get them to graduate me, do you think?"

"Definitely you need to show them that you can be an inventive ninja who adapts to surroundings with ease and knows his enemies weaknesses." The kitsune said, leaning forward.

Naruto leaned in as well, face serious. "How do I do that?"

"By playing brilliant pranks and not getting caught doing them, of course." The kitsune answered with a devilish smirk.

"Alright!" Naruto cried, jumping and pumping his tiny fist into the air. "I knew there was a reason I liked you, Musume-chan!"

"Of course, brat, I am the master at showing people their deficiencies."

"Does that mean that you'll help me with my first one?"

The kyuubi gasped. "You mean to tell me that you are a prank playing virgin?" She asked, seriously put out. She had obviously been negligent.

"What's a virgin?" The kit asked.
"Don't worry about that, kiddo. We're going to pop your pranking cherry today." She crouched down, digging her toes into the dirt road and thinking. "You have anyone you really don't like?" She asked him, hoping that maybe a specific target might give her some ideas.

"Er… not really."

"Right, silly question." The kitsune murmured. Even with her whispering constantly in his ear to try to make him insane (she had decided that she had to try Shukaku's method at least once, if for nothing than to be different outcome- which sucked so badly she never did it again) he had still been friendly to everyone he had met. Even enemies!

"Hey, we can always do something to my dad, right? I heard of people doing this 'short sheets' thing at school."

She considered. Sort of simplistic… but… "Sure, why not kid. It's your first time, we can do something classic."

"Classic? Is that like classical? I hate that boring music stuff." Naruto's face was scrunched up as he considered the possibility.

The kyuubi stood up. "You're right! This is your first time ever, we should make it completely memorable. Do you know any Nara we could bring into this?"

"Heh, sure do." The kitsune grinned.

"Ah, you make me proud, brat." The kitsune sighed happily, ruffling the boy's blond hair affectionately. "So here's the plan…"

OoOOOoOOoO

She was again awakened to human voices yelling. The kitsune cracked open an eye and glared at the window. This was getting old- they kept screaming to get her attention, and then made her do the most inane things for the rest of the day. She hadn't minded helping the older humans that had given her ramen afterward, but fixing the rest of the forsaken complex was not something she wanted to do. She hoped they gave up soon since she kept carving obscene reliefs in the posts and turning things colors.

More yelling startled her back awake after she had just managed to get back to sleep. Forget just taking out the red-eyed annoyances and maybe that toad-sitting bastard father of her favorite brat. This whole town was going to be thoroughly squished under a certain demon of destruction's massive paw before she left back to the not-space.

She went to the window and looked down, somewhat surprised that the destroyers of her peace and quiet were not the bug that she had allowed to attack her yesterday, but rather some thin older guy that kind of looked like that chronically late pervert ninja and one of the ninja that enjoyed dressing up like animals. They looked about three insults away from starting to actually attack each other, and both had the cronies to make it a truly riotous disaster.

The kitsune perched in the window and eagerly awaited the chaos.

"There she is!" Pointed one of the animal wanna-bes.

Or not.

"You were entrusted to take care of her, not let her roam about the city burning down buildings!"
"She never left the compound." The skinny poofy haired one retorted.

"Don't get technical with me Yashiro- her clone did a lot of damage before we could catch it and dispel it."

"It's not my fault that the ANBU are so incompetent." Yashiro replied with a shrug.

"Why you!"

"Rat!" Came a familiar voice. The kitsune's gaze shot over to the brat's father. He was wearing the stupid hat again. "I told you not to come here."

"Technically you said to leave it alone until repairs were finished." The ANBU muttered. The kitsune could hear him, and she was pretty sure everyone else could, too, but they ignored the comment.

"You are dismissed Rat. Yashiro-san please get Fugaku-sama for me. We do need to discuss this situation." The man was trying to sound reasonable, but the kitsune wondered how anyone could take him seriously when he was not only wearing that odd outfit, but fought with giant amphibians. It wasn't even anything respectable like... well, a fox, for example.

She hopped down and stood behind the still volatile situation, head cocked to the side. She noticed the Hokage's eyebrow twitching in her direction in a way reminiscent of an ear flick of acknowledgement, but no one else seemed to notice her.

"If you are going to give this 'Uchiha' into our care, then she is ours to discipline and do with as we will. It is not our fault that you were completely unable to discern her capabilities." The kitsune crinkled her nose in amusement. That was one thing to say that to the cosplaying rat, but quite another to say that in the presence of the leader. Even not paying attention at all she had still learned that from the brat's various terms.

"You will go and fetch Fugaku-san, Yashiro." The brat's father repeated coldly, his eyes hard. The Uchiha gulped and he ran away quickly in a swirl of leaves. He turned to the kitsune, still looking rather stern. "And you need to come as well." He said. "I was hoping that I wouldn't hear much from you for at least a few weeks."

The kitsune grinned. That sounded a lot like a challenge. She would have to think of something to do before the day was out, she had already been fairly quiet recently due to the inane repairs. Painting the Hokage Mountain was always a good fallback, and it had the added bonus of not being done yet in this timeline.

"Minato." The kitsune twitched a bit and turned. The red-eyes bug was there, though his eyes were not red at the moment. She still backed up warily, keeping him within her sight, but tilting her head so she could keep an eye on the brat's father as well. "Have you come for the stray you dumped onto us?"

The kitsune growled so low in her throat no one could really hear it, though they did feel the increasing pressure of her wary killing intent. She had a feeling that the bug was calling her a bitch again, and she wanted to bark out that a) she was a vixen, thank you very much and that b) she would see him dead either by her own hand or by letting fate unfold and c) some insults for good measure.

"I came to see why such an esteemed clan could have let a charge entrusted to them end up so unsupervised. Besides the damage she did last week, she has been spotted wandering about
Konoha.” Minato said, dangerously mild.

"She will be properly disciplined for her actions." Fugaku replied shortly.

"Wasn't it during the course of your discipline that the incident in question took place?" Minato asked innocently. "In fact, I believe you left her trapped in a genjutsu in the middle of an empty field."

Fugaku didn't say anything.

"Is this true, Musume?" Minato asked her.

It took the kitsune a while to understand that he was talking to her, both because she was watching Fugaku to make sure he didn't try anything, and because she wasn't quite used to the name. When Minato took a step toward her she snapped most of her attention to him. "What?" The Hokage's eyebrow twitched warningly. "The…" she stopped herself just before saying 'bug', "he left me trapped in a cursed mind trick, yes." She bit out, turning back to give her full attention to the Uchiha.

"Are you trained to escape jutsu?" Minato asked.

"Escape them?" Who the heck would teach her that?

Minato frowned. "How did you come back to yourself?"

"Itachi… hit me?" She mused over that- he must have. "Much less hard than the not-people were stabbing me, however."

Fugaku looked a bit uncomfortable, though the Hokage continued to ignore him. "And the shadow clones?" He asked gently.

"I was trying to fight off all of the…” She waved at Fugaku "him that were attacking me. But they didn't appear. I thought I had not gotten the chakra flow correct. I've not done it before, only…” She frowned. Only what? Saw it performed when she was in another's body?

"Only felt it done when you were not in control?" Minato asked.

The kitsune jerked her head around with wide eyes. How had he known that? Did he know all that had happened? It was impossible, right? The brat's father did mess around with a lot of time and space arrays, however, she supposed it was possible.

"This is nonsense." Fugaku snapped, grabbing the kitsune's arm. She spun back to face him, annoyed that she had let him out of her sight. His eyes were red, her vision tunneled into seeing them. "Get back in the house."

"No!" She was again surprised when she was able to resist. She broke away and shot back so quickly she ran into Minato. "I don't have to obey you!" She replied, half in wonder and half in anger. "Your eyes aren't enough." She snarled at him.

"Not enough?!" He snarled back at her, taking a step forward. "I'll show you what is enough!"

"Fugaku, contain yourself." Minato said, putting a comforting arm around the kitsune to prevent her from jumping back again and bowling him over. "She has obvious issues with the Sharingan." The kitsune shuddered at the word.

"My Sharingan is fully formed." Fugaku sneered.
"No- the one which spins can control, yours only sees and remembers." The kitsune smirked back. "It is not as powerful- you cannot attack by simply staring." Which was probably a good thing, if her theories on how fighting by getting into staring contests affected your personality were correct.

Fugaku's teeth were grinding again and the kitsune was pretty sure that everyone could hear it.

"If you are not able to care for a displaced member of your clan…"

"She is not an Uchiha!" Fugaku interrupted. The kitsune felt the brat's father stiffen behind her.

"I am." She protested. How much more of one could you be? Sure she'd shut off that little blob of instructions in all the body's little fatty bags, but that still left the other 45. And besides, the whole clan was obviously inbred with how similar they all looked. Missing one set of sex instructions wasn't going to change her status as an Uchiha.

"Where is the proof? She appeared literally from the sky. And besides that is retarded. What do you expect us to do with her?"

"Hey!" The kitsune protested, only to be held back by the arm around her waist.

"I expected you to treat such a delicate person who your clan has wronged with the respect she deserves." Minato growled. The kitsune wondered suddenly if he would still feel that way after she defaced the Hokage monument.

"Deal with your own trash." Fugaku sneered.

"I don't have to stay in this village." The kitsune huffed. Although the ramen was unspeakably better than raw bear. Maybe she could go out into the woods until she had figured out some more about the chakra nonsense- she thought she had gotten the hang of the human techniques, but apparently she had only gotten a hold of human chakra as an energy, not what to do with it. Perhaps she could rip the information out of the prisoner that was whimpering to itself inside her.

Minato didn't say anything further. Suddenly, however, the two of them were in not-space, and just as quickly back. The kitsune quickly checked all her limbs and found them to be free from being combined with anything. But she hadn't…

"Sorry for moving us like that." The kitsune turned to the human as his arm fell from around her. She tilted her head and contemplated him. He had pulled them through demon space? "If we stayed there a moment longer it was going to become a political incident." He took off the hat and ran a hand through the yellow hair.

The kyuubi felt a weird sense of displacement- it should be her hand running through hair like that, in another life… another body. One that he had forced on her. How confusing… She ran her hand through her own hair only to have it get stuck. She pulled away and stuck her tongue out in disgust.

"Did they not help you bathe?" Minato asked, plopping into the chair behind his desk.

"No." The kitsune sniffed and crossed her arms. 'Bathing' was one of those things the brat had done that she hadn't paid much attention to. She vaguely recalled snatches of the people in the interrogation place helping her with it, but her mind had been so scattered until the brat's father had zapped her. Much that she hated to think that she had needed his seals in any respect.

"Would you like to?" He asked.

"What?" The kitsune blinked. Dammit, she'd almost done it again.
"Bathe? Get clean?"

"Oh. Will you help me?" The kitsune watched in amazement as the brat's father turned as deep red as the markings on his robe. What did that mean? Anger? Maybe… more like… embarrassed?

"Wh… that… no!" He sputtered.

"Why not? You look pretty clean, surely you know how?"

"That's not… I'm not a…" He snapped his mouth shut before he embarrassed himself further. "I will find a kunoichi to help you."

"Alright." She shrugged. She would prefer a human she liked help her with it, but she supposed she could tolerate one of his subordinates.

Chapter End Notes

All Uchiha in this and the previous chapters are actually (very minor) canon characters.
The kitsune leaned against the prison bars. Her face pressed to the tingling-cold chakra, she watched through Naruto's eyes with something disturbingly close to fondness. The brat was almost kitsune like in the way he dealt with boredom. He was pulling one of her favorites: impersonating that betraying Uchiha bastard whom he had left trussed up and stuffed in a closet. She knew how this scene played out- it wasn't quite what the brat was going for, but his execution was pure kitsune-like brilliance.

It was also absolutely fascinating how he managed to destroy whole social orders with kindness, of all things, rather than by blowing them up (though he was appropriately fond of that as well). That bridge incident, for example. When she allowed him to end up on it, he was able to restructure a whole country by being... well, nice. It almost seemed more efficient to muck around with things with kindness rather than violence. In fact, it seemed that blowing shit up could sometimes bring people together. It was fairly contrary to anything the kitsune could relate to, but one couldn't dispute evidence. Especially evidence that you could play out in all its infinite permutations. Oh, how they played out... she winced against the bars.

"Uzumaki Naruto, you are Konoha's number one loudest, unpredictable, hyperactive idiot-nin."
Kakashi said. Like usual, the brat rubbed the back of his head and grinned proudly, while his teacher looked on in bemusement as the brat proved himself worthy of the name and took the insult as a complement.

Inside her cage, the kitsune echoed that proud grin.

OooOOooooO

Minata rubbed his temples with his hands, waiting for inspiration to strike him on what to do about Musume. The Uchiha were right, there had been no way to prove that she was their responsibility, and so their insolence had been tolerated by the Council, especially considering the delicate position the village was with the Sharingan clan. They were becoming increasingly discontent. Only Itachi seemed to be sensible of the whole lot of them.

But the truth was, no one wanted much to do with her. She constantly needed reminding to bathe-though thankfully didn't need help doing so after that first time. Gods! He couldn't remember being more embarrassed, at least recently. It had been years since Kushina had died and he hadn't had the time, or really the inclination to pursue another woman... maybe he needed a relaxing roll in the hay. How to go about it when he was the Hokage was the question, however; that same dilemma keeping him from doing something about his celibacy thus far. There wasn't a woman in the village... or country, that didn't know who he was, and any relationship or one night stand would certainly not be private, and just as certainly politically analyzed. He sighed. He probably would just have to learn to deal with reacting like a virgin in such situations.

That aside, the problem with Musume was the girl kept being bounced around from one ANBU to another, staying with all the ones that lived outside headquarters for as long as they could take it before getting passed off to the next one.

If only she would stop with the nonsense! She had turned the tobacco in Asuma's cigarettes to some weed that made him ravenous and entirely too relaxed, changed all of Anko's fishnet to wool fibers
(which she was apparently allergic to), set up a realistic illusion that frogs had overrun the Aburame's insect colonies (causing two clan members to be hospitalized from nervous break downs), had gotten into a brawl with the Inuzuka and all their dogs, been left in a gengutsu by Kurenai Yuhi for a reason neither of them would discuss, somehow sealed the head of the Hyuuga with a branch members' seal (they were still trying to remove it), somehow switched Kakashi's Icha Icha Paradise with a yaoi, and generally made a nuisance of herself. He was running out of people to host her.

She had even stayed at the Ichiraku house for a while until they had gotten annoyed with her cooking ramen at all hours of the night and literally eating them out of house and home. They fortunately would still allow her to visit, as nothing had exploded. Somehow.

She really was quite nice, if a bit scattered most of the time. She just seemed incapable of refraining from pulling a prank the second she thought of it. The number of times he had called her into his office was getting ridiculous. But he didn't know what to do to punish her. She was completely unrepentant, though she would fix things if he forced her to and it was within her abilities to do so. He was hoping that she would become friends with someone, but so far the only people she seemed to like were himself and his son for no reason he could determine, people who cooked ramen and gave her some for free, and then select Uchiha, as the mood struck her. Too bad Fugaku had refused to have her in his compound, Uchiha Teyaki and Uruchi had offered to host Musume, even though they had been one of her first victims.

He was tempted to offer her his place, but even though she seemed to genuinely care for his son, he was still wary of leaving her alone with him when Naruto wasn't in class and while he was working. Minato still remembered the terror that he had felt when he had seen her looking at him with those alien, uncaring eyes over the head of his son. He had been sure that he had lost the boy, and was trying to gather the anger to seek revenge in the face of his panic and grief. Nothing had happened, except his son's ridiculously increased chakra, but it could have. And despite how helpless she seemed now, he still didn't trust her. The woman had boiled walls, by kami! Though she seemed to have more power with chakra disruptors on, rather than less. Which was entirely too confusing.

Not that he could keep her away from Naruto outside his house, much to his chagrine. He'd tried to stop them from meeting, but it seemed that Naruto was the one initiating all their contact. She was corrupting his happy, hyperactive son with all manner of terrible habits. Though he had a sneaking suspicion that his son might already be too far gone to end up a respectable citizen. And, he has to admit, it does seem to be helping Naruto to develop an... interesting ninja skillset that will likely be of benefit in the future.

He had the ANBU keep a very close eye on the two of them, but Musume only helped Naruto with the mildest of pranks, or more usually his schoolwork. All the more reason to keep the probably crazy only possibly trustworthy woman out of his home even though (and he hates to even think this) Musume was acting more like a parent than he was most days, what with all his Hokage duties.

But he might have to take one for the village. She couldn't just live in the jail, and he wasn't sure she should be allowed to live without some sort of supervision. Though it was almost completely unlikely at this point that she was an enemy spy, she still could be dangerous if the mood struck her. Minato was not looking forward to a house turned inside out with whatever mischief she could come up with.

If only she could be as responsible with the families and ninja she lived with… and if only she would stop helping to turn Naruto into a delinquent. A talented shinobi of a delinquent, but still. Between her and the boy's godfather, he was fairly certain his son was going to end up a prank-pulling pervert.
"Hokage-sama!" Namiashi Raido said as he burst into the room.

Minato had a bad feeling about this. "Yes?" He asked warily.

"The Hokage Monument!"

With a sigh he walked out the window until the cliffs came into view. The four faces looked quite different- it seemed someone had carved them more finely and they now bore a striking resemblance to the people they were based on. That wasn't the first thing that you noticed, however. The first thing being something that gave the current Hokage a very good idea who was responsible for the upgrade; there were sayings written on all of their foreheads. The First's said "I love playing with my morning wood!" in bold red letters. The Second's said "Check out my special water jutsu! Golden shower no-jutsu!" The Third's just had a large hot pink "HENTAI" covering most of his face. He looked at his own with some trepidation. "So ugly demons flee my presence!" was written in huge letters in a text bubble splashed over the face of the cliff. His carving also had a mustache and glasses and it seemed his eyes had been colored to look like a frog hermit. Minato wasn't sure whether to be more flattered or annoyed by that last addition.

He sighed again and walked back into his office. "Who is she living with now?"

"She's been living at the detention center." Raido said, coughing.

"Right." Because no one had stepped up to take her in yet after her most recent stunt where she had somehow set fire to a tub of water and managed to explode the hot water heater.

OOOoOoOoOooo

"Hey Musume-chan!" The kitsune cracked open her eye and looked at the familiar face that accompanied the voice that she knew better than the one she was currently using. "My dad said that you made me have tons of chakra!"

"Sure did, brat." The kitsune yawned. "So?"

"It's a pain! I can't get the clone to work because there's too much." The kitsune grinned and sat up, sensing a great prank. And she hadn't even been yelled at for modifying the monument. Yet. Time for a diversion.

"Is that so, brat?" The kitsune said, mock thoughtfully.

"Believe it!" The kid pouted.

"Well, I know for a fact where your father has a scroll that can teach you a better version that's impossible to put too much chakra into." The kitsune shook her head sadly. "But I know that you can't really read."

"I can read you old hag!" The kid shouted, jumping up and down. "That was just that one time!"

The kitsune smirked internally. This was almost too easy. "Well, I suppose." She looked at him dubiously. "I guess I'll tell you where it is then. But there's no way you can learn the technique before your dad finishes reaming me out about the monument."

"That was you?" The kid was excited again. "I knew it! No one else would have the… er… vision! Yeah." He smiled, his eyes squinted shut in mischief.

The kitsune preened. She had never managed to get the brat to praise her in all of her many lives
with him. So his appreciation of her in this life had yet to get old. "Well, I did spend months planning the perfect sayings." She demurred.

"Tell me where the scroll is, I'll do the new clone thing and be back before they know I broke out."

"Why are you here anyway, brat?" The kitsune asked, somewhat curious.

"Eheh!" The brat said, putting his hand behind his head and grinning. "I made my sensei pass out with my Sexy no Jutsu!"

"That doesn't seem like the kind of thing that would get you sent to ANBU holding." The kitsune admitted. "Though I must say, getting sent here means you're moving up in notoriety."

"No notes involved." The kit looked a bit confused on why there ever would be, before he continued brightly. "They said my father would be down here soon for some other reason, so they sent me here instead of to his office." He looked at her with a mock serious face. "That reason might not happen to be you, would it?"

"Certainly not…" The kitsune grinned.

"Hah! You already admitted to the monument thing. You can't pretend he's not coming to talk to you."

"Maybe he just likes me." The kitsune smirked. "Maybe he's looking for a replacement brat."

"You're too old!" Naruto scoffed. "More like he'd be looking for a new… er…" The kit struggled. "A new rug, yeah! I think you'd be perfect for right by the door. Then we could step on you every day." He started laughing hysterically.

The kitsune shook her head; glad he at least amused himself. A sudden horrible thought hit her. What if she had been sealed in an Uchiha, or an Aburame! She never would have got them to pull any pranks. She would have gone completely insane in those repeated lives! She shuddered.

"Hey, hey! You said you were going to tell me where to get the special scroll."

"That I did."

OooOOo

Ten minutes later the brat was off on a mission to learn the shadow clone and his father was on the other side of her bars. Even being in the prison many times now the similarity to her old prison giver her a minute twinge of fear.

"So, you had to write on the monument." Minato opened with.

"They had to know the truth. It wasn't the toad that scared off a giant fox, that's for sure. Foxes eat toads." She grinned.

Minato's hand came up to pinch the bridge of his nose. "Why do you have to do these things?"

"I'm pretty sure it's my nature." The kitsune answered, perfectly serious. Minato glared at her. She just looked at him smugly. He should be grateful that her possession of a human form was tempering her malevolent spirit tendencies.

"There are no other people who will take you in."
"I could try the other Uchiha households. There's got to be more than one of them." She offered, unsubtly fishing for their numbers. She hadn't gotten anyone to talk about the Uchiha. They just tended to grumble when she mentioned them.

"There are well over a hundred Uchiha households, and not one of them will take you."

Over a hundred! With more than one to a household, probably… first fox's hairy balls! How the hell had that Itachi brat killed them all? Mangy cow Cherry Gun or no, there was no way! "Not even the ramen old people? Teyaki and Uruchi?" She asked, somewhat saddened about that.

"They mentioned it." Minato allowed. "Fugaku refused to have you in his section of the city."

The kitsune added that to the growing list of reasons she needed to kill that bug.

He paused as if he was about to suggest something, then shook his head. "You're going to have to stay here, I suppose." He sighed, looking as if he was about to flash away.

The kitsune did a quick calculation… the brat probably needed another twenty minutes to get the shadow clone down. "Well, did you like my other modifications at least? I don't know who your previous artist was, but they did a piss poor job getting a working likeness."

Minato focused back on her, looking bemused.

She grinned. "You do like it better now, don't you."

"I have no idea what you are talking about." He said, not looking at her.

"Yours wasn't doing you justice at all." She added.

"Not hideous enough?" He asked, his lip quirking.

"Did I say that?" She asked innocently, eyes widening.

"No, but you wrote it in forty foot high letters."

"Hmm. There is that." She conceded. "Though it's only a good parody if the statement is ridiculous."

Minato frowned at that, trying to figure out what she meant. She let him stew on it. By her reckoning, the brat would need another five minutes for an average time. She might need to get him an additional fifteen, though, to cover up to his slowest time. "Did you just say I'm… did you just complement…" He looked at her with a suspicious look on his face.

"I can't help it, I think it's the hair." The kitsune said seriously, grinning.

Minato flattened his hair reflexively, looking awkward and like he was about to flash away.

"So, what's my punishment? I suppose you will want to make someone try to get me to clean off the monument."

"Not try to get you to, you will clean it off." Minato said, leaning forward against the bars, his eyes flashing.

"Eh… I don't know. I think visitors to this city need to know the facts." She leaned back with her arms behind her head.

"Musume…" He drew her 'name' out, hinting at danger.
"Minato..." She replied in kind.

He broke the seal on the door and came in to tower over where she was lounging on the bed. "You WILL clean off the monument."

She stood up and pushed into his personal space. He didn't give an inch. Though he did twitch a bit and get a little pink around the edges. "No." She replied, reveling in the defiance. The cat might have had something with this whole 'independence' thing.

"You will or..."

She smirked when he fumbled for something to punish her with. What could he do, really? She was living in the freaking jail!

"I will make it a S-class crime to serve you or sell you ramen." The Hokage smirked.

The kitsune gasped. "That's... that's cruel and unusual punishment! Isn't that reserved for enemies of the state? Missing-nin and traitors?"

"Desperate times..."

"You are a bastard, you know that?" The kitsune glared.

"Actually, I did know that. My father was not married to my mother when I was conceived."

Well that took the fun out of the insult. "I meant it in the colloquial sense." She replied dryly.

"Oh, is that so?" The brat's father had the audacity to look unconcerned. And about to leave! She needed another five minutes.

"It's watercolor." She conceded.

"What?"

"The paint- it will wash off the next time it rains, or if someone hits it with a water jutsu." She said it reluctantly. She was hoping it would take them a while to figure it out, and she'd picked a day that smelled especially dry. But ramen was serious business. As was the grief that Minato was going to have to deal with when he had to deal with a hundred copies of his son. She cackled to herself silently.

"That should make it easy for you, then." He noted.

The kitsune looked at him in disgruntlement. "I don't know how to manipulate water!"

"You better learn I suppose." He mused, a wicked gleam in his eye.

"Can you learn an element that is completely opposite your primary affinity?" She asked, somewhat startled.

"Why, no, you can't." He flashed into the not-space, but not before the kitsune caught his grin breaking out on his face. The poor brat didn't have a chance at being a rule-abiding citizen, with that as a father and what she had heard said about his mother. Thank the first fox.

OoooOOo

Back at the Hokage tower, Minato arrived in a flash of yellow and several poofs of smoke. When it
cleared and he finally stopped coughing, he looked on in horror at the floor to ceiling copies of his son.

"Hey dad!" Came from all sides. "I can do this cool version of the bushin! Why didn't you show me this scroll earlier?" Minato was pretty sure he didn't want to know which one Naruto was talking about even before his son held up the Hidden Leaf's number one secret S-class jutsu scroll. And he knew exactly who had put the idea into his son's impressionable head. Some days, he wished he had sealed the kyuubi and was quietly and slowly being digested in the death god's stomach. Yes… calm and quiet…

"Namikaze Naruto!"

OoOoOoOoOoO

Meanwhile the kyuubi had made good on the fact that the Hokage was reaming out his son to break herself out of jail and wander about in search of something to do. She was mildly hungry, but had no money to buy anything, and no real desire to try to scavenge something out of the trash or steal it from a vendor. She would probably be caught and the food would probably be cold by the time the ANBU sent her back to jail or she lost them.

So instead she decided to try to track down someone who might know water jutsu. The brat wasn't particularly good with that affinity, at least when he didn't have a toad contract... really, few people were good at such moves in the land of fire.

Unless they were in the habit of copying peoples moves! Excellent. Although, that meant that she would have to deliberately find and talk to an Uchiha. She scowled. Even though most of them would never actually develop the Sharingan and be civilians, she still didn't want to go into the belly of the beast, so to speak. She might accidentally kill someone's best friend in front of them and activate a monkey-ko-ko thingie.

Which left Kakashi. Provided that he wouldn't kill her on sight for changing the pictures of women in all his books into men. The fact that he did not realize what an improvement that was showed how unappreciative he was of her brilliance. Perhaps if she changed it back? She certainly had more borrowed memories of female flesh to draw from than male. Curse her hosts and their heterosexual maleness, anyway. Not that either sex was particularly attractive, being that they were both, well, human.

With that in mind she made her way to Kakashi's apartment. Hanging from the eaves by her fingers and toes, she looked inside. She couldn't see anything... she sniffed the air- no fresh scent. She let her chakra flow out and cover the room. There were various traps, but no living presence. Excellent.

She swung down and burnt out the seals on the windows, using the chakra she had crept into the room via the cracks outside the frames. From behind the protections were easy to break. She also dissolved the hooks keeping the window locked while she was at it, and let herself in.

The kitsune made a beeline for the most protected area of the room, coming upon a compartment under a false bottom of the drawer. This time she simply smashed the entire desk, which happily circumvented the protections around tampering with that drawer in particular. Inside were the dog-eared copies that she had modified, as well as a selection of newer looking replacements, though it seemed that he had only just begun to revamp his collection.

She took out one of the yaoi ones she had modified. Sighing at the destruction of such art, she started to focus on shifting the ink in the page to be visions of human females with their various absurd facial expressions that she remembered from Naruto's time as a sexy stud. A time loop scenario that
was thankfully few and far between.

About halfway though the fourth book she was done with the human female form. Now, if only they were foxes, she might enjoy them more. Now, there was an idea. Maybe not foxes, but the poofy haired pervert played with all those dog-nin all the time, right?

Newly inspired she flew through the remaining books she had previously modified, feeling quite accomplished.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" The normally laid back ninja yelled.

The kitsune looked over her shoulder with wide eyes, having completely missed the arrival of Kakashi. "I was trying to fix the books I changed... I need someone to help me with a water jutsu."
She smiled with closed eyes and a wide grin.

The book was snatched from her hand. The kitsune's grin settled into a pleased, self-satisfied smile. Her expression slid more into confusion when he didn't say anything but just stared at the book with a face turning slowly red. Did that mean he liked it or that he wanted to kill her?

"You turned the books, which you had previously changed from my beloved Icha Icha Paradise, to this?" He said, voice dead even.

The kitsune nodded warily, moving her center of gravity to over the balls of her feet.

"You turned it into hard core bestiality?" He exploded. The kitsune jumped away as blue light screaming like nest-defending birds crashed into the floor where she had just been.

"I couldn't stomach all the human females anymore, so I switched species. You seem to like those dogs you... whoah!" The kitsune barely managed to duck under the crackling attack for the second time- she could feel the pathetically fine hairs on her belly standing up and her clothing start to cling to her- a sensation that was so odd that in any other time it might have sent her to contemplation for a good couple days.

She backed up hastily, angling toward the window. She felt a bad feeling settle in her stomach as the ninja shoved his forehead protector off of his eye so violently that it flew completely off of his head. The sight of the Sharingan sent a spike of fear through her, especially when she saw that the comma were starting to spin.

"I'll turn them back to humans!"

Kakashi didn't say anything, just started flashing through a set of hand-seals.

The kyuubi dove through the window just ahead of a rather impressive explosion. She barely managed to cling to the wall of the building opposite the window. She had to reinforce her nails to keep them from snapping at the sudden force. But there was no time to collect herself, she scrambled up to the roof and took off running at top speed to avoid the raging ninja.

With the Sharingan active, she was only barely able to keep ahead. She was starting to get desperate. The brat's father would probably happily let her die seeing as she had just taught his son the possibly number one most annoying skill for someone of the chakra capacity she had given him. And there was no one else who would even consider helping her.

She looked over her shoulder and eeped- Kakashi was hot on her tail and he looked murderous with his two different colored eyes under that shock of white hair. There was no way that she would be able to kill him- she was slightly faster, but had no weapons and knew no ninja techniques. Trying to
mind-rape her prisoner for how to use jutsu had been useless as he seemed to have gone completely insane, and she hadn't made much headway in trying to remember what the brat had been doing or to reinvent it on her own. It didn't help that the roundabout way she had to flow her chakra to have it appear human made her control so pathetic it made the brat look like a genius in comparison. On the day that he failed the Academy exam. The first time. She could only modify things on the very small scale, very slowly- great for artistic pranks, not so great for trying to kill someone.

The kitsune ducked the kunai she felt more than anything else- it was thrown to hard that it built up a small pressure wave in the air, despite how sharp it was. Frustrated, she took a huge leap straight up to give herself some breathing room. Except that Kakashi managed to grab onto her ankle right after she took off. The two of them sailed over the village... except it had disappeared again due to that hiding seal.

"What the?"

The kitsune looked down in surprise, noting the ninja's wide eyes. It seemed that somehow he could no longer see the village either.

Taking advantage of his shock, she grabbed his wrist, twisted her leg enough to make him lose his grip, and flipped him up and kicked him hard in the gut, making sure that she was pointed down and vaguely in the direction of the cliff, whereas he was pointed up and into the open space around Konoha proper.

"Later, Kakashi!" She called as they sailed off in opposite directions. The kitsune's quick calculations were fairly accurate; she flew back through the seal and sped toward the cliff, while the ninja spun, cursing, off past the outer border. She twisted wildly in mid-air and managed to bounce off the rock with minimal damage to herself or the modified monument.

She stopped her fall by grabbing onto the Third's goatee. She took the moment to survey what she could see of her handiwork. It was starting to look a bit ragged and faded, but she somehow doubted that Minato would consider it clean.

Plan one for getting a water jutsu user had failed. Too bad the brat's mother was dead. This left her with the Uchiha clan. She sighed. Well, that old couple weren't so bad. She perked up. Maybe they would be willing to give her some free ramen!

Chapter End Notes

Minato's assistant is another (super minor) canon character.
"Shred apart." Itachi said.

The kitsune looked behind it, knowing that there was no one in the prison with her, but confused if the human was talking to her. "What?" She rumbled.

The human didn't say anything else. She was curious. This was the first time she could remember seeing this particular human, though she had seen others with the red eyes, of course. The one the brat had been chasing after and the one who had set her on the city. Ah, destruction… sweet, sweet destruction.

How was the human talking to her, though? It didn't make any sense.

Suddenly there was pain! She didn't recognize what it was at first, the sensation was new to her. But soon she was howling and thrashing as some force pulled her against the bars. Bits of herself were pulled so strongly that they dissociated from her main body and began to leak through, looking like red soap bubbles on top of the water flooding the brat's psyche.

"It hurts! Make them stop it, brat!"

Her jailor didn't respond. Enough of her was pulled through the bars, however, that she could control his physical body and crack open the eyelids. She could see a huge creepy wooden thing with nine eyes, most of which were open. The ones that were had different colored lights in them. The closest one was blue and looked a lot like...

"Cat! What are you doing in there?" The eye thrashed violently, but the other demon couldn't break free any more than she could.

"Something is wrong." The kitsune heard through the brat's ears. "I think the seal might be different."

"Just keep going." Came another voice.

The kitsune screamed through the brat's throat. Everything was coming apart- she was coming apart! She couldn't hold her energy together, she was going to... AHHHHH!

OoOOooO

The streets of the Uchiha section of town were quieter than she remembered, and the occupants looked more angry. She slipped into the little restaurant with a confused frown on her face.

"Ah, Musume." Uruchi said, sounding tired. "Would you like some miso ramen?"

"Absolutely." She grinned, ignoring whatever small human problem Uruchi was dealing with, if it was not going to affect her ability to get free food.

"Come into the back room, then." Uruchi said, leading the way past the regular customer area. "It's getting rather volatile out there, it wouldn't be good for you to be seen." She looked around, worried.

"O...kay." The kyuubi said slowly, shrugging.
"Besides, I will be breaking an S-class law, won't I?" Uruchi asked with a wink.

The kitsune responded with a grin. Hah! Take that Minato.

Inside the small back room, there was already someone else huddled over a dish. The kitsune gave the air a sniff and could scent dangos. She plopped down next to the other and stole a dango and popped it in her mouth. When the other didn't protest she took a longer look. She was mildly surprised to see it was Itachi- and he looked more like the familiar stick-in-the-mud Itachi of the future, rather than the relatively happy Itachi from the more recent life. He looked like his friend had just died.

The kitsune choked. Itachi looked over at her, but didn't say anything. She sent some calming little chemical bits to her hard breathing tube and sent the food out of her lungs and down the proper muscular tube. She coughed a little bit to test her heal. Good.

"So... you're in ANBU?" she asked Itachi in what she hoped was a nonchalant manner. She wasn't sure if that were true or not, but she was pretty sure that he had been in the corps when the whole massacre thing had gone down.

Itachi just grunted.

Crap. Maybe it hadn't happened yet? If she could prevent anyone from getting the evil spinning eyes, she would be a happy fox. "And possibly you have seen people using water jutsu? You know, with your eyes?"

The corner of Itachi's lip quirked. The kitsune took that as a good sign. Even a stick-in-the-mud would feel more depressed if they had killed their best friend, no? Hopefully he was just distressed thinking about it. "I don't know that I could have 'seen' anything if I wasn't using my eyes." He commented.

The kitsune grinned. Cracking jokes was more like the cute chibi-Itachi, not homicidal-Itachi. "You know what I mean, brat- the sharing gum eyes."

"Sharingan?" He asked dryly.

"Yeah. Cause I need someone who knows how to use a water jutsu to help me out, and fire-nin around here don't tend to know any. So do you?" She asked hopefully. And maybe if she got him to come with her, she could figure out how to kill him before he killed his friend. Yeah right... she would have to catch him really really unaware. Maybe if he was contemplating killing his clan she could convince him to get really drunk. She looked at him with squinted eyes. Was he old enough to drink?

"I do." Itachi said finally, picking up a dango and staring at it.

"Well, would you like to help me wash off the Hokage monument?" She asked hopefully.

He dropped the dango and stood up abruptly. "Yeah. Let's go."

"Whoah, wait...!"

Itachi looked at her in annoyance. "Do you want me to help you or not."

"I would love for you to help me." She said sincerely. "But Uruchi is making me ramen." She gave him her best cute fox kit face.
He sighed and sat back down on the chair.

Uruchi came in with the steaming bowl of ramen right after Itachi picked up the dango again, and she smiled happily. "Let me know how they taste Itachi-kun." She set the bowl in front of the kitsune and dropped a pair of chopsticks next to it. "And here you go dear, you're looking thin. You tell those ANBU they need to feed you more. And the Hokage not to restrict your diet as punishment."

"Yes, Uruchi-san." The kitsune said dutifully. She grabbed the chopsticks, broke them apart and grinned. "Time to eat!"

After she had slurped up a majority of the noodles she noticed that Itachi was staring at her. "What?" She asked as she fished out some of the last noodles so she could drink the rest of the broth.

"How did you manage to evade the Hokage for the past week? He was looking for you everywhere and had most of ANBU hunting as well."

The kitsune scowled. "A week!" She hadn't realized it had taken her that long to fix all those comics. Hmm, speaking of, maybe she should break back into Kakashi's apartment and get rid of (or keep?) the dog ones. "Where was Kakashi all week?"

Itachi looked confused at the seeming non-sequitur. "He is on a mission to Sand, why?" The kitsune was pleased to note that the Uchiha was looking less grim and murderous as the conversation was wearing on. Excellent. No monkey-bow, and Uruchi could continue to live and give her ramen. Uruchi and her husband being two of the five people who were currently talking to (and feeding) her, she would really rather they stay part of the world.

"Hm. Well, then he really shouldn't be surprised when people have broken into his apartment when he leaves for that long." She huffed, before tipping the bowl and slurping up the broth.

"You... you were in Kakashi's apartment the whole time?" He looked scandalized. "Why?"

"I was changing his dirty manga into something he might like more, but then I sort of got side-tracked..." The kitsune replied.

Itachi stood abruptly. "Let's go do this. I have... a mission." Then he was quiet again.

A mission? What was the brat talking about anyway? How depressed he was about it, you might think that he had been ordered to kill the Uchiha. Ohhh. That would explain a few things, actually.

"Sure, it shouldn't take long with jutsu involved. That bastard Hokage wanted me to do it by hand or some nonsense."

"Yeah." Itachi replied as he stood and dropped the dango back onto the plate. She noted that the only one that seemed to be missing was the one she had stolen.

The kitsune watched the Uchiha as they jumped over the rooftops toward the monument. She saw a couple of ANBU in a searching pattern and nonchalantly got closer to Itachi so that the ANBU thought that she and Itachi were partners. The ninja were probably looking for her but no one would expect her to be with an Uchiha-nin.

They got to the monument without incident, and Itachi stood sideways on the First's nose and started blowing water out of his mouth. The paint was gone in all of ten minutes. Then the Uchiha just stood there, staring off into nothingness. It was a bit creepy. If this was what she looked like, the kitsune had a new appreciation for the people who would put up with her when she spaced out. Not that anyone really put up with that...
"Hey, Itachi-kun?" The kitsune started, not sure how to bust out the 'if you want to kill your family, let me help!' Maybe, 'I only hate your father, can't we just murder him? And maybe that Kakashi-look-a-like?' would work better? Itachi looked at her, his eyes bleak. He didn't seem to even notice that she was clinging to the First's nostril to avoid falling off the cliff, rather than just sticking to it with chakra like he was. "You want to... uh... talk about anything?"

"No."

"I know I haven't really looked you up recently... but we are like, cousins or something. Probably." Itachi stared at her in something akin to horror. Well he didn't have to get that worked up about it. She was a nuisance but the rest of the Uchiha seemed to be dealing with it through denial, and he was going to kill them all anyway... oh. If she were an Uchiha, maybe she would need to go, too. She huffed in frustration. This wasn't working. "Listen, I'll just stop dancing around this whole thing, because I apparently suck at subtlety."

"Apparently?" Itachi asked dryly.

She glared at him but didn't let the comment sidetrack her. "I know that you are going to kill your cla..." Itachi's red eyes were suddenly in front of her own and his hand was clamped over her mouth.

"How did you...?" He looked around, noticing that they were completely exposed. It was only a matter of time before someone noticed the two of them hanging out like living zits on the First's stony face. He rushed them off in a swirl of leaves to a secluded little bole in the forest somewhere. He set her down, none too gently either, and repeated the question. "How did you know that." His stare was intense.

"Er..." This wasn't working very well. "Not that hard to figure out." She admitted. Heck, she'd not been paying attention to the whole deal. Though in retrospect maybe she should have. But no harm-so far she inhabited the only body that knew the Manky koi eye thing.

She hadn't been expecting her comment to cause Itachi to react so extremely- the teen sank into the crouch and started rocking, eyes staring down at the ground looking totally lost.

"It's sort of clear you don't want to, so... why do it?" The kitsune asked. She felt that it was a pretty logical question.

"I can't disobey orders." He whispered. "And Father is trying to start a civil war. We've seen enough war. I've seen enough. Konoha won't survive another one."

The kitsune hummed thoughtfully. She was somewhat lost as to how this quivering ball of patheticness was tapped for this kind of 'mission'. "No offense, but I'm not really sure how you're going to pull this off."

"You know how I can." He said, looking up at her with black eyes that looked like holes in his pale face.

"The Mango-cherry eyes aren't that powerful, kiddo. Especially if they're new to you." Her extensive dealings with the eyes had made sure she knew that. Sasuke had been able to use it, sure, but in loops where Naruto managed to kill him within a few months to a year after he killed his brother, it was a one-man job. Later, when Sasuke had gotten practice, it was a whole team effort or a wait-until-he-dies-of-natural-causes situation.

"Mangekyou Sharingan." He absently corrected, dropping his head onto his knees. "There is no other way."
"Yes, because murdering your best friend, then using his death to help you systematically murder a significant portion of the village, including your mother... including your little brother... yes, that makes sense as a way to preserve peace." The kitsune snarked. This sounded like the kind of plan she would come up with. That is, harebrained and with excessive violence.

Itachi flinched throughout her commentary. "With the Mangekyou Sharingan, I could make them slip into the genjutsu, and then they won't feel a thing when I..." He choked off the end, unable to finish the sentence. He looked very small and kit-like; she blamed the human body's female hormones for her desire to give him a hug. There was something about the emotionally constipated Uchiha breaking down that had a special spot in her hormones' heart.

She sighed. "Can't you think of some other way? Aren't you the clan heir or something? Just challenge your father."

"I wouldn't be able to beat him without overwhelming evidence of power... and they would know that I... that Shisui..."

"I see your point." It was basically the same reason she had been messing around with (relatively) harmless pranks instead of picking off people as subtly as she could. As stupid as humans were, they tended to notice when one much less several hundred of them showed up dead.

Itachi let out a shuddering sigh and that was the last straw. He might be a ninja, but he was still just a kit. She gathered him up in a hug and rubbed her hand along his back, muttering nonsense into his hair. She was obviously being influenced by the insanity of her prisoner and the body she was inhabiting. Especially since she wasn't as disgusted with herself as she felt she should be.

"Now, we'll think of something, ok? Did the Hokage put you up to this?" If so, she would be ecstatic. She could drop her waffling weak human attachments to the man like a rotted corpse and kill him, kill her current body, then go on a demonic rampage. Such appalling abuse of his power for those in his charge would be unforgivable. Even the kitsune had to draw a line at betraying underlings.

"No." He muttered into her shoulder, before pulling away and looking completely embarrassed. "It was Danzo-sama, the head of my division."

Danzo... that name seemed vaguely familiar. It brought up thoughts of frustration and mindless raging hate. Apparently the brat-of-the-future hadn't liked the man. "Uh huh." Drat! Not that she thought Minato would be so bloodthirsty, but there was always hope. Though why she cared was somewhat mysterious. She was definitely getting too attached to these humans. Maybe she could just sterilize them all instead of killing them? Keep them as pets and wait for them to die off? Then she could have fun with them for a while before going back to rampaging and mayhem.

"If I had someone to teach me about it, I would feel better about... taking the next step." Itachi looked at her somewhat hopefully.

"Oh hell no. That manga kibble eye is nothing but trouble. Don't look at me, I'm not helping you with it. You can't even talk about the act needed, anyway, how do you think you'll be able to pull this off?" She was almost embarrassed that by not decimating the population of Konoha she had made such a bad-ass ninja turn into a pansy.

"I don't know." Itachi muttered, pulling himself up.

"Well, you should confront your father more directly or something, if he's being an ass. Uruchi-san can't possibly approve of this." There were plenty of non-Sharingan civilians in the clan, after all.
"No…" Itachi shook his head and got a firm scowl back on his face, clearly coming to a decision. The kitsune cursed mentally. She might be able to kill Itachi before he killed Shisui, but could she do it without activating Madara's eyes and without tipping her hand to Minato? Probably not.

He took off and the kitsune scrambled after him. "Itachi, wait!" She managed to catch up with him, but he wouldn't look at her.

"Don't make me add you." He murmured. If she had been anything less than demon enhanced, she would have missed the comment.

"Musume!" The kitsune winced. "Good work, Itachi." The kitsune and the troubled ANBU stopped at the Hokage's call.

"Yes, sir." Itachi muttered.

"Come back to my office, you two." Minato had his hands on his hips. "I must say I'm a bit disappointed with you Itachi, aiding and abetting the criminal." He was grinning, though.

The kitsune looked at Itachi, who was back to looking like someone had killed his puppy. She turned back to Minato. "Ch. There are plenty of people willing to break rules for me." She boasted, crossing her arms over her chest. "Itachi is just one of my favorites. He likes to tell me state secrets."

"Is that so." Minato replied, not giving her claim any credence. The ANBU to either side of him stiffened, however, and Itachi was looking at her incredulously.

"Yeah, you know these Uchiha." Itachi looked like he was about to murder her right then and there if she didn't shut up. "They're all far too serious about things, if you can read their grunts it's like a world of information opens up right in front of you."

Itachi relaxed, though Minato was now looking at the younger shinobi thoughtfully. "Well, are we coming back to my office, then?" He asked mildly. "I believe that on top of the two infractions from before, you might also have to answer for a small house fire."

They headed off for the tower, Itachi following reluctantly when the ANBU made as if to stop him when he tried to continue toward the Uchiha section of town.

"The monument is clean!" The kitsune huffed indignantly. "And Kakashi set fire to his own apartment, believe it!"

Minato looked at her oddly. "Kakashi isn't back from his mission yet."

"Sure he is… oh. Well, he was, but then I think I flung him out of the hide-the-village zone." She smirked. "Serves him right for not appreciating fine art. That took me a week to do, you know."

The Hokage groaned as they made it to the tower and started to climb the stairs. "Your modifications aside, Kakashi is a shinobi of Leaf, he can't get lost outside the village."

"Well, he certainly couldn't see it when we were fighting above it." She replied. "And then I kicked him off towards the forest." She waved vaguely in the direction in question. "He was looking with the red eye thing, too."

Minato's eyes widened and he turned to whisper to one of the ANBU, who took off in the direction that the kitsune had indicated.

Finally in the Hokage's office, he motioned for them to sit. "So, why Kakashi?" He asked tiredly,
pulling out a piece of paper from a stack.

"I figured the only people in the village that would know water jutsu aside from you would be the ones with the copy eye. I don't know any other Wave refugees or their spouses." She shrugged.

"Hmm. And the books?"

"I hoped that if I turned them back, then maybe he would be more likely to help me..."

Minato looked at her from under skeptical brows. "I take it you didn't turn them back so much as modify them more?"

"There may have been a switch in species." The kitsune allowed, scratching her chin.

Minato sighed heavily. "And Itachi?"

"He just happened to be at Uruchi-san's place." The kitsune noted the Hokage's sharp look and continued. "Where I ate dango." She smiled smugly. Literal truth. That she had also had ramen wasn't something she was going to confess without a bit more effort on Minato's part. How was she going to get more if she did that? She turned to look at Itachi for confirmation, but he was not paying attention.

"I see..."

"Hokage-sama, I must protest!" A voice came as the door burst open. A man covered in cloth limped into the office. "You can't question my ANBU here without my permission."

"Excuse me, Danzo." The Hokage said coldly. "But I may question whomever I wish to, wherever and whenever I wish to, especially when they attack national monuments with elemental jutsu."

"Oh." Danzo looked a bit startled, like he had been expecting Itachi was being questioned about something else.

"Danzo, eh?" The kitsune smirked, her grin wide. The Hokage and Itachi looked worried, whereas Danzo merely looked angry.

"Musume. I have heard of your exploits, and advised the Council to keep you locked up more than once." Danzo replied.

"You do seem to be prone to overly aggressive responses." She allowed.

"I wasn't aware that you had had contact with Danzo, Musume." Minato looked quite curious.

"Oh, I haven't." When she was in control of the body, anyway. "Just what I've heard from Itachi." She started to squirm in pleasure at the intense looks that she was getting from everyone—curiosity from Minato, anger from Danzo, and a frantic silent plea from Itachi to be quiet. She wasn't sure she would be able to drag this out much longer before blurting out everything she knew about the whole mess.

"What would that be?" Minato asked, seemingly nonchalantly.

"I'm sure that Danzo-sama makes you aware of all the orders he gives to his ANBU with regards to their dealings with civilians." The kitsune replied demurely, leaning back and studying her nails while watching the ensuing chaos in her peripheral vision.

Minato gave Danzo an extremely sharp look before turning his full attention back to her. "The
ANBU should have no dealings with civilians." He said, low and dangerous.

"Oh? Who does, then?" The kitsune asked, genuinely curious.

"The Konoha police." Itachi said softly when the room stayed silent with the rising tension.

"Well, that would explain it, then." The kitsune said innocently. "Seeing as the order was to get rid of the military police, right, Itachi? They are your clan, aren't they?"

Itachi winced. Minato shouted an angry question, but the kitsune couldn't reply, as she was dodging the suddenly agile cripple. She flipped over the back of her chair to avoid the first kunai, but couldn't quite avoid the second, which nicked her shoulder. She immediately stopped the bleeding, but it meant that when she leapt into the corner of the room up at the ceiling she couldn't hold her grip and immediately had to bounce again and run along the bookcase. She ducked behind Minato and used him as a shield from the enraged mummy.

"Danzo!" Minato exclaimed, shocked.

"She is blurt out state secrets!" Danzo's eye was bloodshot and the old man was looking less composed than usual.

"Seeing as Musume is the only one in this room without a clearance level, I doubt somehow that this is really a problem."

"You fool! The Uchiha will have heard of the plot now!" Danzo spat.

"I'm pretty sure that I merely hinted heavily at the state secrets, but you just blurted them out." The kitsune pointed out helpfully.

"What orders did you give to Itachi with regards to his clan, Danzo?" Minato asked warily, fairly sure he knew the answer already.

"Only the order you and the old fool were too weak to know needed to be given." Danzo spat, giving up on trying to kill the kitsune as she had a firm grasp on Minato's silly robes and wasn't letting any portion of herself become visible except for one eye over his shoulder. Itachi was similarly using his ninja skills to subtly blend in with the far wall.

"You ordered Itachi to kill his clan? He's a pacifist!" The Hokage sputtered, disbelieving.

"He knows what needs to happen for the greater good." Danzo replied smugly.

"Meaning you brainwashed him." The kitsune muttered from behind her protector. Visions of a pale, dark haired boy with a plastered on smile and no social skills and a laudable love for the arts swam before her memory's eye. That had been a pretty frustrating situation in all the time loops.

"I will deal with you later, Danzo." Minato hissed. "Itachi!" Itachi twitched, which was as good as a jump for an Uchiha. "Any prior orders you have gotten from your commander is hereby countermanded. Escort Danzo to the Council Chambers and wait there." Itachi bowed in acknowledgment. Minato nodded at the other ANBU in the room to reinforce the order and got confirmation back. Not that Danzo couldn't slip free if he wanted to, but he likely wouldn't- he had enough of the Council on his side that he was looking smugly confident.

Minato moved for the door and the kitsune hung close to his robes. The mummy looked more calm, but she didn't trust him not to try to kill her again. Minato stopped before the ANBU at his door, who was looking quite concerned with what he must have heard from inside. "Wolf-san, please call the
Minato took the demon-space to the former Hokage's living room. He left so quickly the kitsune barely managed to follow him through not-space. He looked at her in puzzled shock.

"Minato!" The old monkey said in surprise, dropping his pipe into his lap and cursing as he slapped his smoldering robes with the newspaper he had been holding.

"Hiruzen, did you know anything about this?" Minato growled.

"Um…?" The old ape seemed lost.

"The planned Uchiha massacre to prevent them from causing a civil war." The kitsune clarified helpfully.

Hiruzen's mouth dropped open. "W-what? Someone killed the Uchiha?" He was turning dangerously pale.

"No, though Danzo ordered it."

"He… but…how did you find out?"

Minato crossed his arms over his chest and looked lost. "Musume reported it."

They both turned to stare at her, Hiruzen's incredulity at that statement leading Minato to realize how bizarre the situation had gotten. The kitsune fidgeted. "What? I told you I only had the best interests of Konoha in my mind, etc." She mumbled. Which was basically true. Sort of. Well, not really at all, actually.

"I called a Council meeting and I would appreciate that you were there." Minato said finally, after they had both finished studying her.

"Of course." Sarutobi stood up quickly from his chair and made his way to his rooms. "I will be there as soon as I change. I wouldn't miss this if you sealed the door with Heaven's Seal. Danzo has finally overstepped himself." He grinned happily.

"We will meet you there." Minato said.

"We?" The kitsune asked. She had been planning to find someplace to hide out for a while…

"Yes, we. You have some explaining to do on how you knew what was happening." Minato fixed her with a sharp gaze.

"Animal instinct?" The kitsune offered.

Minato just gathered her close and pulled them into not-space and into the corridor just outside the council rooms. Many people were already arriving. The kitsune spotted the Hyuuga head, branch seal still on his forehead, walking into the room regally. So collected was he trying to be that his eye only spasmed uncontrollably when he saw her, rather than the last time he had met up with her and had tried to close off the chakra flow to her brain.

"I don't really have to go in there, do I, Minato-kun?" The kyuubi purred, leaning forward to close the sliver of remaining space between them and rubbing her cheek against his jaw. "A big strong man like you can handle it without involving me."
"Nice try." Minato said, though his voice sounded a bit strangled and his face was turning quite red. He shoved her in front of him and marched her into the council room. The kitsune was amused and somewhat alarmed that everyone immediately focused on her with looks that held varying degrees of hatred.

He pushed her into the seat to the right of his and sat down. The kitsune fidgeted as they waited and started to turn the top of the table into a poisonous gas before Minato glared at her. "Just enough for myself." She muttered in protest, before sitting back with a sigh.

The former Hokage entered the room, wearing the silly robes but no hat and sat to Minato's left, murmuring greetings.

Itachi was standing behind the Hokage's chair, looking torn between being relieved, horrified and depressed. Danzo was surrounded by some ANBU who were aggressively facing other ANBU, there were Uchiha police scattered about looking lost, the council was mostly glaring at the kitsune...

The door burst open, startling even the shinobi. The red-eyed bug flew across the space to the Hokage's table so fast that he almost might have traveled through not-space to get there, his Sharingan active and quivering on the edge of swirling. The kitsune was so terrified at the sight and silently willing them to not change that she almost missed that she was slammed up against the wall with a sharp kunai at her throat.

"Fugaku!" Minato yelled, looking appalled at the chaos and his seeming inability to control it.

The Uchiha head ignored him. "This is all your fault, isn't it?" He growled.

"I just saved your clan from getting slaughtered you ungrateful, traitorous jerk!" She hissed in reply, as loudly as she could without moving her throat and getting it cut.

He pressed the kunai closer. The Hyuuga moved as if to disable the Uchiha, but was reluctant enough to rescue the kitsune that a step forward by one of the Uchiha police was enough for him to give it up as a bad job.

"Fugaku, we called this meeting to try to find a way to resolve our differences. Let's not escalate the confrontation over a personal grudge you have against Musume." Minato said placatingly.

"Are you telling me that she did let the duplicity of this town come to light? The duplicity of my son?" He glared at Itachi, whose Sharingan had activated reflexively at the beginning of the violence.

"We're a part of the clan, too." The kitsune rasped in protest. "If you're going to do shit that is going to make Konoha take action against the group, we have a right to interfere."

Fugaku shouted in her face, spittle flying, "You are not part of our clan, you bitch!"

If the blade hadn't been actually digging into her throat she would have protested that she was a vixen, thanks. As it was, she used her enhanced muscles to push the man's arm away just enough that she could reseal her hard breathing tube. "I am a part of your clan, and I already told you that you needed more evolved eyes to scare me." She sneered.

Minato looked like he wanted to hide his face in his hands as Musume antagonized the already volatile man.

"Oh, you mean the ones you can't even say?" He pressed against her, and she had to use all her strength to keep him from cutting her head off, much less break the skin again. "Say it. Say what it is called."
"No."

"Say it!"

"You know what that hateful thing is! Why do you need me to say it?" The kitsune asked, her eyes widening in fear. She had deliberately avoided saying its name. Damned if she was going to be the one who brought it back into the world where it could harm her!

"Say it!" Fugaku growled, pulling out another kunai. The kitsune gulped. She was using both hands to ward off the one at her throat.

"Fugaku, stop this at once!" Minato said. The ANBU made as if to move, and so did the Uchiha police force. They stared at each other warily, reluctant to start overtly fighting.

"Say it." He growled low, poking her in the belly with another knife. With both her hands busy protecting her throat she could do nothing about it. But a belly would probably take longer to kill her, so she did not shift priorities of defense.

"Mango coke sherry gum." The kitsune singsonged, sneering.

"Say it, or you will be seeing your guts on the floor."

"I won't! And you don't have the eyes to make me."

"Say it, or I will start this battle, and you and Minato-chan will be the first casualties."

The kyuubi's eyes slid over to the Hokage. He could take care of himself, right? She eyed the rest of the council. They seemed torn as to which side to take.

"And then we will make sure that Naruto has a long, painful death."

"Mangekyou Sharingan!" She roared, her vision going red from pure rage. Except that her vision also seemed extraordinarily sharp... and everyone seemed to be moving as a snail's pace.

She locked eyes with the wide ones of Fugaku and she could see right into his thoughts. His disgusting, self-serving thoughts. She snarled and kicked him away from her, following him to the ground and staring deep into the middle pupils of his red eyes. "Squirm." She hissed. He started screaming and thrashing under her, before going limp with an expression of sheer terror on his face.

Chapter End Notes

Mangekyou activation phrases borrowed from Soul Caliber (Ivy).
The kitsune saw the wrinkled, red, goo-covered raisin-like excuse for a human and almost gagged. The brat had reproduced in this loop, a somewhat rare occurrence what with his dangerous life and the hate that many usually aimed at him (intensified when the fox got annoyed with repetition and encouraged him to rampage).

Like all his emotions, when she felt the inexplicable burst of love in the brat's chest it crossed over into her own energy. She was fairly sure being this close to such amounts of unselfish love would eventually kill her by unraveling her very nature, but it was hard to feel that annoyed with death by baby. Especially when it was the brat's baby.

Their child.

Her kit.

Hers!

OoooOOo

"No one hurts the kit!" The kyuubi growled, grabbing the passed out Uchiha clan head by the hair and slamming his head against the floor for good measure, though the eye technique had put him into a hallucination-induced coma.

She sat there, straddling him and breathing hard until she noticed the silence in the room. She looked around and everyone gasped and stepped back, except for Minato, who was walking towards her with his arms held out, and Itachi, who was staring at her in shocked disbelief.

"Musume, come away from him, alright?" Minato said gently, holding his hands out to her. She looked at them and then reached forward.

"Hokage-sama, don't!" Shouted one of the ANBU. The kitsune reflexively looked at him and he fell to the ground with a gasp. Others started moving but Minato shook his head at them decisively.

"Come on, Musume." He said gently. The fox put her hands in his and allowed him to lift her up. "Would you please release Badger-san?" He asked politely.

Musume looked over with a wry smile. "Ah… I think he'll need to come out of it on his own."

"You little!" The Hyuuga started, before the kitsune glared at him and he slumped over in his seat.

Musume looked over toward Minato and focused on his nose before closing her eyes. It annoyed her to find that his nose was no less visible. "It is a horrible technique." She whispered, dizzy at the implications of her new eyes. On the one hand, this solved her problem with not being able to focus her chakra enough to win in a fight. On the other hand, she now was the one thing she hated in this world more than being sealed.

"You… you are an Uchiha!" Someone shouted. She twitched and glared, but didn't open her eyes. It was disconcerting being able to see through her eyelids, but it seemed to mitigate the effects of the Mangekyou Sharingan.
"What are you people, deaf? I've been saying so for years!" Damn humans. She should hypnotize the lot and slit their throats. She should do that right now, in fact! Minato's hands were warm on her own, however, and she didn't want them to be cold with death.

She felt the power slide out of her eyes and she opened them with a sigh.

"If you had shown your Sharingan, that would have been definitive proof." Minato said gently.

"But…" The kitsune trialed off from her reflexive protest, before the corner of her mouth quirked up. "So it would, wouldn't it." She decided not to mention that she both hadn't thought about that before, much less that she hadn't known that she could actually activate it with all the modifications she had done to the body.

The fallen ANBU groaned and stood up. The eyes of the room focused on him.

"Badger-san, what did she subject you to?" One of the council members asked.

The ninja shuddered. "A room with a moose."

"A room with a moose?" The council member was confused. "That doesn't seem so bad."

"Then you ask her to trap you in a room with a moose for weeks." The ANBU said, glaring.

"You were only down for a few moments." The council member protested. The ANBU just stared at the council member until they coughed and looked away.

The Hyuuga was quick to rouse afterward, with a groan. He looked around before announcing, "I'm not going to talk about it."

"We called this meeting for a reason." Minato announced, moving to drop the Musume's arms. She tightened her grip, looking up at him with wild eyes. He sighed and guided them both to their chairs and gently extracted his left arm. "Impressive displays of Kekkei Genkai aside, we have not resolved the issue of Danzo's unauthorized actions, nor the concerns of the Uchiha clan."

The kitsune quickly became bored with the humans talking about things that she already knew and/or did not care about at all. Also using those eyes had mentally and emotionally drained her and she just glared at anyone who made as if to ask her a question. The look in Minato's eyes indicated that she would probably have to talk to him later, but honestly- what is there to tell? Itachi had been upset, the Uchiha all tense, it was a deduction (though with a bit of foreknowledge, admittedly). So there was nothing to tell.

OoooooooOO

The sun was beginning to peek over the horizon as the meeting grumbled to a close. Fugaku had yet to wake up from the gengutsu, even when the ANBU and military police together carried him to the ANBU holding cells pending a final disposition decision.

Minato looked down at the sleeping woman and couldn't help the fond smile. She looked so deceptively innocent when she was unconscious. Everyone had relaxed marginally when Musume passed out on the Hokage's shoulder, though the tone of the meeting had remained somber.

Minato moved a stray lock of hair of her nose to stop the irritated twitching and his smile grew when she hummed happily and settled. That Musume had only activated her eyes when his son was threatened... as anyone knew, the way to Minato's heart was through Naruto. And now everyone also knew that threatening Naruto was apparently the way to Musume's rage.
With a resigned huff he gathered her up into his arms. She grumbled and curled against his chest but didn't wake up. He nodded to his assistant to take the paperwork the meeting had produced, finish and file them, and then walked out the door and towards his house.

He had to shift Musume to being slung half over one shoulder in order to open his door, but even then she didn't awaken. Minato frowned a bit in worry. He didn't think that using the Mangekyou Sharingan was supposed to cause chakra exhaustion, but she seemed fairly out of it.

Minato lowered her onto his most comfortable couch and covered her with a blanket from the closet. He sent up a quick prayer that when he woke up he would still have an intact room... or even house... before going off to his own bed.

OoOOOooo

Naruto raced down the stairs, making sure to make lots of noise so that his father would wake up. He knew that his dad had come in really late- he was in the Academy already! No ninja would miss such a detail! But being out late didn't mean he got to skip breakfast. That's what the ninja code said, after all- it was in print!

He stopped though when he noticed that their couch seemed to have acquired some sort of odd growth at one end of it. "Eh?" The boy grunted, looking at the pile of blankets. He poked the mound and got a grunt in response. Who the heck was sleeping on their couch? Naruto pulled the blanket away and revealed tangled hair so black it had blue highlights.

Naruto grinned. He leapt onto the blanket and yelled at the top of his lungs, "Hey lady, time to get up! You can't hog our couch all day!"

The kitsune jerked awake, thrashing around so much she toppled both of them to the ground. "Brat! I am going to beat you so hard your fool father will be sore!" She roared, struggling to untangle from her nest.

"Bleeaah!" Naruto said, holding the edges of his mouth with his fingers and sticking out his tongue. "You have to catch me first!"

Musume crouched on all fours, glaring up at the boy through tangled bangs. "I'm very quick, brat. You sure seem confident for a midget."

The boy flashed through familiar handseals. "Kage Bushin no jutsu!" He cried, and suddenly the room was filled floor to ceiling with shadow clones. "You can only catch me if you know which I am!" A chorus of voices cried.

The kitsune's eyes glinted. "I'll have you know I'm an Uchiha, brat. We have advanced eye techniques that let us see through these things."

"No fair! That's cheating!" the Narutos pouted.

"True." She replied. "Especially when I've already got such an advantage." She grinned and leapt at the closest Naruto, who disappeared in a puff of smoke.

"Ahahah! Try again, slowpoke!" The Narutos took off to various parts of the house, the kitsune dashing after them and smacking them hard enough to dispel them, but as lightly as possible so that if she hit the real Naruto it wouldn't hurt him.

She poked a clone in the forehead that was pulling down his eyelid with his finger, and when it dispensed she was pointing at the bare chest of the brat's father. "Good morning." She grinned. She
poked him on the chest in a short jab, causing the man's look of absolute horror to turn to one of annoyance.

"What was that for?" He grumbled, rubbing his eyes. "And what is the meaning of all this?"

"I had to make sure you weren't a henged shadow clone, which is pretty much the meaning of all this. Your son started it." Musume decided that since the Hokage didn't seem inclined to do much besides blink that he was giving her permission to take a good look. The fact that he was trying to simultaneously wake up and recover from a wave of adrenaline was of no consequence.

Normally she wouldn't think a human body attractive, but something about his shape was definitely pleasing. Maybe it was the toned body? No, she had seen plenty of muscled humans before. The pale skin? Probably not, the lack of fur was more disturbing than anything else. Although, it did serve to highlight the hair he did have, which was all that fabulous yellow. The kitsune was amused and somewhat concerned that her hand was itching to feel what the fine hairs on his chest felt like on her palm. She swallowed when she realized she was drooling.

"Hey! You stopped trying to catch me!" A (the?) Naruto pouted next to them.

"Naruto." Minato blinked at his son, still looking adorably half asleep. The kitsune frowned when she ran that thought back through her head. Adorable? "What have I told you about jutsu in the house?"

"Yeah yeah." The brat pouted. "But you also said that we had to wear pants when company was over." With that the shadow clone dispelled itself.

Minato looked confused for about five seconds before he looked down at himself in horror. He was dressed only in a pair of boxers with little bowls of ramen all over them.

"We could forgo that rule." The kitsune offered hopefully.

"Erk!" Minato stepped back into his room and slammed the door. She sighed unhappily and walked back down the stairs.

"Brat! Where's breakfast!" She called.

"Almost done!" Came a voice from the kitchen. A Naruto with a bandana tying his hair back and an apron on popped his head around the doorframe. "You like sweet toast, right?"

"Sure, brat." Musume sauntered into the room and flopped down at the table. She watched the three Narutos bustling about.

Minato was down a few minutes later, wearing pants that stopped mid-calf and a loose T-shirt... and his wounded dignity like a protective shroud. "Thank you for cooking, Naruto." He said, sitting down stiffly.

"I thought you said there was no one who would take me in?" Musume asked, her tone a bit sharper than she intended with disappointment over the amount of clothing. Better than the robes, she supposed.

Minato frowned and picked at the wood on the edge of the table. "There isn't anyone else. And you couldn't go back to the jail. Fugaku is there."

"So?" Musume pouted, annoyed that apparently he was not considering himself as a possible host.
Minato looked at her from the corner of his eye. "You attacked him yesterday, if you recall. The latest report stated that he still hasn't woken up from the genjutsu you put him under."

Her mood instantly lightened. "The jerk deserved it. In fact- he literally asked for it." She settled her hands in her lap and grinned. "That will show him to try and take control of people."

Minato sighed. "We'll have to deal with the fall-out today. Last night the village and the Uchihas came to an agreement and we've started mediation on their concerns, but they will most likely want you to come back to their part of the village."

"Oh, now they want me to stay with them." The kitsune grumped. Just when she had gotten to bunk with her two favorite humans. And learned that one of them would walk around mostly naked if roused suddenly. She purred a bit at the thought.

"Well, now you're an Uchiha."

"I was always an Uchiha!" She snapped, snatching the plate from the shadow clone so abruptly that it dispelled. The other set a plate in front of Minato and then vanished while the real Naruto sat down and took a bite of his own sweet toast.

"Of this I am aware." Minato said mildly. "And the irony is not lost on me."

"What's irony mean?" Naruto asked around a mouthful of toast.

"Don't talk with your mouth full." Minato chided.

"Irony means 'stupidity' in this case, brat." The kitune snarked, before savagely tearing into her own toast.

"So after breakfast, you should probably clean up a bit..." Minato continued.

"Are you going to help me with that?" She asked slyly. Minato choked on his toast.

"I'll help you!" Naruto offered.

"No, absolutely not!" Minato dropped the toast and took a drink of tea to settle his throat.

"Oh, are you jealous?" The kitsune asked, slinking back in her chair and looking at him smugly.

"You know perfectly well how to clean yourself." Minato snapped.

OooOOOoo

Breakfast was over fairly quickly, and Musume was shown where the bathing area was. She did in fact know the basics of cleaning up, but it was also true that she wasn't loathe to accept help. Especially with the long pelt springing from the top of her head. She felt that she should keep as much of it as possible as the rest of her body was so bald, but it was really hard to keep from tangling into a huge matt that stank to high heavens. And it seemed to enjoy sticking straight up in the back, despite its length. She blamed the inbreeding for that.

So it was without shame that once she was washed and dressed in new clothes that Minato had left for her, she sought him out. He looked up from a stack of papers and put down his cup of tea. "Are you ready?"

"Mostly." She replied. Now that she was standing in front of him the request seemed stupid. Like she were a dog, not a fox, and she was asking her master to rub her tummy.
"What is it?" He asked.

"Nothing." She shook her head and backed away.

Minato set the papers aside and stood up, coming over to her. "What's wrong? You like Teyaki and Uruchi, right? I'm sure they'll take you in now that Fugaku has been over-ruled and put in a coma."

She frowned. "Why does anyone have to 'take me in'? Am I some orphan child?"

"No." Minato said, leaning back in surprise. "You are definitely not a child."

She looked at him, studying his expression. "I could live on my own, couldn't I? I'm sure there's something in this town I could do." She studied her hands and the restrictive human chakra coils that prevented her from being 'useful' by demolishing things, as her essential nature demanded. "Maybe I could do sculpture or something." She muttered in disgust. She almost jumped when a hand landed softly on her shoulder. She turned to Minato, uncertain. Nothing seemed right anymore. She didn't even know what she was still doing here.

"Whatever you want to do, we'll figure it out, alright?" Minato asked gently, rubbing her shoulder comfortably.

The kitsune looked down at the floor and sighed. Things used to be so simple; destroy everything in sight, chat with other demons, answer summons, destroy more things (including the summoner if possible), take a nap for a few centuries…

Minato's other hand came under her chin and lifted it gently, until they were looking in each other's eyes. "It will all work out." He promised.

"Alright." She whispered.

"What were you going to ask me?" He murmured, running his hand along her jaw, tracing behind her ear before he let both his hands drop slowly.

The kyuubi wanted to grab his hands and put them back, but was disgusted with herself for the thought. "I… uh…" She felt one side of her mouth quirk. "Was wondering if you would help me with my hair?" Her nose twitched and she scratched at it.

"Alright." Musume looked up at him, startled. He would? "Where's the brush?" She handed it to him and he gestured for her to sit down on the couch. He sat behind her and she waited for the pain to come. But he was working quite gently at the ends and working his way to the top.

"Why are you doing that?" She asked, twisting around a bit to see, though she was pushed back to face forward immediately.

"Doing what?" Minato asked, continuing the steady rhythm.

"Brushing it like that." She clarified.

"It works better to start at the ends with long hair."

"Is that so?" She mused. It certainly seemed to be, but maybe he was just playing with the ends of her hair and it only seemed he was brushing it? "Ouch!" She snapped, trying to twist around again.

"Sorry." He pushed her back straight. "Yes, it does. I had long hair for a while and Kush…" He trailed off. She could hear him swallow. "Kushina had long hair." He finished the statement, but
didn't say anything more.

"Dad!" Naruto called as he bounced into the room. "I'm off to the Academy."

"Do well today. Graduation is tomorrow, isn't it?"

"Yup! And this year I'll pass for sure, since I know the super awesome Kage Bushin. I will blow them away! It's much better then the regular bushin, right Dad?"

"That it is. Have fun and be safe." Minato replied, laughing.

"Heh heh! I know the ANBU-san will be watching me the whole time, Dad. How could I get into trouble?" The kid grinned widely.

"You always seem to manage." Minato said dryly.

"Yeah, yeah. Have fun yelling at the old farts." Naruto called as he slammed the door on the way out.

"We should get going soon." Minato commented. He finished the last big snag in the impressively long and previously impressively tangled mane. He swept the brush along the scalp of the woman in front of him and heard her gasp. He hadn't felt a snag, but he was about to ask if he had hurt her when she started to… purr? He brushed along her scalp again and watched her arch into it. He hastily set the brush down and stood up. "There you go, all the knots are taken care of." Musume turned to him lazily, eyes half lidded.

"Can we do that every morning?" She sighed. Minato gulped, though for some reason the question had him almost reflexively answering 'yes.' It wasn't like she hadn't been a nearly constant presence in his life for the past two years. Mostly when he was scolding her about a prank…right? Buying her ramen was a bribe to stop the pranks, especially when he caught her plotting with his son, nothing more... bringing her home with him was a necessity... He grumbled to himself and rubbed his forehead.

"We need to get going. The Council will be meeting again soon." Minato said decisively, moving towards the stairs. "I need to get into my official clothing. I'll be back down in a bit and then we can go, alright?" He beat a hasty retreat without waiting for an answer.

Musume pulled some of the long black hair in front of her shoulder and ran her fingers through it. They met no resistance. She sighed and flung it back behind her. She had thrown away her pride as a fox, a wild creature and a force of nature and acted like some domesticated bitch; her reward was having Minato pet her like one. It sort of seemed worth it...

She scoffed at herself and stood. Pathetic.

OooOoOoOO

Minato had to move the meeting outside as a good half of the Uchiha clan as well as large numbers of other highly placed clans' members and assorted civilians had come. Since all the basics of a peace agreement had been hammered out yesterday, and since technically all meetings of the Council could be attended by the general public... as much as this was going to be a disaster, neither Minato nor the Council members could do anything about it.

"Show us..."

"No." Musume cut off the Hyuuga.
"But..."

"No!" She growled at the Uchiha.

"Everyone, please wait for the meeting to ask your questions." Minato said, steering Musume away from the crowd of ninja and civilians before something exploded. And, looking at the woman's twitching face, it would probably be the prankster and everyone that happened to be around her. "Relax." He murmured in her ear. She looked up at him with wide eyes. He counted it as a win, as she was no longer snarling.

Minato sat her down and then settled beside her. "Alright everyone." He called out, causing most of the talking to die down. "We're here to settle some issues that have come from the recent misunderstanding between the Uchiha clan and this Council."

"Misunderstanding!" Someone shouted, and it was chaos again. Minato rubbed his forehead tiredly.

"Yes, misunderstanding!" Minato called out. "Anyone who continues to disrupt this meeting will be taking away by the ANBU or the Konoha Police. Whichever force looks more bloodthirsty." Everyone mostly quieted down. "There have been some issues, but the principle players have been arrested and will be tried for treason. The remaining parties have come to agreements which will most likely not impact anything in daily life." Minato nodded to acknowledge Uchiha Hotchikisu, the acting head of the clan, indicating that the temporary leader had the floor.

"We would like to apologize for the previous clan head's hostility toward Musume." Hotchikisu started. Musume cocked her head to the side but didn't acknowledge the speaker any more than that. "It is the hope of the clan that she will live with one of the Uchiha that have volunteered for the honor of hosting her in their home." Minato noted Musume's nose twitching and started to get a bit nervous - that seemed to be a gesture that precluded snarling.

Several Uchiha stepped up with the interim leader. It was glaringly obvious that all of them were unattached males of marrying age, all of whom had activated Sharingans. All but one were on the Konoha police force. It was somewhat conspicuous that Itachi was absent. The Hokage hoped that Musume wouldn't pick up on the unsubtle tactic...

"What is this, a line up of mates?" Musume snapped.

Minato sighed. It was a vain hope, as he had expected. She might be oblivious most of the time, but a maneuver of such blatancy wasn't going to get past even the most politically ignorant child in the Academy.

"These young men have all volunteered..." Hotchikisu started.

"You want me to mate with these kits? Do you take me for a cradle robber of some sort?"

"Er..." Hotchikisu looked confused, and rightly so. It was unusual for a woman to protest someone thinking she was younger than she was. But also, Musume looked perhaps mid-twenties at the oldest. The average age of the Uchiha men looked considerably older than that. Though, Minato considered, she had been in the village for the past... he blinked. For almost six years now. And she had always looked to be early-to-mid-twenties. He'd have to compare with her intake photo, to see if there had been any aging changes or not.

Hotchikisu made placating motions. "We felt that it would be helpful for you to have a selection of young men who find you attractive." Minato looked over to the woman beside him and saw that the flattery had gotten Hotchikisu absolutely nowhere. In fact she looked more annoyed. "And with
these fine Uchiha, all of your children will have the capability to activate their Sharingan."

A crash made Minato jump a little bit - not because he had been surprised to hear it, but more because of the sharply increasing sense of impending disaster.

"You wish me to serve as a brood mare for a clan that has rejected me?" Musume's aura seemed to be turning a bit red around the edges.

"Very few women are able to activate their Sharingan and those who do have all their children able to do so... we have few girls in the clan as they rarely survive to adulthood... and no one, of course, has it to the level..." Hotchikisu tried to continue.

"You not only want to use me as a brood mare, but as one for the despicable Man-" Minato clapped a hand over her mouth, receiving a deadly glare in response. Made even more deadly by the three black commas spinning in each red eye.

"It's activated." Minato told her softly and watched those red eyes widen and then fade back to black. He let her go.

Musume took a deep, shuddering breath before turning back to Hotchikisu. "No." She replied, before sitting back down.

"But... you need to come back to the clan. Is there someone else that you would prefer to live with?" Hotchikisu asked hopefully.

"I owe nothing to the clan. One of your number has..." She trailed off. Minato winced at the reference to Uchiha Madara. "But I didn't blame you for that. Much." She paused again. "But since that time only three of your number has been anything but hostile." She waved a hand airily. "I suppose I could stay with Itachi. Doesn't he still live in Fugaku's house? I feel that taking over the family would be an appropriate battle trophy." Her grin was wide and stretched almost ear to ear. Minato felt that the idea was an awful one, and not just because she had just essentially killed the head of the household.

Hotchikisu turned a bit pale, and the other Uchiha were looking restless. "Itachi and the rest of his family are under review, they aren't really available to host such a valuable person..."

Musume grasped the armrests of the chair so tightly that they creaked and started to crack. Impressive considering that she was not a ninja, and the chairs were reinforced with the strength of one in mind. "Then I have no desire to return to your clan." She said through gritted teeth.

"But you didn't even say if you activated the Mangekyou Sharingan the same way!" Hotchikisu burst out. Minato hoped that she would cooperate and coach the Uchiha, as the promise of the technique was part of the reason that they were not in open civil war now.

"You want to match me up with some young kit and spill clan secrets into a general meeting?" Musume sneered at the man.

"No, of course not right now, you don't need to choose a host, either, of course, these are clan matters..." Hotchikisu babbled. Minato felt a bit sorry for the man. He was the only one the clan could agree on, but he wasn't particularly politically savvy. Or really, even remotely politically savvy.

"No, no." Musume waved magnanimously. "If you wish to be so generous as to make all of your clan's actions completely transparent, I shall have to oblige you." Hotchikisu looked rather ill. "As all Uchiha are aware, the only documented way to activate one's," she slid a look to Minato before she
continued. "Manky eyes, is to become very close friends with someone, love them in the deepest part of your heart, and then brutally murder them."

Everyone gasped. The non-Uchiha at the revelation, and the Uchiha that she had actually said it. Minato felt as ill as Hotchikisu looked. He knew there was something horrific involved, but killing your best friend? The picture of what had been done to the woman at the hands of Madara had been bleak before, but now he realized that on top of completely controlling his own daughter, he must have also emotionally tortured her. It was a wonder she was functional at all.

"Oh, but that's not the end of course." Musume sneered. "That will only get you the first level. If you stay with that you will eventually go blind, and every time you use your new technique, your eyes will bleed. In order to counteract that, you have to kill your own sibling and steal their eyes, which have to, of course, be at the same level."

At this pronouncement there was complete silence. Minato looked over at Musume, but her face was a blank mask. His heart contracted painfully. Madara hadn't done this to only one child, but two? And that was assuming that he had gotten the process correct on the first try. What a monster!

"You want this technique? This thing that controls people, takes away their will, traps them in a prison of their own mind's making?" She continued quietly. "Maybe it would have been better, then, if you had all been murdered." Minato winced, both because that was supposed to be a state secret, but more because of the pain in her voice. "I'm a fool." She whispered, so quietly that only Minato could hear her. "What am I doing here, connecting? They're all the same." Minato sucked in his breath to say something, but she stood up and walked toward the assembled Uchiha. "Anyone who tries to get the Manky eyes- I will kill them." She said it flatly, with no emotion. Turning to Hotchikisu she snarled. "And I don't need a keeper." And with that she disappeared in a flash of red.

Minato blinked. That hadn't looked like a body-flicker, that had looked like his own yellow flash technique. But that was impossible, wasn't it?

Minato stood, trying to reign in the frantic whispers that had broken out after Musume's disappearance. He swept his vision over the gathered people. A good percentage of the Uchiha looked angry or scared. These were probably the ones for whom Musume's speech had not been news. Some of the Uchiha and all of the villagers looked disgusted. He had a feeling that if anyone now appeared with the Mangekyou Sharingan, that person would be hunted by not just the broken Uchiha woman, but also most of the rest of the clans, if not the whole village.

Chapter End Notes

Room with a Moose is from Invader Zim.
"I'm disappointed with you, kyuubi."

The kitsune growled, straining against the other demon. This was a somewhat rare happenstance—she had gotten the brat to fully release her before he and the sand brat had become friends (which would make said release involve more friendly bonding than she ever wanted to experience again).

"Indeed, there has been a disturbing lack of psychological trauma to your host. Look at all the work I've done on mine! He's practically a demon himself by now."

"Listen, you fat raccoon!" The fox demon snarled. "I don't approve of any sort of mental manipulation. If my host is going to go insane, he's getting there under his own power."

"Bullshit!" Shukaku snarled. "Any time you interact with someone you are mentally manipulating them. It's in our very nature to do so."

The kitsune knocked the other demon back and settled onto all fours, looking at the other through narrowed eyes. "You may be the demon of lies, but I am the demon of destructive hatred." She said finally, settling her feet to more easily spring at her opponent on the next pass.

She had some sympathy for the other; like her, Shukaku had to constantly remind people of her gender. They had that in common. But she couldn't stand the other demon's desire to twist things into such ugly forms. Even her body was hideous. The fox gave herself a moment to look herself over and preen a bit. Humans might say that hatred was ugly, but it was a pure concept, with a definite structure and, in her mind anyway, a great beauty. And at its essence, it is a denial of how things are and an intense need to change for the better.

"You're not being beautiful." The kitsune smirked. "I think you would look much better melted to glass."

OoOoOoOoO

It had taken Minato the rest of the day and long into the night to deal with the initial fallout over Musume's pronouncement. It was still not completely resolved, but everyone had left only disgruntled, not outright angry. He also was on his way to his new goal of integrating the Uchiha back into the village. He understood why his predecessors had gone the route they had, but he also couldn't blame the clan for feeling that the village was trying to diminish them to the point where they would disappear. It was lucky that he was not associated with either the Uchiha or the Senju more than peripherally. If the third had been in charge, Minato had a feeling that the whole situation would have gone much more disastrously.

He headed back to his house, hoping that Musume was there. He wasn't entirely surprised when she wasn't. He went up to Naruto's room and leaned against the doorjam and watched him sleep.

Or pretend to sleep, as it turned out.

"Hey old man, if you're going to just stand there, I'm never going to get any rest." Naruto peeked out from under the covers to his father.
Minato came and sat down beside his son. "It was a long day."

"So go to sleep already." His son grumbled. "I'm not going to let you off the hook tomorrow. It's the graduation, and you can't be late!"

"Alright, Naruto." Minato smiled, and stood up, ruffling his son's hair.

OoOOoooOoOO

The kitsune was perched on the ear of the Third, behind an outcropping that represented his hair. She had been debating with herself back and forth since she had disappeared and ended up half-way inside of the rock. She had been so angry and confused that it had taken her a good ten minutes to realize that she was stuck, and then only because she began to pass out when her blood couldn't flow properly.

She had basically boiled it down to two sides. One was that she was a demon, dammit, and all of this moping around and human angst was beneath her. The other side was kind of enjoying playing around at being human, even with all the angst, and didn't really see why she couldn't do whatever she felt like. She was a force of nature after all. Who would say no to her? Even the Uchiha and seals were but a temporary annoyance.

The fox demon figured that she had three options: leave the village, either in the human shell or not, and not reply to summons; kill everyone in the village and then go about doing whatever she wanted to; stay in the village and say goodbye to her pride as an elemental creature. One was not an option; it was running away, pure and simple. And kitsunes only ran away strategically before coming back and crushing everyone. The second was a thought, except that besides her enjoyment of her pet humans, she wasn't entirely sure she could pull it off. Or rather, of course she could pull it off, it would just likely require reinforcements. Which, if she recalled correctly, always seemed to happen when the brat went into the chuunin exams.

The third option, though… at first glance seemed out of the question. However a) she needed to bide her time for a couple years anyway to implement the second plan and b) no one actually knew that she was a demon, and if they found out she could always play the innocent jinchuriki, even to other demons, so they never had to find out and c) who said that demons had to be malevolent? She was pretty sure that was a human construction and a relatively recent one.

Why did she have to listen to humans, anyway? In fact, it should be her demonly duty to prove them the idiots that they certainly were. Maybe she was just the demon of chaos, not destruction. And if there was one thing this whole mess had proven- it was that when she was in control of things, everything went pear shaped pretty quickly. Hell, look at how different events were turning out. Much more variety then she had ever managed to manipulate the brat into making, even when she showed him the future.

With that decided, she stood up and watched the sun rise over the forest. Stay she would, and Konoha would not be the same two days in a row from here on out. Believe it!

The kitsune paused in her reveling. There was something that was supposed to happen today… what was it? Something to do with Minato? No… the brat? Maybe…

Aha! The brat was graduating. Well, that usually was an interesting event anyway, and Naruto was her favorite human, despite how twisted the reasons why were on that. It had been enough introspection to last her a good long while. She would do what she wanted and anyone who gave her grief about it could go suck a toad.
Musume ended up perched in a tree, sitting over the swing the brat tended to mope in, in previous lives. It seemed that she was early. She settled back into the tree and yawned. Time enough for a nap, then.

It barely seemed like she'd closed her eyes before there were people below her. She cracked open an eye and surveyed the gathered families. No students seemed to have made their way out yet, so she hadn't missed anything. She spotted Minato and was about to stand up when a large man wearing a red coat was suddenly in front of her.

Musume let out a surprised yell and fell out of the tree, the ninja (?) close on her heels.

"What's a lovely lady like yourself doing hiding from the ANBU on this fine morning?" The man asked, genially. "Don't feel shy. You can come right up to me and confess your feelings of love that you can no longer keep inside."

The kitsune gawked up at the man. He was outrageous! And so fast! She hadn't seen him move, and she could always follow the fool ninjas. Something about him seemed sort of familiar, however.

"Sensei!" Minato hurried over and stood next to the pervert. "What are you doing with Musume?" His eyes flickered to her and he looked... relieved. Which seemed a bit odd to Musume but humans were rarely understandable.

"I'm not doing anything... yet." The man replied, rubbing his jaw with a lecherous twinkle in his eye. "If she's yours, I suppose I'll have to restrain my native charm around her."

"M-mine?" Minato stuttered, looking at the much taller man in bemused horror.

"Absolutely! The only woman to set foot in your house in over a decade. And not a bad choice, either. An Uchiha, if I'm not mistaken, hmm?"

(Uchiha) Musume frowned. "Well if it's that obvious what the hell was their problem acknowledging me?" She muttered in disgust.

"Don't jump to conclusions, Jiraiya." Minato scolded.

"Jiraiya... that was a familiar name... hmm, older, perverted... "Ah!" She exclaimed. "The lecherous old sage!"

Jiraiya grinned. "I see my reputation precedes me." He gallantly (sort of) helped the kitsune to her feet.

Hmm... if she recalled correctly... she allowed the hermit to pull her into his grasp, and ignored it when his hand groped her bottom, as well as the spluttered protests from Minato. She was on a mission! "Oh, have I heard of you?" She purred. "Don't you write those wonderful novels?" She asked, running a hand down the collar of his red vest.

Jiraiya's grin stretched so wide that she could see his molars. "Do you want to help me with my research?" He asked, leaning in closer.

"Oh, my, do you think I could?" She gasped, while starting to chuckle maliciously inside.

"Absolutely." The toad hermit said, looking utterly serious.
"I would love to."

"You would?" The hermit seemed torn between surprise and elation.

"Do you think that, maybe, I could get a copy of the series from you… maybe signed? Such a wonderful masterpiece…" She simpered.

"Definitely!" He shouted. Jiraiya was comically torn between letting her go in order to reach into his vest and complying with the request later. He settled for moving her slightly away and reaching inside his pocket. Musume watched curiously as the man unrolled it and bit his thumb, pressing the bloody digit to the paper. With a poof, a stack of the familiar orange books appeared in his hand.

"Here you go, darling." He said, presenting them with a flourish.

"Oh, thank you! You're so clever to keep them like that! Otherwise I'd imagine they would get so heavy!" She cooed. "Is it already signed, too?"

"Of course." Jiraiya grinned broadly. "Now about the research…"

The kitsune took the books from the sage while staring adoringly into his eyes. The second the manga was firmly in her grasp, she slipped away from him and danced over behind Minato. "Oh, Hokage-sama! I think I'm being taken advantage of!" She cried, holding the books to her chest with one hand, while the back of the other was pressed to her forehead dramatically.

"Wha…?" Jiraiya looked rather ridiculous with his mouth hanging open. He shut it with a snap. "Minato! What is the meaning of this? Hey! Make her return those books!"

Minato's battle to keep his straight face was lost decisively at Jiraiya's finger pointed in blame at Musume. He doubled over, laughing so hard he seemed to be forgetting to breathe, if the blue color of his face was any indication. He just waved helplessly in Jiraiya's direction.

"I believe you gave these to me as a gift, Ero-sennin-sama." The demon said, mock seriously. "I much appreciate it, they will go to a good cause."

"You little vixen." Jiraiya said wonderingly.

"Why, thank you." She replied sincerely. "That's the nicest thing I've been called in a long while."

"Hn." The toad sage said, keeping an eye on her out of the corner of his vision. "Minato, shape up—the first graduates are coming out now."

Minato tried to stand up, though he couldn't quite make it. It looked like he might have a cramp of some sort. And every time he looked at the bemused expression on Jiraiya's face or Musume's smug one he snorted and had to put his hand over his mouth. In the end he ignored the two of them as he congratulated the graduates. The fox was surprised when she only recognized a few of them.

She stopped paying attention when the brat didn't come out immediately. With how loud he always was she was sure to spot him when he finally did show up.

She was brought out of her semi-daze when she felt a tug on her sleeve. She turned around to see a Hyuuga kit. She wondered if this was one that she should know its name...

"Are you the one that changed the fate of our clan head?" She asked very seriously.

"There's no such thing as fate, kit." She replied. "Just an annoying habit for the world to stay the same." The Hyuuga frowned. "But if you're asking if I put the seal on that guy's forehead, then yes.
Yes I did. What, do you want yours personalized or something?"

The Hyuuga's eyes widened before another Hyuuga, this one an older woman, rushed over and pulled the child away, apologizing in between her hushed scolds to her daughter.

"Could you modify it?" Minato asked, curious.

"Sure, given enough time." Musume replied absently. She missed the significant look that passed between the two Seal Masters as she had caught sight of the brat.

"Hey, hey! The old pervert is here!" Naruto bounced happily up to them after the other classmates had bowed to accept the Hokage's praise. "And Musume-chan!" He jumped over in front of the kitsune. "You were sure a pain making my chakra coils so big, but thanks to the Kage Bushin, I passed with flying colors!" He adjusted his forehead protector proudly.

From the look of Minato's sudden glare, he had forgotten who it was who had taught his son that technique.

"I'm proud of you, brat." The fox said honestly, ruffling her hands through his hair. Damn- there was something about unruly yellow mops that was definitely addictive!

"Good job, Naruto. You deserve it." Minato smiled at his son, who grinned back.

"Yeah, I was beginning to think that you were a dud, kid." Jiraiya said, looking up at the sky and scratching the back of his head.

"Hey! I almost passed last year, and I'd only been in the academy for two years!" Naruto protested, breaking away from Musume's petting. She eyed Minato contemplatively, much to the Hokage's consternation.

"And your father's student Kakashi graduated at five, what's your point?" The sannin retorted. "It's a good thing you graduated this year. I had a bet going with Orochimaru, and if you hadn't passed this year, you would have become his apprentice."

A jolt of fear shot through the kitsune. Minato looked at her oddly, but she wasn't paying attention to him. They would seriously send off the brat… her brat, with that homicidal insane snake?

"Eheh." Naruto said with a grin, apparently unphased by the toad sage betting on him with the snake freak. "I don't know which is better, maybe I should go put the forehead protector back… snakes are cooler than toads…"

"Why you!" Jiraiya exclaimed, picking the boy up and ruffling his hair. The brat was cackling gleefully, and past her fear, Musume was jealous. She wanted to pet his hair. She eyed Minato again, who raised his eyebrow in response. "That's it! You're going to be my student, and I'm going to work you so hard you won't know day from night."

"In Konoha, right?"

"Minato, don't be such a…" Jiraiya paused as he realized the one who was wringing their hands and looking worried was not his student, but the woman standing beside him.

"He'll be fine with Jiraiya. He will learn a lot traveling with the sannin." Minato soothed, though he looked a bit confused as to why he had to do so.

"Yeah, Mom." Naruto said it like an insult, but the kitsune felt inordinately pleased to hear the term.
"I still don't want to deal with toads. Toads have warts!"

"Don't you want to follow in the footsteps of your father and his teacher, your godfather?" Minato asked solicitously.

Naruto squinted at his father and pouted. "No." He replied petulantly.

"I understand, brat. Who wants to have a summon that makes you so ugly demons run away from you?" Musume asked reasonably.

"That is not…!" Minato protested.

"After all, there are lots of summons out there. Bugs, and monkeys, and lizards and… who knows… foxes?" The kitsune continued, ignoring Minato's protests.

"Foxes!" Naruto exclaimed, wriggling out of the toad sage's grip. "Really?"

"No, there is no such thing as a fox summon. None of the demon animals have contracts." Minato said decisively.

Musume smirked. He only thought that because the 'demons' were better than any old summon, being able to manifest themselves in the world, and thus had no need of foolish contracts. Though they were known to accept them on a case-by-case basis. "If anyone can show that's not true, it's you brat." The fox assured him.

"Well, if you'd failed next year, too, Tsunade called dibs, and she summons slugs." Jiraiya said smugly.

"Ewwww!" Naruto said, his face screwed up in disgust.

"So be grateful, kid." The sage finished, crossing his arms over his chest. "Well, now that you have, we'll leave in a couple days for a most awesome training trip! We need to raise your level so you can kick ass in the chuunin exams here in Konoha in four years."

"Couple days?" Minato squeaked, right as Musume gasped, "Four years?" She hadn't realized that it was still that far away, or that the brat wouldn't be around for her to torment.

"Sheesh, you two are like a married couple. I'm sorry for making a move on your girl, Minato." Jiraiya huffed.

"Heh heh." Naruto chuckled.

The kyuubi ignored the barb, instead grilling the sannin. "Four years? Why do you have to leave with him? How will you get back to Konoha? Every time I leave there's this seal thing and it disappears. Did you break it to get in?" She asked, eying the toad hermit. It was possible, she supposed. She had a vague recollection that maybe he had been powerful enough to do so.

Naruto was the one who answered, though. "Hey, yeah! So it's in the forehead protectors, didn't you know?" He asked, tapping his own proudly. "They put up the seal after the Kyuubi attack, see, and now if you want to come you need to either be a shinobi of Leaf or get one of the special passes from the border guards."

"Oh." The kitsune blinked. That did make sense—ninja were coming and going all the time from Konoha. She turned to Minato. "So if I graduate from the academy, I can get one, too?"
"No." Minato said, but didn't elaborate.

"But…"

"I will look into getting you a permit to leave and enter as you please, if you would like." He allowed at her protest.

"Alright!" That would go a long way toward making her feel less trapped. This whole country, no, the whole world was hers to play with or destroy, dammit. Being cooped up in one city for fear she would never find it again was annoying, to say the least. Especially now that she had decided to stay for a while. "But still, why four years?" She pressed.

The sannin nodded. "Well, this year it's already too late, and besides, the exam was in Stone. Not a good place for the kid to go, seeing as who his father is. Three years after that it will be Leaf's turn to host."

"I can train my own son, too, you know, Jiraiya." Minato said dryly.

"You're always working, Dad." Naruto disagreed. The comment left Minato looking pained.

"You don't want us to destroy Konoha, do you?" Jiraiya asked.

"More than Naruto and Musume already have, you mean?" Minato asked dryly, causing both the two to grin with their eyes squinted in foxy mischief.

"We'll only be a frog summon away, Minato. And you can give Naruto one of those kunai of yours that tells you when to come if it's thrown."

"True." Minato mused, looking more relaxed at the thought, though the fox had no idea what the sage had just said and was thus not mollified.

"Are you coming home with us?" Naruto asked Musume, causing his father to cough.

The kitsune tapped her chin. "Tempting, brat, especially with you leaving soon." Especially if Minato always slept in his boxers.

“A week.” Minato said pointedly, giving Jiraiya a pointed look. “At least.”

"Sure." Naruto replied easily, though Jiraiya had his mouth open to say no. The older man shrugged in acquiescence.

“And you need to come back for holidays.” Minato continued.

“Sheesh, Minato! How am I supposed to get my training in with all these restrictions!” Jiraiya threw his arms up in the air dramatically.

“You mean... your research.” Musume extrapolated with a raised eyebrow, causing the sannin to pout.

“Come along, Naruto- you have to finish all your paperwork to make you an official ninja of Konoha!” Minato bent down to his son, placing a hand on his shoulder and smiling cheerfully.

At the word paperwork, Musume jumped backward. "Hahaha! I just remembered I was told I couldn't do something, so I think it's time to visit my favorite cousin." The demon announced before taking off, ignoring Minato's worried shout.
"Itachi, why can't I leave the house? How come you won't say anything? Where's Dad?"

"Sasuke." Mikoto grabbed up her younger son, even though he was really too big to be restrained in that way.

"Mom! I don't understand. I want to go to the Academy and train. Why do we have to stay in the house?"

"Because your dad is an ass, your brother is too committed to peace for your own good and his own sanity, and you're a brat." Came the reply from the eaves. Mikoto and Sasuke looked up in shock, seeing an Uchiha they had never met before hanging from the edge of their roof with hands and bare feet. "Yo, Itachi. Mind if I stay with you a while?"

Itachi's eyebrow twitched. "How long a while?" He asked.

"Itachi, who is this?" Mikoto asked nervously.

"Uchiha Musume, at your service." The kitsune said with a sweeping bow (upside down). She dropped to the floor, noting Sasuke gasping and crawling away from her.

"You're the one with the…"

"Yes." The demon interrupted Mikoto. "I'm the one that they are trying to match up with someone with a Sharin…" She felt the energy in her eyes building excitedly. No control, she though in disgust, she simply had too much chakra that was too twisted. She felt a sudden surge of sympathy for the brat, even if he reaped a lot of benefits from the arrangement. But he'd never had it this bad, anyway. "Well, the only one of you lot I like that isn't married and old as dirt is Itachi-kun, here."

"I'm not…" Itachi protested.

"I know, kit. You're much too young for me, don't worry. But this is the best way to rile up your clan, no?" Musume smirked, ignoring Sasuke. Apparently the massacre had given the kit a spine, since he was definitely lacking one at this point. Musume knew enough about wild animals, being one herself... sort of, to just leave him be until he relaxed a little.

"I don't wish to antagonize anyone- the situation is already very volatile." Itachi said warily.

"Ah, too bad. I just resolved to be as disruptive as possible to life in Konoha." At the tightening of Itachi’s face and his subtle motions toward battle-readiness, she qualified. "Not to destroy the town, Itachi-kun." She soothed. "My favorite brat will need a town to come back to, when he gets back from his training."

"Who's your favorite brat?" Sasuke pouted.

"Naruto is. Do you want to try to compete to replace him?" Musume asked curiously. It might actually work... her brat would be gone, and this one had hair that stuck up in the back in a somewhat amusing way. Although, she could just work on nipping the growing addiction to poofy human hair in the bud instead.

"No. I don't care what happens to that teacher's pet." Sasuke muttered petulantly.

The fox was so shocked at the reversal that her laughter was trapped careening hysterically around inside her head. Instead her face was twitching almost into smiles before smoothing over.
"And why are you insulting Dad? He's a great shinobi and a police officer!" Sasuke continued. He was starting to be less cute.

"Listen, you little punk. Your dad almost sent us into a civil war." The demon, though she might have approved of the ensuing chaos, figured this was a pretty good argument for persuading humans.

"Then maybe we should go to war." Sasuke huffed, crossing his arms.

"No." Itachi said, his voice low but intense.

"But big brother..."

"No, war is never something that should happen. It should be avoided at all costs." Itachi said emphatically, before standing and walking off stiffly.

Sasuke watched his brother go with a look like a kicked puppy before running off after Itachi.

Musume watched the two of them go with a sigh. She turned to the mother and cocked her head to the side. Mikoto's focus was intent on her sons as they took off. "You want something?" Musume asked suspiciously.

"What is happening to my husband?" She burst out.

"Ah." Musume rocked back on her heals. "Well, last I heard he was still... 'napping'. And considering how much chakra ended up going into the technique, it might be a while still."

"But he will wake up?" Mikoto gasped.

"Unless I put it on him again, I don't see why not." Although that was an idea. She could keep all the red eyed bugs in a perpetually comatose state! She might even be able to pass that off as an accident...

"Are... are you going to do that?"

The fox regarded the woman. Her expression almost made her want to do it, just because. "Well." She said, smirking devilishly. "Being comatose is probably better than what the Council has in store from him. So I guess it depends on if I'm feeling generous." something.

Mikoto looked somewhat constipated at the thought. Musume did like Itachi but his family was something else. No, they wouldn't be a good place to stay, even if it would piss off basically the whole village. If she can't sneak into Minato's house then she could always sleep in a tree again, or dig a den or

"Well." Musume stood, deciding to leave the woman to stew. "I have a man I to see about a burnt down apartment building."

Chapter End Notes

References to "being beautiful" a nod to Brilliant Dynamites Neon from Trigun.

This chapter and the next couple more significantly edited than previous ones from what's posted on ffnet. It doesn't really change any plot points but rather fixes some
rough patches in flow, etc.
"We could blow them up." The kyuubi suggested from behind the bars.

"No."

"Or... maim them a little?"

"No."

"Brat! They are completely irredeemable. Why on earth would you NOT want to kill them."

Naruto felt his teeth clench and smoothed his facial expression. Though both his prisoner and the humans in the physical world were both tempting him to murder, he had to remain calm. "And that is why these measures need to be implemented." He finished. "Thank you councilors."

"Yes, Hokage-sama." They replied, knowing it was a dismissal.

OOooOOOO

"Go away."

"Kakashi, I just wanted to..." The kitsune tried, before being cut off.

"I have been ordered to not destroy any more of the village. And for that, you need to leave."

Kakashi looked up at the kitsune with a sharply focused gaze... and two eyes.

"Er... actually, in the spirit of not destroying things..." and because this particular ninja might actually be able to kill her... "and because it was too easy to trick that old pervert..." Kakashi's gaze turned slightly from purely murderous to somewhat interested. The kitsune dug out the respectably sized stack of manga and presented it to the ninja.

Kakashi stared at the pile warily for several minutes. The kitsune just held it out steadily. Finally he took the books and looked them over."Icha Icha Paradise, special edition series?" He read dubiously. But he still cracked it open to the first page.

The look of utter shock was priceless. The kitsune decided then and there that she had to do random acts of kindness in between her pranks. The ninja looked like his entire world view had come crashing down about his ears.

"Signed by the author?" Kakashi whispered, quickly paging through everything quickly to confirm that they were all the real deal. His hands were trembling slightly.

"I'm getting pretty good at repair of buildings burnt down by fire, too, if you want some help." The kitsune smirked. "I can't guarantee that you'll think the end result is the workings of a sane person, however. Because, well, it's probably not..."

"Thank you." Kakashi said, looking up at her with his Sharingan closed.

"It was a pleasure." Musume added honestly. "I don't suppose the originals survived the fire..."
She ducked instinctively out of the way of the thrown kunai.

"You had to ruin the moment." Kakashi muttered, shaking his head.

"Are they, though? I spent a long time on… whoops!" That one almost cut her! "They are a work of art." The kitsune protested hotly. "Eep!" She dodged this last one, but noticed that it wasn't aimed nearly as well as the previous ones. She snuck a glance back as she leapt away and saw that the ninja had his nose firmly in the crease of the book and was giggling a bit to himself. She cackled gleefully as she skipped away.

OooooOOo

"Hey, brat." The kitsune hoped to startle Naruto, but he simply waved a hand behind him. She looked over his shoulder to look at what he was doing. It seemed to be some sort of seal thingie. Since she only knew the one she was currently employing, and only by its chakra patterns, she had no idea what he was drawing. "What are you doing, kit?"

Naruto finished a sweeping line with his brush and then set it to the side before turning around. "I'm researching how to make a contract. The old pervert says that if I can, he'll teach me dad's spinning ball technique!" The kid grinned up at her, eyes squinted closed in happiness.

"Contract?" She asked, hoping he didn't mean what she thought he meant.

"Yeah! I want to make one with the foxes, like you said to do, Musume-chan!" He crossed his arms over his chest proudly.

"I see." He meant exactly what she thought he meant. "Isn't it a bit dangerous to be working on something like that?"

Naruto's happy smile turned to a thunderous scowl. "Not you, too!" He huffed. "The lecherous sage wrote his own contract, and so did his two teammates."

"Aren't they some sort of legendary ninja or something, brat?"

"Sure. But I'm the number one ninja of all time, so I can make one, too. And it will be even better than theirs." Naruto said proudly.

"Uh huh." The kitsune said dubiously.

"And anyway, we're staying here for a bit longer than even Dad was demanding so we can read all the stuff in the library about it." Naruto said with a sour look on his face.

"That's great!" The kitsune cheered.

Naruto squinted at her. "I don't see why that's so great."

"Don't pout, brat." The kitsune grinned. "I just wasn't up to letting you go just yet."

"It's not like we're not coming back." He huffed.

"Yeah, but you kits grow up so fast. Next thing I know you'll be all tall and wearing something respectable and not wanting me to do… this!" She pounced on him and started ruffling his hair.

"I already don't want you to do that!" He yowled in protest, trying to shove the cackling kitsune off of him. "Don't you have some new family you're supposed to be bugging?"
"Aw, you spoil my fun, kit." Musume's eyes crinkled up. "And I don't want to bug any family but yours, anyway." She pounced on him, fake biting at his stomach until he was screaming with laughter.

OoooOoooOOO

The kitsune stared long enough to pressure Minato into feeding her lunch. Which was, much to her pleasure, ramen. The reason why, however, was less to her liking.

"How did Danzo get out?" Jiraiya growled, biting into his ramen like it was an enemy ninja.

"He has a lot of members of the ANBU and the council that are loyal to him." Minato sighed, rubbing his head distractedly.

"That's treason!" Jiraiya growled, slamming his fist down on the table. The kitsune rescued her ramen, but some of the older ninjas' spilled over.

"I know that, sensei, but I don't know what I can do about it, short of sending everyone to Inoichi." He held up a hand at the look on the older man's face. "Which we cannot do."

"What about the Uchiha, then?" The kitsune asked curiously.

"Fugaku has woken up, finally." Minato said with a look at her that was somewhat uneasy. "And now the whole clan is fighting."

The kitsune frowned. Maybe she shouldn't go back there. On the other hand, it would stir up a lot of chaos…

"Please don't do anything to make this worse." Minato almost seemed to be begging.

The kitsune looked him over- he was rather haggard. She twitched her nose contemplatively.

"Please." Minato asked again, quietly.

"I have recently resolved to disrupt as many constants in this life as I can." The kitsune declared. Minato looked positively ill, and Jiraiya was starting to look at her like an enemy. Time for the reversal then. She grinned cheekily. "And it has recently come to my attention that acting outside of people's expectations is the best way to do that." Now they all looked confused. "Hence- this week, I am practicing random acts of kindness." She concluded. "So I shall honor your request, Hoakge-sama." She slurped her soup.

"Really?" Minato looked pathetically like a child who was told that he actually could have the candy, after all.

"Sure. Aren't I generous?" She chuckled into the broth.

"Depends on one's basis for comparison." Jiraiya muttered. She stuck her tongue out at him. "Well, if Danzo does try anything, I'll be here for a while. And Orochimaru will be here soon…" The kitsune choked on her soup. Say what now? The snake was always an enemy of Konoha. What the hell had happened to change that?

"Are you ok, Musume-chan?" Naruto asked in concern. She waved him off and soothed the things in her throat that were trying to make her cough.

Minato sighed and pushed his ramen away, causing the kitsune to feel a bit worried about him. But
not worried enough to stop her from stealing his leftovers and finishing them off, over the protests of Naruto, who she had beaten to grabbing it.

"Speak of the devil!" Jiraiya boomed, going to the patio door and throwing it open. There stood a sight that set fear and anger rushing through the kitsune.

It was Orochimaru! The one who had almost defeated her with nearly half her tails out, the one that had messed with her seal to make her almost completely sensory deprived. The one that was even more creepily proficient with the body hopping than she ever hoped that she would be.

The snake sannin looked over at the kitsune in some surprise when he felt the rush of killing intent roll off of the relatively small and innocuous looking woman. Although, she did have the look of an Uchiha, and they were known for unreasoning hatred and violence. Orochimaru moved to brace himself against the oncoming attack.

The kitsune, meanwhile, was a bit confused. This Orochimaru looked almost… relaxed? Even in the battle stance he had slipped into, there was a certain amount of peace in him. She cocked her head to the side and studied the ninja. There was something else that was very off… something… he looked similar to many humans, so she wasn't quite sure what it was. Until she noticed the streaks of grey in his hair, and the wrinkles around his eyes and mouth. He looked… not old really, but certainly not the prime of youth his body switch technique always left him in.

"Musume." The kitsune felt an arm on her shoulder and turned to Minato, though she kept part of her vision on the not-quite-missing-nin. "This is Orochimaru, he is a friend of Konoha."

"I didn't realize you had taken a new wife, Minato." Orochimaru said in his raspy voice. "Though now it makes a bit more sense why you are so concerned about the Uchiha." He nodded toward the kitsune.

She forgot a good portion of her wariness of the snake at her renewed anger at the Uchiha clan. "If it's really that obvious, what the hell?"

"You are having a secret affair, then?" Orochimaru asked, looking surprised and impressed.

"No!" Minato growled. "She meant that it was obvious that she is an Uchiha. We are not having an affair, nor are we married."

"As much as everyone keeps saying we are, though, we might have to get hitched." The kitsune mused, leaning back. Minato just gaped at her, at a loss for words.

"You better watch out for that one!" Jiraiya chuckled. "She's definitely a vixen."

"Thank you." The kitsune said, her smile wide. If the toad sage kept complimenting her, she might have to start liking long grey hair. She eyes his main contemplatively, to Jiraiya's evident unease.

"So how have you been, Chi-chan?" Jiraiya asked, deciding to ignore Musume.

"Don't call me that! I told you what I would do to you if you did." Orochimaru hissed (more than usual).

"Yes, set poisonous snakes in my bed to chew off my manhood." The hermit replied easily, slapping the former (alternate future?) betrayer on the shoulder.

"You missed my graduation." Naruto pouted.
"Ah, you did make it this year? Too bad." Orochimaru said as the two sannin moved to sit around the table. "If you failed again I was going to get you as an apprentice."

"Yeah- snakes are cooler than toads." Naruto mused, making Orochimaru smirk happily and Jiraiya frown. "But I like foxes best, so I'm going to make my own summon just for them!"

"I told you, kid! You can't summon foxes." Jiraiya looked annoyed.

"Foxes are… demons." Minato said calmly. "You should pick another animal."

Naruto's face twisted into a petulant frown. "No. I want to do foxes."

The kitsune's face twitched, both at the defiance and the unintended double entendre. "At least he doesn't want to summon tanuki." The kitsune imagined that scenario and couldn't quite figure out if the whole Jinchuuriki would come, just the demon, the demon in the person's body… her attention snapped back to the table when Orochimaru leaned forward to Naruto.

The snake sannin sat back slightly and looked the kitsune in the eye. "What exactly is your problem with me?" He asked.

She reached over the table and pinched him on the cheek, so hard and fast he barely had time to recoil before she withdrew. Not a fake skin. It seemed to be his real flesh. The kitsune was intrigued.

"What the hell?" Orochimaru asked, moving as if to stand up.

"Easy, friend." Jiraiya put a hand on his teammate's shoulder.

"Musume, you cannot attack my guests when you are one yourself." Minato said sternly. Naruto giggled a bit at the red welt on the older ninja's face. "Orochimaru is a trusted advisor." He slid a wry grin to the other then smirked. "Besides, I've already beaten him to a pulp. You don't need to attack him as well."

"It was a lucky shot." The snake sannin scoffed, relaxing.

"I'm always up for a rematch." Minato replied easily. Orochimaru only sniffed.

"When did you fight him?" The kitsune asked, curious. And where? A fight between the two of them would take out half the village.

"It was before you came to the village." Minato said, grabbing at his ramen bowl only to find it missing. He sighed in resignation, then continued. "A lot of people had ideas on what to do in the aftermath of the kyuubi attack." The kitsune tried to not shift at the mention of the almost-start of the nearly endless repeats of her imprisonment. If she never did anything twice anything it would be too soon. "But the crux of the matter was, there was no damage to the village at all, and very few casualties. So I just demonstrated that my ideas were the best."

"By taking out Chi-chan in under a minute and defeating half the council before they could properly process the battle." Jiraiya chuckled.

"Indeed." Orochimaru grunted, looking, if anything, bemused. "And you have since proven that you were correct with less… violent persuasions." The snake sannin didn't comment on the nickname, though his thumb was twitching like he wanted to bite it. "I have since learned from the snake sages about the virtue of patience." The kitsune was now almost unbearably curious. As far as she had ever seen, the only sages were Naruto and Jiraiya- both of them of the toads. What would a snake sage be like?
"I'm glad you could make it here so quickly." Minato said.

"It's always a pleasure to conduct some genetic research." Orochimaru hissed, with that familiar gleam coming to his eyes and making the kitsune tense. The bastard was sitting next to her kit!

"What research?" Naruto looked more excited about the prospect than he ought to. "Is it like dad's where there are lots of lights and explosions?"

Minato gave his son an embarrassed look.

"No, it's to see what is going wrong with the Uchiha clan that they are having such low birth rates and so few females." Orochimaru replied.

"They're all inbred pricks." The kitsune replied in confusion. "What more is there to know?"

"Ah." Orochimaru said, leaning forward. "There is everything to know. They are inbred- absolutely. But inbred how, exactly?"

The kitsune cocked her head to the side. "When two people love each other very much…"

"Musume!" Minato snapped, slapping his hand over her mouth.

Orochimaru let out a hissing laugh that sent shivers down her spine.

OoOOoOOO

The snake sannin had taken over an outbuilding by Minato's house. The kitsune stayed away for a bit, wary of walking in and getting experimented upon (especially considering his unhealthy obsession with bleeding her) but eventually the temptation was too much.

She snuck in a window and clung to the rafters with toes and fingers, observing Orochimaru going about his mysterious tasks. There were devices of metal and mirrors, tubes of things, odd shaped bottles of glass, various seals and notes strewn about…

"If you have satisfied your curiosity, you may leave." Orochimaru rasped.

"Eep!" The kitsune yelped in startled, losing her grip with one foot and one hand and almost crashing to the ground. She regrabbed the beam with her hand and dropped gracefully to the ground. "I haven't." The kitsune replied honestly.

The pale man turned to look at her, an eyebrow raised.

"I like the white in your hair." The comment came out without her realizing she had actually been thinking it. Mostly because the whole concept had been running about in her head since she first saw him in this reality.

"Thank you." Orochimaru drawled. He pulled something from under the contraption he was fiddling with and picked up a tube and started twirling it.

"Weren't you afraid of getting old or wanting to be immortal or something?" She asked finally, unable to think of a more subtle way to ask how Konoha's number one enemy... well, ok, maybe number two, but certainly an enemy ended up like... this.

"Immortality is a myth and impossible."

"Not if you phase out of this plane of temporal reality." The kitsune muttered, leading Orochimaru to
give her an odd look. It was a bit ironic, really, that the man who had in other timelines been searching fanatically for a way to keep himself young and alive was now denying the possibility to the body that had actually managed it, prior to being taken over by a demon (who was also immortal). Getting his ass handed to him by Minato and not meeting Madara and joining the Akatsuki had changed him so much. The kitsune cocked her head and regarded the aging man in front of her. Those were some fairly large life events, but even so...

"Tsunade fixed the part of my brain that was making me think such things were valid possibilities. Perhaps she should take a look at you as well." He raised an eyebrow in her direction when he felt her continued stares.

"Heh heh. I think I'm a bit too crazy for anyone to fix." Besides the fact that she wasn't human and thus had completely different mental processes.

"Hm." Orochimaru went back to looking through the contraption of metal, glass and chakra. "Besides." He continued, not looking up from his work, "I realized that there was too much in this world for any one person to ever know fully, and even should they be able to, there are many other realms to study." He stopped and looked up at the ceiling. "I think I like the search itself better, anyway. There is always something new, and a change in one's way of thinking."

"You learned all this from the snakes?" If so, perhaps she had to give them a bit more credit. Perhaps missing all your limbs meant that you had time to think about stuff other people didn't bother with?

"Not all." Orochimaru said calmly, moving to the other side of the room.

The kitsune snuck over to the contraption, looking through where Orochimaru had been looking. She saw lots of little round things with something inside... she hmmed and extended her other senses to the contraption in front of her. "Water filled fat bags?" She asked in surprise.

"They're called cells." Orochimaru supplied.

"Cells." The kitsune mused. "Why are you looking at cells?"

"As part of my workup."

"These are part of the blood, yes?" She asked. They had felt quite a bit like the things that were constantly racing about her body.

"Yes." Orochimaru replied, looking surprised.

"Is there one of the little smaller-than-cells things that is making the Uchiha sick?" She asked, feeling a bit excited. Was it one of the flat ones that liked to hide in the bags? Or the ones that just touched the outside?

"Yes." Orochimaru looked even more surprised now, though he also was starting to look thoughtful.

"What is it then?"

"It's one of the ones that stops bleeding."

The bleeding thing would explain a lot- like the manky eyes when activated in the non-eternal form causing tears of blood to run down the face. The kitsune wasn't a medic nin, but even before her foray into the healing arts, the demon would have known that bleeding from the eyes wasn't normal. It was about as subtle as projectile vomiting.
"Are you willing to give me your blood yet?" Orochimaru asked slyly.

"No." The kitsune refused. Who knew what her blood said? Probably 'demon here! And not really who she says she is!' in big, bloody letters. Besides- her blood wasn't so much blood anymore as it was some sort of chakra/biological hybrid. "What's this thing for though?" She deflected.

"A protein separator."

"What's a protein?"

Orochimaru let out a long suffering sigh. "I need to get this work done."

Musume grinned, especially at seeing the former nuisance so put out. "What happened to 'the joy of discovery and changing beliefs' and such? Teaching is the best way to see things in a different light."

The snake sannin gave her a dubious look, but replied to her question. "A protein is one of the things that circulated in blood. And I believe it is the thing that is deficient. It would be a lot easier if I had an affected sample from a female, however..."

"Nice try." The kitsune smirked. "The answer is still no." She easily dodged his almost body flicker fast attack and danced away, barking laughter. "And you'll need to be faster than that to catch me." She taunted. Though at the look in the older nin's eyes she also took the precaution to make her skin as hard as she could to avoid needle penetration (just in case).

OoooOOOoo

A week later, Musume landed next to Itachi's perch on the roof overlooking the main Uchiha meeting grounds. "So." She said.

"Hm." Itachi replied.

Some Uchiha or the other was ranting down below. "This is ridiculous! Some outside can't come in here and tell us what we have to do! Especially who we fucking marry!"

"Or just fuck in general!" Someone called, eliciting some laughs. But the mood quickly became deadly serious again.

"What's up?" The kitsune asked. She didn't think they could be this riled up about her pestering Itachi and his family. Especially since the topic seemed to be mating, which seemed like eating grass when there was a frog caught right by your nose.

"Orochimaru said the Sharingan was carried on the part that makes someone a woman, but that men have it, too." He looked dubious about that. "So a woman needs two copies in order to have the Sharingan, but men only need one. Because it is masked by the non-Sharingan copy." He stopped and looked up at the sky, trying to remember. "And he said that there was also a problem with bleeding that was trapped with the eye technique. It kills all the girls, but there is something on the male copy that compensates for it a bit, the rest is mitigated only by male children with enormous stores of chakra, which go into replenishing the blood. He said that it could be separated with taking wives and husbands that aren't Uchiha"

"Ah." Hence, the impromptu pre-riot. During her periodic visits to bug Orochimaru, the snake sannin had explained the whole blood bit, but he and the kitsune had gotten distracted talking about his research (or trying to draw blood or avoid needles, respectively) and he had never gotten around to actually tell her his recommendations. He had managed to dispel seventeen clones, however.
Itachi looked at her sideways. "Which brings up the question of how you have the Sharingan, as that would mean that any daughter of Madara's would have the normal copy blocking it."

"Yes, it does bring that up, doesn't it?" She replied, not answering. If her observations on Minato held true for Itachi, she would just have to keep the blank face for... aha! At Itachi's dawning look of horror she turned away abruptly. Both because it confirmed whatever theory he had just come up with and so that she wouldn't laugh in his face.

"Oh... I..."

"Just... don't" The kitsune said. If he said one more word she was going to lose it and crack up. She felt his gaze, though not his attention, shift back to the crowd. When she had sufficiently contained herself she turned to look at the crowd as well. Her eyes were moist from holding all her mirth in, though she was pretty sure Itachi was interpreting it differently.

"Fugaku was right! This village is full of Senju who want to see us destroyed."

Musume sighed. This was entirely too much stupidity for her to deal with right now. And besides, she was still acting under her random acts of kindness mission. Although the old ladies she was helping with groceries were no longer looking at her with suspicion and fear, so she probably should switch back pretty soon to destruction.

Musume launched herself into the middle of the forming mob. "What the hell are you talking about? The Senju wasn't even really a clan. There are none of them left except on old hag." The kyuubi growled from on top of the groaning body of the last person who spoke.

"The whole town is Senju! And now they are trying to make us like them- all watered down and pathetic."

Musume wanted to hit her head on something. That is, something other than the metaphorical brick wall that was this crowds' (lack of) intellect. "You can't have it both ways, either they are watered down to nothing, or they are conspiring against you." She pointed out logically. The crowd shifted angrily. "And they aren't the problem- you are!" That got more angry mutters. "You're the ones that have made it so that all your daughters die in the womb! You are the ones making this clan shrink into nothing. Do you not notice the empty houses? Do you really want your children marrying their siblings?" She had the idea that this was a taboo- and from the looks of disgust she was right.

"Why should we listen to a retard like you?"

The kitsune felt her eyes twitch into the Sharingan and start to spin. Maybe a little death and destruction today... except that she didn't know who had spoken. "Perhaps you all would like to try being completely controlled by these eyes from the time you entered the world." She mentally applauded herself for her clever use of euphemism. "We'll see how well you function after I make you kill your family and friends, hmm?" The anger was dispersing, some people were coughing uneasily.

"You all need to choose." She continued. "Do you want to become a part of this village like you have always wanted to? Or do you want to stay with your current ways, die off as a clan and become obsolete? If you want to remain stagnant, you might as well kill yourselves now and save others the trouble."

"The Senju control this village, there is no place for us! They keep tying to keep us down."

"Look around. Do you see any Senju? The last one is a drunken gambling addict that hasn't been
seen in this village for years. Where is this clan that has been keeping us down? The Uchiha have survived when the Senju have become obsolete."

"You're not in our clan, outsider."

The kitsune felt the small human restraints on her rage snap apart as she rounded on the offending speaker. To her frustration, again she could not find him. She did feel some satisfaction that the Uchiha all involuntarily stepped back when her gaze passed over them, many of them gasping or letting out small shouts of fear. "I am your clan. I am the epitome of the degradation you can fall to. I know the depths to which you can sink and have come crawling back out of it, covered in the filth of your lives." She wasn't sure she was talking just to the Uchiha anymore.

She took a deep breath, looked up to the sky, where the Mangekyou Sharingan showed her the stars through the shielding blue and the clouds as specks of liquid. She turned her gaze back on the huddled clan. "I could kill you all where you stand. You wouldn't even have to feel a thing- it would all just end. I deign to allow you to live." There were shocked gasps and whimpers. "What's more- so far, this village allows you to continue your pathetic existence." She scowled. "So stop bitching like a group of pansies and take advantage of it. Live!"

Chapter End Notes

Quotes about being generous from The Labyrinth.
"I'm going to bring my clan back to greatness!" Sasuke spat, punching Naruto through the gut.

"How are you going to do that, bastard, when all you do completely immoral? Your clan is dead. And good riddance!" Naruto replied, darting back as his stomach healed over.

It was a familiar battle, one that always happened, with some variation, in all of the lives. Sometimes there was more love, sometimes more hate, sometimes it was impersonal.

"I'm going to kill you." Sasuke said it like it was a fact, an inevitable outcome.

"Then I'll see you in hell, bastard." Naruto growled in response.

OooOooOOo

"I said I wanted to talk to the head of the clan." Minato looked annoyed.

"Ok, so speak." Musume replied, matching his attitude.

"What?"

"I somehow became the head of the clan." She shrugged. "I think it's a reflection of their masochistic tendencies."

"You somehow became their clan head?" Minato repeated incredulously. "What did you do to them?"

"They were about to rebel, so I just offered to kill them quickly and painlessly to save everyone the trouble." Musume rubbed her chin. "Though I was cranky enough that I probably would have trapped them in the worst sort of hell for the few seconds before I killed their physical bodies." She mused. The whole standoff had been rather glorious. She was, however, somewhat depressed that they hadn't taken her up on her offer. It would have solved so many problems.

"Oh boy." Minato rubbed his head. "I think we both need to talk to the entire clan, then, or rather, the heads of all the households."

"Why?" She asked defensively.

"Because it is entirely possible that they are planning things underground and have set you up as a distraction." Minato said as he strode forward. "Especially considering that they left you to come out here on your own."

"Oh, well, not exactly." The kitsune grinned, rubbing the back of her head. "Firstly, they are all really freaking slow. And secondly, I'm still back there slapping sense into them." At Minato's horrified look she clarified. "With words, of course." She coughed. "Mostly."

"How can you be..."

"We're at the main meeting house. You know where that is, right?" She asked.

"Yes..."

"Good, good. You might want to get there quickly before something gets blown up. I think my
chakra is being pulled away..." the clone didn't get to finish its statement because it dispersed in a poof of smoke.

Minato stared at the space it had occupied for several seconds, completely stunned that he had had no idea that it was a clone, and not Musume. She was so pathetic at any attempt to use jutsu that it was easy to forget that they had put dozens of chakra disruptors on her when she was first taken in for questioning before giving it up as an impossible task. She simply had too much chakra to disrupt it all.

Actually, though... Minato was struck by a sudden epiphany as he leapt toward the Uchiha meeting house. Musume could easily have the same problem as Naruto- that there was simply too much chakra to use properly. In her case, possibly compounded due to not being in control of if from birth until Madara's death. Minato contemplated himself suddenly dropped into his current body after being a spectator at best for the entirety of his life... it would be a miracle if he had enough control to even walk! Minato suddenly had a bit more sympathy for Musume being a flaky nutcase. But only a little bit.

His thoughts were set to the back of his mind as he neared the building. Like Musume's clone had intimated, it was chaos. However, he wasn't sure how he could get in to make a difference, as there was some sort of barrier made out of black flame that was surrounding the meeting house. Hopefully, it was not hot enough to melt the seal off of his special kunai. He drew one from his omnipresent pouch and tossed it through the fire. He could immediately sense the room on the other side- and what he sensed was not particularly soothing.

He looked at the ANBU bodyguards beside him that were his personal guard for the day. One of them stepped forward as if to protest the insanity of Minato's plan, but the Hokage knew that he was the only one who would be able to get through the flames, if they were what he thought they were.

Minato pulled himself through space, time and the fire and landed next to several scared and angry Uchiha. They ignored him, instead leaping to attack someone moving in the center of the entire mess. Minato assumed that it was Musume, though whoever it was was moving so quickly that he couldn't totally make them out. Which meant that whoever it was was continuously moving at body flicker speeds. He hadn't thought it possible.

The floor of the meeting house was covered in bodies- some screaming and grabbing their heads, but most still. There was also blood splashed on the walls and over the bodies, making almost artistic marks against the white shoji and tan tatami.

As Minato tried to figure out the best plan of action, Uchiha Battare leapt towards where Musume (?) had been several seconds ago and instead stabbed Uchiha Kobune in the neck, sending another spray of blood splashing against the wall. Battare's eyes widened in horror before he fell to the ground limply. Kobune was gurgling and staggered backwards, clutching his neck.

Three more Uchiha fell over, and then movement stopped. Minato was still trying to decide which side he should fight on, or what he should do at all. The previously almost invisibly fast person halted in the center of the room, resolving into a panting Musume.

"I'm glad you came." She gasped out, straightening and wiping some sweat off her forehead. "Can you watch my back? The ones that are more recently down will probably be back up soon, I can't maintain more than a few moments anymore."

Her eyes rose to meet Minato's and he couldn't help the gasp as his vision was locked with red eyes that with three swirls chasing each other around her pupils and radiating black lines going out from them.
"Sorry." She muttered, lowering her gaze and giving a shaking sigh.

Minato came towards her, noting that some of the Uchiha on the floor were already stirring. He quickly performed a jutsu to secure them all.

"Thanks." She moved towards Kobune, who was starting to look deathly pale, and turned back to Minato with her normal dark eyes. "Will you keep me safe?" She asked again.

"Yes." Minato replied.

And with that she nodded and turned back to Kobune. The other Uchiha's eyes were rolling in fear and he looked to be on death's door. Minato looked at the man sadly. Though they had had their differences, he did not wish anyone of his villagers harm. In fact, he was sworn to protect them.

Minato watched with a mixture of confusion and curiosity as Musume put her hands over Kobune's neck and stared at it in a familiar intense look. He was about to get angry at her for deliberately spacing out in the middle of such a chaotic mess when he saw that Kobune was no longer looking like he was getting worse. In fact, he was starting to breathe easier and his color was coming back. Minato gaped at Musume. A well trained medic-nin would be hard-pressed to save a man whose throat had been as savaged as Kobune's was, especially after fighting such a pitched battle. For Musume, who theoretically had abyssmal chakra control, it seemed impossible. Yet, there she was.

"What are you doing to Kobune!" Came a yell from behind him. Minato grabbed Nibui and restrained her.

"Your husband will be fine." Minato said in something approaching wonder.

"How can he be fine? He was dying, and now that freak is doing something to him!"

"That's right." Minato replied easily. "And look at what it is that she is doing." He could tell when Nibui let out a startled gasp and relaxed from her efforts to get to her husband that she could see it, too. Together they waited the remaining twenty minutes it took for Musume to heal the Uchiha. By that time, all of those who had been struck down by the Mangekyou Sharingan were awake, and it was clear that some of the Uchiha would not be as lucky as Nibui and had already succumbed to their wounds.

"Did she attack any of you?" Minato asked, torn as to what he would do if the answer was yes.

"She came in here, saying that if she were our head than she should be in on all meetings, and that we couldn't sneak past her that easily. Like we would really elect her to the position of leader!" Nibui snarled as she stood some distance from the Hokage, eying him warily. "We told her to get out, but she refused. And then..." Nibui waved at the dead and bound bodies and the blood everywhere.

"People are dead." Minato prompted.

"She wouldn't stay still! How are we supposed to avoid one another in such close quarters?" Nibui asked hysterically.

"She didn't attack back?" Minato asked hopefully.

"Of course she did, with those horrible eyes." Nibui shuddered. "She's too good to 'deign to kill us' with traditional weapons." She spat.

"Deign to kill?" Minato asked- it had sounded like a quote.
"That's what she said before- that we should be grateful she deigned to suffer us to live," Nibui growled, and then crossed her arms over her chest and refused to say anything more.

Musume pulled away from Kobune, who looked up at her with wide eyes. She stood and swayed, and Minato hurried forward to catch her. "That's a lot more work than I thought it was going to be." She muttered, looking up at Minato with unfocused dark eyes. "Anyone else dying but not dead?"

"No. And you will pass out if you try anything more." Minato scolded.

"Heh. No way, I have lots of chakra left, it's just my body that is wearing thin. Probably should have eaten something." Musume mused. She closed her eyes.

"Musume!" Minato said sharply. "You can't blank out now, you need to put down the flames. Others are injured, and could use a medic-nin."

One dark eye cracked open. "Give me a little bit, I need to get some strength." It was several minutes later and Minato was about to start scribing a seal on the floor to shock her out of her daze when Musume's eyes opened again.

She straightened with a yawn, apparently back to full strength, relatively anyway. "Thanks." She grinned up at him. "If I keep playing the damsel in distress will you carry me?" She asked cheekily.

Minato felt his eyebrow quirk up. "Perhaps." He replied.

"Really?" Musume leaned on Minato's shoulder. "I'll remember that, then." She said before standing away from him and moving toward the edges of the building. "Amaratsu's fire's giving people troubles, it seems. Good. Sort of." She rubbed her chin. "Might have been better if people had been able to run away, but I was more concerned with reinforcements."

Minato could see why, only a very few of the Uchiha were here, all the most discontent about the current situation and the staunchest of Fugaku's supporters.

"Whether the election was a sham or not, Hokage-sama, these people have made themselves mine. As such I will deal with them. And cooperate fully with the wishes of Konoha." Musume said, her back ram-rod straight and proper, before she bowed deeply to Minato. With that gesture, the flames vanished as if they had never been.

ANBU and Konoha police flooded into the building, stopping as they caught sight of the bound men and few women on the floor.

"Hokage-sama?" Rat asked, tilting her head toward the prisoners.

"If you would take them to Police Headquarters, Rat-san, and stay with them until the Hokage and I can sort through everyone." Musume said formally, nodding her head to the ANBU. Everyone stared at her, a bit taken aback at the seriousness she was displaying, before the ANBU snapped to attention and started to body flicker the tied offenders away. "I would appreciate your help, Hokage-sama." Musume said, turning back to Minato. "There has been mutiny, but there may have been treason, as well."

"Of course." Minato nodded. Treason was his jurisdiction, mutiny hers.

OoOoooOOO

By the time Minato and Musume had sorted through the five bodies, seventeen prisoners, and eight bystanders of the illicit meeting, there were three more people who would be sharing Fugaku's
scheduled execution and eight people who needed discipline from their leader. Who was still, despite
the surrealism of it, Uchiha Musume.

The conspirators had pushed the election forward with their unlikely candidate, but they had done so
through official channels. And surprisingly, most of the Uchiha were content with the decision.
Musume was clearly the strongest, as she had defeated almost two dozen Sharingan users. That she
was almost unable to use jutsu, was not born in the village and had spent the past five or so years
causing chaos seemed to be less important to the general Uchiha populous than having a consistent,
strong leader. It probably helped that Musume and Minato were known to be on good terms and the
clan was worried about being wiped out by the village, which was less of a possibility since Danzo
had fled, but was still being muttered about as a possibility in the rumor mill of the city.

"What are you going to do with them?" Minato asked Musume in a lull in the chaos. He looked at
her warily. Literally anything she said would not surprise him.

"Tempting as it is to just kill them, probably that would be a bad idea." Musume looked very put out
at the thought.

"I agree." Minato said with relief. "Right now they see you as strong but beneficial, if you start
killing them, they might panic."

"Ch." She huffed. "I have an idea of what to do. Once they are officially sentenced you'll see."

"Musume..." he drew out her name warningly.

"It's nothing that is without precedence, don't worry." Musume smirked. "But I have other things I
wanted to discuss, before we get sucked back into nonsense." She sighed.

"What?"

"I want the Konoha police to become separate from Uchiha, and for more Uchiha to be in ANBU.
And this separate part of the town thing is ridiculous. We probably can't do anything with the other
clan's complexes, but this clan needs to integrate to the rest of the town if it is going to survive."
Musume mused.

Minato let out his breath, smiling. "I agree."

"Good." The Konoha police force, helped with ANBU, brought out the eight to be released to their
clan head. Musume stood up and put her hands on the first two foreheads she came to. Their eyes
widened but they stood still.

After a minute, she moved onto the next two, then the next, and the next. When her hand left their
foreheads, it left behind a very familiar scrolling mark, except that the center had three commas
chasing each other, not an 'x'. Minato frowned to see yet more evidence of Musume's ability to set
the Hyuuga seal, though her ability to alter it was somewhat troubling.

Musume opened her eyes finally and regarded the seven men and one woman. "I have set a variant
of the Hyuuga clan's seal on you. You will not be able to use your Sharingan, nor will you be able to
conceive a child." There were shocked gasps and some started forward, though they were stopped
by the police and ANBU.

Musume quirked an eyebrow up. "If you continue to cause trouble, I will put this seal on your
children, siblings, and possibly parents as well, depending on how much you piss me off."
The Uchiha were starting to growl. "But I will entertain petitions for its removal on a yearly basis." There
were shocked gasps again, but this time they were followed by looks of confusion and some hope.
"Now, shoo." She said, waving them off.

The eight scuttled away.

"You're not worried about them causing more trouble?" Minato asked bemusedly.

"You think they will?" Musume asked, sounding too hopeful for Minato's peace of mind.

"I'll miss you, brat." Musume said fondly, rubbing Naruto's head and cooing a bit over his hair. She was in her official Uchiha clan head garb, which was entirely too much blue for her taste, but she decided at the crazed gleam in the eyes of Uchiha Shatsu, her wardrobe assistant, that this was perhaps one battle that she could take on after she'd finished turning everything else onto its ear. She still refused to wear shoes, however. The humans could wear bizarre footwear to separate them from their environment if they wanted to, but she had to draw the line somewhere.

"I might miss you, too." Naruto confessed. "Especially since Jiraiya won't do fun things like this with me." He pouted.

"Well, what a way to leave the village- with a legacy of explosions!" The kitsune laughed. She turned to the others who were arrayed along the wall, a good portion of them shadow clones of herself and Naruto, most of the rest were younger Uchiha, with some scattering of other villagers with a love of destruction. Musume felt a sniffle of pride at the amassed destructive power.

"Everyone ready?" She called.

"YES!" Came a happy roar in response.

"Then let's do this!" She said, sending a swift punch to the wall with her reinforced fist. A wide crack appeared in the wall around the Uchiha compound. She busied herself with cracking the wall and tearing great chunks from it, while Naruto at her side used some sort of lightning jutsu overloaded to shatter large pieces from the wall, and others on either side of her used various jutsu and physical attacks to turn the once proud wall to rubble. As her clones dispersed, she felt the memories of her demolition magnified and smiled happily.

She hopped up onto a pile of rubble and beamed at her helpers, who had gathered back to what used to be the gate. "Thank you all, you have done a great service to the Uchiha clan." She smiled. "One person could have probably done this with some Doton skill, but where would be the fun in that? Or the symbolism, no?" She saluted the youngling humans in front of her. "And now for the ramen dinner, courtesy of the Uchiha clan and Uchiha Teyaki and Uruchi. They wanted me to note that their baked goods leftover from the day will be available, too. So, let's go eat!" With a roar of approval, the Uchiha and assorted villagers stormed to restaurant.

Naruto ate what seemed like more than his weight in ramen, and stole a couple of sticky buns for his trip.

"You sure you don't want to stay for dinner?" Musume asked the kit.

"You've already managed to keep the pervert here another whole month!" Naruto chuckled. "We need to get going, so I can learn stuff and become a chuunin!"

"I suppose." Musume sighed. She knew how much the brat learned on his journeys with the hermit, no matter what the circumstances.

"And, hey, you helped me get past the dangerous bit of the summoning, right? Figuring out how to
draw a fox. So now all the rest I have to do is just tweak some stuff." Naruto puffed out his chest proudly, while the kitsune winced. The brat's first several attempts to draw a summons had been embarrassing. It had looked more like a jellyfish with legs. As a potential target for his jutsu, it was her moral duty to help him draw a fox properly. Although if he actually managed to summon jellyfish, perhaps they could have eaten them?.

The two stopped by the gate, where Jiraiya and Minato were waiting.

"How was the destruction?" Minato asked, smiling.

"Great!" Naruto said, jumping into the air and pumping his fist.

"Good." Minato handed his son a large pack. "Here you go. And do you have the special kunai I gave you?"

Naruto pulled out a small dull knife from under his shirt, where it was hanging on a string. "Yes, dad." He said while rolling his eyes. "If there's any problems, I'm supposed to throw it on the ground so that you can come and save me."

"That's right." Minato said, smiling a bit more fragilely. "Pay attention to your godfather and listen to what he says, alright?"

"Unless it has to do with anything female." Musume added.

The two watched the brat and his mentor walking off down the road until they turned a corner and couldn't be seen anymore. "Well." Minato sighed. "I hope this is the right decision."

"He'll learn a lot. And they said they would stop back every couple of months." Musume replied, not sure who she was soothing. This was a good thing, she told herself, she was becoming too addicted to the brat, anyway.

"It's good that he is leaving- he needs to learn about the harshness of ninja life, but I am glad he won't be learning that by seeing his fellow villagers put to death." Minato looked disturbed at the thought, either of his son seeing it, or the concept at all.

The kitsune started walking back into the village, bumping her shoulder to Minato's companionably and letting her arm trail against his side. "It has to be done; they brought it onto themselves." She said, speaking only the truth.

"I know."
"I don't understand- why are you still trying? What's the point?" Gaara's blue eyes were locked into Naruto's.

"I won't let you hurt my precious people." Naruto growled, as he crawled towards the prone form of the other jinchuuriki.

The kitsune rumbled inside the brat's head, "he's down, brat. Unless you are willing to kill him when he's helpless, give it up."

"I will protect all my precious people." Naruto snarled, inching one fingerlength more forward.

The kitsune sighed. "It's not like it matters, does it? What's one human versus another? One lifeform versus another?"

"You just can't understand, you damn fox, the beauty of bonds."

"Is that so?" The kitsune mused. "Perhaps, it is I that has a better view on life- you are the one willing to kill in order to continue the lives of certain creatures. Why should they lose their precious people and you not?"

"Shut up, fox, you are just a damn demon. You can't confuse me." Naruto said, and that was the end of the conversation as far as he was concerned.

"Except, I think I've confused myself..." The kitsune murmured to herself, leaning against the bars.

OoOoOOooOoo

Minato awoke with a start, his hand already around a kunai and halfway to the intruder's throat before he recognized the chakra signature. He relaxed somewhat and laid his hand and the weapon it contained onto his chest.

"Sorry, I'm sorry." Musume muttered. "So tired..." She flopped beside him and curled against his side. "Not safe anywhere else, safe here." She yawned and relaxed into what seemed to be a dead faint.

Minato grumbled, pushed at her arm and felt it flop over in the darkness. He sighed and put the kunai back under his pillow, rolled over and went back to the sleep he hadn't quite left.

Sometime later a soft sigh and a leg thrown across his hip left Minato feeling appreciative of the bedfellow. Still mostly asleep he rocked forward and put an arm around the warm toned body opposite him. A feminine murmur responded to his actions.

The next moment entirely killed the mood, however. "Oi, brat, stop moving around."

Minato's eyes flew open. To his embarrassment his initial assessment of a particularly good dream was disproved. He was, in fact, wrapped around one Uchiha Musume in a most intimate way. A way that, had she not started talking about his son, likely would have become even more intimate quite quickly.

As he extracted himself from the sleepily protesting Uchiha and got out of bed cursing, he vaguely recalled what had happened at some ungodly hour of the night. He scowled down at the (hot, half-
naked) woman in his bed as he grabbed up a pair of pants and a shirt. How the hell had she even
gotten into his house? And why in the name of all that's holy did she think he was his son?

That thought had him kneeling on the bed and shaking the Uchiha until she groggily roused.

"What the hell are you doing in here and what have you been doing to Naruto?" Minato growled.

Musume stared up at him, a confused frown knitting together her brows, as she blinked bloodshot
eyes above deep bruised looking bags.

"And what the hell happened to you?" He asked incredulously. Last time he had seen her she had
looked fine- at the execution a few weeks ago, he thought.

"You're not the brat." She murmured, looking at her hands. "I'm not the brat?" She continued,
making Minato grit his teeth. He only waited because if she was as tired as she looked, then he knew
how much higher brain function she had. That is to say, none. "Hn."

"No grunting." Minato said in exasperation. "And more explaining."

Musume rubbed her hands over her eyes and blinked. "I was tired. And I couldn't sleep."

Minato raised an eyebrow at her, eying the pillow and the kunai it was hiding.

"They wouldn't let me sleep." She continued. "Though they were less nice about it than you are."
She yawned. "Can I sleep here every night?" She asked, looking up at him hopefully.

"Wha… no!" Minato sputtered.

"Oh." She sighed, rolling over a bit and looking like she was passing out again.

"You didn't answer my question…” Musume rolled over and glared at him with spinning red eyes.
Minato slumped unconscious.

OooOoOo

Minato stalked down to the kitchen to find a very sheepish looking Musume and a table set for
breakfast for two with tea by the plates. "You attacked the Hokage. That is a treasonous offense." He
stated beside the table, ignoring the food.

"I'm sorry." She looked up at him through her lashes and he felt his anger soften. And other things
harden. Dammit. "I didn't send you anywhere… unpleasant… did I?" She asked, picking up one of
the teas and sipping it nervously.

"No." Minato felt the last of his anger drain away as he sat in the chair and took a bite of toast. The
genjutsu had practically been a vacation- he and Naruto were surfing on a beach, under a clear blue
sky and crystal clear waters. And it hadn't even lasted that long- he was still on time for his morning
appointments. "I forgive you for attacking me, but only if you tell me what the hell you were
thinking."

"Er… well… to answer your questions… from before that is… I know how to key into your wards." The
kitsune shrugged. "I don't know if anyone else would be able to do it… I can tell you how later." She fidgeted. "I'm sorry for mistaking you for the… for Naruto. Sometimes we would camp
out in the woods after training, or crash in his bed here if it was close enough. When he was
younger." She sighed wistfully. "He's too old for 'mushy stuff' now, though." She shrugged.
Minato settled back into his chair. Though disturbing to know that Musume had been sleeping in his house without him knowing, that she had been keeping him out at night was both worse and made him feel better. Naruto did stay out all night on occasion, a habit he had been trying to break him of since he was able to walk, to no avail. It had become especially desperate after assassins were sent to kill him when he was not quite two, and a crazy woman prisoner had taken him and expanded his chakra coils. Though subsequently Naruto had survived assassin attacks because of said chakra coils, so Minato still didn't know what to think of that day, especially with the woman who did it sitting in front of him. It had been the most terrifying moment of his life- seeing his child nonresponsive and locked in a stranger's arms for hours and hours…

"And why you felt the need to break in in the first place?" He prompted.

"Oh." She sat down and munched on her own toast. "Ever since the executions, well, since being elected I suppose... I've either been attacked at odd hours or consulted about important clan matters. I haven't been able to sleep, really…"

"Since the executions? Since...?" Minato asked in surprise, leaning forward. "That was weeks ago. A month!"

Musume shrugged and took another bite of bread. She still looked horrible- the dark bruises had receded a bit, but her eyes were still heavily lidded and her posture at the table was slumped and defeated. "I can only run on chakra alone for so long, then the body starts to break down a bit… and it's hard to keep up the flow at the right levels…" She trailed off, still looking down and thus not noticing Minato's shocked look. He hadn't know it was possible at all to run your body on chakra for any amount of time.

"Is this another handy trait that Uchiha Madara left to you?" He asked gently.

Musume shrugged and started on her second piece of toast.

"You can't stay here." Minato said. Musume sighed heavily. "It would cause a political scandal." He continued. She slumped farther into the seat but nodded. "I will teach you how to put the seals on your own place, though, as soon as you tell me the weakness."

Musume looked up at him with such gratitude in her eyes that he shifted uncomfortably.

"Thank you!" She breathed. Musume happily finished her toast and then snatched a piece off of Minato's plate. He lifted and eyebrow but didn't saw anything, eating his remaining piece of toast in silence.

Musume put down her cup of tea and looked at Minato dubiously. "Will I be able to do the seals?"

She asked.

"Ah! That reminds me." He stood up and darted out of the room, returning with a bag that clinked as it moved.

"What's that?" She asked, looking at the bag dubiously. "And you didn't answer me."

Minato waved her off. "Seals will be no problem. You've demonstrated quite a bit of proficiency with them."

"Not really…"

He gave her a long look. "Few if any people could twist the Hyuuga clan seal or slip through my wards without destroying the house and alerting me."
"That's not…" She shrugged.

"Not what?" He asked, curious.

"Well, the Hyuuga seal… it is rather simple, really, if you know how the chakra in the body is supposed to be. You just… shift how it is a certain way." Her nose twitched as she said it.

"Is… that how you healed Kobune?" He asked, stunned. A state of being, he thought wryly, that he should be used to when around this particular woman.

"Sort of." Musume shrugged. "It's hard to describe. And you likely wouldn't be able to learn it unless you felt high level jutsus being used through your body without your control for years upon years." She smiled wryly.

"Which is also how you can use certain power intensive jutsus that do not require precise control, and manipulate elements somewhat." It certainly made sense.

"Sure, but shadow clones only get you so far. And it takes a lot longer to manipulate chakra without the seals."

Musume startled as Minato dropped the bag onto the table with a clunk. "That's where these come in."

"And these are…?" She asked, opening the bag and fingering the necklaces and wristbands made of metal.

"High grade chakra disruptors." He said proudly. "Put one on."

Musume complied, putting it about her wrist. Her eyes widened. "Wow. That's much easier to control." She said looking down at her wrist. "How did you think of this?"

"Well, you melted a good number of holes in our Interrogation department when you were wearing over a dozen of these things. Which is much more powerful a jutsu than I have seen you using since, even if it wasn't particularly focused.

"I do sort of remember that." She muttered, frowning contemplatively at the metal. "These look a lot less like shackles than those did." She added, looking up at him.

"I made them, actually. It's just some inexpensive jewelry with a modified seal put on it. Took me a while to figure out how the seal should work, once I thought of the idea."

"Thank you." Musume said, touching the metal wonderingly, before putting the rest of them on. They looked sort of odd on someone that you knew was deadly, as most shinobi wore little jewelry, but it wasn't completely out of place. She let out a happy sigh. "This is wonderful, Minato." She said, standing up and coming around the table to him, grabbing him in a swift hug.

She stepped back with a cheeky grin and put her hands through a familiar technique.

"Don't!" Minato exclaimed, just as Musume yelled, "Sexy no jutsu!" and turned into a naked, blond version of herself. Minato noted in a small part of his mind the three odd lines on each cheek before his brain shut down due to blood rushing other places. He grabbed his bleeding nose and roared, "Out! Now!"

Musume skipped away gleefully, cackling.
Musume slunk by the Uchiha main house, checking on her shadow clone. So far it hadn't been dispelled, which meant it had avoided any attacks. And she had given it enough chakra to deal with anything minor that came up and left it with instructions to find a secluded spot and dispel itself if something major came up.

So far, so good.

She transported herself through not-space to a glade she had discovered a while back after her first two dens had been discovered. The chakra disruptors made the teleport mildly taxing on her readily available reserves, meaning she ended up slightly above where she wanted to be, but not inside anything. Excellent.

She sobered at the thought that she almost hadn't gotten them.

When Musume had regained her fled brain cells and found herself cuddling her enemy, the one that sealed her, she was torn. By this point most of the adult Uchiha had pissed her off enough that she had sealed them, as well as some of their children. Itachi was still unmarked, but he had become much more relaxed and happy since the change of command, even to the point where his little brother yelled at him for seeming to be content with their father being killed. So the kitsune was fairly sure that he would not be able to harden his heart enough to kill his best friend. Sasuke was still a brat, but similarly was not traumatized enough to become the total tool he had been in another life. Probably.

So she had stared down at the peaceful face of the Hokage, the Seal Master, Konoha's Yellow Flash, and held the kunai she had found under his pillow to his tanned throat. He had sighed and almost slit his jugular for her, but she had pulled back in time, heart pounding.

She had thrust the kunai back under the pillow, trailed her hands through his hair and draped her body over his so she could feel his heartbeat, his breathing. So that she could assure herself that he was warm and still alive.

And then she had flung herself out of the bed, totally disgusted with herself, and not just for acting like a human, but a sappy, besotted human, and gone to make breakfast. As something to do to take her mind off of things.

She broke out of her musings about the morning and climbed up one of the nearby trees, delighting a bit in the fact that her feet could now stick to the bark as easily as it should always have been, though the thought made her tremble a bit as her mind looped back to Minato.

She loved the kit- she was demon enough to admit it. It was a twisted, bizarre love that really was a celebration of her freedom, after all. She could accept that. But his father? She hadn't even met Minato in the time loops. Although, she considered, perhaps that was the appeal?

Well, as much as it made no sense, it was also enjoyable. "And no one has to know." She muttered to herself.

And no one did know, although the comment would drive a certain sweating ROOT operative hidden in the tree next to her to distraction and provide hours of fruitless searching for the organization. Had she known, she would have been thrilled.
The kyuubi felt the familiar tug of a summons. It had been a while and she had been somewhat concerned that humans had forgotten the mechanics of it. Whoever this was, they felt strong. It would be unlikely that she would be able to break free from them and devour them at the end of her destruction. No matter, it would be fun to ravage things for as long as the human's energy held out. She graciously accepted the summons.

In front of her was a human that was obviously the summoner. His hair was a black mess that was poking out on all sides, and he was wearing the most peculiar red armor. The most bizarre thing were his spinning red eyes, however. She looked at them curiously and felt drawn into them.

With a sickening flop of her senses, she felt suddenly separated from her surroundings. Everything felt muffled, and yet, so much more annoying! Everything around her just pissed her off.

Like this jerk in front of her. Why was he wearing the same thing as her gorgeous summoner? It was so ANNOYING that they were wearing the same thing. And his hair was so fucking straight!

She snarled and pounced at him, expecting that she would crush the puny beast beneath her with no trouble whatsoever. But there were all these branches that kept jumping into her path, sucking at her energy, seeking to contain it. She yowled and flashed her chakra, burning the human's pitiful plants to ash.

She opened her mouth and began to gather energy into a ball. She loved this attack- love destruction love! She swallowed it and spat it at the annoying human, burning through his protective boughs and almost singeing him. Blast! Too fast, little bug!

She turned her tails into fire and swept them at him, but the trees were more resistant now, and the energy she had been drawing on was fading fast. She didn't want to lose her summon contract now!

She turned and snarled at her cute summoner in annoyance. More! More! You can't be done yet?

OooooOO

It was in the middle of a Council meeting when Musume's nose started to fiercely itch. She tried to be unobtrusive about scratching it, as the other members already hated her for various reasons (the Hyuuga for the most obvious one) and she was the new person in office and thus the low one on the totem pole. But it only got worse until she sneezed. "Achoo! Sorry." She waved the textile guild head to continue his enthralling speech about the trade in some sort of bug excretions. "Achoo!" She sneezed again.

"Maybe someone is saying something unkind about you, Uchiha-san." The gem merchant guild head said snidely.

"What?" She asked, before her nose started tingling again. "Achoo!"

"Are you sick with something?" The nervous looking head-of-some-human commodity asked anxiously (she could only remember the textile and gem guys because they wore their wares around like male birds in mating season.)
"I… don't think so." Musume said in confusion, checking inside herself. The tiny bags with the buckets of sneeze-inducing stuff were quiescent, her nose lining calm and quiet. "No…"

Suddenly the world spun and she was ripped away, almost entirely losing her toehold on her body before she grabbed onto it with all her demonic will. Even so, when she opened her eyes, all she saw was blue skies.

"What the?" She rumbled. Then she blinked. Rumbled? She noted that all four of her legs were sprawled out, catching herself instinctively from falling into a very deep hole. Wait… all four legs? She coughed a brief laugh. Whatever had happened, she was herself again, and it felt amazing! Only that small little thread connecting her to Madara's body kept this from being a full immersion experience. She gathered her chakra and leapt, feeling her not-muscles flexing in a way she had forgotten from being in a human so long. Ah, glorious!

"Naruto! Get over here now!" Came a tiny, panicked voice. Buahahaha! That is how all humans should sound when faced with the epitome of fox spirits, the only one to earn all nine tails and thus become a god among kitsune! She oriented to the small figure and opened her mouth and felt the energy gathering from around her to a ball of malevolent hate.

"No way, perverted sage! I summoned a fox! A really huge, gorgeous, red fox!" Aw, the kit knew to flatter her even in her proper form. Well, he should flatter her especially in her proper form, of course, but he'd never seen her out before, so she could forgive him. After she was done preening. And destroying the annoying human… she swallowed the energy and felt it settle in her stomach, seething and waiting for her to release it.

In a poof of smoke a giant toad was in front of her and she skittered away a bit, but the human on top was still the same grey haired one. She crouched and lashed her tails, sending tree trunks flying.

"You idiot! You summoned the nine-tails demon fox!" The man in front of hers voice squeaked a bit as he said her title. As it should be! Though, he did look a bit familiar…

"Yeah, that's because I'm the number one unpredictable ninja, believe it!"

Hold up, brat on her head… traveling in a place she didn't recognize, with some tiny human that summoned toads… she let the energy spew out of her. But instead of incinerating the ugly toad thing and the human she now knew was Jiraiya, she let it dispel harmlessly into the sky. Well, relatively harmlessly- the side wash still sent shockwaves of air flattening shrubbery, and if she had timed it just right, she probably had managed to hit the moon again. Much trickier to do during the day, though…

"Brat!" She roared. The toad jumped and Jiraiya looked like he'd almost crapped himself. She tossed her head hard enough to dislodge the brat's feet, even though he was attached through chakra, and caught him on the tip of her nose so she could look at him. She probably didn't look very dignified, but who did when one had a tiny human on one's head like a hairy mite? "Next time you summon me, the person in front of you had better be asking for a most painful death, got it?" The terrain rocked at the sound of her voice and she almost melted in pleasure. Except that she had to keep up appearances. "Do you want me to kill your sensei? Because I almost just did."

"N-no." Naruto said quietly. Only because she had ears as tall as most buildings aimed directly at him did she hear.

"Then don't try your luck! I'm the concentration of all evil, hateful feelings in this world," which wasn't true, but one had to keep up appearances, "don't summon me for a chat with your mentor."

"I…. I just was because… cliff… and chakra…" Naruto stuttered.
"Uh huh." She put her nose to the ground and pushed him off with a burst of her (red!) chakra. "I suppose I can accept you as a summoner, but don't expect me to like anyone you give any summoning scrolls to. You should see the last guy who tried to control me. Mmm... those dark haired ones are tasty. Too bad you're a blond, brat." She cackled gleefully.

"Er..." Naruto looked a bit less sure of himself.

"Later, kiddo." She smirked.

And opened her eyes with a groan. She had a pounding head ache... she pulled her hand off of her forehead and sighed. She looked around at the other councilors. "What?" She asked.

The Council stared at her.

"What?" She asked again, scowling.

"It seems that you sneezed so hard you knocked yourself out." The nervous councilor said shakily. She looked at him suspiciously. "And then you started yelling at nothing about being a man trapped in a woman's body." He squeaked under her glare.

Her eyes widened, though not (as the others assumed) from embarrassment, but rather because that meant her prisoner had gotten out from the seal somewhat. "I see." She muttered. She weathered the rest of the council session in silence, ignoring the sniggers and the smug looks.

Once the ridiculously long and boring meeting (why was she not destroying the town again?) was finished she stepped into the not-space and came out in a tree near where the brat and his mentor had summoned her and the toad. The two were long gone by now, of course, but it was a good place to muse.

She spent the next few hours tightening down the seal on her belly so that if she were to be summoned again, her prisoner would have no control whatsoever. She was once again grateful for the chakra disruptors- without her massive demonic energy flowing through the body, they had laid her prisoner completely incapable of doing much besides lying there limply and muttering. She shuddered at the thought of what he would do if he got loose. Probably find the nearest unsealed Uchiha and wake all their Mangekyou Sharingan. Then she would be in for a world of problems... the whole clan fully activated, with the secret how to keep it that way sans fratricide? Disaster!

She noted with some interest when a group of ninja came to investigate the massive destruction. At first she thought they must be Akatsuki, but their cloaks were pure black, no red clouds in sight. If anything, they looked somewhat like Konoha ANBU.

"It's gone." One said to the other.

"Yup." And with that, they sped away. Musume was disappointed. The enemy always seemed to talk and talk to Naruto. Why did she get close-lipped nin to spy on?

She swept back to Konoha through the not-space, feeling the by now familiar tug of her travel permit at her neck, sitting proudly by the chakra disruptors. Yet another reason not to kill Minato- he was so useful. Although, she suddenly remembered, he hadn't ever taught her those seals. Her lips drew up into a devilish smile. That seemed like a perfectly good reason to sneak back into his house to her...

Before she could invade anyone's house, however, she got hit with the sudden memory of her clone's death. With a put-upon sigh she sped to the Uchiha main house. Even though it took her less than five seconds, the assassin had managed to run off. She had recognized her, however, as she had only masked her face and chakra, and not her smell or characteristic movements; it was that first woman
that she had put the seal on. Unfortunately, she didn't have any children, her parents had been executed for recent treason, and she had no other relatives. The kitsune sighed. She had to admire someone so dedicated to chaos, but not when it was making her have to skulk around like a wanted criminal, not like an elected official. Which, ironically, was not how she had to move when she was a wanted criminal.

She opened the door to the other room and found her assistant doodling on a piece of paper. "Bring me Keisai." She barked, lips twitching when Aenka squeaked and almost fell off of her chair.

"Yes, Musume-sama." Aenka stood and hurried out the door to go fetch the other Uchiha.

While waiting, Musume contemplated what she should do with the human. This was the fourth attempt by this particular person, one of which had actually hit her, though Musume had quickly half-summoned a clone to make the smoke and then flashed away to heal herself. She was the only one to repeat an attempt, the others had been sufficiently cowed by getting sealed, though their relatives had then come to attack her either verbally or physically.

She could always kill the annoying Uchiha, which was quite tempting, but seemed sort of anti-climatic. Musume supposed she could always wait until she got attacked again and then do something really gruesome with her body. Thoughts of Keisai's blood-curdling screams ripping through the night and disrupting other people's sleep as much as hers had been recently had a definite appeal.

"Keisai." Musume greeted as the struggling woman was pulled through the door by two police officers. One who, she was pleased to note, was not an Uchiha. It seemed that her and Minato's plans to incorporate the Uchiha into the village and vice versa were working well.

Keisai spat at Musume, who easily dodged the bodily secretion with a sigh.

"I'm trying to work with you, but you're making it somewhat difficult." Musume said, perching on the desk as the two police officers sat her in a chair and stood to either side with crossed arms.

"You are destroying everything that the Uchiha stand for and turning our clan into a thing of disgrace!

The kitsune grinned. "How nice of you to say so. Here I thought I was becoming depressingly close to an agent of order, peace and tradition."

"You're a monster!" Keisai tried another insult.

"Your point?" Musume yawned. Besides the 'insult' being true, it was almost nostalgic being called a monster again.

"You only won against all of us because of those damn eyes." Keisai hissed.

"True..." Musume replied, drawing out the word to induce the human to continue her thought.

"Which was gotten through horrible means and is a walking detriment to our reputation with the rest of the town!" Musume rolled her eyes and hoped the human would say something of importance.

"And we got you elected in the first place!"

"You're saying things that everyone knows, but I'm failing to see your point." The kyuubi scratched her nose and eyed Keisai.

The woman sat forward in her chair, eyes wild and desperate. "If you didn't have those eyes, I would
Musume sat up and grinned happily. "That's a great idea!" She jumped off the desk.

"It is?" Keisai looked wary.

"What is?" Aenka looked confused.

"This was how Fugaku dealt with issues of this sort, isn't it? He would kick the crap out of people that didn't agree with him." She smacked her fist into her other palm.

"Well, yes, that's true but..." Aenka started.

"This will be fun! You think that training ground will be big enough? I guess neither of us will be summoning anything, but some of those fun jutsus can get a little explosive..." The kyuubi bounced as she walked through the door, the other four following her in varying levels of bemusement. "Well, we'll just have to agree not to destroy the rest of the town, or at least, clean up afterwards if we do... Minato usually is fine with that stipulation." She started cackling gleefully.

OoooOOo

The Uchiha training ground was rather small, but it had been enhanced over the years the clan had been there by wards, seals, and jutsu-formed walls, mostly to contain fire jutsu, the clan's specialty. Which was good if the kyuubi no kitsune was going to play in it.

Most of the clan had shown up to watch the fight, as well as a large number of other villagers. "This is at your own risk, alright?" The kitsune head of the clan called out. "You all know the drill with ninja battles, though..." She muttered to herself, walking towards the stiffening Keisai. Musume grabbed the human by the forehead and twisted the chakra in the other- it was a bit more difficult with the chakra disruptors on, but much faster as she didn't have to monitor her chakra output.

"What did you do, make it impossible for me to use any jutsu?" Keisai asked, her eyes now a blazing red with three commas in one eye and two in the other. There were gasps of thrilled horror from the audience. "What... I can..." Keisai trailed off, looking around herself with wide red eyes.

"I took it off entirely." The fox smiled happily. This was going to be the first time she could use jutsu since... well, ever really. She had only seen the brat use it.

"But... you were lying about being able to take it off." Keisai protested weakly.

"Who said I was lying?" the demon was a bit confused. Actually, she had never lied to anyone, just said truth in such a way that the humans leapt to incorrect conclusions. "I don't think I've ever lied..." She said out loud, feeling a bit hurt. Sure, a demon, certainly destructive, not a model citizen... but that didn't mean all human failings had to be heaped onto her. "And it would be boring to fight you without the Sh..."

Musume stopped herself as her own eyes started to turn. "Actually... I'll do one better." She put her hand on her own forehead and twisted her chakra until she could feel the pressure of the seal on her eyes. It was actually a relief to not feel the sharingan trying to push out every time she felt the slightest bit annoyed or said the word.

"You..." Keisai didn't finish her sentence, her mouth hanging open.

"That's right!" Musume smirked, her eyes squinting shut in excitement. "I'll beat you without any Sharingan at all, believe it!" She threw back her head and laughed heartily.
"You're insane!" Keisai whispered in horror.

Musume winked at her adversary and then turned to the crowd. "Does anyone want to be our referee?" She called.

"I'll do it."

Musume felt a bit of uneasiness at the volunteer. "Heh heh... if you're sure Anko..."

"Absolutely." The jounin said maliciously. "There can't be a hint of favoritism, now, can there?"

"Right..." The fox eyes her warily then shrugged. "Ok, so- no jutsu that would harm the crowd too much, otherwise, we're good?" She suggested.

"To the death?" Keisai asked, a gleam in her eye.

"Sure." Musume shrugged. At this point there were perhaps three Sharingan bearing Uchiha left unsealed- the one in front of her, Itachi, and his friend Shisui. Well, that she could think of off the top of her head. She didn't remember the ones that just went with the flow too well. There were probably some one and two comma users out there, too.

"Well then." Anko said with a sadistic grin. "Begin!"

Keisai immediately threw weapons at Musume, which were easily avoided. But the idea was not to actually hit her, but rather to distract her. Keisai's hands were running through various seals at impressive speed. Musume started her own, her hands flipping through the seals much more slowly as she tried to remember the order. She dodged the massive fireball while still running through more seals, twisting to make sure that the fireball dispelled harmlessly against the wall, which it did.

Musume slapped her hand to the ground as she finished the last seal. "Lake of Fire jutsu!" She called out happily. The entire inside of the training arena turned into a pit of lava. Both Anko and Keisai jumped up and were able to land on top of the melted ground with a chakra buffer between them and the heat, but they both looked pale as they regarded Musume.

"Since... since when can you do jutsu?" Keisai asked, sounding betrayed.

"Eheh." The kitsune winked and held up her pointer finger. "It's a secret."

"It doesn't matter." Keisai muttered, flashing through more hand signs. Musume didn't need any fancy kekkei genkai to recognize it as the same technique. This time, though, she leapt through the fireball, landing on the human's shoulders and almost making her fall over into the lava.

Musume quickly leapt backward off of the woman's shoulders when she was stabbed at with a kunai and landed easily back on the lava. She held her hands in a familiar position and felt her chakra flowing down the familiar pathways. "Kage Bushin no jutsu!" She yelled out, summoning twenty clones, three of which fell off of the lava and poofed out, cursing their creator. "Eheh. Oh well." She grabbed the nearest clone and it hanged in a puff of smoke into a large sword. Her other clones similarly paired up and transformed into various weapons. "Here we go!" They all yelled, grinning as they darted forward at body flicker speeds.

She swung the sword with pathetically poor technique at Keisai's head. But the other Uchiha seemed to have problems tracking her opponent and barely managed to dodge in time. Clones rushed her as well and Keisai tried to hit and dispel them, but the clones were all as quick as the original and easily dodged.
Musume ringed Keisai and cocked her head. "Well, do something. How about water attacks? I've always wanted to try fighting underwater." The kitsune frowned at the pale and drawn face in front of her. She noted her opponent was hunched over and her legs appeared to be trembling. "Er... are you ok?"

"We said to the death." Keisai panted, looking terrified.

"Hm." Musume looked over at Anko, who was looking grim, then the audience. Everyone looked like they were witnessing someone kicking a puppy. She sighed and dispelled the lava jutsu and her clones. "What happened to 'I can beat you no problem?' Musume huffed. "Here I was all revved up for a big fight. This was somewhat of a disappointment."

Keisai dropped to the ground. At first Musume thought that it was because she was more exhausted than she had previously thought. Until the woman started to speak. "I am sorry for doubting you Uchiha-sama. Please forgive this humble servant." She was on the floor bowing.

Musume regarded her with a tilted head. "There is nothing to forgive." She said finally. And there wasn't. This seemed a much more natural way of settling dominance disputes. The fox in her was completely satisfied, and even the corrupting human emotions were content. "Though I do hope this means you will stop trying to kill me."

"Of course!" Keisai gasped.

"Good." The kitsune looked down at the woman who was still lying on the ground with her head on her folded hands. She turned back to the crowd, which was displaying a whole range of foolish human emotions that she didn't feel the need to categorize. "Well, that's it." She said. "Unless someone else wants to fight me?" Musume asked hopefully. "Anko?" The kuniochi just shook her head. "Anyone else?" No one stepped forward to say anything. Musume sighed and shrugged, strolling off to the edge of the training area, scowling as she noticed it was all burnt or melted to glass.

She kicked a bit of rock and slashed her foot open. "Well this is no good." She muttered. How would she fight anyone else if the ground was in this sad shape? "We need someone with a good grasp on earth jutsu. Or better yet- plant jutsu!" She made a mental note to requisition someone from the Hokage. There should be that clone wandering around, unless Orochimaru had gotten his brain fixed prior to the human experimentation... Worse came to worst she could try transforming it into a swamp… no, that wouldn't be very pleasant… the brat had been taught an area effect sand transformation by the one-tailed brat a couple of times, that might work…

"Uchiha-sama." Keisai called out from the arena.

"Yeah, I know it needs to be changed back to a better terrain- I'll work on it." Musume said as she hopped backward onto the surrounding wall, hands stuck in the pockets of her pants as she mused.

"Oh." Keisai gulped. "I... you didn't... er...

Musume raised a brow at the young woman, then looked at the still gathered crowd for clues. "Don't you people have work or something to do?"

"You didn't put my seal back on." Keisai finally said. "And you didn't take the one off of yourself."

"Oh. Well, you said that you wouldn't attack anymore, right? I believe you. Go do our clan proud." Musume said, making a shooing motion.

"It's barely been a month, you said a year..." Keisai looked dazed.
"So I did. I never was good with time, though, was I?" The kitsune replied with a devilish twinkle in her eye.

"But... the seal on your forehead..." Keisai continued, still looking like someone had smacked her on the back of the head too hard. Musume didn't think she had during the battle, though anything was possible she supposed. Keisai had been pretty slow.

"Well, it occurred to me that it is an effective means of suppressing the annoying trait. Now I won't go about stunning people whenever I get a bit annoyed." She shrugged. "And I know how to take it off, should some cataclysmic event happen where I need it." She shuddered to think of a day where that would be the case, especially now that the chakra disruptors allowed her to use her (secondhand) kage-level knowledge of jutsu. Hey- there was a thought! Maybe Minato would fight with her.

"Take off my seal, too! I swear I won't kill you!"

"Me, too! I'll totally be loyal!"

"Uchiha-sama, my father's a no good jerk, I would definitely never try to kill you!"

Musume regarded the masses with something akin to despair. "What?" She backed away from them warily.

"Here, I'll take an oath right now, if you will only remove the seal!"

"I want to join ANBU- please release mine!"

Musume hopped up onto a nearby building, followed by a mass of Uchiha. "No!" She roared. "Unless you want to battle me..." Some looked like they would. "And then..." She fumbled for something to say in addition to that. "Have a long discussion with me on the nature of life, the universe, and everything." They were still coming. "And promise to marry a civilian." No go. "Erk!" She flashed through demon space to a random section of town, startling a stray cat. "Well, that went well." She grumbled to herself.

Chapter End Notes

Nod to Slayers re: "it's a secret" (Xellos).
"Brat, you need me."

"Shut it, fox."

"No, I'm serious. You look ridiculous. You would really rather be a... toad of all things when you could look like me?" The kitsune, no matter how many times she watched the brat become a toad sage, would never understand it.

"I would rather have control over myself when I go into super powered states so I don't kill the people I reached said states to protect." Naruto said, gritting his teeth. "Now shut up, I can't commune with nature."

The fox couldn't help it, she burst out laughing. "Are you listening to yourself?" She asked cheerily.

"..." At the lack of response the kitsune tried to push through the layers of seal the brat and his toad loving teacher had slapped over her. Why would he... ah. Yes, falling into a pit of spikes would probably make one concentrate on the outside world.

But even as the brat was heinously injured and she couldn't reach outward enough to heal him before he died and repeated the cycle, she still carried her good mood with her into the next life. When she gave the brat his memories in order to gloat some more, she ended up both with the first insane baby she had ever been trapped in, and a ridiculously thorough understanding of sealing that she tried to forget- to no avail.

OOOooo

"Minato, you said you would teach me how to seal my house and I need to learn right now!" Musume burst through a side window, looking about the building in annoyance. "Brat!" She cried happily, spotting Naruto. "What are you doing back?"

"The pervert hermit says that he needs to speak with my father so he can scold me or something." Naruto pouted.

"Oh? What did you do?" She asked, having a pretty good idea already.

Naruto grinned cheekily. "Summoned the most massive fox known to the five countries!" He bragged. "Which shows I am a totally awesome, one of a kind ninja!" He crowed, pumping his fist victoriously. "Not that I'm an undisciplined brat with 'no concept of the consequences of my actions.'" Naruto mimicked Jiraiya for the last bit with a fair amount of accuracy.

"Well, he's one to talk." Musume muttered.

"Exactly! My spy training was hiding in baths!" He threw his hands up in disgust. "Women's baths!"

"Hrn." Musume remembered something like that. "Well, maybe we should test those skills, eh?" She asked, her eyes sparkling with mischief.

"Hell yeah!" Naruto grinned in reply. "But I was told not to leave the house or else. And with Dad and the pervert, the 'or else' can get really bad."

"I wasn't going to have you leave the house, brat. I think we should spy on the two of them."
Naruto squinted his eyes at her suspiciously. "They're pretty good at noticing that stuff."

"And who was it hiding from ANBU at three years old?" Musume shot back.

"Eheh. Yeah… good point. Let's do this!"

The two of them snuck silently into the next room, Musume sliding them both past the double wards that the sannin and his student had erected on the door. They snuck up along the ceiling and hid behind a light fixture by sticking to the ceiling with chakra.

"No, you don't understand, Minato- he summoned the _kuubi no kitsune!_ It should be impossible."

"Well, more improbable." Minato replied, sinking down into his chair and burying his head into his hands.

"And the damn thing talked to Naruto like he was some sort of pet!"

"They can talk?" Minato muttered, shaking his head.

"And apparently like eating brunettes." Jiraiya spat.

"Brunettes?" Minato appeared to be in a my-son-was-chatting-with-death induced daze.

"I assume he…" the kitsune almost gave them both away at her barely contained snarl, "was referring to Uchiha Madara. Your wife already told us the demon ate him."

"She's not my wife." Minato snapped. "But you're probably right. Though better him in a demon's belly than me in death's." He continued, shaking his head. "Naruto summoned a demon… gods!"

"And you know how this will turn out if anyone gets wind of it. Or if the idiot summons him again!" Jiraiya slumped into a chair as well.

Musume barely kept from fidgeting at the male pronoun. At least call her an 'it'- that was certainly on the way to being correct, as she was a natural phenomenon. But even _trees_ have genders, dammit!

"Obviously, we have to tell Naruto not to summon it again." Minato said seriously. Musume mentally thanked him for being gender-neutral.

"That's the odd part- the damned fox himself told him as much. Said that the next time Naruto used the jutsu, the person in front of them had better be someone he wanted dead." Jiraiya ran his hand through his hair and laughed nervously. "That being right after he decided to not blow Gamabunta and I away with the most massive burst of energy I have never wanted to see."

"How massive?" Minato choked.

"If I had been hit with much of the force, being totally unprepared, I would certainly have died." Jiraiya said seriously. "That amount of energy would be able to cut through even the most reinforced of barriers- perhaps even one maintained by several people."

"Jiraiya…" Minato said, looking at his mentor with wide eyes.

"The brat must have said something, or done something… I don't know why I'm not dead right now." Jiraiya buried his head in his hands, starting to shake. "You have to talk sense into that idiot!"

He exclaimed roughly, his voice muffled. Musume looked over at Naruto, who was as white as his sensei. She had a feeling that there would be little need to talk sense into him- it had already been scared firmly into place. She motioned to him that they should leave, and Naruto nodded.
They made their way back to the edge of the wards and slipped out silently, though in all likelihood, if they had dropped from the ceiling and walked out, the two men wouldn't have noticed.

Outside Naruto was starting to look watery. "Jiraiya- sensei really could have died?" He sniffled.

"Summoning creatures is not for every-day use, brat." She said softly. "They are deadly beings that can easily kill a strong shinobi like the pervert."

"But… he's the one that shoved me into that huge crack in the earth!" He pouted, leaking tears.

Musume pulled him into a hug. "Which he never should have done, brat, but life as a ninja is dangerous." Naruто sniffled against her shoulder. She forgot sometimes that he was so young- time didn't matter much to her, but the brat was a over two years younger than when he usually graduated the academy. "He probably just wanted you to throw a kunai with a rope, or use some wind jutsu to blow you toward the wall so you could climb out."

There was a long pause. "Eheh. That probably would have worked better, huh?" He asked sheepishly.

"Well, 'better' is a relative term. More efficiently, perhaps."

Naruto looked up at her. "Musume-chan, do you think I should never summon the nine-tails again?" He asked.

She looked down at him and smiled reassuringly. "If she didn't attack you or kill a pervert like Jiraiya, even when he was riding as tasty a snack as that toad of his, I think you can feel safe around her. I would reserve calling her for the most absolutely dire circumstances, though. But don't hesitate if you think it's life or death. That's a powerful ally you've gained, ok?"

"Ok." Naruto sniffed. "Like she said, only if the person in front of me needs to…" He gulped. "Die…"

"And only if the reason is that if they don't die, you will, ok?"

"Yeah, ok."

They cuddled for a bit after that, Musume feeling her heart swelling that he wasn't considering himself too old for it yet. Or maybe it was the psychological trauma. Either way she fully intended to take advantage of it.

"Musume-chan?"

"Mm?"

"Why did you call the fox a 'she'? The pervert sage says it's a 'he'."

"I just know, that's all." She replied, hoping that would settle that.

"Why?"

"Er…"

"Musume! What are you doing here?" Minato's startled voice broke up the awkward silence. Musume and the brat looked over the back of the couch at him.

"Yo, Minato."
"See, you can't deny it, Mina-chan." Jiraiya said with a trace of his usual humor. "She's already raising your child. All you are missing out on are the pleasures of the relationship."

"Jiraiya, be serious." Minato snapped.

"I promise I won't do it again. I will only summon the nine-tails if I'm about to die and I want the person who is about to make me that way dead instead." Naruto blurted out, jumping over the couch and standing in front of his father and teacher. "I won't break that promise!"

"Naruto…" Minato said, sinking to his knees in front of his son and hugging him tightly.

"Daaaad!" Naruto protested.

"Why does Musume get to hug you but I can't?" Minato asked, trying to hold onto his struggling son.

"Because!" Naruto answered, as if that were the end of the argument.

Minato let him go and stood up, shaking his head. He turned to Musume with a frown. "And how did you get in here? I plugged up twelve possible holes in the protections since last night."

"Oho, Minato, you rogue! What happened last night?" Jiraiya asked with a lecherous grin.

"Nothing!" Musume and Minato said at the same time.

"You better marry the wench if you're going to do that kind of thing." Jiraiya cackled, his spirits back up.

Musume eyed the pervert contemplatively, then slid her gaze over to Minato. "That would solve a lot of problems." She mused, looking at the squirming Hokage with narrowed eyes. "I wouldn't have to learn your house sealing techniques, as I can breach them anyway, I would get to sleep with you every night…" Minato was looking quite red under Jiraiya's half incredulous, half congratulatory smirk, "And it would go a long way toward the integration of the Uchiha clan into the village." She finished with a nod.

"Those aren't good reasons to marry." Minato protested weakly.

"They are perfectly good reasons to marry. I'm a clan head or some such nonsense now, I have to think politically." Musume pressed, pleased at the reaction she was getting, and more than a bit pleased he hadn't just said no. Though, her pleasure at the second part was disturbing her a bit.

"Aren't you supposed to… like love each other and stuff?" Naruto asked with squinty-eyed suspicion, looking between the two of them.

"I love you, Naruto-chan." Musume purred. "I can put up with your father for your sake."

"Yeah?" Naruto asked, grinning. "Well, then go for it, Dad! I'm behind you all the way."

"I'm sure your father is behind…"

"If you finish that sentence, I will kill you." Minato cut off Jiraiya, who pouted.

"Are you two going to stick around for a while?" Musume asked politely. She had learned quite a bit about diffusing tensions before they could become chaotic altercations that she would have to clean up later. The altercation part was good, the cleaning up other people's messes; not so much.
"Yeah, we need to do some more research." Jiraiya turned from Minato and sighed.

"The next academy graduation is in a few months- you should stay for that. Perhaps Naruto could get on a team." Minato said, looking hopeful, but not particularly convinced it would happen.

"Dad! I could teach those kids in the academy, right sensei?" Naruto yelled.

"Hah! Most of those kids are older than you, idiot!" The sannin retorted.

"So?" Naruto pouted.

"But I don't think he needs to be on a team this year. Perhaps next year, as he will need one in order to compete in the chuunin exams." Jiraiya pointed out.

"Hell yeah! I'll get whoever I get stuck with through the exams no problem. We'll all become chuunin no matter what!" Naruto said, jumping into the air and pumping his fist.

"There's more to being chuunin than kicking ass, brat." Musume said with some amusement. "But on to more pressing matters- I've gone from being kept up all night from assassination attempts to being kept up all night from people swearing undying fealty and bringing me bribes." She sighed wistfully. "I think I prefer the attempts on my life."

"You said you were a clan head now?" Jiraiya asked dubiously. "We leave you alone in the village for a few months and look what happens! And it doesn't sound like you are managing them well."

"You try to get the emotionally constipated and staunchly illogical Uchiha to do anything the way you think they will and then get back to me." She snarled. "I've tried threatening them, beating them, giving them what they ask for- all ended in disaster!"

Jiraiya held up his hands in surrender.

"So am I staying here tonight or are you teaching me those seals?" She snapped at Minato.

"I don't know that you can learn them in the few hours left of the day…" He stopped when he saw her heading up towards the stairs. "Where are you going?"

"Not sleeping on the couch again. You can if you want to, but I'm not responsible for the shape your back will be in in the morning." Musume said from the stairwell.

"You can't sleep in my room! Take the guest bedroom!"

Jiraiya cleared his throat.

"You can take the couch, dammit. You should have a house here, anyway." Minato scowled at Jiraiya.

"I like your bed better, anyway- it has the bonus of a warm body that comes with it!" Came the faint reply from the second floor. Minato blushed and hid his face in his hands.

"Just like a married couple." Jiraiya mused. "And you're not getting the benefits?" He asked with a pitying look at his first pupil.

"Argh!" Minato growled, before pulling out the blankets for the couch. "Fine, take the guest bedroom you freeloader." He glared at his couch like it was a traitor.

"She could sleep with me, Dad." Naruto offered.
"No!"
This story was written before the names of any of the tailed beasts (besides Shukaku) was known so I made up the 5-tail. There is considerable divergence on what a demon is and what it means from canon as well. For the five-tailed beast: five=go, lust=gokai.

"You're embarrassing us." The kitsune said, as she came upon the five tailed beast. "What in the world do you think you are doing?"

"I'm having fun, kitsune, you should try it sometime." The wide purple eyes looked up at the kitsune from inside a (mostly) human body. Which was currently straddling a human male who was looking a bit dried up. "And as a bonus, I get so much energy from them." It purred. Unlike the other tailed beasts, Gokai was actually non-sexed. It switched depending on which suited its particular seduction technique.

"You're a demon, dammit." The kitsune scowled.

"Ah, but the demon of lust, the most destructive of human fallacies, no?" The human-ish being stood from the corpse, chuckling. "You really should give it a shot. It can be quite addictive."

"I'll keep killing humans in a way that leaves beautiful sprays of blood, not unappealing mummies, thanks." The kitsune lifted her lip in disgust.

OoOoOoooo

"Get back here, brat!" three Musumes called, rushing after two Narutos.

"Aha!" called another Naruto off to the side, when he pounced on yet another Musume. "Aw!" He pouted as the clone disappeared in a puff of smoke, only to in turn be dispelled by a thrown kunai, which then transformed back into another shadow clone of Musume.

"Fire Technique: Grand Fire Ball!" Came a yell from off to the side, dispelling three clones and causing six more to scatter, calling "no fair!"

"Rasengan!" ripped through another clone and a tree.

"Brat! That's a dangerous technique! Don't use that crap on allies!" Several of the Musumes called.

"Heh heh. You can take it, right Musume-chan?"

"Fire Technique: Trap of the Thousand Hells!" Came the reply, bands of flame spiralling into being and constricting down on all but four of the Naruto clones.

"That's a dangerous technique, too, you hag!"

"What is going on out here?" Boomed a ruffled looking Minato, hands on his hips. "What the hell are you two doing at this hour of the morning?" He was still in pajama pants and a tee, his hair sticking straight up on one side of his head.
"We're just training, Dad. Musume-chan was showing me some cool jutsu!" All of the visible Naruto dispelled, and then the fire trap blew apart in a cyclone of air, revealing a grinning Naruto.

"Hah! I trapped you, brat." Musume smirked.

"I could have replaced myself with a clone at any time." Naruto protested. "And I got out, didn't I?"

"Only when I stopped paying attention." Musume retorted.

"Musume." Minato growled. "Why are you using S-level techniques on my son in my back yard at 3 in the morning?" He asked, his voice getting more deadly with every conjunction.

Musume smiled up at him happily- if the price of seeing him all sleepy and adorable was getting yelled at, it was definitely worth it. Especially as she had lots of experience with tuning out his rants. "The S-level ones are the most fun." She shrugged.

Minato just rubbed his temples and groaned. "Go back to bed, both of you." He grumbled, heading back into the house.

"Are you coming with me?" Musume asked his retreating back.

"No," He snarled, slamming the door.

Musume chased after him, trying to look contrite. "Why not?" She asked.

Minato looked at her with a scowl. "Tell me how you get into my house right now, so I can lock you out."

The kitsune sighed. "Well, it's really easy, actually. I just mold my chakra signature to look like Naruto's."

"That's... impossible." Minato said, standing up a bit straighter.

"Not really- I basically molded his myself, if you recall." She concentrated and felt herself shift into the brat's signature. "There you go."

Minato looked at her with wide eyes. "Don't ever do that again. I'll add you to the wards on the house."

"Ok..." Musume replied. She wasn't exactly sure what had spurred the change, but she wasn't about to protest. She watched in complete mystification when Minato shuddered and burrowed under the blankets on the couch. She was much more tempted to snuggle down with him than to go up to her cold bed.

Well... she didn't feel like sleeping. Perhaps she would be better off going to the Uchiha main house and seeing if her clones were keeping up on the paperwork. There hadn't been any dispelled for a while- she was dubious if this meant that the furor had died down, or if someone had figured out that she was hiding somewhere and that it wasn't worth it to try to grill her shadow clones.

She hopped through the window to her office to find the Hyuuga head camped out in front of her desk.

"If you had dispelled it, then I would have known to come." Musume said, giving said clone a look to ask why it hadn't done just that. The clone gave a helpless shrug and indicated the lack of anything even remotely sharp in the room. "You could have bitten yourself." The kitsune remarked dryly.
"Oh." Her clone said. "Right." Musume had a sneaking suspicion that it had been in place too long-they tended to lose their mental capacity. She sighed and punched it in the face and took its place, reviewing the memories as she sat back.

"So... you decided to sit here all night why?" She asked, genuinely curious.

"To see how negligent you are in your duties so that I can take a report to the council." The Hyuuga said coldly.

"I do believe that is a clan matter. And if they need the head of the Byakugan clan to tell the difference between myself and my clone, then I really don't see the problem." She replied mildly.

"Let's stop with the pleasantries." The Hyuuga said, sitting forward. "It is now known that you can remove seals. For the sake of inter-clan relationships, I demand that you remove mine."

The kitsune steepled her fingers in front of her face and stared at the other clan head, trying not to let her glee explode out from behind her facade. She was almost positive that he was not aware that his phrasing was essentially giving her blanket permission to free the entire branch house, if she should so choose. In fact, she was pretty sure that she would be able to subvert the entire clan with modified seals, and still be within the request. Though that would take a lot longer- the Hyuuga seal was even more complex than most of Minato's, and she had the knowledge of that man's teacher in her head via Naruto loops. But only a few loops had the brat messed with the Hyuuga's seal- and in most of them the Hyuuga(s) so experimented on had died. Of course, the Hyuuga head would undoubtedly deny this entire conversation...

She sat forward and took a deep breath before she replied. "It will take some work to get it off of you." She said seriously. "The seal may have changed since I put it on- it was my first attempt, after all. You could die." She waited for the Hyuuga's grim look of determination. "So as a precaution, we'll have to do this whole procedure naked, in a pool of some sort of viscous liquid- perhaps pudding?"

The Hyuuga stood up so quickly his chair clattered to the ground behind him. "Stop playing around! These pranks of yours were never funny, and now that you have these responsibilities, you can no longer pretend that you are some sort of mentally challenged waif!" He yelled, slamming his hands down on the desk. "I will be talking with the Hokage about this. He can no longer let his ridiculous affection for you keep you from justice! And if he tries..." The clan head trailed off, the threat puny, but fairly clear.

"That's probably a good idea." Musume replied mildly. "As you obviously do not know much about sealing, even though you are applying these horrible things to your own family as children."

The Hyuuga was so annoyed that he could only snarl before he rushed off in a swirl of leaves. Musume sighed and looked down at the paperwork. And then she groaned. The last day's forms were signed with cartoon foxes. With nine tails. She set fire to the whole pile. If there was anything important in there, she was sure they would get sent to her again.

OooOOo

"So, my favorite student."

Minato looked up blearily from his cereal, giving his teacher a suspicious look. Jiraiya never called him his 'favorite student' unless he was about to call Minato an idiot or try to foist off some buxom woman onto him. "Yes?"
"Is there a particular reason why you keep turning down a blatant invitation for sex?" The perverted sage asked.

"What?" Minato tried to think back to their day... he hadn't noticed any women who were making moves on him... most of them didn't even try anymore, after that international disaster of a 'date' between himself and the diplomat from Sand...

Jiraiya smacked himself in the forehead. "That lovely woman who practically lives in your house!"

"Musume?" Minato scoffed. "She wasn't talking about sex." He took another bite of his cereal, dismissing the obviously delusional older ninja.

"Listen, Minato. I have literally made a career on knowing when a woman is not interested. That is most definitely not your problem with Musume."

Minato stared at his teacher in disbelief. But suddenly memories of their time together came to the front of his consciousness. He grabbed his chin with his hand and looked askance at Jiraiya. "No..." He drew the word out- it was starting to feel like a lie. "That's not... surely..."

Jiraiya took some pity on his comically confused and flustered looking student. "Minato, you're being an idiot. Take the woman to bed already."

Minato couldn't help the wry smile. It seemed that this time, he was the 'favorite student' because he was being an idiot AND Jiraiya was trying to push a woman on him. "It's a bit uncomfortable for me, though- she acts so much like Naruto sometimes. She actually molded her chakra to look like his." He complained.

"Minato, she is essentially raising your child with you. Of course the two of them act the same. And she built his chakra system." Jiraiya shook his head at his wayward student.

"That's what she said."

"So what is your problem? She's practically your wife, except you do all the cooking and you're in the doghouse every night." Jiraiya flung his hands out in exasperation.

A messenger bird rapping on the window saved Minato from having to reply. The code it tapped was that a VIP was waiting for him in his office, and that he was needed five minutes ago.

Abandoning his breakfast with a quick "Later" to his teacher, Minato activated the seal to the tower's entryway. The ANBU serving as receptionists didn't even blink, as they had sent the messenger bird and were quite used to the Hokage's sudden entrances.

"It's Hyuuga Hiashi, sir. Seems he had a run in with Uchiha Musume." Giraffe reported.

"Thank you." Minato nodded and steeled himself to walk into the room. This was bound to be unpleasant, though he couldn't imagine what Musume could have possibly done to the other clan head now. She seemed to have mellowed, or at least gotten too busy to be as obnoxious as she used to be. "Hyuuga Hiashi."

Minato nodded a greeting to the man sitting stiffly in front of his desk. Minato made his way to his chair and sat down. "What can I do for you this morning?"

"I did not want to call the full Council." Hiashi began, which Minato translated to 'but I will if you don't tell me what I want to hear'.

"No one wants to bother them if this is something we can settle easily." Minato replied calmly.
"Recently, Uchiha-sama proved that she can remove seals that she had put on." Hiashi started. Minato nodded for him to continue- he was aware of the fight between Musume and one of the other Uchiha. "But she claims that she will need special preparations in order to remove... ones that have been in place for longer."

Minato barely suppressed his smirk at Hiashi's way of referring to the seal concealed beneath his forehead protector. But he gave himself a bit of time before he answered the other man. He had done considerable research on seals that were to be put on people, in his attempt to seal the kitsune. "That is true- with time, seals can shift depending on the chakra use of the host." He leaned back and ran through the possibilities. "You may need to remove all the chakra-imbued items that you possibly can, including any reinforced clothing, and something that suppresses chakra might help... certain liquids can..." Minato trailed off when he saw that Hiashi was looking murderous.

"This is ridiculous! You two are conspiring against this village!" Hiashi was angry, but he was still sitting down, so Minato had hope that his office was going to survive this encounter.

"I'm not quite sure what you mean, Hiashi-san." Minato said placatingly. He had a sinking suspicion that Musume had said something similar, but perhaps more crudely. "If you want to have some scrolls on seal removal I can point you to the appropriate section of the library..."

"I know how to use seals!" This time the Hyuuga did stand up. "There will be a Council hearing on this." He snapped before he spun on his heal and marched out.

Minato sighed and rubbed his forehead with his fingers, before he stood up and followed the clan head out of the office. He stopped by the front desk and leaned over to Giraffe. "I'm going to need a full report and summary of seal removal- what's available in the library. Especially anything that pertains to external chakra and how it can interfere with the removal."

"Yes, Hokage-sama. I will get on it right away." Giraffe replied.

"As soon as possible, Giraffe. I have a feeling the Council meeting will be, if not today, then tomorrow." Minato rubbed his head and walked back to his office; he had to get through the routine paperwork as soon as he could, so he could figure out what Musume had done before she was pulled in front of the council and she ended up causing another incident. Fortunately there were no other emergencies- only the usual reports, new missions to approve their ranking, and the preparations for the upcoming graduation ceremonies, among other small issues that needed his attention- mostly revolving around the still shaky Uchiha situation.

Which would be why Hyuuga Hiashi making a fuss now about the head of the clan was potentially disastrous. The entire council, no- the whole town was shaken up by Danzo's treason and subsequent escape, the Uchiha executions, the sealing of the Sharingan and the restructuring of the police and ANBU. Minato would have to handle this very delicately- this question wasn't just about Musume putting a seal on one person; the actions of the new Uchiha head were also calling into question the rights of clans to seal individuals in their own or other clans and where the whole village was going to go in the future.

Minato was almost to the point when he would have to ask the Professor for advice. The old man's sadistic pleasure that he was retired and thus did not have to deal with this sort of tangled situation if he didn't want to was completely understandable, especially these days. But given the circumstances, with a civil war that they had narrowly avoided just recently threatening to boil over again, maybe the Third Hokage would be less smug. Minato had doubts that would be the case. The old man would lean back, puff on his pipe, and look wise while the corner of his mouth quirked up at his successor.
OooooO

The kitsune was playing around in the ash that her papers had left when a bird started rapping on her window. She watched it, something tickling in the back of her mind. This was some sort of special bird, something about this tapping meant that... something...

"Ah!" Musume said, slapping her fist into her other palm. "Messenger bird." The bird gave her a dirty look and kept rapping out the message. Except she hadn't bothered to learn the codes. Well, it didn't take a genius to figure out what it meant- someone, probably Minato, wanted to talk to her. And considering what had just happened and the amount of time she had spent avoiding the issue of the Hyuuga by burning her papers, the Hyuuga had yelled at the Hokage and now that ire was about to be passed on to her. Well, she couldn't avoid it any longer. So she jumped out the window past the bird and zipped to Hokage tower.

"Minato?" She called from where she was hanging from the top of the window from her fingers before she remembered her chakra and walked upside down into the room.

It was empty, though there were stacks of papers all over the desk, so high that in places they were about to fall over. She read over some of the top stacks upside down, finding a lot of boring crap like what had been on her desk before she lit it on fire. The ashes had been very satisfying... Minato walked into the room and she hesitated from putting his desk up in flames. He looked worn out and awful, one paperwork blaze away from crawling into a corner and crying.

She dropped from the ceiling and went to him, taking the stack of papers he was carrying and holding them, giving the desk a bemused glance, but there was nowhere to put it.

"Musume." Minato gave her a wan smile. "What did you say to antagonize Hyuuga Hiashi?"

Though she hadn't known the Hyuuga's name, she didn't ask which one he was talking about. "I just gave him some pointers on how we could go about removing the seal I placed." She said innocently.

"What did you say exactly?" Minato said as he walked around his desk gingerly and dropped into his chair.

"I might have suggested we take a pudding bath together." She said, her nose twitching. She huffed to ask what to do with the stack of papers, but his eyes were closed and he didn't acknowledge her.

"You couldn't think of any way to describe the use of environmental chakra muffling that was less reactionary?" He groaned.

Musume put the papers on the ground, tired of standing there and holding them like a glorified table. "I'm not sure. It's possible." She allowed. Minato let out a defeated sigh. The kitsune rumbled soothingly to him, as if he were an upset fox, and went over to his chair. He looked up at her and they stood there staring at each other.

"There is a Council meeting in an hour." Minato said. "Did you get the messenger bird?"

"Ah. Yes and no." Musume said. She went to prop her hips against the desk, but refrained when she saw Minato's panicked look and the warning rustling of a paper stack about to come crashing down. "I saw the bird, but I don't know any of the codes. I was fairly sure it had to do with the Hyuuga and our conversation this morning, however." She smiled wryly.

"Musume." Minato said, leaning forward. "Do you understand what the ramifications of this could be?"
The kitsune watched the Hokage warily. He was asking her what snarls the humans were going to make out of a conversation? How was she supposed to know? "I expect it will get used as a way to promote personal agendas under the guise of helping out others from the village."

"But specifically." Minato's voice cracked a bit. "The Uchiha clan is finally settling into your leadership." Musume didn't say anything- she wasn't sure whether to crack up laughing that a demon was head of one of their clans or cry at the thought of how they were all stalking her to remove their seals. "And the village is finally starting to heal from the betrayals on both sides of this dispute."

"Yes..." Musume wasn't sure what the point was. Unless Minato was telling her that she could destroy the village without actually blowing anything up. What would be the point of that?

"Please don't antagonize the Council." Minato pressed his hands together and put them to his lips, looking up at her with wide blue eyes.


"Thank you."

"I shouldn't be anyway, right?" She smiled a bit. "Being a responsible member of society or what have you, now."

The blue eyes warmed a bit. "Don't say it like it's a disease." Minato smiled.

"Well, it certainly seems to be. The longer you live in a village, the more you end up being productive." Musume waved her hand airily.

Minato caught it and she looked at him in surprise. "Are you going to honor Hiashi's request?" He asked her. Her attention, however, was focused on his fingers on hers. She wanted to curl up in his lap and purr, but couldn't figure out how to do that with the awkward angles and the uncomfortable looking chair. "Musume?"

"Hmm?"

"Are you going to answer my question?" He breathed.

"No."

"Oh." Minato said a bit breathlessly.

"Hokage-sama!" Musume turned and glared at the hawk ANBU, who started a bit at the intensity of it. If she hadn't felt the pressure of her seal holding her Sharingan back... hold it!

She ran to the ANBU and grabbed her by the shoulders. "You're absolutely brilliant!" Musume laughed happily, skipping out of the room.

"Sir, what just happened?" Hawk-san asked, looking puzzled even with the mask on.

"I have no idea." Minato replied honestly, rubbing his hand where it had been holding Musume's. It was time for the Council meeting, though, so he thoughtfully followed the likely insane Uchiha head out the door.

OooooOOOoo

"That concludes the old business, which brings us to the reason this meeting was called." Minato said tiredly, tapping the papers he was holding into a neat stack and putting them to the side.
"Hyuuga Hiashi has a grievance he would like to address with Uchiha Musume." The Hokage nodded to the Hyuuga head for him to speak.

"As I am sure the Council is aware, the current clan head of the Uchiha was found as a... refugee" Minato saw Musume's eye twitch at that but thankfully she didn't say anything. "And has recently risen to a high rank in the community." Again, Minato stiffened, waiting for a comment, but it seemed she was holding to her promise to him to not make this more painful than it already was. "As such the actions that she undertook as a nameless civilian must now be reviewed as befits a citizen in her standing."

"Your premise is logical." The Aburame clan head said, what little of his face could be seen giving away nothing.

"I repaid for my previous actions in a way that this Council found acceptable." Musume replied demurely, "I do not wish to see a clan of people have to suffer more than they already have with further reparations." Minato caught the glint in her eye and almost groaned.

"The Hyuuga clan is not seeking reparations from the Uchiha clan, but from its head." Hiashi continued formally.

"Please, Hyuuga-sama, if you could be more plain in the interest of resolving this issue." Musume purred.

"There has now been set a precedence for the removal of seals set on the Uchiha clan. Seals that, though illegal, this Council has allowed to exist." Hiashi seemed to be getting a bit angry.

Minato noted that even Aburame Shibi was surprised that was brought up, seeing as the Hyuuga also semi-legalistically enslaved their clan members. Akimichi Chouza looked a bit like he had just seen his favorite brand of chips- his clan had been trying to get the seal outlawed since the kidnapping of Hyuuga Hinata and that whole disaster. Even Nara Shikaku was looking like he was paying a bit of attention, though the contemplative look in his eye probably meant that he was planning some grand strategy.

"I was under the impression that it was a technique to control clan members that has much precedence." Musume noted, picking a bit under her nails. Minato tried to send her a mental reminder of her promise to behave.

"For the clan head to discipline clan members, for the good of the clan, yes!" Hiashi growled. "And only when the practice predated the clan's migration to the village!"

"Hyuuga-sama." Musume pouted. "I'm not sure that I, being new to my leadership role and the politics of this village can fully understand this subtle talk." Minato didn't buy that plea for inexperience for a second, and neither did the other clan heads and village officials. "So perhaps if you could ask for what it is that you want, and we can stop making oblique references." Minato wondered why she wanted him to say it out loud- had not Hiashi already demanded what he wanted? Perhaps she wanted the full Council to witness it for some reason.

Hiashi straightened and pulled his dress robes into falling perfectly. "This clan requests that Uchiha-sama, for continued peace in the village, remove my seal as you were asked. It was placed without consent and it is unacceptable." Hiashi grated out, his eye twitching. Simultaneously Nara Shikaku looked briefly shocked, both of Aburame Shibi's eyes became visible over his glasses, and Musume looked smug. Minato tried to puzzle through what had just happened, as he had a feeling it was going to get ugly.
Musume stayed silent until the brush strokes of the official Council stenographer stilled. "Are you speaking of the Caged Bird Seal?" She asked, nodding toward Hiashi while looking meaningfully towards his head. Both Nara and Aburame heads riveted their attention on Hiashi, making Minato even more nervous.

"Yes." The Hyuuga bit out.

"Hm." Musume said, leaning back and waiting again for the brush strokes to still. "I have found that since the time a seal was placed on this one, it has been somewhat more difficult to manipulate chakra the way you are requesting." Minato wondered from her phrasing if that was because her seal she was proudly displaying on her forehead or because of the several dozens of chakra disruptors he had made for her around the same time, that she happened to be currently wearing. But he didn't call her out on that.

"Nonsense!" Hiashi was getting a bit purple in the face.

"It's quite tragic, really." Musume said insincerely. "Which was why I suggested the environmental chakra disruptors." She said the last while sliding a look at Minato. "It would take more time than it did with Keisai-chan to remove my own, which would be considerably easier than attempting to take off a Caged Bird Seal, seeing as I copied only the barest of elements for the Uchiha from the original seal."

"You will try." Hiashi demanded.

"Is that an order, Hyuuga-sama?" Musume's eyes were hard.

"If you want to see continued peace in this village, yes it is!"

"Hiashi, that is enough." Minato snapped at the Hyuuga head. This whole business was distasteful; he already felt like the two clan heads were bartering slaves, without Hiashi trying to order other clan heads around by threatening the whole village. "The Uchiha clan will of course try to make peace with the Hyuuga clan." He glared at Musume, but she surprisingly acquiesced without protest.

"Of course, Hokage-sama. This clan does not have a reason to antagonize the Hyuuga clan." Her eyes were still sparkling in a way that seemed to impress the Nara and Aburame, which made Minato exceptionally nervous. She bowed her head a bit in the direction of Hiashi. "I was merely trying to maintain some of his clan's privacy."

"What are you talking about, that has nothing to do with what you did to me." Hiashi snarled, though he sat back at Minato's look, giving some hope that this would not degenerate into a brawl.

"Of course it does. I copied your seal completely- it has all the proper elements: sealing of the Byakugan upon unconsciousness, subverting of the will of the recipient, the ability of the sealer to induce horrendous pain on the recipient at the whim of the sealer, and fatality at the formation of a hand seal." Minato barely was able to keep himself from groaning out loud, mostly because he was so shocked and appalled to learn what the Caged Bird Seal actually did. The Hyuuga had kept him away from examining it for the entire time that he had been Hokage, despite his many efforts to do so.

"Is this truly what your clan's seal does?" The heat in the Aburame's voice was somewhat surprising, as was it that he was the one asking the question.

"I do not need to discuss my clan's practices with this Council." Hiashi replied stiffly.

"I think you do." Aburame Shibi said coldly.
"Perhaps we could have a duel to decide?" Musume asked, looking too hopeful for Minato's peace of mind.

"This isn't just between two groups." Akimichi Chouza said with a frown, though he looked fairly pleased at where the discussion was going.

"A battle?" Musume said, quivering in excitement. "I volunteer to be on Hiashi's team against everyone else."

"You what?" Minato asked in shock, just as Hiashi said "Absolutely not!"

Musume huffed and sat back. "Not like anyone else is going to fight for you, but you're probably right. I would win." She grinned at the annoyed looks on the other clan heads' faces.

"We were given an exemption when we settled in this village." Hiashi almost growled- as much as the prissy man could, anyway. "And no one has yet answered the charge of the Uchiha clan using seals when they were not given such an exemption!"

"A valid point." Aburame Shibi said in a monotone that still somehow managed to sound reluctant. Musume looked unconcerned at the seriousness of the allegations. "Is it?" She asked.

"Yes." Minato replied seriously.

"Well, alright. I'll take them off, I suppose. But I still need to do Hiashi's in a pool of pudding." Musume grinned.

The Hyuuga clan head let out a strangled noise of anger and stormed out of the Council Hall.

"That concludes this meeting, then." Minato said, somewhat unnecessarily. He warily watched as the three other clan heads approached Musume. In the past they had been fairly neutral to the new Uchiha head, but she had pranked their clans, while not to the extent as the Hyuuga and Uchiha, as much as any other civilian or unaffiliated part of the village.

Aburame Shibi bowed to Musume, who smirked back at him. Minato started to feel a bit sick to his stomach. What the hell had changed?

Akimichi Chouza slapped Musume on the shoulder. Surprisingly the slight woman was able to take the full brunt without being crushed- or really even moving at all. Chouza's grin widened. "I am glad to have you on the Council, Uchiha-sama. Perhaps you should come to dinner with Nara-sama and I sometime. There is a beef barbecue place that we love to eat at." Minato blinked- he knew which barbecue he was referring to, and it was one that the two close clans frequently met at to secure their alliance.

"I would love to, Akimichi-sama. I'm always up for a good meal with friends," Musume replied with a grin that looked entirely too cheerful. Minato only wondered for a second if she knew that she was accepting an alliance- the satisfied and calculating glitter in her eye was as obvious as it was devious.

Chouza laughed heartily and clapped her on the shoulder again, and this time Musume let it knock her forward lightly. "You're alright." Chouza announced, before walking out the door. Usually the Nara head would have followed his friend, but Shikaku just looked after the retreating Akimichi before turning back to Musume.

"I'm not sure how much of this was planned and how much simply chaos that turned out for you." Nara Shikaku said wryly, shaking his head.
"And that, friend, is the key to an exciting life." Musume replied, her eyes almost closed at the size of her pleased grin.


"Musume, would you join me in my office?" Minato asked, far more calmly than he felt inside. If he weren't quite so tired and stressed, perhaps he would be able to see what had just happened. It seemed as if the clans (well, except for the Hyuuga) were pulling in beautifully behind Musume... but why? Minato rubbed his temples and sighed.

"Certainly, Minato." Musume replied, looking at him with a concern that somewhat surprised the Hokage.

Once the door to his office was sealed and he could be reasonably certain that no one could overhear, Minato turned to Musume and asked the burning question. "What the hell happened in there?"

"You couldn't tell?" Musume seemed generally shocked.

"I was too busy worrying that you were going to instigate a civil war to figure out what had the four of you so pleased. Why didn't you protest the seal removal? Why were you so polite to Hiashi one moment and riling him up the next? And that dumb act... I can't believe he didn't see though it... I..."

"Minato." Musume interrupted the ranting Hokage, putting two fingers over his lips. Minato was sufficiently distracted that he didn't even hear her explanation.

"What?" Minato asked, blinking at Musume's raised eyebrow.

"I said," Musume began sardonically, "that Hyuuga-sama has essentially ordered me to take the seals off of the entire branch clan with how he phrased his 'request' that I remove the one from him."

"What... no he..." Minato thought back to the phrasing. "Oh gods."

Musume started to cackle gleefully. "Oh yes."

Minato pinched his eyes closed and tried to think of a way out of this. "Musume, you can't actually do that! It would destroy the entire balance of power in the village- it would be total anarchy and chaos!" He opened his eyes and looked in horror at the stunned look of rapture on Musume's face. "Which would be a very, very BAD thing." He emphasized.

Musume blinked and looked at the Hokage. "Well." She allowed. "He didn't put a time limit on it. I suppose it can wait." She hummed to herself. "Yes, wait until he does not suspect it at all..."

Minato felt an almost physical sensation of the future crushing him. This could not possibly work! Visions of civil war, all of Konoha fighting itself, all her enemies attacking the village, fire, destruction, blood!

"Minato! Breathe dammit!"

Minato sucked in a huge lungful of air and focused on Musume and the way her arms had wrapped around him snugly.

"Hey, that's right, just take it easy. Think about bunnies and rainbows or some shit, ok? Everything will be ok, relax." Minato nodded and put his arms around her as well, resting his head on her shoulder and getting a pleased hum in response.
Minato felt a bit better- at least he could breathe again.

"I won't do it, ok? I won't antagonize Hyuuga-sama too much and I'll only take off the seals I'm supposed to." Musume said, brushing her hands across his face and making an odd, but strangely soothing rumbling sound.

"Ok." Minato agreed with a mutter. Not that he actually believed her for a second.
Rumblings

The kitsune was particularly amused to see the brat standing before her.

"I appreciate the fact that you are torturing yourself, but I'm not quite sure what you want me to do."

Naruto winced and pushed back the silly Hokage hat off his forehead, letting it fall into the water that covered the floor of the sewer. "I don't want to talk to you, but anything has to be better than budget negotiations."

"Perhaps." The kitsune smiled broadly, showing off her white teeth. "Unfortunately for you, these talks of ours only take a few seconds of 'real' time."

The curses that streamed from the brat were certainly entertaining. And perhaps being able to yell at someone made it easier to refrain from yelling at the ones he really wanted to. "I became Hokage to protect my precious people, not sit in meetings!" He groaned.

"I'll be sure to remind you of that." The kitsune smirked. The brat glared at her, but she didn't bother to clarify she meant in other lives. She could hold it over his head in this one as well as in the next.

OooOoOo

Musume leaned against the doorway to the kitchen, watching Minato poring over paperwork. She could tell by the brief twitch of his hands that he had noticed her and acknowledged her as not a threat, possibly subconsciously. If he had been paying attention that small movement would have been controlled.

Musume was a bit confused as to why she was so content to just watch him, especially as he was doing nothing interesting. But looking at him set her heart to dancing. She rubbed between her breasts absently before her eyes widened in realization. She had been locked in the brat so long that she had failed to recognize the obvious signs of attraction. But a human? Her nose scrunched up a bit. A mighty demon such as herself... her thoughts trailed off before she grinned toothily. A mighty demon such as she currently was not could do whatever she pleased. She was beginning to really love that particular thread of logic.

"Minato." Musume slid into the room to stand behind him, looking over his shoulder at the paperwork dismissively. "The brat and the pervert are off on a weeklong training trip..." She offered. Minato grunted back at her. He hadn't even looked up at her. She smirked before sighing dramatically and draping herself over his shoulders.

Minato started at the contact and turned slightly so that he could look her in the eye. "I... have paperwork to do."

"Then why aren't you in your office?" She huffed, pulling away.

Minato turned in the chair, following her retreat. "It was late, and people never stop coming in to speak with me if I'm in my office. I get more done here." He looked at her suspiciously. "Why are you not doing paperwork?" He asked.

Musume grinned. "Well, that's a task that anyone can do, right?"

"Anyone with the training and experience and memories of a village leader." Minato retorted sharply.
"Precisely!" Musume smirked.

"What?" Minato was confused- he had been expecting an argument.

"Shadow clones, of course." She shook her head at him. "They have all your memories and what not, and can do all this menial nonsense."

"That would work for maybe a half hour, tops." Minato said suspiciously.

Musume stared at him blankly. "Really?"

"Yes..." Minato replied with the known fact, though he was starting to have less than full confidence in his answer.

"Huh. Well, mine last days." She shrugged. Minato gaped at her. "How about I summon some for you, and they can get to writing, and we can do other things?" She moved toward him, eyes gleaming as she said it.

Minato gulped and then cleared his throat. "I would need to make my own... yours wouldn't have my memories or thoughts, much less the fact I can't share classified information with you."

"Well, fine, then- make enough that when they dispel in 30 minutes, they'll be done." Musume was getting frustrated. It was surprisingly difficult to get through to Minato, and he didn't have nearly as good an excuse as she did for not noticing the attraction. Maybe he didn't want to have sex with her...? But from all the observations she had made of human courting, it seemed that he was interested. Maybe it was her that wasn't being blatant enough? But the brat had always gotten smacked when he just came out and asked...

"That... that would take a dozen shadow clones!" Minato gaped at her. "If the chakra drain doesn't kill me the mental shock when they disperse will!"

Musume threw up her hands. "Well I can't help it if you can't work around your own limitations." She huffed. "Get a secretary or summon some of those useless frogs, or tell the village that things will just have to wait!" She caught herself just before she started swearing on the first fox's various body parts. "You can't just be the hokage. Everybody else gets time off from their jobs, besides what they take for sleeping!" With that she turned and smacked a fist into the doorframe, shaking the chakra reinforced wood before she stepped into demon space and left.

"Well." Minato said to the now empty room, taking a deep, shuddering breath. "That could have gone better."

OooOOoo

It took Musume a good ten minutes of brooding before her stomach rumbled and reminded her why she had snuck into the Namikaze kitchen to begin with. The Uchiha house she was 'staying in' was pathetically empty of food seeing as she was rarely there. All that was in her fridge was a pint of milk. She had learned that lesson via the brat quite enough times, thank you. She wasn't quite desperate enough to rely on her chakra to convert it to something her body could use when she could poach some instant ramen, leftovers, or if Minato hadn't been having his balls handed to him by paperwork, actual cooked dinner.

When Musume's stomach rumbled again she shook herself out of her pout and jumped out of the tree she had been moping in. She blinked in shock and rubbed the back of her neck in embarrassment. "I really am acting like an Uchiha." She grumbled, wondering what she could do to break herself out of impersonating a stick in the mud. "I suppose I should be social..." She mused to herself. But the only
person she wanted to go socialize with she also wanted to either glomp or knock into the next year.

"Oi! Uchiha-sama!" Came a call from the side of the street. Musume straightened up from her slouching walk in surprise, and then pulled her hands out of her pants pockets with a snarl. She turned to see who had called for her with a deliberately large grin on her face.

Akimichi Chouza let his hand fall slightly at the feral look on the other clan head's face before steeling himself and waving to indicate he had been the one that had called to her. He was relieved that her face had settled back to a pout before she slouched over to where he, Inoichi and Shikaku were enjoying dinner together at the barbecue restaurant.

"Hn." Musume grunted as she dropped into the booth next to Shikaku.

"I heard about the meeting from the other two and I'm very sorry to have missed it." Yamanaka Inoichi said cheerfully, deciding to ignore the typical Uchiha behavior as he was not aware it was unusual for the clan's head.

"It was rather fun, wasn't it?" Musume asked, perking up at the thought of how thoroughly she had tricked Hiachi.

"In retrospect, scolding your daughter for messing about with fertilizer and chemicals was much less important, eh, Inoichi?" Chouza asked as he grabbed a piece of meat off the grill. Musume snatched another that was still a bit too raw for the large man.

"Mixing chemicals can be quite troublesome." Shikaku commented.

"Absolutely." Musume agreed around her chopsticks. She remembered the one loop where the clan had taken in that blond with the mouths on his hands... the explosions had been truly spectacular. The hidden village had sported a great number of craters before the two blond children had blown up everything... literally. It had been one of her most amusing deaths.

"Ino is trying to come up with a new technique now that she has graduated. Which I definitely support." Inoichi sighed. "I just wish she wouldn't do her experimentation next to my prize hydrangeas."

"Explosions are much better crowd pleasers than mind techniques." Shikaku commented. "More likely to gain her points in the chuunin exams."

Musume paused in her grab for another piece of meat at that comment. She glared at Chouzu who stole it due to her inattention. "The chuunin exams are in a few months, then?" She asked with some trepidation. "And they are here this year, no?"

"Yup. If Azuma doesn't put them in the running..." Chouza cracked his knuckles menacingly.

"They will. They already went to the effort of putting them in one team." Shikaku commented.

"Isn't Naruto trying for chuunin this year?" Inoichi asked Musume.

"Yeah, the brat can pass no problem. He'll pull his team along." Musume snatched a nice big hunk right out from under Chouza's chopsticks with a grin before popping it into her mouth.

"What team is he on, then?" Inoichi asked.

"Eh?" Musume blinked at him. She honestly hadn't thought about it. "There wasn't a team with a spot open or something?"
"No, they were evenly divisible by three." Inoichi replied. "But probably only the teams with clan member's children will be put into the exam. The first generation genin won't be ready for it."

"Hm." Musume shrugged, munching on some fries dipped in a lot of ketchup. She was secretly pleased that they looked like humans covered in blood from the perspective of when she was her proper size.

"He might be able to go with one of the older teams if they have a member that either doesn't want to be in the exams or is injured." Chouzu suggested dubiously.

"Ch. The exams may be a bother, but no one is going to voluntarily give up a chance to show off on their home grounds." Shikaku said dismissively.

Musume shrugged. "He'll figure it out, I'm sure. Maybe he could use shadow clones to be his other teammates."

"Or maybe you could take it with him." Inoichi chuckled.

Musume lifted a brow at him doubtfully. "I technically haven't graduated the Academy." She retorted. "Besides, I don't want to be a ninja." She had enough annoyances with the paperwork... imagining missions made her shudder inside. The village could damn well consider 'not destroying us' as her mission so far as she was concerned.

"Being a clan head is troublesome enough." Shikaku nodded in agreement.

"Hey, you three run clans, yeah? How do you do it and have time left over to eat dinner for several hours?" Musume asked, leaning forward.

"How do you?" Inoichi rebutted.

"Shadow clones." Musume shot back. "Answer my question."

"Well, our clans are much smaller. Only an extended family, really." Chouza said, making a placating gesture. "For a clan your size with hundreds of members, or like the Hyuuga with the branch family, it is a lot more work."

"And we don't have to deal with complicated familiars like the Inuzuka or the Aburame clans." Shikaku added.

"And we don't have as much pull with the Hokage or as much stake in the politics." Chouza shrugged.

Musume sat back with a grunt. That wasn't particularly helpful. Not that she cared how the humans dealt with their social lives... except that she wanted Minato to pay less attention to boring things and more time with her.

"Hey, speaking of clan business, what's going on with Itachi? I heard it from some of the ANBU that he's been spending a lot more time than usual with them and going out on dangerous missions." Chouza asked Musume.

"He has?" She thought back and couldn't really remember the last time she had seen him. "Huh, I haven't seen him around for a while." She frowned a bit at that. She used to hang out with him a lot, particularly before she had become the clan head and the subsequent mutiny when they realized they couldn't control her.
"Maybe he's avoiding you." Inoichi said, sipping his tea. "Perhaps you should send him a white carnation for remembrance and wisteria and ivy for loyalty and duty."

"You really think he's avoiding me? Why would he do that?" Musume leaned back and burped in satisfaction.

"I've been hearing stories about you from villagers that come to my shop about how all the Uchiha are living in fear of you." Inoichi said with a smile.

Musume snorted. "As they should be! Even though I try to be nice." She paused and snorted at the incredulous looks on the three men. "Well, relatively. But all they understand is violence. Which is fine by me." She winced. "At least since they stopped attacking me at all hours of the night and not letting me sleep, anyway. That was rather annoying."

"Perhaps he's just at that age." Inoichi sighed. "At least he's not trying to explode your projects."

"Maybe." Musume stood up and hopped backwards out of the booth. "Thanks for supper, guys. It's been fun." And she was no longer starving. "Later!" There was an Uchiha she had to take out her aggression on disguised as a concerned talking-to.

"Hey wait..." Chouza called out, but she had already slipped into not-space. "She didn't leave any money."

"No one ever leaves any money. You eat far more than we do." Shikaku drawled.

"But you guys pay for other things, like weapons and seal scrolls." Chouza pouted.

"You invited her." Shikaku shot back.

"You could try billing the Uchiha clan and seeing how that goes." Inoichi suggested.

Chouza shuddered. "I've heard the same rumors you have." And additionally the scary look Musume had given him when he called her over. "Although she's much different in person." He mused.

"You just never hosted her before." Inoichi laughed.

"It is almost more troublesome that she didn't do anything that we can detect." Shikaku muttered.

"That we can detect?" Chouza asked, sweating a little bit. "Couldn't she have just done nothing at all? You know, calmed down under the mantle of leadership or something?" At the sidelong looks from his two friends he sighed. "Right, right, never hosted her, got it."

OooOOooo

"Hey, Sasuke,"

The young Uchiha squeaked and whipped around, taking a second to realize he had to look up to where Musume was standing on the ceiling of the porch. "Why are you always on our roof?"

"Because your mother is scary when it comes to those rock gardens, and I don't need to give her another reason to hate me."

"Oh." Sasuke's brow furrowed in confusion.

"Where is your brother? I need someone to beat u... er... practice jutsu with."
"How am I supposed to know?" Sasuke scowled. It would have been adorable if Musume hadn't seen him become completely emo and a total jerk in so many possible futures. "He never will show me any jutsu or train at all." Sasuke's eyes brightened as a sudden thought occurred to him. "Hey, could you..." But he realized he was speaking to empty air as he looked up to find Musume gone. Sasuke flopped down onto the wood floor. "Of course she won't train me, she already said she didn't like me at all." He sniffed. "Well, I hate her, anyway." He reminded himself.

OOOooooOO

"Itachi!" Musume barked, making the normally stoic teen tense up with a jolt.

"Uchiha-sama..." Itachi said as he turned around, looking at the irate clan head with trepidation.

"Don't give me that." She scowled. "Why have you been avoiding me?"

"I haven't..."

"Nonsense." Musume huffed. "I used to see you all the time before this mess started. You were always skulking about something interesting going on."

"Perhaps nothing interesting has happened lately." Itachi offered, his face showing no emotion.

Musume eyed him. "We could go to the training grounds and make something interesting happen. How about a friendly duel?" Her eyes glittered dangerously.

Itachi paled noticeably. "I don't think that would be a very entertaining fight for you Uchiha-sama."

"Why the hell not?" She growled.

"You seem rather er..." Itachi looked uncharacteristically flustered, "annoyed about something."

Musume crossed her arms and huffed at him. "That obvious, is it?" She asked in bemusement. "Hrn."

Itachi started to walk away slowly when he saw her distracted.

"Hey! You still didn't answer me about why you've been avoiding me." She called to his retreating form.

"Perhaps I want to keep myself as one of the two with the Sharingan to not yet be sealed." Itachi muttered, pausing in his slow escape and eying her.

"You haven't tried to kill me, be an ass or disobey one of my rules, so why would I seal you?" Musume asked him, confused.

"I have no idea why you would, Uchiha-sama." Itachi replied, his tone of voice odd and indecipherable to the baffled demon-turned-human. He beat a hasty retreat and she let him go.

If he was going to run away from her she might as well let him. Maybe eventually he would attack her randomly? That might be fun, though she didn't know if he knew how to fight while moving. She snickered.

"Well at least I now have something interesting to think about." Musume muttered to herself. Why would the Uchiha sound so sarcastic? "Although, now that he mentions it... I should probably start taking the seals off my Uchiha." She snarled a bit at the thought of going backwards like that. More unsealed Uchiha was counterproductive to her eventual goal of ripping apart the village without
being trapped in some baby again. Although...

"It was only unwilling sealing, wasn't it?" She mused out loud. "How the heck do I get them to want their Sharingan sealed..." She crossed her arms and squinted her eyes closed in thought. "Ah!" She smacked a fist into her open palm as she remembered the theory the brat's had had in a couple loops that the Sharingan made the clan insane. Plus, hadn't Itachi had some sort of wasting illness or something? "I need to go talk to Orochimaru." She muttered. Except he wouldn't be back in the village until the chuunin exam. And she would have to avoid his attempts to suck out some of her blood. Her eyes sparkled. "Heh heh... a challenge!"

Musume turned instinctively just in time to catch a senbon on her forarm. "Ow, what the hell?" She looked up to the thrower of the needle and saw Hiashi standing there with a blank face.

"If you do not want people to attack you to see if you are a shadow clone, then you should actually sit in your office once in a while rather than leave your clone there."

"You can see if I'm a clone or not, you jerk." Musume grumbled, pulling out the senbon and licking her blood off of the tip. With thoughts of Orochimaru fresh in her mind, she didn't want him to get ahold of any. Although... could he get it from saliva, too? Hmm...

"Throwing senbon does not require nearly as much chakra." Hiashi said tonelessly.

"I'm sorry that you are so handicapped that the drain is noticeable Hyuuga-sama." Musume purred. Hiashi's eyebrow twitched. "I know what you are doing."

"Ok." Musume replied, lost. She looked down at herself in confusion. Was she standing oddly or something? Or was he talking about one of her many pranks... surely the Nara couldn't have noticed and started retaliation already. That would have required quite a lot of effort. Or maybe he meant about her colossal win at the Council meeting? She grinned remembering how fun it was to use the human's silly games against them. "Do you want to... discuss it further?" She asked hopefully, shifting into a ready stance.

"No." Hiashi said, face blank. "Just noting that you are wandering around rather than researching."

"So? It's not like there is any rush." The wave of killing intent had Musume instinctively rolling her weight to the balls of her feet. She stuck out her tongue at the stoic man. Just a little more of a push…

He turned away and walked sedately away from the Uchiha section of down.

"Dammit." Musume snarled. "No one will help me relieve any stress. I can't be held responsible for what happens if I don't get something fun to do soon." She wondered if the brat would meet up with the Akatsuki and summon her. That would be a fun battle... maybe she should become a ninja, then she could go do assassination missions or something. "With my luck they wouldn't let me for some fool reason." She grumbled.

She got to the office and dispelled her clone, looking down at the doodle it had been making of a fox eating a toad. She noted with some surprise that the talent had progressed from stick figures to decent line drawing before she burnt the paper to ashes.

Although maybe she shouldn't be surprised; she had done a lovely job on those comics... it was really too bad that Kakashi had probably burned the books. Then exploded the ashes. Then gathered them up again and chidori'ed the cinders.

"Heh heh. Maybe I should talk to Jiraiya about starting a series of comics of my own..."
grinned, her eyes turning to slits. "And I could publish it under 'Namikaze'." She leaned back in the chair and huffed. Jiraiya wouldn't be back until the exams. "Why can't it be the chuunin exams already? At least that's always interesting."
The kitsune watched from inside her cage as the brat and the emo boy had their 'final confrontation.'

"Oh look who it is again. What a surprise.‖ She muttered, grumpy that she hadn't managed to get the brat to listen to her this loop. "Sasuke, your betrayal is the reason for my existence.‖ She paraphrased as Naruto stared at the Uchiha. "You were always beneath me.‖ She continued for Sasuke as he looked down from a cliff. "I can't help it that you want to be on top all the time.‖ She rebutted herself as Naruto began to twitch. "I am going to thrust my sword deep into you...‖ She blinked as she saw the brat appear in front of her.

"Will you shut up!?‖

The kyuubi blinked again. Wait... she had made it so he could hear her? She thought so, but he had been so good at ignoring her. She was surprised, and then ecstatic. It had been so long that she had been anything but bored!

"Hn. It figures.‖ Sasuke said as he disdainfully pulled one of his feet out of the calf-high water.

"S-sasuke-teme! What... how...?‖ Naruto stuttered.

"He's taking after 'that man.'" The kitsune answered cryptically, smirking at the look he gave her that was mixture confusion, disgust and hatred.

"What man?‖ Sasuke asked, spinning his eyes at her.

Eh, what the hell. "Uchiha Madara, the guy who wiped out your clan.‖

"Itachi killed my clan.‖ The punk snarled.

"Right, with the mentorship of Uchiha Madara. Your great-great-great-great-grandfather.‖

"Don't listen to the bastard fox, Sasuke, it always lies.‖

"I don't need your help!‖ Sasuke snapped.

"That's right, Naruto, just kill him already." The kitsune drawled, yawning.

"No way! I'm going to bring Sasuke back. You just don't understand the value of bonds.‖

"Sure I understand. They make you put your entire life on hold chasing after someone who tried to use your feelings to make himself more powerful and so blind you to his faults that you are trying to protect him while he is taking over your mind.‖ She growled, frustrated again. He never learned. Never never learned! She smashed against the bars and snarled. "Bonds make you insane, they make you stupid, they make you blind, they make you predictable.‖

"They make you live!‖ Naruto roared, throwing himself at Sasuke and both of them out of his mind and back into the real world, and the same tired fight.

OooooOOO

Minato sat in his kitchen, thinking about his last encounter with Musume. It had been right here, and he was again trying to get work done without people distracting him. Instead, he wasn't getting anything done because he was waiting for her to come waltzing in to steal his food or harass him in
some manner, or even just distract him from his work. He was basically being completely unproductive.

Minato thought he heard someone coming down the stairs and looked up expectantly from the report he had been staring at for at least an hour. No one was there.

He cursed before taking a deep breath to calm the rapid jump in his pulse. This wasn't working. He put the reports down on his desk. They really could wait until the next day. Nothing particularly crazy had happened recently and no one was going to die if he didn't go through all the D-rank mission reports.

Minato flashed over to the entrance to the Uchiha compound and quickly but sedately walked the short distance to the Uchiha main house. He moved as if to open the door to Musume's office, but Hyuuga Hiashi flung it open, almost smacking the Hokage in the face, before he stormed out. "Hyuuga-sama..." Minato said warily and with some surprise, but the other man was not paying attention to him.

The Hyuuga turned around and glared through the door. "Again neglecting your duties! Not getting rid of the seals as you were told!"

"Who's neglecting duties? I'm sitting here filling out paperwork while also brushing up on your little problem whilst you are continually harassing me! How can you possibly be getting any work done?" Musume barked back at Hiashi.

"Someone needs to keep an eye on you." Hiashi snarled, before glancing at the Hokage with a sneer on his face and whipping around and stalking out of the Uchiha office building past the dazed secretary.

"Hiashi, is there anything I can do to…" Minato called after the Hyuuga head.

Hiashi snapped a look over his shoulder before disappearing in a swirl of leaves.

Minato watched him go with a puzzled frown. He would have to talk with the Hyuuga at some point soon. Hiashi looked to be quite frustrated, even with the Council session going his way. Well, relatively speaking anyway.

The Hokage didn't want the clan to feel alienated, though he was at a loss as to what to do to appease Hiashi. He resolved to track the man down tomorrow to try to see what the Hyuuga needed. Kami knew the village had had enough of this sort of thing with the near mutiny of the Uchiha.

Speaking of the Uchiha- that reminded him why he was here. Minato was suddenly nervous again. His heart jumped into a faster beat and he swallowed nervously. He was a bit out of practice with this sort of thing...

"Erm... doing paperwork?" Minato asked, leaning around the doorway feeling foolish.

"What does it look like, Spikey?" The clone (?) replied.

"Spikey?" He asked, amused in spite of the nerves.

The clone (?) raised an eyebrow. "Would you prefer blondie?"

"Erm... no. Or yes... or, whatever's fine. Look..." He rubbed the back of his neck while he eyed the stack of paper and the lamp that was illuminating the pile. "You're a clone, right? Because no one would do paperwork at this hour if they could be doing other things." He winced even as he said it,
as that was exactly what he had been doing. When had he ended up with absolutely no life outside of his duties?

But the clone(?) did not throw the easy insult that he was expecting, merely raising an eyebrow and regarding him, looking a bit annoyed. Minato hoped that was due to her previous rather than visitor. "Your point?" The clone(?) asked dryly.

Minato shifted uncomfortably. "I don't suppose you could get a message to Musume that I want to talk to her, could you?"

The clone (?) sighed and picked up a pen and stabbed herself in the hand, leaving behind a poof of smoke.

When it cleared, Musume was where the clone had been, crouching on the chair and eying the Hokage in a way that made him nervous in an entirely different way. She looked positively feral.

"Are you another clone?" He asked after they had been staring at each other for a long while.

The clone (?) hopped over the desk, landing so close to Minato that they were almost touching. "You'll have to... poke me with something to figure out, won't you?" She asked with a devilish smirk on her lips.

"Ah..." Minato was at a loss for words. He shifted a bit as he thought about what exactly he would like to poke her with... He coughed and rubbed the back of his head again. At least he felt fairly sure that this was the real Musume.

His suspicion was confirmed when another clone formed behind the desk and started doing paperwork again. Minato cleared his throat to answer. "No... I think I'm alright. Unless you want to disprove another rule of cloning and say that your clones can cast jutsu and self-perpetuate."

"Hmm. A good goal, I think." Musume said, looking entirely too pleased at the suggestion. "Why did you come here?" She asked finally, her gaze traveling away as she took a step back, her body language closing off and going distant.

"Er... are you really working on taking off Hiashi's seal?" He blurted out in his panic. His mind had gone blank and he couldn't think of what else to say to get her to reengage her in conversation. What in the world had happened to their easy discussions? He immediately regretted the question, however, when he saw Musume's face tense up.

"Yes, actually, I am. It is much different to work on with the chakra disruptors and the seal on my head, but I would like to avoid taking them off and leaving myself vulnerable." Musume replied, crossing her arms over her chest.

Minato was torn between being saddened at the hostile body language and staring at how her arms were pressing her breasts together and showing off her cleavage. He wondered vaguely if she was doing it on purpose and he had a sudden irrational desire to run away and ask his mentor. The thought of what Jiraiya would say was both horrifying and strangely intriguing.

When Minato didn't say anything Musume continued frostily. "I'm not actually good at seals, I just can see how they integrate with a person's chakra and the ones I made up are much less integrated...” She trailed off and looked at Minato with a raised eyebrow as the man was turning an interesting shade of red. They went back to staring at each other for a while: Musume his face, Minato a bit lower.

Musume could tell that he had not been listening to a word that she had said. Her annoyance with the
man faded into humor seeing that he was spacing out as much as she used to.

"I think you're right." Minato said into the silence, startling the kitsune a bit.

"Of course I am." Musume replied automatically before blinking back into focus on the conversation. "About what?" She had completely lost the thread of what they were talking about.

Minato closed the distance between them and slid an arm around her waist, smiling nervously at Musume's look of surprise. Musume could feel the slip of not-space closing around them - it tingled to not be in control. She allowed Minato to take her with him, distracted at the subtle differences being with him gave to the familiar space.

Minato ran a finger along the edge of her jaw, bringing her attention back to the physical. "You were right; I need to take more personal time."

For once she curbed her initial response which would have been 'hells yes!' or 'finally!' or maybe 'believe it!' and instead purred, "is that so?" as she leaned into his chest and slid her arms down his back. Musume was already enjoying this much more than from her previous second-hand human courtship experiences. She squeezed his tight butt and grinned up into his eyes. She also bit back from asking if it was a summoning scroll in his pocket or if he was happy to see her, both because she knew the answer and it caused her grin to get even more pleased and because if the mood got ruined she was going to howl in fury and destroy the fucking village.

Minato smiled and leaned forward until his lips were almost brushing Musume's. "Yes." He whispered, delighting in how she shivered at his voice. Minato slid his hands under her shirt.

Musume arched her back as he lifted her loose top up but looked down in confusion when his hands froze on either side of her ribs. "Why are you stopping?" she growled. If all human courtship was this frustrating it was a wonder they ever reproduced at all!

Minato did not look up from her stomach, his shocked face was riveted to the bold black lines of the demon seal standing out against Musume's pale skin, and his expression set in shock.

Musume forgot plans for destruction as she felt an overwhelming rush of fear, followed closely by the crushing weight of despair. How could she have forgotten? She had noticed that the seal was visible all the time now, but hadn't given it a thought. And now Minato knew... now he had seen it. He had designed the seal, after all, and knew exactly what it was for. Even a decade later, something that he had almost sacrificed his life and son for would not be something he forgot. She would have to kill him, but the very thought forced a choked sob from her throat.

Musume trembled as she realized she had been fooling herself. She had thought she meant to kill him at an opportune moment and she had thought that she was biding her time but somewhere she had lost her desire to do so. Sure he was fun to be around and set off the hormones in her fool body, but didn't she want freedom? What the hell was more important than that?

Minato finally looked up at Musume when he felt a burst of killing intent. The woman looked completely panicked, and the immense force of the malevolence was fluctuating wildly. Minato gulped and froze, hoping that she would decide that she didn't really want to kill him. Boasting aside, she really was very powerful, and a battle between the two of them might not be certain. If he could even bring himself to attack her seriously. "How long have you had this seal?" He winced at the dumb question. He was actually a bit surprised when she answered.

"A long time." Musume replied with a wan smile. "From before I ever entered this town."
Minato frowned. She hadn't had the seal that when she had first come to the village and been imprisoned. He certainly would have noticed something like that after she had kidnapped Naruto and he had pored over her information.

"It's only active when I'm using chakra. Or it used to be." Musume placed her hands between where Minato's were still resting on her stomach, covering the black lines. Her face was upset and confused.

Minato looked to her hands, then his own, then back up to Musume's face. She was looking a bit ill and the killing intent was focusing inward. "It must be the chakra disruptors, or maybe the additional seal... or..." He looked back up at her face when she shrugged helplessly. "Well, I guess that really doesn't matter." He said. And he didn't mean just the exact mechanism behind the seal's appearance. Considering that he had been about to turn his son into a jinchuuriki, it wasn't like he could discriminate against one now. And even if that were not the case, he had known this woman for over a decade. A decade where she had been the same person she was now. Just because he now knew one more detail about her life, his feelings for her wouldn't change.

"I..." Musume said, before shaking her head and starting to pull away. This was becoming much more complicated than the physical enjoyment she had been anticipating.

Minato grabbed her hands from where they were still covering her seal. He felt her wince when the lines were uncovered, but Minato ignored her stomach in favor of kissing the palms of her hands. Musume looked at him in confusion. "It doesn't matter at all."

"Of course it matters." She choked out. Musume's face started to look pinched with fear and then resigned, the killing intent she was putting off flickering indecisively, as if unsure who she wanted to kill, only that she wanted someone to die.

Minato lifted her chin with his finger and startled her from her thoughts. "Musume." He said seriously, his blue eyes dark in sadness. "What was done to you was wrong. And it is not your fault."

Musume let out another choked sob at the irony.

"This sort of technique is the only way to save a village, but done in order to enslave and destroy is wrong." Minato continued intently, trying to lock his gaze with hers, but she refused to meet his eyes.

Musume shook, the soothing hand along her arm only making her internal conflict worse. How little he knew how true his statements were. If she had been trapped by a regular sealing technique she would have broken out like she had so many times in the past and ravaged the village to the ground. Instead now she was... doing whatever the hell she was doing here, prepared to have sex with the person who trapped her. The whole situation was totally ludicrous. She hadn't forgotten that fact of course, she had simply... "I forgive him." She said in surprise, her eyes wide at the realization.

"Musume..."

She shook her head. "No, I really do." She smiled sadly up at Minato and put her hand on his face, trying to memorize it for what she had to do. If she killed herself she would pop up back at the moment of sealing, or possibly just break free, but either way she could leave the village and avoid damaging it any further. But she didn't want to forget Minato's face, or the way that he looked at her with such concern.

"Musume!" Minato said urgently, moving closer and grabbing her about the shoulders. She looked at
him in puzzlement and was startled to see the desperate look on his face. "Please don't hurt yourself." He pleaded, his eyes bright with... tears? "I would miss you so much. Naruto... we would both be devastated. Whatever you are thinking, we can help you."

She looked at him in shock- how did he know what she was thinking?

"Your killing intent..." Minato started to explain, his eyes searching her face. "It was focused entirely inward."

Her face quirked in an ironic smile. "I'll try to be more subtle next time." She muttered.

"No!" Minato looked truly upset, which both confused her and set her human belly fluttering. Immersed in the sensations she was totally caught off guard when suddenly his lips were on hers. All her nerves were on fire- it was like being in a really good fight, except so much more intense and so focused! She heard herself whimper slightly as he pulled away from her. Looking at his flushed face set her heart thumping harder than she thought possible. She felt slightly dizzy at all the sensations. Minato looked at her seriously, and their eyes locked. "I will help you." He said. "I know who you are, and you are not a malevolent demon."

She almost laughed at that, but she was too stunned to do more than stare at him.

"A destructive prankster of one, maybe..." Minato said, and only the joking smile on his face kept her from having a heart attack at his statement. His face grew serious. "I don't care what you are, Musume, or what is sealed inside of you. I only care who you are. And you are someone loved by this village." She looked at him dubiously. "At least part of it." He allowed. He leaned forward and her heart and belly were flipping about so much she wondered if she really were still human. Surely a living being could not survive this sort of internal gymnastics? But he didn't kiss her immediately. Instead he whispered words over her lips that sent her mind reeling. "But I don't care about the rest of the village- I love you."

Musume couldn't breathe- both because of what he said and because his lips were covering her own.

When they came up for air she pressed her hand against Minato's shoulder to get him to pause for a second. She gulped in a few gasping breaths and laid her forehead against his. She almost forgot what she was going to say as she realized the almost unbearably strong feelings of warmth and attachment was coming not just from her human body, but from her actual self as well.

Like the other powerful demons, she had never had a mate. A weaker one would be destroyed by her enemies, and the powerful ones... it simply wasn't possible. But here, in this human body, with this troublesome human that had locked her inside his son... "Minato, I love you, too." She said finally, grinning broadly at the ringing truth of it. Seeing his face reflecting her grin had her so happy she felt she was going to pass out in a delirium.

"Let's go upstairs." Minato said, his voice rough.

"Ok." Musume laughed breathlessly.

OooooOOO

"Father, what did you need us for?" Hanabi asked, strolling into the Hyuuga main house and looking around at the scrolls littered on the floor. "Are we to practice calligraphy?" She asked idly.

Behind her, Hinata was looking at the scrolls and trembling slightly. She recognized what her younger sister did not, as she was still in her first year of Academy. Hinata poked the ends of her fingers together and trembled, wondering if she should ask her father why he was messing with the
Caged Bird seal and modifying it in a way that was very definitely illegal. Especially as he had ordered another clan head to remove them for him.

"That's right, Hanabi. We're going to practice calligraphy." Hiashi said, in a tone of voice that set all the fine hairs on the back of her neck standing straight upright.

OoooOOo

Musume was lying awake in the half-light of the pre-dawn. She sat thinking, curled up against Minato, satiated and almost content enough to fall into sleep. The only thing keeping her from succumbing to the happy buzz was the thought of what had almost happened.

It would have been the perfect opportunity to free herself forever from this village- she had their best fighter surprised and with his pants down- literally! It was the best she could possibly get. But the very idea made her body feel nauseous. She had been prepared to do the only alternative and kill herself. But she now realized that killing herself would be killing Minato just as surely. He would be alive, but he would have no memory of her. All their time together would be wiped away. She remembered the look he had given her when she had first held Naruto all those years ago. He had looked at her like she was a wild animal... or an enemy. She shuddered to think that he had almost gone back to having Minato look at her with those hostile eyes.

She curled up against Minato even more tightly, until she could feel his heart beating against her fingers and his chest rising and falling under her arm. This Minato is the only one that she ever wants to know- the thought of seeing him with their past no longer between them is more painful than the thought of even another loop trapped in Naruto.

OooOoOOO

"Thank you for your concern, officers, but there is nothing amiss here." Hiashi said to the Konoha police team that had shown up at his home.

"Of course, sir, we just wanted to make sure everything was alright when we got the complaint of a disturbance."

"Of course." Hiashi turned a disdainful look onto the two Uchiha in the group, his eyes narrowing when he noted both their red eyes. "Uchiha, I would ask that you respect the treaty and not use your Sharingan within the walls of the Hyuuga compound."

"Oh, sorry, sir!" Keisai replied, snapping into a respectful salute.

"Our apologies, Hyuuuga-sama!" Replied the other Uchiha.

"I thought you had your abilities sealed?" The Hyuuga head asked, a dangerous edge to his voice.

"Yes, sir, it was. But surely you heard about the duel I had with Uchiha-sama? She did not replace it when we finished."

"Indeed, but what of your companion?"

"I was only unsealed just today, Hyuuga-sama." The second Uchiha replied sheepishly. "In the excitement I forgot that that was the case."

"Indeed." Hiashi commented.

"She was unsealing just about everyone, really... because of the Council meeting about how it wasn't
"legal I believe, sir." Keisai replied. "Oh, but of course you know more about it than we do, sir." She smiled.

"So prompt in her following of Council orders." Hiashi said tonelessly.

"Um... yes, sir." Keisai replied uneasily. Something about the Hyuuga's voice had her a bit on edge.

"Sorry for taking up your time, Hyuuga-sama." One of the non-Uchiha police said respectfully.

Hiashi's pupil-less eyes narrowed, making a shiver of terror run up the polices' backs. "Yes, you all have been very helpful. Good night." The Hyuuga clanhouse door shut decisively in the outsider's faces.

OoooOOO

"Minato?" Musume looked down at her toast and started picking the crust off of the edges.

"Hmm?" He replied around a mouthful of bread.

Musume's mouth quirked up at how adorable he looked before she sighed.

"What's wrong?"

"I know why I want to keep my..." She winced a bit internally before she finally settled on "'status' a secret, but why do you?"

Minato looked at her in disbelief before swallowing his bite of toast and shaking his head. "You know, Musume, right this moment I really can believe that you manipulated a seasoned clan head so well that you impressed a Nara totally by accident."

Musume didn't really understand why that was an answer to her question. "Well, it was an accident. I just wanted him to repeat what he said to me in private in front of witnesses."

Minato chuckled ruefully.

"I don't see how that answered my question, though."

Minato leaned back in his chair and sighed. "Musume." He started seriously. "Our village is in a very precarious position internally. There has been a lot of shifting of power and new policies made up in the past year. The other villages are looking at us and waiting to see if we completely combust, waiting for a chance to weaken us or destroy us completely. We have been the strongest village for a long time and that pisses a lot of people off. If it was learned that you are a jinchuuriki, not only would it completely upset the balance of power internally and bring into question the legitimacy of your position of power even more than it already is, the other villages would see that weakness as well as our sudden power and likely attack out of desperation. The fact that you exist at all already has them worried and I have been corresponding with the other Kages almost weekly to assure them we have no expansionist intentions. It would mean war if it were to get out what you are."

"Oh." Musume looked a bit stunned. More human foolishness- would it even end? One of them should just become the strongest and then that would be that, no more of this constant posturing.

Minato took a bite from his toast, now that he was done gesticulating with it to prove the massive headache that outing her as a jinchuuriki would be. "Why, what was your reason?"

Musume shrugged. Her thoughts seemed rather simple now that the web of insanity had been laid
out for her. "I just assumed that everyone would go back to hating me and I would have to live in the jail again."

"Huh. Why would they hate you?"

Musume looked at him askance. Although, she supposed that the kyuubi no kitsune hadn't killed a good 10 percent of the village this time, unlike in the past/future. "Demon sealed inside me?" She replied, confused. "Isn't that enough?"

"Musume, with all the history you have with this village, besides for the power struggles, everyone else would probably just feel relieved to have an explanation for why you're so crazy." Minato chuckled.

"Containers are not their captors!" Musume protested reflexively. The number of times she had heard such ignorant bigotry... and to hear it coming from Minato... she was surprised to see that she actually felt hurt.

"Oh, Musume." Minato said, dropping the last bit of toast and holding onto both her hands. "Look at me." Musume reluctantly met his gaze. "I know that's not true, but other people want to make sense of things. And you are very hard to make sense of in any way, shape, or form."

Musume grinned at Minato's unknowing truth. Hah! No human could possibly fully appreciate the greatest demon on the planet.

"I know that you are yourself, Musume, and entirely human." Minato assured her.

Musume couldn't decide if she was pleased or insulted.
The kyuubi weaseled her way up into the brat's consciousness when she noticed that he was putting off a disgusting amount of happiness. It was bad enough feeling the emotion without also being insanely curious as to what interesting thing was going on.

She peeked from his eyes and saw him chasing around a bevy of squealing pink and yellow haired children.

"I'm the kyuubi and I'm going to catch you!" He proclaimed, much to the kitsune's shock. He was no such thing! He was lying and misrepresenting her! Least he could do if he was scaring kits is let her out a bit to help. Although, they seemed to be squealing in delight, not terror. What the?

"No! Don't catch me, Daddy!" One of the pink haired ones squeaked.

The kitsune sighed. That's right, the brat had married that useless big-forehead girl again. She didn't see why he was so set on her, there were plenty less annoying females in the village. Heck- it was less annoying when he had a harem. At least the constant fighting among the females was amusing.

"Argh! I can't help it, you're too pretty. I need to take you back to my lair as a souvenir!" The brat replied as he stomped after the kit.

The kyuubi groaned. This was less bearable than when he tried to convince all his enemies to give up their evil ways or some shit and be friends. Although, she supposed grudgingly, the brat did have an admirable dedication to his family. After all, play of this sort was crucial to their development because they were weak, short-lived mortal creatures.

Well, it was better than staring at a dripping wall, she supposed. Though why the brat mating with the pink-haired nuisance produced only yellow and pink hair was maddening. It should make a nice shade of orange when combined together. But no, of course not. That would be entirely too pleasant.

OOooooooO

Musume curled about Minato and mostly asleep when she felt a zing of energy shoot through her. "Wha?" She muttered. Minato stirred beside her as she looked at the energy that had hit her. It was molded in a certain way... something that was familiar... another bolt of energy hit her and she sat up in startlement. She knew what it was- someone had released her Uchiha seals. But the only two people who might be able to do so were the man beside her and his pervert teacher. But Minato was beside her and Jiraiya out of town.

"What's wrong?" Minato asked, rolling over in the bed and turning on a light. Both he and the night-adjusted kitsune blinked in temporary dazzlement.

"My seals are releasing." She muttered, still trying to get her sluggish brain to understand what was going on.

"But the only way that could happen is..." Minato's face went hard.

"Someone is killing my Uchiha!" Musume practically barked the statement. The energy of a wash of memory hit her as one of her clones dispersed, sending her images of hard pale eyes with no pupils and Uchiha blood running freely over the ground. With a snarl she ripped through the demon space and arrived at the spot the clone had dispersed, landing in front of a Main Branch Hyuuga just as he was turning towards one of the pale-eyed kits, hands already started forming the seal that would kill
"No!" Shouted a Hyuuga woman, jumping in front of the boy just before the main branch Hyuuga finished his hand gesture. Her caged bird seal flared with white-hot light and blood burst from her ears, eyes and nose as she fell to the ground, dead, in front of the wide-eyed Hyuuga boy. He looked up from the body of the woman and straight into Musume's eyes, the pain in them made her uncomfortable.

"Hey!" Musume shouted, causing the main branch Hyuuga to turn towards her before he could form the seal again.

"Another Uchiha." The man smirked. "I will take you down just as easily." He gestured to the ground, where two lumps she had previously ignored resolved to be two Uchiha- also just kits; two of the ones sealed due to their parents' insurgence.

"Is that all you are good for, Hyuuga? Killing children?" Musume snarled.

The bastard laughed. LAUGHED! The nine-tailed demon fox saw red. She leapt forward, hitting the man in the chest with both feet, knocking him to the ground and she followed him all the way down. She snarled as she shoved her hands into his chest, right by the neck, reveling in his horrified screams of pain that continued even as she ripped his ribs up and apart. Even as she grabbed his beating heart and squeezed it until it was shivering all over like the kit staring at her with those pale eyes. The man's choked gasps faded as his eyes became even paler in death.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" Demanded a voice. Musume snapped her head around, seeing more of the pale eyed enemy. "Don't interfere with this! It's none of your business!"

The kitsune's eyes flicked to the corpses of her kits, lying with dark eyes staring and blood clotting on their rookie police uniforms and then back to the group of three Hyuuga.

"It was their own fault. The police have no jurisdiction here. Now get out before we press charges." The Hyuuga was still talking. The kitsune couldn't understand why. Her kits weren't talking. These pale-eyed enemies should be screaming they should be begging her. Their voices faded into a droning buzz and she launched herself at the lead one, punching him so hard in the jaw that she could feel it crunching into several pieces, even with the chakra he was sending into his bones to keep them whole.

Dimly she was aware of more of her kits joining in the fray. Some of them dragged away the boy who was sitting beside the opened corpse and staring. Others came with her and tried to subdue the Hyuuga. But the pale-eyed adversaries tapped her kits here, there, making their limbs stop working, their hearts to stop beating, their brains to bleed... the kitsune could feel it all happening, could sense it with her chakra and her spiritual energy and it drove her even farther into the red, to the point where she wasn't even really seeing at all.

She hadn't felt this way before- the carnage should be making her happy, excited, enjoying of the artistry of it. But it was instead making her brain shut down lest she think about it and look at her kits, staring up at nothing with their black eyes. Their eyes should be red! They should be hunting the enemy with her, finishing off those that she had disabled for them, tearing into the enemy and laughing with her!

Her human chakra coils were closing and she had to pop them open again, making her feel almost like she was a demon again; a being of pure energy. She shook off another pin-prick pain and felt her chakra fling loose before she hauled it back, hardly even using her physical human body anymore.
She grabbed the neck of the Hyuuga in front of her and snapped it, feeling the pop as it separated with satisfaction, reveling in the way it made the flesh feel barely connected. She dropped the corpse and hit the next, and the next. All Hyuuga who stood in front of her were walking corpses and all the Uchiha who joined her were shoved back lest they be killed as well. Protect!

She looked around and the eyes that looked at her were red and black, some other colors, but all with pupils. No- there was one Hyuuga, tied to the ground and helpless. He would be easy prey and satisfying to rend limb from limb. His eyes widened and she could smell his fear. She would make him pay!

She was pulled to the side, and the enemy was no longer in front of her. She could feel something was pressing her into a wall- something warm and human that was begging to be cold and dead. She snarled and snapped at it, but it wouldn't let her go. Yellow filled her vision before she looked down into blue eyes. Blue not black, but hers all the same. "Mine!" She yipped, her nose twitching as she caught wind of her scent mixed with his.

Gradually words broke through the red. "Musume, calm down, please! Musume, come back, please come back, it's alright, I'm here."

"Minato?" She asked, blinking to clear her vision and then sagging against him. "My kits... they killed my kits. There was blood... they died beside me... I..." To her consternation she hiccuped and felt moisture running out of her eyes. Minato wrapped his arms around her tightly.

"Shh. Shh." He rocked her. "Just calm down, alright?"

"I'm ok." She said, though her voice quavered a bit. "I need to get back out there! More of my Uchiha could be dying, I..."

"Relax; all the Hyuuga have been killed or taken into custody except for Hiashi and his family. The Uchiha aren't going to die anymore. But they need to see you when you're not in berserker mode."

"It wasn't..."

Minato put a finger over her lips. "Your eyes were even turning red despite the seal you placed on yourself. You must have been very distraught seeing your clan being killed."

Musume looked at him askance. He knew very well that she hadn't been in berserker mode, she had been in demon mode, and if her eyes had turned red she was sure they had had slits, not commas in them. So why would he... oh. "Ah." Because only they knew that was the actual reason, and only she knew the true extent of that truth.

"Good." Minato said, stepping back. "Now we need to go negotiate with Hiashi. He is not being reasonable and is holding his daughters hostage."

"But why?" Musume asked, confused as to why that would help the situation at all.

"I don't know. But he's also asking for you."

"Me?" Musume asked, mystified and feeling too drained to deal with this.

"Please come with me, we'll see what he wants together, alright?"

"Alright." Musume sighed. The two of them walked the short distance to the main Hyuuga house, the kitsune leaning on her mate for comfort, especially when they passed the still bodies in Police and
ANBU uniforms.

The front of the building was teeming with ninja. All of the clan heads, police and ANBU were there, as well as large numbers of jounin from those clans and a few miscellaneous special jounin.

As they got to the front of the crowd they could see Hiashi holding one young girl in each arm. One was crying steadily, while the other looked pale and shocky. Both had rough caged bird seals inscribed on their forehead in blood, with an added symbol right between their eyes. A symbol matched on Hiashi's forehead- also in blood. The source of the red liquid was immediately apparent. All one had to do was look at Hiashi's feet and see a Hyuuga woman sprawled out on the flood, a pool of bright red framing her and staining Hiashi's sandals.

"Musume. Aren't you glad I started the work for you? I've been getting rid of the Caged Bird Seal." Hiashi said with a smile even the demon fox could tell was not mentally balanced. "I'm so glad you came. Why don't you kill me then? All it will take is a hand seal." He taunted.

Musume looked between the three Hyuuga with narrowed eyes.

"Don't." Minato cautioned, but she had no intention of testing out the bloody seals.

"What have you done, Hiashi?" Musume asked with an eyebrow quirked. She didn't particularly care, beyond the fact that the seal was making her skin crawl from even this far away. Whatever he said did not change the fact that she was going to kill him, painfully, for what he had made her feel tonight.

"I made up a new seal, too, Uchiha-chan." Hiashi replied, laughing with a jagged edge to it.

"I think he's cracked." Musume murmured dubiously. She knew many faces of insanity, and Hiashi was looking like the poster child for mental diseases. Killing him would be less fun if he was insane. He wouldn't be able to properly appreciate the horror she was going to put him through.

"I'd say that he proved he'd lost his mind when he ordered everyone to kill the branch clan and started a Hyuuga civil war that spilled out to the entire village, yes." Uchiha Keisai coughed, rubbing her throat.

"I'd say that he proved he'd lost his mind when he ordered everyone to kill the branch clan and started a Hyuuga civil war that spilled out to the entire village, yes." Uchiha Keisai coughed, rubbing her throat.

"He did what now?" Musume was shocked and almost a bit impressed at the level of havoc he had caused. "Why would he do that?"

"He probably figured out what it was he asked you to do at the council meeting and decided to preempt you." Minato said, looking a bit ill. Musume bumped her shoulder comfortingly to her mate's. "And technically speaking, he does have the right under the law to discipline his clan as he sees fit, especially on their own compound."

"What an idiot." Musume snorted in disgust. "How does this help anything?" She mentally cursed human stupidity and felt her anger flare up again, the rage a familiar friend burning in the core of her being slow and cold now rather than the unreasoning heat from before.

This destruction had a tainted human edge to it, hell, tonight *she* had a damned human edge... she growled low in her throat.

"Why is no one doing anything about him?" Musume asked, gesturing helplessly. Surely this was exactly the sort of thing that the humans should be appalled by and take care of so she didn't have to be bothered by it.

"He's holding his children hostage." Keisai said, as if that were obvious.
"So?" Musume didn't see that as a particular problem. If the madman wanted to kill his children, then there wasn't anything that they could do about it except try to stop him, as doing nothing or failing would lead to dead kits, but trying might end with live.

"Musume!" Minato sounded shocked.

She sighed. "What does the seal do, and why did you do it to your kits, Hyuuga?" Musume asked instead, feeling for the chakra flows- a difficult proposition with the seal on her eyes and the chakra limiters. But even so she could sense the chakra running between the three Hyuuga. It was a dirty, clotted color, a red that the kitsune was perturbed to find she didn't like at all.

"It was their fate." He replied. "Why don't you form the seal and see their destiny?"

"I have no intention of helping in a suicide, much less the murder of children." Musume scoffed. At her words there were many indrawn gasps, though she wasn't quite sure why.

"Then fight me!" Hiashi spat, dropping his two girls to the ground. The smaller one cried out in pain, but the larger just kept staring at the corpse on the ground, looking almost dead herself with how white her face was.

Musume looking around at the gathered ninja, who all looked back at her like they were waiting for her to do something. There were quite a few Uchiha, so they had an excuse, or rather, a reason, as it was only proper that they wait for their leader before taking action.

The gathered ninja didn't seem to look like they wanted to stop her, even as her face set in a flat glare of anger when Hiashi called to her again. "I see you have come to your senses, Uchiha. Attacking me in my own jurisdiction is political suicide, not to mention totally illegal. But I suppose even you must realize the futility after so many casualties."

That's it- she no longer cared what the humans were or were not doing. "Oh, no, I will fight you. With pleasure." Musume snarled, launching herself at the Hyuuga.

Hiashi flashed forward as well, his hands out for a classic Jyuken strike. Musume ducked under it and spun around behind him, trying to extend her senses to see what he had done to the seal. But he spun around too quickly for her to get a fix on it. His hands flashed through an activation cycle.

Musume charged him again, only to bounce off of some sort of force.

OooooooOO

"Musume!" Minato cursed in frustrated desperation when the Uchiha head launched herself at the Hyuuga. 'Too fast...' He muttered dazedly. It was insane how quick she had been, quicker than him, quicker than Hiashi.

Also, apparently, the only one that was allowed through the barrier now surrounding the Hyuuga Main House.

"Musume!" Minato snarled her name like a curse, pounding on the barrier even though he knew it was futile. He could recognize an ancient blood seal like this easily enough... and with the number of Hyuuga that had lived here for the entire history of the village... well, it was surely impenetrable. Minato felt his stomach sink to the floor when he saw Musume bounce off another seal inside the main one. There was no way that she would win. He was going to lose her. "No..." He moaned weakly.

And worst of all, when this crazy night was over, for the sake of the village, no one would be held accountable for her death. It would all be swept under the table and never spoken of again.
If only she had kept negotiating- they might have come out of this together.

OOooooOO

Musume blinked and looked around. A veil of force was holding back all the other shinobi, despite their belated attempts to break through with various jutsus and physical means. The young Hyuuga that she had seen when she first arrived seemed to be throwing chakra-charged rocks at the barrier.

She was a bit confused how such a barrier could come into being until she looked down at the ground. The Hyuuga main house was apparently a giant permanent seal that only needed someone from the clan to activate it. And within it Hiashi was enveloped in another bubble.

"So... you think this is going to make a difference?" Musume smirked, somewhat enjoying the banter. The brat had gotten to spew all sorts of nonsense at enemies, and now she cold see why he'd done it. It was almost enough fun that she could forget the corpses of her charges falling in front of her. Not that she cared about them, anyway. She frowned.

Musume glanced outside again. Everyone seemed to be getting progressively more frantic with their attempts to get through the barrier. She wanted to tell them that she would take care of it and that no puny human could best her, but they were screaming and no sound was reaching her, so she figured the reverse was true. Her eyes locked with Minato's and the panic in them made her heart thump painfully, so she turned her attention back to Hiashi.

"I don't think the shields will make a difference, I know it will make a difference." The Hyuuga smirked. "Not that I would even need them to take you out."

"Mnhmm." Musume replied absently. She was trying to figure out if there was an easy way to break through... but Hiashi was really starting to piss her off with his inane boasting.

She realized with a sudden rush of pleasure that this was a duel- she could disembowel Hiashi in the most horrible way and none of the humans would think anything of it. They probably were expecting her to and would laud her afterward. Her anger started to burn more maliciously at the thought of proper revenge. Her kits' empty black eyes swam in the back of her consciousness. Soon.

"It's no use; I can kill you at my leisure."

Musume wasn't listening. Whatever came out of the human's mouth was self-aggrandizing nonsense and she didn't need to pay it any mind. More interesting was finding a way to get through this shield- the chakra was swirling in a most confusing way.

She pulled the energy on the periphery into herself and split it around her, snarling as it snapped along the edges of her body. The energy cracked around her, hissing like a living thing. She ignored the pain of it and pushed right into the Hyuuga's shocked face, smirking at his expression of disbelief. She pushed her fist through the energy, but it was moving too slow to do any damage. The shield was still maintaining its integrity, it was hard to pop all the way through, she was stuck half inside of it, the strands of it denying her entrance as other.

She opened her hand to grab the bastard's throat but he was quicker. He slammed a full Jyuukan strike to her chest and she felt her heart burst. A cough escaped her mouth and blood hit Hiashi's grinning face. Ok, playtime was over. This ass killed his clan, her clan and was being insultingly condescending.

She coughed one more time before pushing the rest of the way through the barrier with a faint pulling sensation then a pop. Hiashi's eyes widened and he hit her again and again. She could feel...
her human chakra points blocking and then snapping separate from her chakra weave. Her energy was turning a deep purple as the masking effects of the human's coils were lost. She ignored it in favor of keeping her natural chakra tight to her body and not pushing through the human coils. It took a good chunk of her concentration to keep the human coils from completely disintegrating.

When Hiashi closed the last gate in her human channels the explosion was as shocking to them both as it was violent. They were thrown to opposite sides of the barrier where both bounced off and landed messily on the floor. The kitsune snarled and snapped as she yanked her coils back into submission- both sets. The human ones had almost given up the ghost and were trying to float away and die peacefully. Her prisoner inside was also getting weaker than she was willing to tolerate. She was NOT going to lose this body, dammit. She did NOT want to loop back to the sealing and lose all she had!

She flared her demonic energy through her body and wrestled it into submission more forcefully than she ever had before. She was tempted to just convert it entirely to something less pathetic and more durable- like maybe tissue paper- but that would defeat the whole point of having a body. How aggravating!

Outside the barrier Minato was slamming his hands against the barrier so much that streaks of blood were sizzling against the energy of it. Musume locked eyes with him, but couldn't convey that things would be alright... after all, she wasn't sure they would. Kill this asshole, yes. Be the same human at the end of it?

"You are a piece of work." Hiashi smirked as he stood up. Musume was annoyed that she had to listen to him while she thrashed on the ground and recovered. "But if you are so bent on rescuing the children, you should think before killing me."

"I don't care about your kits one way or another, except that you are betraying them." Musume barked out before coughing once again. Her body was workably fixed and she almost had her coils back in order, just one more second.

Hiashi walked over to her, a kunai in his hand. Musume stilled, her full attention on him.

"Fortunately." He said, "you are the only one who can activate this seal. And you are in here with me." He reached down and slit her throat. Musume felt the blood running out of her and she couldn't quite stop it.

Musume glared at him over her gaping neck. There was absolutely nothing that could make this more humiliating. She stopped trying to keep hold of the chakra coils and let them float above her skin, giving a mental sigh of relief that they were shored up enough to be at least that stable. Inside the swirling blue, her native chakra boiled red and bubbled off of her human host. Her neck healed in an instant but she grabbed it and made a great show of gasping and thrashing about like she was finally dying. She kept an eye on Hiashi and when she saw the look of complete satisfaction and victory in his eyes. She waited a few seconds more to allow a bit more healing before she leapt to her feet and dropped her hands. Her perfect neck showed above the blood stained shirt. Hiashi stumbled back with a gasp, his eyes wide. She smirked evilly. The horror was magnificent, the seconds of reveling in glory making it exponentially worse for the Hyuuga.

She was done with this. Her modified caged bird seal was floating above Madara's coils, she reached up with her fingers and buried it so that it appeared to be destroyed, disappearing in it's physical manifestation from her forehead. She then sighed with satisfaction and let her native chakra settle into her body even more and turn her eyes red. She glared at the Hyuuga in annoyance.

"You can't use that in here!" Hiashi laughed, his eyes wild. "And it... that..."
"You look confused, Hyuuga-sama." Musume smirked at him. "Let me put your poor overworked brain out of its misery." She rushed him and grabbed the taller Hyuuga by the neck, pushing him up against the barrier. He screamed as the energy raced over his body. Musume didn't relent, pushing him until they both broke through the energy and it shattered.

"If you will not sacrifice for your kits as you should, than I will help you do so." She hissed, before grabbing at the chakra between his eyes. It was a disgusting and abhorrent color that she never wanted to see again. It was seeping into his body and brain in ways that were ugly and offensive to her demonic sensibilities. She tore it from his mind with no regard for the damage as she uprooted it, just so long as it did not react and set off the threads she could see going toward the children.

Hiashi's white eyes clouded over to grey and Musume dropped him dismissively on the ground.

Musume was starting to feel tired and there were little spots of color dancing around her vision. From the shield bubble? She wondered. She stood still for a while, blinking and then letting out a deep rattling breath. When she didn't feel much better she shrugged then pulled the chakra coils back into herself. She shook her head and blinked again at the Hyuuga kits.

The smaller of the two kits reached down meekly and the shimmering bubble disappeared. Musume looked at the assembled ninja who had stopped their forward rush with a quirked brow. They were all staring at her with stunned looks on their faces.

"What? The Uchiha clan have been saying we're the most powerful since before the founding of this village. Why are you so shocked?" Her voice sounded a bit odd to her and she reached up to wipe away the liquid that was dribbling down her lips. Blood. How interesting. She coughed and felt her absent heartbeat restart weakly, in an erratic sort of way. It seemed that it was not particularly happy with her ignoring it. "I knew I was forgetting something..." she muttered, before collapsing to the ground.
The demon sits quietly beside the two humans, whispering to her vessel about how pleasant it would be to peel the flesh from their bones. She is ignored, but she doesn't mind overly much. Eventually her vessel will kill someone just to shut her up for a few seconds.

"Hyuuga Hiashi should not have done that. It drastically changes our plans."

"He had no choice. He was useless to us shackled to that bitch. At least some good came from it. We were able to secure some... replacement parts."

"Even so, why did he have to be so impatient! We could have had Konoha on its knees working together. We could have used the diversion to further the rest of our agendas."

"There are other ways that we can enforce our will. There will be another opportunity."

"Another that allows so many foreign ninja into the village? Not until the next time they host the chūnin exams!"

"Patience. This is not the sort of thing that can be rushed. And you forget how many of us are considered allies and trusted advisers. Besides, they will be expecting trouble during such a vulnerable time."

"If you all keep blowing your cover, than we will soon have no one left on the inside."

"Silence! You have no idea how annoying Uchiha Musume can be!"

The demon chuckles. She wants to meet this human they keep screaming about. She sounds like a lot of fun. The vessel shudders, his eyes becoming even more blank in despair.

Minato was in his office, trying not to pull out his hair. He would much rather be at Musume's bedside, waiting for her to wake up and hoping that it would happen, but he simply had too much work to do. The Uchiha and Hyuuga clans together easily made up a fifth of the village shinobi population, and almost a tenth of the overall population. Well, they used to, anyway. Last night over half of the Hyuuga and nearly a sixth of the Uchiha police and ANBU had been killed or seriously wounded.

All the other clans were clamoring loudly- technically the police had overstepped their bounds. Technically they should all be arrested. But the popular sentiment was torn between outrage at the overstepping (clan heads) and outrage at what the Hyuuga had done (general population).

And to add to all that, the chūnin exams were set to start at the end of the month- just weeks away. What the hell kind of show of strength could they pull off with such a disturbance? And what actual force could they mobilize for exam security at this rate?

Even so, it was unlikely that anyone would dare attack the village, even with what had happened. There were plenty of non-Uchiha and non-Hyuuga jounin and ANBU, not to mention the Hokage himself and the fact that all three sannin would be around for the festivities. But petty mischief would be almost impossible to keep under control. Minato had a fleeting thought that maybe he should let Naruto preemptively prank the hell out of the dignitaries, but laughed that off nervously, knocking on the wood of his desk just to be sure.
"Hokage-sama, the next batch have been interviewed and Ibiki wants you to sign off on the ones that are clueless." Giraffe called from where she was leaning through the door.

"Thank you." Minato replied, before flashing over to Interrogation. "Ibiki, report."

"These Uchiha were pulled into the incident after they heard the distress calls over the radio." Ibiki waved at a group of sullen looking brunettes with their hands stuck in their pockets or crossed over their chests. "And these Hyuuga are all too young to have had any idea what was going on."

"You questioned them anyway?" Minato asked.

Ibiki snorted. "Of course. We found a couple that were trying to lie their way out of trouble, but we caught them."

"Alright. Release the Hyuuga children to the shelter and the Uchiha to their suspension." Minato sighed.

"One of the Hyuuga wants to talk with you, Hokage-sama." Ibiki added as he waved some of his people to carry out the Hokage's orders.

"Who?" He asked tiredly.

"Hyuuga Neji. He is the son of Hiashi's twin, a branch family member." Ibiki replied. "He was not actually present, having just come back from a short mission with his team, Team Gai. He has been waiting here to help with the children and to meet with you."

"Alright. I don't have much time, though." Minato said.

Ibiki nodded and led the Hokage to an interrogation room. "Here's his file." He said as he handed the Hokage a manila folder.

"Thank you, Ibiki." Minato muttered as he went into the room, flipping through the papers. There wasn't much in it besides mission reports, the genin registration form and the chuunin application form. He finally looked up to the quiet young man sitting in front of him. "Hyuuga Neji."

"Hokage-sama."

"What is it you wanted to talk to me about?" Minato asked.

"Sir, the Hyuuga were not at fault in this matter."

Minato rubbed his head. "We still aren't totally sure what happened. And we need to figure that out and heal the wounded before any charges can be filed or, in some cases, statements even taken at all."

"I understand, Hokage-sama. But shouldn't Hinata-sama be taking care of the internal affairs, rather than the village?" Neji gave a sour look. Minato wondered what for- was it because of giving the honorific to Hinata, a year younger and his cousin? Or that the village was taking over?

"Unfortunately, your two cousins were the victims of a sealing technique that we have not been able to remove safely as of yet, and both are horribly traumatized by what occurred."

Neji's eyes widened then narrowed. "I see."

"And very few adults survived the night- the branch members almost universally died protecting the children and the main family were... incapacitated by the Uchiha and other respondents to the crisis
situation." Minato sighed.

"You mean, slaughtered by the inhuman monster that is the head of the Uchiha clan." Neji replied coldly.

Minato gave him a warning look in response. "There is much that Uchiha Musume must answer about what happened that night. But she was not aware of the situation any more than the others who responded after the initial incident."

"Which was?" Neji pressed.

"We are not releasing the details of the incident until more is known. But I can tell you that calls for a disturbance were taken the day prior to the crisis and we believe that even at that time Hiashi was concocting his seals for his children." Minato replied stiffly. Not that they knew much more than that, nor were likely to. The original responding police- two Uchiha and an Inuzuka- as well as Hiashi and all the Hyuuga close to him were dead. Unless they got Orochimaru to raise their bodies temporarily... but that would almost certainly break his psyche again.

Neji didn't reply to that, just looked down at the floor with a mixture of confusion and anger.

Minato had a sudden revelation. "You were the only Hyuuga to not be in any way involved with this. And you are the nephew of the previous clan head."

Neji looked up at him with a dubious expression on his face.

Minato grinned in a way that frightened Neji rather badly and, should he have seen himself in the mirror, would have made Minato decide that what he was about to say was a very bad idea. He knew the look well... "I think I'm going to recommend that you be the interim head of the clan until we can get things more settled." ...the look on his face was the exact same one that graced Musume's face right before she turned the village on its ear.

OoOOOoo

"Urgh..." Musume quirked open an eye and quickly shut it again. It felt like someone was pouring acid into her eye sockets.

"Musume!"

"Brat... too loud." Musume muttered, rolling over.

She heard a clang and then the brat was yelling some more. "She's awake, Dad!"

"Brat! Quiet!" Musume snapped, though the sound of her own yell made her head pound.

"Musume." A weight settled on the side of the bed. Musume turned to it blearily. "I'm so glad you're awake."

"I'm not." She groused. Although, having her mate sitting close was helping. She reached out and pulled him down to lay alongside her and sighed in contentment.

"What are you doing?" Minato asked softly.

"I'm in pain, dammit. The least my mate can do for me is cuddle." She yawned, snuggling closer.

"Mate?"
"Mmm."

Minato chuckled a bit before he relaxed beside her and draped an arm over her waist. "Well, I suppose we can wait a bit before telling the rest of the village that you've recovered. The Uchiha will finally stop harassing me about your condition."

"They care?" Musume asked in surprised amusement, opening her eyes to look at her mate.

"Well, considering they thought you were going to die without releasing their seals, yes."

She snorted and closed her eyes again. "Those bastards." She said fondly. Then sighed. Getting fond of the Uchiha was bad for The Plan. Meh. Plans were for humans, anyway. Maybe she would just scrap the plan and let the Uchiha destroy themselves. They seemed pretty intent on doing just that.

"You know, since you came to this village, one clan was saved, one destroyed, the entire structure of power overturned and we probably have a war brewing with defected ROOT ninja, but if I had to do it all over again, I don't think I would change a thing." Minato mused with a smile.

Musume's eyes snapped open and tightened her grip on her mate. "Never joke about that. Never!" She hissed. "This life is unique and wonderful and we will NEVER repeat it." She shuddered at the very thought.

"What...?" Minato blinked at her, confused.

Musume stared him in the eyes, growling low. "You agree, don't you?" She growled intently.

"Of course I do..." Minato assured her, worried that she was going to aggravate her injuries and totally confused.

"And you're not going to do anything to change it, right?" She pressed.

"Alright... I'll make a point not to invent any time-travel jutsu." Minato replied, frowning at her in confusion.

Musume just laughed bitterly. "Good." She was half asleep and pretty content with the conversation when her eye popped open again. "The Hyuuga are destroyed?" She asked. There had been at least three survivors... the two girls and that boy throwing rocks... how many had to die before a clan was 'destroyed'?

"Well, technically no, but most of the Branch family was killed, and we're trying to sort out what in the world to do with the surviving Main family, as they claim to have been acting under orders and defending their territory." Minato sighed, his breath ruffling Musume's hair.

"Sure they were. And I'm just resting here because I'm lazy." Musume scoffed.

"Oh, so you admit it then? That does save paperwork." Minato teased.

"Hmph." Musume yawned. The sad fact was, she needed to rest... or at least, she did if she wanted to keep her body from dying. It had a pretty high tolerance and seemingly a built in resistance to change- almost as if it were constantly using time/space jutsu- but even it had limits.

"Yeah, she's awake now!" Naruto's voice echoed down the hall.

"Who is he talking to?" Musume asked in trepidation. "For that matter, where are we?"

"I hope for his sake he's talking to a nurse, and we're in the hospital." Minato answered, turning
around to look over his shoulder for his son.

"The hospital?!" Musume tried to bolt upright but pain shot through her head and chest. "ARGH!"

An annoying flat tone started coming from beside her head and a siren was barking out in the hallway. It was giving Musume an even worse headache. Although, there were spots in front of her vision again and she was starting to feel a bit nauseous.

"Hokage-sama, move!"

Someone was pounding on her chest and Musume felt something in her chest respond by thumping, then again, and again. The flat tone started beeping and the siren went silent. "What?" She rasped.

"Your heart stopped again, Uchiha-sama."

Musume looked up at the nurse and blinked the spots out of her eyes. "My heart stopped?" She repeated. "Wait... again?" She coughed and wiped blood off her lips before looking at it blankly.

"Yes, Uchiha-sama, please relax or you will aggravate your injuries. Jyuuken strikes are notoriously difficult to heal."

There was the sound of pounding feet and someone in doctor's robes entered the room. "Is she stable? Did she die again?" She asked, panting.

"Die?" Musume said weakly. Surely that was a euphemism.

"Oops... er..." The doctor blushed pink in embarrassment. "How are you feeling Uchiha-sama?"

"Like I got stepped on by a bijuu." She grumbled, frowning. Even the joke could not amuse her enough to make her grin through the pain. "What's this about dying?"

"Um." The doctor said, her face now white. "You were only clinically dead those few times..."

Musume turned to the window and looked out over the buildings. She knew she had been hurt... and in retrospect, she even knew that her heart had failed. Why hadn't she looped back to the time of sealing? Before, when the the brat's body had died, she had been sent back. No exceptions.

Musume looked inside herself and down into the cage. Madara was flat out on the ground and barely breathing. Or maybe, not breathing? Did souls need to breathe?

Sometime later, hand on hers brought her out of her lazy thoughts and the light nap she had slipped into with a jump. "Musume, I have to leave, now. I have work to do in the tower." Minato said, his face worried.

"That's such a surprise." Musume snorted.

"I will try to come back as soon as I can- I'll bring my paperwork here or something..." Minato continued, his eyes staring at her with strange intensity.

Musume felt something in her chest glow with heat. She tensed but was able to determine that it wasn't her heart boycotting life again. It seemed more like an emotion. She sighed. "You can be here in literally a flash if anything happens- go do your work." She shooed him off. She needed some time alone to test things out and see what her borrowed body was doing.

Minato barely passed the door before someone else was in to bother her."I need to talk to you, Uchiha-sama." Musume's secretary Uchiha Aenka said from the doorway.
"What is that behind you?" Musume asked suspiciously, seeing the glint of metal that looked rather too much like a cart full of paperwork for her peace of mind.

"Just a few forms that require your attention, Uchiha-sama." Aenka said cheerfully.

"You have got to be joking." Musume said flatly upon seeing the massive pile.

"There are a lot of reports that you need to go over about what happened at the Hyuuga compound. And you will have to organize in case there are charges brought against your clan members so far as these trespassing complaints are concerned. Some Uchiha are in custody." Minato said from the door. "And don't even try to use shadow clones. Your body is in no shape to handle any chakra." He gave her one last worried look after she nodded acceptance and then was gone.

" Seriously, my heart just stopped." Musume whined to Aenka as what was indeed a metal cart of paperwork is wheeled into the hospital room.

"You are clear to do light work such as this, Uchiha-sama." The doctor said cheerfully, looking up from where she was making a note in Musume's chart.

Musume glared at the doctor until she scurried out of the room. She turned her glare back to her assistant. "Aenka, this is pure torture, you know that, right?"

"You at least have to indicate what is to be done with the Uchiha that died who no longer have family to make arrangements." Aenka replied stubbornly, sliding forward the first file.

"Can't we just burn them?" Musume grumbled.

Aenka gasped. "That is not showing them proper respect!"

"I don't see why not- the Uchiha love fire. They should be honored to go whoosh in flames at the end off their life. In fact, what better way to honor them? Their ashes would be going straight up to the heavens and the gods or whatever." Musume said, gesturing with her arm but quickly putting it back down when she felt a spike of pain and the machine behind her started beeping erratically.

She started going through the file when she had a sudden horrifying thought. What if she couldn't die? What if she would be stuck in this body, in this bed, forever, doing paperwork for a clan she couldn't decide if she wanted to wipe out or turn into her own personal army?

The kitsune shuddered at the thought.

OoooOOOOo

"Hey... um... blond kid."

Naruto turned around, squinting as he looked at the Uchiha his own age standing in the hallway with his arms crossed tightly across his chest. From living with Musume for so long, he could recognize this as the Uchiha version of wringing their hands in worry.

Naruto stuck out his hand under the surprised boy's nose. "Hi! I'm Namekaze Naruto, the number one unpredictable ninja!" He grinned. "What's up Uchiha-kun?"

"Um... you can call me Sasuke." He hesitantly grasped Naruto's hand.

Naruto shook vigorously and dropped Sasuke's hand. "You're Itachi's little brother, aren't you? Is he here in the hospital?" He squinted and looked down the hallway.
Sasuke wondered if the other boy can see through walls or was just a little bit stupid. "Um, yes, he is. But I was asking you if you knew something about Uchiha-sama. I saw you coming from her room."

"Eh? Musume-chan?" Naruto scratched the side of his face. "Sure, sure. Her heart keeps stopping or something." Sasuke felt like his heart was going to stop at that. His mother had been alternatively crying and breaking things last night when she heard their clan head was in a coma. "But she's more annoyed about that than anything."

"She's annoyed her heart is stopping?" Sasuke asked weakly. He despaired of ever getting to the same level as the higher ninjas... as his brother. They made everything seem so easy.

"Sure, wouldn't you be?" Naruto asked, looking puzzled.

"I think I would be dead." Sasuke replied frankly.

"Musume-chan can't die, can she?" Naruto looked upset at the idea.

Sasuke regarded Naruto for a second, bemused at the other boy's innocent outlook. He didn't really recognize him from Academy, though he had heard of the Hokage having a son. He frowned at the thought that this no one spent enough time with his clan head to call her 'chan'. He must be the class below him in Academy or something. "Everyone dies." Sasuke shrugged. Maybe he was first year in the Academy- that was taught pretty early.

Naruto squinted his eyes and crossed his arms over his chest, seemingly deep in thought. "Maybe." He said finally. "But not from something as lame as her heart stopping."

"Stopping from a Jyuuken strike." Sasuke corrected. "One of the most powerful techniques in the village."

"Psh!" Naruto waved away the comment. "Well, if you want to see her, why don't you go in yourself?" Naruto asked.

"Er..." Sasuke didn't want to admit that the clan head had said to his face that she didn't like him at all and would be unlikely to want to see him. Besides which, there were ANBU and Police standing guard and neither group was a big fan of his family after what his father had done.

"Hey Musume-chan! You have a visitor!" Naruto called loudly, grabbing Sasuke and pulling him to the doorway. Sasuke tried to resist but was surprised at how strong Naruto was and completely irresistible his dragging was.

"I don't know that..." Sasuke tried to protest, but he got shoved into the room before he could finish. He whirled around to complain at the handling only to see Naruto wave with a wide grin and then disappear in a swirl of leaves. Sasuke felt his jaw drop open- that was a jounin level technique!

"Sasuke?"

The young Uchiha turned warily to look at his clan head. He was uneasy to see the tubes and monitors hooked up to her and the pale face with dark circles under the eyes. She looked... ill.

Musume on her part was a bit startled to see Sasuke, though she had to grin at Naruto just shoving the other boy into the room. She hadn't realized that they were friends, though she supposed that it was inevitable. "Well are you going to say anything?" She teased him and was not disappointed when he had the reaction she was hoping for and scowled in response. And was still silent. She grinned even wider, which seemed to make him uncomfortable as he stiffened even further. Musume wondered if all Uchiha had a built in ability to survive having sticks up their asses. "Well why are
you here, anyway?" Even a 'conversation' with an Uchiha would be more amusing than starting on the paperwork, which she had been alternatively staring at and ignoring for the past who knows how long while she tried to ignore the implications of her current seal.

"Itachi is here." Sasuke muttered reluctantly.

"Oh, really?" She looked at the mountain of papers. Maybe there was some interesting stuff in there after all.

Sasuke shrugged.

"And he is here... why?" Musume prompted, getting annoyed.

"He lost an eye." Sasuke replied grudgingly.

Musume blinked. How ironic... "Hmm." She gestured Sasuke over, missing his surprised look because she was digging through the piles of papers. "Help me out for a second, will you?" She asked absently, putting a big stack into Sasuke's hand. It was a bit odd doing this, actually, as she had secondhand memories of doing so much paperwork, of learning how to do it in the first place, but had never actually done any herself. "Aha!" She crowed, pulling out a very thick folder marked 'injuries' and dated something that looked like it was recently. "This was the day of the Hyuuga thing, right?" Musume asked, holding the folder under Sasuke's nose.

"Hn." Sasuke confirmed.

"Ok, so let's see then..." She flipped through the folder until she got to Itachi. It seemed that he was recovering the use of all of his limbs but that the Jyuuenken strikes had somehow completely destroyed the eye. There was a picture of the injury on intake; it was an impressive caved in socket oozing fluid and some sort of black stuff and his cheeks were covered in dried blood, especially under the injured eye. There was also a description of the likely deficits in his performance.

"Will he be kicked out of ANBU?" Sasuke asked. Musume looked at the kid and was surprised to see that under the prickly Uchiha exterior, he was really worried. It wasn't even buried that deeply.

"Possibly. But there are other ninja that work with only one eye. Like Kakashi."

"Sensei has two eyes, and the one he hides is a Sharingan." Sasuke pouted.

Musume grinned. "Your brother won't let something little like a missing eye stop him unless he wants it to." She declared. Although maybe he would want to- the guy was sort of pacifistic. She entertained the mental image of him working in Uchiha Teyaki and Uruchi's ramen and bakery shop and grinned .

"It's not a minor injury!" Sasuke shouted, surprising the kitsune and making her jump. The heart monitor started to go crazy until she soothed the grumpy muscle quickly. She looked out the door but when no doctors showed up she sighed in relief.

"Why is everyone making these injuries seem like nothing!" Sasuke shouted.

"Sasuke..." Musume was not sure what to say. He seemed as emo as ever, but in a totally not badass way. He was actually a bit of a pansy. It was sort of painful to look at. Maybe she should have given him some extra training when he asked. Or told him he was worthless and killed his family so he would have grown a spine.

"You could die." He told her stubbornly.
Musume blinked and then laughed. "Sure, sure... I could." She said patronizingly.

Sasuke scowled at her.

She ignored him and continued flipping through the reports. "WHAT!?!" Musume almost fell out of her bed somehow even though it had guard rails on it. Her heart monitor beeped erratically then went into a flat tone, the siren going off in the hallway. She ignored the entire scene and resisted the doctor's efforts to take the file away from her. She couldn't stop staring at Uchiha Shishui's Mangekyou eyes.
Inside of his mind, trapped behind his eyes, the soul was hissing and screaming, throwing itself against the bonds that he could not feel, but knew were there. Only occasionally could he break through, but the desperation could not follow. He could only respond to things a little bit, almost as he used to. Very few things could break through the numb barrier, however. He was trapped and he was beginning to become terrified.

How would he escape? How would anyone even know what was wrong? No one could tell that he was in such pain. His sealer only knew the physical- even the famed Yamanaka could only feel his thoughts and missed him trapped behind his eyes.

Someone must look into the soul. Someone...

OoOooOoooO

"How did you do it?"

Musume looked up from her green jello and blinked at the wild woman in the doorway. She felt the hair on the back of her neck raising aggressively, but she managed to reply calmly. "Hello Inuzuka-sama. What are you doing in here?" She asked, looking pointedly to the ANBU in the doorway, who shrugged helplessly.

"They say that you did not get killed by the Jyuuenken strike. I need to know how you did it." Tsume strode confidently into the room. Her large wolf-like dog followed her. Musume gave the beast a wary glance. The last time she had gotten close to the dog-nin, he had sniffed her and proclaimed that she stank like a fox.

"I don't have to tell you that." Musume replied, looking up at the other woman.

"Of course you do! We need to be able to protect ourselves and our partners from this if we are going to be a part of your police squad." Tsume snarled.

Musume raised an eyebrow. "My police squad? I and my clan have little to do with how that is run. And I certainly do not have any say on who from your clan enters into the service."

"Have you no sense of obligation!" Tsume barked. "I must protect my pack!"

Musume sat up, brandishing the spork she had been eating with. "Of course I protect my own!" She jabbed it in the direction of the dog-loving nin. "What do you think I was doing that got me landed in this kami-forsaken hospital?"

"Then tell me..."

"Last time I checked, I am not responsible in any way for your clan. I haven't even met any of them."

Musume semi-lied. She certainly hadn't met any of them as herself, or in this timeline. "If I can't even teach my clan how to survive, then I certainly am not going about telling strangers how to do it."

Tsume's lip lifted off her teeth and the hair on her head seemed to stand up a bit, her killing intent pushing against Musume, who was left unphased. There was no way the killing intent of a human, even a dog-like one, could rattle a demon.

The Inuzuka turned on her heel and stomped out of the room, Kuromaru following after he laid back
his one remaining ear and lifted his own lip and hackles briefly.

Musume watched them go and then sighed, before shifting her attention to the ANBU and motioning them to let in the Uchiha she had summoned.

"Hello Shishui." Musume looked pointedly to the Uchiha standing in her doorway. The young man shifted nervously before entering the room and shutting the door.

"Uchiha-sama." Shishui muttered in reply.

"I haven't really gotten to talk to you much." Musume noted, knocking some papers on her lap into a neat stack.

"That is true, Uchiha-sama."

Musume sighed. This was like pulling teeth. No wonder she hadn't had a conversation with him before. "But you are good friends with Itachi, no?"

She noted with some interest that Shishui seemed to jump a little bit at the comment and was now looking even more nervous. "Well, yes... that is, we have known each other a long time and..."

Shishui continued babbling while his gaze became intent and focused on his clan head.

Musume got a sudden odd feeling that she wanted to tell Shishui to leave but shook it off and instead interrupted him. "So you spend a lot of time at their house?" When he looked even more panicked she continued quickly. "And know what might be going on in Uchiha Mikoto's head?"

Shishui's mouth opened and closed a few times. "Er... I guess. About what?"

Musume held up the sheaf of papers. "This proposal."

Shishui's eyes darkened. "Did she actually send that inane idea to you?"

Musume hummed in amusement. "Well, we did lose almost half of our fighting population." She winced at the pain that thought still brought to her. What nonsense! Her plan was to eliminate the clan! Although, that idea about turning them into her own personal army had been making progressively more sense. And they were hers to kill, anyway.

"Yes." Shishui looked down at the floor, his expression closing off from the previous anger, looking vaguely guilty.

"And we do need to integrate even further into the village." Musume mused, pretending to be thinking it over, when she has really already decided. She just wanted to get a feel for what the attitude of the Uchiha clan was.

"It's an outdated idea that has no relevance to today's society! It totally ignores all personal freedom and happiness!" Shishui yelled, one of his arms cutting through the air in a negating gesture.

Excellent. "Then why would Mikoto propose it?" Musume asked innocently.

"She is just trying to force Itachi into a marriage he has no interest in, like she has since he joined ANBU." Shishui snarled.

Musume's eyebrows rose a bit at his red glare. Interesting that he was so worked up, but a good way to see his eyes. "Well, maybe he should just get married then." She said, watching for it... aha! Spinning.
Shishui leaned closer to her, poking his finger into the stack of papers that made up the proposal. "This is a load of crap." He hissed. "A desperate mother trying to take over her son's life."

Musume's hand shot out and grabbed the hair in the back of Shishui's head. She held tight when he instinctively jerked back and tried to pull her into his genjutsu. She shook him off, but it required a slightly higher amount of chakra than she had wanted to use. She could feel the warning twinges from her heart.

"Now, now. Are you attacking your clan head, Shishui?" Musume purred at him.

Shishui's eyes widened, both in shock and (possibly inadvertently) increasing in power. "I..." He choked.

But Musume was looking deep into the eyes, both visually and with a trickle of her chakra sensing abilities. "Tell what happened when you first activated it." She murmured, the fingers from her other hand tracing the Uchiha's eyelid.

Shishui gulped and his eyes flicked to the side.

"Tell me." She commanded him, not putting any gengutsu behind it, just authority.

Red eyes with pinwheels inside them squeezed shut. "We were responding to the disturbance."

"We?" She prompted.

"Me and... Itachi." Shishui sighed out, eyes still closed.

"What happened?"

"We were doing fine, but there were so many of the Hyuuga, and we weren't entirely sure what level of force was authorized. The head of ANBU and the Police were nowhere to be found. One of them got through and..." He choked off.

"And?"

Shishui looked at her with unnerving Mangekyou eyes. "And Jyuukened Itachi in his eye. If he hadn't moved at the last second, he would have been killed. I thought he had been killed." His eyes pinched shut again. "It was all my fault."

"How was it your fault?" Musume asked softly, mostly from horror rather than compassion, though she hoped it came out more as the latter. If this got out!

"I thought that Hyuuga was knocked out. I didn't incapacitate him. I was supposed to be watching Itachi's back! I should have been able to get there in time! I'm nicknamed that kami-forsaken 'body flicker of Konoha!'" He cried.

"You tried to give him one of your eyes, didn't you." Musume asked, her finger tracing now the lower lid, which was suspiciously free of blood.

"I did... and took his injured one as a reminder, but the chakra to the eye is completely obliterated. No transplant would possibly work. My eye completely shrivelled in his socket, and his almost dead eye healed and activated in me." Shishui looked down, his red spinning eyes becoming shiny.

Musume stared at the (lucky bastard of an) Uchiha, her face impassive. Inside she was cursing up a storm- what crazed luck god had allowed this punk to get the emotional and physical trauma
necessary to not only activate the Mangekyou, but get the eternal form!? Especially as even she had thought they had to be a sibling for it to work. Apparently all you needed was two users capable of the technique. Or maybe not even that, she thought, as she recalled the manky eyes of one poof haired, punctuality challenged jounin.

"You will not experiment with these eyes." Musume said harshly, releasing his head in a way that made the Uchiha stumble back a step. "It is extremely dangerous both to you and to everyone around you, do you understand?" She asked, deadly serious.

"Yes, Uchiha-sama." Shishui said. She had enough experience with Naruto- both in this life and when she was inside him, to know that he was being insincere. It was the exact same petulant lie.

"I am serious, Shishui. You can easily lock someone into a coma if you get too emotionally charged-positive or negative emotions." Musume sat back, crossing her arms over her chest. "You will wait for me to train you." She winced internally at that thought. "And if I am not satisfied that you are giving me your word and that you intend to stand by it, I will seal you."

"You're not allowed to seal anymore." Shishui snapped, taking a step closer to the door.

"I'm willing to get in more trouble that we already are with the Council over this. That is how serious it is." Musume said. "Do you understand?"

"Yes." Shishui said, this time his expression serious and a bit worried.

"Good. Then deactivate it."

"What?" Shishui asked in confusion.

"You have the Mangekyou activated right this second. If you can't get it under control..." She let the rest remain unsaid.

Shishui's eyes widened, before he screwed his eyes shut and put his fingers to his temples. When his hands dropped and his eyes opened they were flat black again. Shishui swayed and almost collapsed before he found a wall to lean on.

"Do you believe me now that it is dangerous? It is easy to run out of chakra. It can get to the point where you will be severely weakened or even die." Musume said.

Shishui looked at her in horror. "Yes, I see now."

"Can you control it, now that you are aware?"

"Yes, Uchiha-sama." Shishui replied, much subdued.

"Good." Not that Musume believed him, but there wasn't anything she could really do about it.

OoOoooOO

Minato led Neji into a quiet corner of the hospital. Jiraya and Tsunade were already there, both looking grim as they sat beside the beds of the two Hyuuga heiresses.

"Why have you brought me here?" Neji whispered to the Hokage, having been told to keep his voice down below what his cousins could possibly hear.

Minato shook his head at the older Hyuuga and turned to the girls. "How are you two feeling?" He asked gently.
Hinata's attention turned to him, but her eyes remained blank. Hanabi smiled brightly and opened her mouth. "Father is going to teach us." She said happily. Hinata winced, her eyes showing a flash of pain before they went blank again.

"What...?" Neji looked at the three other ninja in confusion.

"Do you know why you are here, Hinata-chan?" Minato asked.

"Father told us what to do. Father is gone, now. Will you tell us what to do?" Hanabi asked.

Minato sighed. "Hinata-chan? Do you need anything?"

Hinata turned her head to the wall, ignoring the Hokage.

"Hinata, pay attention to the Hokage!" Neji snapped. Minato shot him a stern look, but soon Neji was regretting what he had said. Hinata stared intently at Minato, noting every single twitch of his hands or rise of his chest with breathing. She did not blink, she was barely moving at all. Her eyes strained so much that they slipped into the Byakugan without her seeming conscious control.

"Hinata-chan, you can do what you want to." Minato said sadly. Instantly Hinata blinked and turned back to the wall. Minato gestured for Neji to follow him out of the room. Once back in the Hokage's office, Minato turned back to the stunned Neji.

"He sealed them to be completely obedient, didn't he?" Neji asked dully.

"He did." Minato nodded, moving to sit behind his desk, setting a stack of papers to the side and pulling out the file on the two of them.

"And you and Jiraya are working on how to get rid of it?" Neji asked.

"We are. But it is twisted with many forbidden branches of jutsu." Minato looked up at Neji pointedly.

"I have been looking through the libraries, but I have not found anything about that. Likely it would not have been kept in the compound, unless it is behind something that blocks the Byakugan." Neji answered the implied question. "If I find anything that might help, I will let Jiraiya review it. Under a vow of confidentiality and only in his role as a Seal Master." Neji continued.

Minato nodded, giving Neji a contemplative look.

OooOooO

"Uchiha Musume?"

Musume looked up from the reports piled everywhere and the notes she had been scribbling on the side... and maybe doodling a few pictures of a dog stomping on some buildings she had done for stress relief (she had decided to disguise her fantasies a little bit- and now she could blame them on Kakashi).

Tsunade was in the doorway with her arms crossed.

"Oh... hello." Musume said uneasily. Her heart monitor started to beep a bit erratically before she deliberately suppressed it back to a normal rhythm. Something that had become almost as routine as healing the brat, sadly... maybe she should just get Kakashi or one of the ANBU to chidori through her chest and then she could just make a new heart from scratch.
"The doctors have told me that they are having issues with your readings." Tsunade said, entering the room.

Orochimaru followed behind her, carrying a case. Musume tensed even further before noting that he seemed rather... blank?

"Chi-chan? Are you feeling quite alright?" She asked.

"Don't call me that!" Orochimaru snapped, his eyebrow twitching and his spine snapping straight. "Or I will be forced to call you Moo-chan."

"Are you calling me fat?" Musume shot back, glaring. She hid her amusement at his reaction under the feigned annoyance. He was a lot more fun when he wasn't a deranged psychopath, it was true.

Orochimaru smirked in a 'what do you think' kind of way before acquiescing. "Fine, then how about 'Sue-chan'?" He asked with a sneer.

"Orochimaru." Tsunade scolded, poking him in the temple with a finger glowing glow reflected in the yellow of the snake sannin's irises and seemed to pull the life and energy right out of the thin man's body.

"Sorry, Tsunade-hime." Orochimaru said dully.

"What did you do to him?" Musume asked in horror.

"I have been needing to adjust his mental balance. Something here in Konoha has been making him slip back into insanity." Tsunade gave the bed-ridden kitsune a speaking glare.

"You can't just take away all of his personality! He is acting as sane as anyone else I've met." Musume protested further.

"Considering you pushed two clan heads off the edge and into mutiny and genocide, forgive me for doubting your ability to judge." Tsunade said as she came over to Musume's bedside.

Musume thought desperately of something that would keep the healer-sannin from looking her over, but could think of nothing short of running away. Not only would it possibly not work due to the level of the nin in front of her, but it would likely kill her body (again). Musume tensed to the point where she thought her bones would snap under the pressure as the hands inexorably came closer.

Tsunade ran a glowing hand over Musume's stiff form before the clan head could think of a reason to protest. "Well, it looks like the doctors are right. Your readings are very bizarre. From this it seems that you are a man and also pregnant." Tsunade shook her head.

Musume's heart would have stopped beating if she hadn't ruthlessly suppressed it from doing so. She tensed even further, some part of her wondering that it was still possible to do so, while most of her was preparing to counter whatever attack the sannin was about to do.

"Obviously the Hyuuga attacks combined with whatever you did to counteract it..." Tsunade left a long pause and looked at Musume expectantly.

"Clan secret." Musume blurted. And then winced internally. Like that was going to work?

"Hm. If you want to get better, then you need to be more forthcoming, Uchiha-sama." Tsunade replied, though seemed to accept the answer as nothing unusual. "The chakra is so distorted in your body at the moment that I can't trust any of these measures." She said. "But you do seem to be
healing well despite that."

"I got to be very good at that... before." Musume replied shortly, hoping that 'before' would be assumed to be 'when being used ruthlessly by my father/Madara' like in the official story. Tsunade's slightly uncomfortable look confirmed the success of blaming the default scapegoat.

Musume looked out the window so the satisfied twitch of her lips was not noticeable. Although she started to actually look uneasy and shut down when she remembered what Tsunade had said. A man? Check. Pregnant!? That wasn't also true, was it? She didn't even want to look. She decided to think about Chi-chan standing listlessly in the corner instead. She looked at him in the reflection in the window. His eyebrow twitched slightly.

Musume jumped when a hand was placed on her chest, right above her heart. She was about to protest, but Tsunade was already seemingly intent on her healing. Musume watched warily with her own internal senses, but the sannin simply helped along her poor heart a little bit before she pulled out.

"You are healing incredibly well." Tsunade said, giving a slightly suspicious look to Musume before she continued. "I would think you could go back to the main house soon so that you can get back to your paperwork in a more accommodating setting."

"Really?" Musume asked eagerly, even as she cringed at the thought of doing more paperwork. All thought of Orochimaru flew from her head. The snake was always acting odd, especially now that she knew him a bit better- he didn't feel the need to hide it as much.

"I think so." Tsunade replied. "As long as you rest."

"Are the Uchiha being that annoying?" Musume smirked. She had been hearing the ANBU outside her door turning away visitors since she woke up. It was perhaps the one benefit to being in the intensive care ward. An added bonus was seeing what some of her clan had been trying- some were getting quite creative trying to get around the protections.

"That and the first rounds of the chuunin exams are coming up soon. We might need the space and I'm sure you will want to be involved." Tsunade replied.

"Is it really?" Musume mused. That would explain why the two sannin were here, she supposed. "Yes, I definitely would."

"Fine. As soon as I can give you an accurate diagnostic, we can get you out of here." Tsunade said decisively, before turning and walking out of the room.

"Yes." Musume frowned at that, though. How was she going to fool the sannin that her body was 'normal' when the scans now were... probably working just fine? She winced and leaned back into the bed. She needed something to distract herself with. She picked up the thick proposal from Uchiha Mikoto and began to chuckle darkly to herself, almost managing to work up to a full blown maniacal cackle before Orochimaru bumped into the side of her bed. "Er... what is it, Chi-chan?" She asked. She had assumed that he ha left with his team-mate.

"Can you still use the Mangekyou Sharingan?" He asked dully.

Musume narrowed her eyes. "I have sealed myself so that I can't anymore. You know that."

"I see." And the sannin turned and walked out the door.

"Weird." Musume noted. She still wasn't terribly fond of the snake, but he had sort of grown on her
what with him constantly trying to get her blood for 'tests'. Something about him was very definitely off. More than his usual mercurial personality. And why would he ask that, anyway? It was basically the most insulting thing she could think of someone asking her. She shrugged and stuck with her previous subconscious decision to forget about the odd sannin.

She turned back to the paperwork and was tempted to have a small hissy fit. Even with how much she had been working on it, there was so much left. It was still preferable to what was potentially growing in her belly, though. But she couldn't be both male and pregnant, right? The whole idea was just wrong, against nature, some sort of abomination!

Satisfied, Musume looked into her lower belly. And was greeted by a uterus full of kits. "Oh shit." she whispered in horror.
They had not been invited to come with the man that fathered the vessel. In fact, they had been deliberately excluded. When his father had heard that Konoha would only be accessible for those given the correct key, the man had jumped at the opportunity to be safe from the son he had turned into a killing machine and an enemy.

There were other ways to get into the town, of course. The most expedient had been the murder and stealing of a seal from someone else. They had simply picked off a straggler from a party of weaklings, and they, too, were able to get inside.

But they hadn't.

The demon shuddered even getting close to the village hidden in leaves. She could feel an old sometime-ally within, and she was terrified. The whole area stank with the chakra of the most powerful demon of all. It was marked undeniably as the territory of the kyuubi no kitsune.

The tanuki was glad that the humans had not tried to order them to attack this village. She did not have to follow the wishes of the humans, of course, but she was not quite ready to kill them out of hand. The host was weak, but not yet weak enough to break out of.

OooOOO

"Musume!" Minato said as he strode into the hospital room. "You are looking much better."

Musume looked up from the paperwork gratefully. She could feel the tension running out of her body at the sight of him, even as her hand crept almost against her will to her lower belly protectively. "Hello, Minato." She smiled.

Minato sat down beside her in the bed and gathered some of the papers and put them to the side. "How are you feeling?"

Musume shrugged. It wasn't like she could tell him what was actually going on with her body.

"Tsunade told me that the chakra in your body is greatly disturbed and was giving her odd readings." Minato said, running a hand over her forehead.

Musume sighed and waited for him to crack a joke or otherwise say what kind of errors, exactly, Tsunade had been getting. They were both silent a long time, and Musume just leaned into Minato's hand until he began to lightly massage her temples.

"Do you have a headache? I know you don't want to tell Tsunade about your condition," Musume felt a jolt of fear shoot through her- he knew! "but she needs to know why your chakra might be different than the average person." Musume nearly fainted in relief- he meant the demon chakra from being a 'jinchuriki'.

"She doesn't need to know." Musume grated out. "I'll heal just fine."

"Musume..." Minato said, sounding quite worried.
She opened her eyes and looked into his strained face. "I'll be out of here before the chuunin exams start."

"That's only a week away." Minato shook his head.

"I'll be better by then, believe it!" She said, giving him a cocky grin that hid the confusion in her chest.

"All right." Minato sighed. "I just wanted to stop by, but I'm really busy with all of the final preparations. Which this close to the event itself, are dealing with last minute emergencies, naturally." He smiled wryly.

"Well, have fun." Musume smirked, though inside she felt a bit ill. She watched him leave and could not decide what it was that she wanted to do about the situation. They were mates, check. Having kits with one's mate was good, check. Having six at once was not human-normal, check. She growled in frustration.

If only she could discuss this with her mate! But that was impossible if she didn't want to tell him everything. And she might not even have the control to do anything but carry them all and birth a litter since her chakra and body were so deranged. Which would be a definite problem. Even though they were all sort of blobby beans with eyes at this point, she could feel that only one had purely human energy surrounding it. The rest had varying degrees of kitsune in them, from two sharing a sac with minimal to the three that felt like full demons.

Maybe she could just... she reached out with her chakra, moving toward the first one, wrapping around it. A twinge of her heart made her pause, panting. As she sat frozen, the primitive chakra from the little bean wrapped around her own, gripping it happily. Her heart twinged again, and it wasn't because of a physical problem.

"I can't." She said softly, not sure how she felt about any of this. She snarled unhappily, but kept her chakra wrapped with the little one's, which helped to calm her.

Musume sighed. This wasn't going to be solved by sitting in the hospital, at the mercy of humans that she had no reason to like or even trust. She shook her head decisively, coming to a decision to finally implement the plan she had been contemplating since she awoke in the hospital. If Tsunade says that there is only one way for her to leave and that's an accurate scan, then an accurate scan she will give her.

She pulled out from her uterus and began to form her human chakra very, very slowly, making sure to use only the borrowed chakra and none of her native demon form. It was quite difficult, as that was the chakra that had been so abused. She was not even quite sure the original donor of it was quite alive anymore. It was difficult to tell with a soul, though, even for a demon used to only dealing with spirits.

With a silent cry of exhilaration, Musume gave her clone a thumbs-up. The clone gave her a weak glare, looking about as sick as the chakra was feeling. But healthy enough to pass, she figured, so long as no Hyuuga were called in. Which, considering all or most of them were dead, in the hospital, or in custody, then she figured those chances were pretty low. She looked over the clone critically—thee exact same heart issues that she still had but some subtle changes besides that; only one sex chromosome (the X, she silently sent a thank-you to Orochimaru for describing the human genetic nonsense), duplicated as is proper in a human female, and NOT pregnant.

Anyway, this clone would pass the sannin's chakra sensing test, hopefully. If not, she would use the back-up logic that if she could make a clone and escape, she was obviously well enough to leave.
She quickly switched the heart monitors from herself to the clone, swiftly enough that they did not make more than one annoyed beep. Fortunately they had taken out the tubes from her arms today, making the escape possible.

She started to bend demon space, but the tearing pain almost made her scream.

Gasping, her eyes watering, she looked to the door. But the ANBU seemed to have not noticed anything. Then her attention snapped to her belly, but no disturbance there, either. She sucked in a ragged breath and patted her chest. But for once, it was not her heart, it was the chakra coils were barely still attached to her. She indulged in a few seconds of snarling and growling (quietly) before opening the window instead.

Musume spread all seven of her senses out around and identified the patrolling ANBU, police, two Uchiha trying to get in and one random ninja that she did not recognize. Quickly she mapped out a path around them, darted to one end of her hospital room to the other to make sure she was still at a proper speed, and then slipped past the humans watching her window faster than they could see.

She went straight to the Uchiha main house and dug through her clothes until she found something that did not immediately scream "Uchiha!" It proved a bit difficult, as her secretary Aenka bought her clothing- both because Musume had no interest in doing so and because the secretary had yet to convince her clan head that going about in ripped, threadbare, stained, ill-fitting clothes was unacceptable. Considering that Musume now had a mate, she felt her point proven- what other use for trappings? But at the moment, she just wanted to get out of the hospital gown.

Finding a pair of kahki pants and a long-sleeved pink T and a pair of the standard-issue sandals, Musume pulled them on. She then found an elastic to pull back her immediately recognizable long shaggy black hair. She looked in the mirror and was satisfied that if someone saw her from a ways away, they would not know her just from her profile. The T was also long enough to cover most of her bracelets and make them look simply like the jewelry of any other human female.

She perched on the dresser and sighed. Something needed to be done about her disability... besides figuring out what to do about the kits, something always happened during the chuunin exams. And if Naruto summoned her...

Musume looked around and zipped up to the roof of the Uchiha main house, sneaking into the attic. Behind some wards containing old explosive notes that had lost their chakra, she settled in to meditate and look at what exactly was the problem. She had done some of this at the hospital, but she had been constantly distracted either by someone visiting or running a scan that she had to try to fool. She was going to figure this out before (if?) it killed her (again).

OoooOOOOoo

"Thank you all for being so patient while we waited for some of the key players to regain consciousness and for Ibiki to work his magic. Along with the Inoichi, Ibiki has been able to reconstruct the night and will now tell us what, exactly, happened. As far as can be determined before the final interrogations. This meeting will hopefully answer as many questions as can be so that we can present a united front for the chuunin exams." Minato began. It was a full council meeting, the newly appointed interim head of the Hyuuga clan looking nervous under his blank looks toward the older council members. "I will yield the floor to Ibiki so that he can report his findings."

Ibiki nodded and then stepped forward, carrying a large sheaf of papers. "I interrogated all individuals that were involved in the fighting who are not currently in the hospital." He began, stating it like he saw no problem with interrogating the injured, as well. "The picture that has
emerged is disturbing." He nodded for some of the Investigations staff to hold up a timeline and pin it to the opposite wall. "Three military police officers Uchiha Ori and Enpitsu and Inuzuka Kawa, responded to the second complaint of a disturbance at the Hyuuga main house, the first having been the night before and was closed without any action taken. As you know, the Police do not have jurisdiction within clan compounds, but can respond to requests for assistance that are made from within the compound. At this time we have been unable to determine who made either call, though the evidence points to different individuals. It is entirely possible that both are now deceased.

"When the second group of three responded to the Hyuuga main house, they might have again closed the case without action, but Inuzuka Kawa was with them with his dog Midomaru. They scented fresh blood in significant quantities and, possibly unaware of the Police's lack of jurisdiction due to their rookie status, demanded entry. Midomaru burst past Hiashi, barking, while Uchiha Ori called for back-up for the presumed disaster that was about to take place due to deviation from protocol.

"Kawa apparently yelled out loudly something to the effect of 'what?! A dead body and lots of blood painting the walls?!', presumably in response to the barks of his dog Midomaru. At this Uchiha Enpitsu's Sharingan was activated, Ori's being still under a seal placed by Uchiha Musume. The shout woke some of the Hyuuga, revealing that some of the branch family had already been executed, leading to panic in the remaining branch members. Additionally, Midomaru was attacked by unknown persons. This somehow lead to an explosion which blew out the wall to the Hyuuga main house, revealing the two clan heirs with their seals and Hyuuga Kire, their mother, dead on the floor.

"At this point, reinforcement arrived from the Police, who called for more reinforcements from both the Police and the ANBU, who do have jurisdiction. Additionally, some of the branch house members had managed to evade the Hyuuga main house ninja and made it to the rest of the village, where they are protected by the laws unless petitioned by the clan head.

"At this point several clones of Uchiha Musume arrived and incapacitated several Hyuuga and bound them before Uchiha Musume herself arrived and began to simply kill the Hyuuga. It is still unknown how she was able to shrug off a majority of the Jyuiken attacks, as we have not been able to interrogate her due to her medical state." Here Ibiki finally paused, giving a pointed look to the Hokage, who ignored him.

Ibiki cleared his throat and continued. "After the arrival of Uchiha Musume, the Hokage quickly followed and the situation was mostly contained. Until Uchiha Musume leapt towards Hyuuga Hiashi and a barrier was formed preventing further force to be deployed. Somehow Uchiha Musume was able to defeat Hyuuga Hiashi, somehow removing a seal he had placed on himself and rendering him blind and in a coma-like state that Senju Tsunade-hime has determined leaves him in a mindless state of pain. Again, Uchiha Musume is not available for comment due to the cardiac insult she sustained from her battle with Hyuuga Hiashi. The two heiresses are also still under intensive care."

Minato nodded as Ibiki ordered the timeline pinned to the wall and then stood back in the shadows.

"How troublesome." Nara Shikaku muttered. When attention snapped to him he sighed and added, "if Uchiha-sama had not been able to defeat him, there would have been nothing that we could have done to retaliate about this distasteful mess."

"What do you mean?!" Inuzuka Tsume growled. "They killed two of my clan members!"

"Who were acting outside of their orders as Konoha Police." Shikaku replied.

"So?" Tsume snapped. "Just because someone comes to your house when you didn't invite them
doesn't mean you get to kill them."

"It does indeed." Uchiha Mikoto said coldly.

"For the Uchiha and the Hyuuga it was part of the treaty with the founding of the village." Minato confirmed.

"What a load of crap!" Tsume barked.

"The policy is under review in light of recent circumstances." Minato tried to soothe the Inuzuka, as her hackles were standing up.

"It was a rather brilliant play, though not very moral." Shikaku continued at a drawl. "That Hyuuga Neji was out of town at the time of the incident was obviously engineered as his team rarely takes outside missions. All the rest of the Hyuuga in the branch family are sealed due to their unfitness as ninja. Only Neji has any proficiency, and was only not one of the main house due to political reasons."

"What political reasons?" Neji asked stiffly, looking at the rest of the council suspiciously as they all seemed to agree with Shikaku.

"Your father and his brother were appointed to be clan heads when very young. If Hyuuga Hizashi had not agreed to be sealed and made one of the branch house, there almost certainly would have been an internal struggle that probably would have led to bloodshed." Minato explained, before anyone could take advantage of the young Hyuuga's ignorance to their political advantage.

Neji sat back, eyes wide in shock. It was obvious that he wanted to call the Hokage a liar, but knew better than to do so in a Council meeting.

"The slaughter of the branch clan is illogical." Shibi Aburame muttered into the collar of his coat. "Hyuuga Hiashi forgot that a colony requires their workers even more so than their warriors. How would they feed and clothe themselves without their chefs and tailors?"

"The rest of the village would be glad to support the Hyuuga." Said the head of one of the civilian guilds. He looked positively greedy at the thought of all that Hyuuga wealth pouring into his coffers. Since the founding of the village, the Hyuuga have only used what they have supplied to themselves.

"For now we will have to take you up on your generosity." Minato said, a bit of a smile quirking his lips. The traders made to protest when they heard the word 'generosity' but Minato continued, "the village will be supporting the remnants of the clan for a while, so we appreciate that you are going to cover their needs until a permanent solution can be negotiated."

Neji bowed from the waist. "Thank you, Honored Council Members, for helping my family in our hour of need." He intoned solemnly. "I am sure that with the Hokage's help we can come to a beneficial settlement."

The guild members had sour looks on their faces, but didn't know how to protest.

"The office of the Hokage will subsidize until the leadership of the Hyuuga and the disposition of funds are settled." Minato added, making tentative smiles come to the faces of the civilians. It was one thing to have potential payment sometime in the future and definite, though not full, payment in the present. Besides, backing out now would cause them to lose much face.

"Thank you, Hokage-sama."
"But still, what was Hiashi thinking, sealing his kids?" Akimichi Chouza asked, looking disgusted. "We had already determined that he would be in trouble if he continued with the sealing."

"From what we can determine," Jiraiya said gruffly from his place leaning against the wall, "the seal was designed to disappear the second it was activated, which would have happened had Uchiha Musume tried to use her control of Hiashi's Caged Bird Seal. The kill command would have been sent to his daughters, causing them intense pain until their bodies shut down."

Nara Shikaku nodded. "His plans seem to be all geared to forcing Uchiha Musume into close combat with him, so that he could use the shields and the Juuken to kill her and thus free himself from her hold of life-or-death over him. But how did she win? It should have been checkmate." He trailed off, muttering with his chin held in his fist as he thought furiously.

"I will be releasing her from the hospital soon. She can tell us what happened at that time." Tsunade replied.

Musume was struggling- it would be so easy to just let the human part die, it wanted to so badly. She felt that she could even maintain the human form... but it would be a construct of chakra, not an actual body. It would work for fighting, but the finer sensations would be lost. She snarled and pulled out from her meditation, feeling as crappy as she had since she had passed out the first time.

There had to be a way to do this... she just needed to let the chakra coils heal. How to let them heal when they were not regenerating? She pouted and looked at the wall in irritation. The brat's coils had always just... healed on their own. She didn't touch them, it had never been an issue before. Even when they were completely depleted, they had just filled from the brat's...

Musume smacked herself on the forehead. "Ow..." she muttered, smiling wryly. She took the coils from where they were fluttering weakly on top of her demonic chakra and pulled them along with her into the dungeon where the possibly dead Madara was lying on the floor. She placed the coils approximately over where she had pulled them from, all those years ago.

They snapped into place with a pleasing finality. The coils immediately perked up and started to glow with a healthy blue shimmer and Madara arched up and gasped.

That taken care of, Musume turned back to the outside world. The shimmer of her crimson chakra was beautiful amongst the wood beams of the attic. She watched it for a few seconds, before tapping her chest to make sure her village pass was still hanging from her neck and then stepping through the demon space out into the forest.

Everyone in the town shuddered briefly as a vicious weight appeared and then disappeared once more. The ninja old enough to remember reacted much more strongly at the sudden memory of a night that they had almost all been destroyed, but none could pinpoint what exactly was making them uneasy or where it came from.

Minato was interrupted as he suddenly sat up straight. He turned back to his son with narrowed eyes. "Have you been practicing with summoning?" He accused.

"Yup!" Naruto replied happily.

Minato choked. "Naruto! I told you not to mess with those foxes any more!"
Naruto looked up at his dad with squinted eyes and a pout on his face. "But it's the one thing I made all by myself!" He pointed an accusing finger. "You get to blow up all sorts of things with your rasengan!"

Minato rubbed his head. "We'll talk about this later." Naruto grinned at the victory. "I need to talk to you about your team for the chuunin exams."

"Yeah!" Naruto crowed, pumping his fist into the air. "Who is it?" He asked eagerly. "Am I on Gai's team? I heard that Hyuuga is on the council or something."

Minato shuddered at the thought of Naruto getting any more 'youthful'. "No, Gai is still traumatized by that disaster of a mission to Wave. His pupil is still fighting off the effects of poison and opening too many of his gates at once."

"Oh." Naruto pouted. He perked up suddenly. "Then am I on the team with the dog boy and the bug guy? They had a Hyuuga on their team, too."

"Naruto! Stop guessing and let me tell you." Minato snapped. Seeing his son temporarily cowed he sighed. "Tenten from Gai's team is going to be taking Hinata's place, as both teams were registered before the.. incident."

"Then who...?" Naruto clamped his mouth shut at the pressure of his father's annoyed intent.

"I had a very special request from the Kazekage." Minato explained, a pleased expression on his face. "It seems that one of his sons had a sudden problem and cannot participate in the chuunin exams either."

Naruto looked dubious. "What kind of problem?" His eyes squinted suspiciously.

"Naruto, that is not our business." Minato sighed. "What is more important is that he is putting forth this faith in his ally. He was aware of your situation and asked if you would be willing to be on the team with his other two children."

Naruto pouted. "I don't want to be on a team with people from Sand."

"Too bad. This is an unparalleled chance for good will between our two towns. You will not mess this up." Minato pressed a sheaf of papers into his son's hand. "Here is your information on the two children."

Naruto looked at the folder but didn't open it.

"And for your unofficial mission..." Minato said with a slow smile crossing his face when his son immediately perked up. "Jiraiya has been teaching you his spying techniques, hasn't he?"

"You want me to peep on the Kazekage's daughter?" Naruto asked dubiously. "Ow!"

A vein pulsed in Minato's forehead. "No! Discrete surveillance and information gathering!"

"He does that?" Naruto asked, rubbing the back of his head, eyes squinted.

Minato rubbed his temples. "Yes, he is our most esteemed spymaster."

"Really? That perverted hermit?"

"Naruto... just try to be discreet. And find out what happened to the Kazekage's son if you can." Minato sighed. When he saw Naruto's mouth open, he added; "And do NOT just ask them what
"Awww!"

OooooOOoOoo

Musume wandered the crowds, her demon chakra fiercely suppressed within her skin and her face hidden behind a cloth mask. There were more people than usual in the village, a good number obviously foreign. Some because they had on forehead protectors that declared that fact. But mostly, Musume could tell because their exotic scents tickled her nose. Instead of the fresh leafy smell of their village, mixed with cinders and occasionally lightening, they smelled of water or burning heat, or dry vegetation.

She probably should just stay away until she was 'released' from the hospital and the human coils finished healing and she could cloak in them again, but the forest was rather boring. Especially since the other foxes were ignoring her in favor of the new and exciting human that she had deigned to make a contract with. Musume was bemused to find that the brat was such a focus of foxy attention. Not that he nor the other foxes knew that it was again.

A face in the crowd jumped out at her- purple paint and a kitty jumpsuit. She blinked. That puppet guy. She tilted her head and followed after him. He was with the fan girl, but Shukaku was not with them. What did that mean?

Chapter End Notes

Names of the minor OCs were selected based on semi-random criteria. The Inuzuka and his dog were named with the theme of all Inuzuka: the guy after a dog body part (forget which one) and the dog after a color with -maru at the end (a bastardized form of green in this case). I suppose technically 'pencil' is a random word, but sort of cheating on being Japanese... but you know what? It's fun to say, so there. Uchiha Enpitsu. In retrospect, I'm kind of hoping he didn't actually die.
"Oh no..."

"What?" Two of her fox minions looked up from the quick game of dice they had set up at their Lord's feet. Since she had lost the human coils, her demon half had been more... solid. Side effects were causing a variety of really odd disturbances to demon-space. Everything from rivers in the air to random fires and sudden color changes. Though it made their fur stand on end, they stayed close to her in shifts to make sure nothing unduly strange happened.

"If I can't put my kits in demon space... maybe I can't fast travel." She paused.

"Do NOT test it." The golden fox yipped- trying to catch the Lord's attention. Not that it seemed possible...

"I really don't want to travel everywhere the long way!" The kyuubi whined. Elsewhere, a lake turned to apple juice. The lesser foxes sighed.

OooooooOO

Being in the hospital was boring. Even feeling sick from low chakra and avoiding anything with a needle, still a clone got to feeling abandoned when left to suffer like this... time for a little exploring.

"Hello, Itachi!" Musume's clone swung into the Uchiha's room, smiling. "You can't avoid me now, can you?" She grinned.

Itachi widened his one remaining eye. "Uchiha-sama..."

"Oh, don't be so formal!" The clone giggled, hopping into the room and onto the younger Uchiha's bed.

Itachi stiffened.

"What is up with your mother, anyway? She is sending me all these reports from council meetings and she is such a stick in the mud! Almost as much as you were." She sighed. She dumped the most recent version of legislature Mikoto was pushing into Itachi's lap, making him grunt in surprise. She smirked at his expression.

"I don't know what you are talking about..." Itachi muttered, looking to the side.

"Oh, Itachi, you can't fool me!" The clone waggled her finger. The clone didn't pay attention to the stricken look on the Uchiha's face, as it was so proud of its conclusion. "You are here to avoid your mother. An eye injury isn't really all that life-threatening, is it? I even bullied Tsunade to give you a look."
Itachi relaxed slightly. "I don't know what you are talking about Uchiha-sama."

The clone preened. "I can read you better than that Itachi-kun! I've known you since you were a little boy, haven't I?" The clone blinked. "Speaking of little boys- what have you been teaching Sasuke?"


The clone poked him in the chest. "Exactly. That boy is pathetic! He could be a cold-hearted bastard of a killing machine under the right circumstances." She bemoaned. "Not that we want that, he gets a lot too into it..." She trailed off, turning away from the confused Itachi. "But anyway, you are his big brother. You should get him up to par. Do you want him to get killed on a mission or something?"

"No! Of course not!" Itachi whispered in horror.

"Then what?" the clone asked, leaning in.

"I... this life is not one I want for him." Itachi sighed. "All this violence..." He stiffened when he realized who's clone he had just said that to.

The clone however just patted him on the shoulder. "It's alright, Itachi. You are a very good shinobi, but that doesn't mean you have to do things that you don't want to." Itachi looked at her with a confused and almost lost expression on his face. "Though I would definitely recommend giving your brother a good talking to at the very least, and some pointers preferably."

"Yes, Uchiha-sama." Itachi whispered, looking down at where his fingers were absently sorting the documents.

Be a good Uchiha and keep an eye on those for me, will you?" Musume's clone stood on the ceiling and started pacing. "I need to discharge myself from the hospital..."

Itachi looked down at the papers and his eye widened.

OoOoOooO

"Hello!" Naruto bounced into the rather somber gathering of other gennin.

"Who are you?" Kiba snapped. Akamaru barked at his partner in a scolding tone. "What? No, he doesn't look anything like the Hokage."

"Ah- well I am Namikaze Naruto." Naruto said, rubbing the back of his head.

"What are you doing here?" Tenten asked.

"I'm supposed to learn how to be on a team or something." Naruto shrugged. "And since that is what you are working on, too, Dad said that I should come do some missions with you guys."

"Why don't you go on your own team?" Kiba growled.

"I don't have a team- I've been training with the pervert toad sage." Naruto rubbed his nose.

"Relax, Kiba." Kurenai put her hand on the shoulder not occupied by dog.

"They can't replace Hinata." Kiba grumbled. Akamaru yipped agreement.

"They are not trying to, Kiba." Kurenai patted her student's shoulder and then turned to Naruto. "We
were picking these tomatoes."

Naruto peered at the field and then at the red eyed jounin. "Why?" He asked finally.

Kurenai felt her eye twitch. "It builds teamwork."

Naruto looked at her dubiously, his eyes squinted. "Really?"

"Yeah, shrimp. Get picking." Kiba snapped.

"Alright." Naruto shrugged. His father had told him to do whatever Kurenai-sensei said. "Kage Bushin!" He cried. A hundred Narutos cheered as they leapt over the short stone wall and started to pull all the tomatoes off of the plants.

The entire team stared at Naruto. Though Shino didn't change his expression at all beyond a raised eyebrow, the other two genin and their jounin instructor's jaws were hanging low. Akamaru tilted his head.

Kiba finally shook his head violently, almost dislodging his dog. "Hey, idiot! Only pick the red ones! What are you doing?" He yelled.

"What? You said pick the tomatoes, you didn't say anything about color!" The Narutos chorused.

"Idiot!" Kiba yelled. "Don't you even know what a fresh tomato looks like?"

The Narutos rubbed the back of their head. "Eheh!" They all ran back to the cart and deposited the tomatoes, then dispelled in a large poof of smoke. "Sorry. I was just trying to help." The original Naruto said sheepishly.

"Thank you, Naruto, but the point of this exercise is to work together." Kurenai said, her voice still a bit shaky to see the young boy's display of his immense store of chakra.

"Oh." Naruto squinted. "Can't we all work together to improve for the exams instead? They are soon, but the physical bit isn't until next Monday."

"Which is why we are taking it easy. We can't have anyone else getting hurt before the exams." Kurenai sighed, though she was rather tired of these D missions as well.

"Oh." Naruto shrugged. "Then how about ramen?" He asked, perking up.

"No. You are here to learn how to be on a team. We need to all get to know each other." Kurenai protested.

"Bonding over ramen is a perfect way to get to know each other. And then we can say our likes and dislikes or something..." Naruto trailed off at the sharp look from Kurenai. "Heh heh. Pick the tomatoes, yes, ma'am."

Akamaru yipped and Kiba's eye lit up. "Hey, can you teach us that solid clone technique? It would make this a lot easier, and then there could be a hundred of Akamaru and I!"

"Sure!" Naruto replied happily, grinning.

"Absolutely not!" Kurenai spun around from where she had been walking off.

"Aww... why not?" Naruto pouted.
"You should not give away powerful techniques so easily." Shino deadpanned.

"But you guys are allies." Naruto protested.

"That is not the reason, though it is a good point." Kurenai said shakily. "The reason is that that is a forbidden technique."

"Cool!" Kiba said, eying at Naruto with a hungry look on his face that made the orange clad genin wary.

"No, not cool! It is forbidden for a reason. That technique requires an amount of chakra that you two do not have. You would die if you tried to make even three clones." Kurenai said harshly.

"Huh. But Musume-chan taught it to me when I was five." Naruto said, his eyes squinted in confusion.

"Five?" Kurenai asked weakly.

"Uchiha Musume?" Shino asked.

"Yeah." Naruto answered both questions.

"She did something to your chakra coils when you were very young." Shino said slowly. "Is that why you have such a large store of chakra?" He asked.

Naruto grabbed his right elbow with his left hand and his chin with his right, looking upward. "That could be." He mused. "And a good thing, too, otherwise I would never survive her training practices!"

"Why the hell is the head of the Uchiha clan training you?" Kiba sniffed.

"She is involved with the Hokage." Shino said blandly.

"What?" Kiba asked. "Is that some sort of code?" Kiba asked.

"How did she do something to your chakra coils?" Tenten asked, ignoring the other two boys in favor of focusing on Naruto.

Shino stared at Kiba and the dog boy returned the favor with a belligerent look. Shino started whispering into the Inuzuka's ear.

Naruto cocked his head to the side, wondering at the girl's intensity. He spared a brief look to Shino and Kiba before turning back to Tenten. "I dunno." He shrugged. "I was a baby and she was a bit... odd back then." He grinned. "Well, more odd anyway."

"Has she ever done it for anyone else?" Tenten pressed, leaning forward intently.

"I don't think so." Naruto paused to think about it. He turned his wide blue eyes back to her. "Why?"

"I..." Tenten shook her head violently, paused, then turned and walked away.

Naruto watched her go, confused. Maybe this was one of the 'mysteries of women-hood' that the pervert sage always was talking about. He pouted when he realized that Tenten was not going into the field to pick tomatoes, but seemed to be leaving entirely.

"Oh! You mean having sex!" Kiba yelled. Shino's ear tips turned red. Kiba threw his head back and
let out a barking laugh. "The bug boy is trying to give me the 'birds and the bees' talk. That's pretty funny!" Akamaru barked his agreement.

Shino pushed his glasses higher on his nose, the red creeping up his cheeks.

"Hey, hey, sensei." Naruto pulled on her red sleeve. "Is this sort of thing what we're supposed to do to get to know each other?"

Kurenai planted her face in the palm of her hand.

OoooOOOOo

Musume had had several close calls- all the shinobi in the village were, of course, quite perceptive. And there were shinobi crawling all over the town in preparation for the exams. She couldn't help but be excited and nervous at the same time. Excited, as there was definitely going to be a lot of chaos in the next month, nervous because pretty much every loop the town had been attacked and she was just starting to get the village into a shape that pleased her. It would be annoying if it were razed.

So to avoid the ninja, she had had to develop a technique of existing partly within the demon space basically as soon as she lost the human coils. Otherwise her aura of malice flooded out. It was an odd sensation- sort of freeing, actually. She could relax more then when she was trying to keep herself contained within the human skin. Even when she didn't have to hide anymore, she might keep up with the dimension-straddling. Until then, she left only the human body out in the physical world. She should seem just like a normal civilian to ninja senses. It did leave her senses feeling a bit dulled, though, at least in the physical world.

In demon space, however, she could feel that there was something else close. A familiar energy... but not within the town itself... and some other, smaller signatures practically on top of her...

"Hey! Musume-chan!"

Musume jumped a foot into the air, her back stiffened. "Brat! Don't sneak up on people!" She snapped reflexively. Then she cursed silently. Why did she acknowledge him?

"When did you get out of the hospital?" Naruto pouted. "You didn't tell me."

"I... uh, just got out." Musume said weakly.

"And you feel sort of funny." Naruto looked at her with squinted eyes.

"I'll show you funny!" Musume growled, brandishing a fist.

"Hah! You can't catch me- your heart is all messed up." Naruto said smugly.

"Why didn't you think of that before you scared the crap out of me?" Musume growled. "I could have keeled over."

"Eheh." Naruto chuckled weakly. "I guess I didn't think of that."

Musume grinned. "Well, it was a good scare, so I can't be too mad. But if your dad were here..." She trailed off with an evil smirk on her face.

"Is that because you are having sex with him?" Naruto asked.

Musume choked on what she had been about to say, her heart doing a bit of a flip before she
thumped on her chest. "What did you just say?" She asked, too calmly.

Naruto went pale and looked around for an escape route. "Er... it's just what Shino was saying to Kiba..."

"Aburame Shino and Inuzuka Kiba?" She asked sweetly.

"Er... yes?" Naruto replied, hopeful that Musume's wrath would soon be directed elsewhere.

"Those gossiping bugs!" Musume growled to herself.

"Well, you did run around the village in a sleeping shirt." Naruto replied, before realizing what he had said and covering his mouth in horror.

"What? I wasn't in a... what?" Musume asked in confusion.

"Ahahah!" Naruto said loudly. "I have to get back to do some team building I think!"

Musume caught Naruto by the scruff of his shirt. "When was I running around in a nightshirt?"

Naruto's eyes widened. "Dad told me not to tell you!" He wailed.

"Not to tell me what?" Musume growled, angry enough that bits of her demon self started to leak back into this reality.

"Well, when the Hyuuga were attacking the Uchiha, Dad said you didn't stop to change, and you were in bed... he said really it was lucky that you were wearing anything at all..." Naruto babbled.

Musume let go of him in surprise and the young shinobi bolted. She tried to think back to that night. She couldn't really remember what she had been wearing, besides that there must have been some sort of clothing, as it had ended up soaked in blood and sticking to her skin. Had she been in only a shirt?

Well, that would certainly explain why everyone knew that she was sleeping with the Hokage... after all, it would have been his shirt she was sleeping in. Which shirt was a somewhat important question, though, as a good number of them did not really cover her butt...

Musume suddenly threw back her head and laughed, startling the people around her. "Well, I'll be damned." She grinned. She had defeated the Hyuuga head half naked, probably mooning the entire village. Talk about adding insult to injury. She grinned at the thought and wished she could remember that night more clearly.

Musume stiffened with a startled snort as the memories from her clone hit her. She sighed. On the one hand, she was released from the hospital. On the other hand... her clone had almost ruined it with Itachi. Whatever bug was up the Uchiha's butt needed to be dealt with. Her clone's behavior would make it tricky to convince him of that, though. She firmly resolved to never again leave a clone active for more than a few days. And she really meant it this time.

OoooOOoooOo

"Kazekage, it is so good to welcome such a loyal ally to our town." Minato said, shaking hands with the other village leader. "It is a shame that your youngest child was not able to make it, but I look forward to seeing how well our children can do together." Minato continued.

"It is always a pleasure to travel to the other towns and cement our relations." The kazekage said in a
monotone. He turned behind him, gesturing toward a boy in a cat costume and face paint. "My older son Kankuro." He indicated the blond girl with an oversized fan. "My daughter, Temari."

"My son is out with some of the village shinobi on low level missions. We weren't expecting you until tomorrow." Minato gestured for the Kazekage and his entourage to follow him into the dining room of the tower.

"We decided to move a bit more quickly, so as to not miss the opening ceremonies." The kazekage muttered.

"Of course." Minato replied, though his mind was busy trying to puzzle the aloof man out. The village of sand was not known for putting out overly emotive individuals, but something about the kazekage indicated nervousness. "After some refreshments, I will give you a tour of the facilities that will be used for the exam. Your children, of course, cannot join us, but will be entertained by my son if they so wish."

"I would love a tour but my children will be fine with their instructor." The kazekage replied.

"Alright." Minato smiled and indicated the spread of brunch on the table. He watched the children enter stiffly as well.

OooOOooo

"Hey Uchiha-kun!" Naruto dashed up to Sasuke, barely stopping in time to keep from bowling the other boy over. "How did it go with Musume-chan? Are you going to be in the chuunin exam, too? Is there a place you know that Musume-chan never goes?"

Sasuke held up a hand and shook his head, trying to get his bearings as the hyperactive blond bounced in front of him. "Namikaze-kun, one question at a time."

"Oh. Well, I guess the most important is... hide me! Musume-chan is going to kill me. And if she doesn't, my dad will. All the places I go to hide she goes! I'm dooomed!" Naruto howled, grabbing onto Sasuke's shirt and going half limp.

"What the! Get off of me!" Sasuke grabbed the orange sleeves, trying to pry Naruto off of him. "I have to meet with my team."

Naruto looked up at him hopefully. "Can I come?"

"We're both going to be in the chuunin exams. I can't lead you to my team so you can see our strategies!" Sasuke retorted.

"But if I spar with you, you can look at me with your sharingan and copy my moves." Naruto said, his eyes looking up at the other boy slyly.

Sasuke stiffened, regarding the other genin speculatively. Itachi had randomly fallen over onto Sasuke the other day at the hospital. He had stared at his little brother with his remaining sharingan eye until Sasuke's had activated from sheer nerves. But how would Naruto know that he had it activated? No one outside of his team and his brother knew that. Well, he allowed, and very possibly Uchiha Musume. "We'll see what sensei says."

Naruto let go of Sasuke and jumped up into the air, pumping his fist. "Alright!"

OoOOOOoo
"Minato!" Musume bounced into the Hokage's office. She grinned at the sight of him buried up to his neck in paperwork. Her pile had become quite decimated from her forced bed rest. It seemed that the original was much better at getting things done than old and somewhat fraying clones.

"Musume." Minato looked at her with a raised eye that said 'what are you doing out of the hospital and bouncing around?'

"I got released. All better." Musume put her hands on her hips proudly. "And just in time for the first part of the chuunin exams." She preened. "I told you that I would get out of there before then."

"Indeed. We could actually use you as one of the proctors, potentially..." Minato trailed off, shuffling through some schedules. "We could definitely use another on the first written portion..." He muttered to himself. "Losing so many ninja right before the exam is wreaking havoc..."

"That could be fun." Musume allowed, presuming that the first exam was the same as it had been in previous loops. "Is that really alright? I'm still not technically a ninja of this village." She was willing to be a bit distracted from her real purpose in coming to see him- it wasn't as if she wanted to talk to him about it. High spirits from successfully tricking basically the entire village at the hospital notwithstanding.

"Other non-nin are being used for non-crucial roles and as monitors." Minato waved the question away. "You are certainly qualified to help out with registration or for monitoring for upper genin or low chuunin level skills."

Musume hmmed in contemplation. "Ibiki is doing the written part this year?" She asked.

Minato looked up, mildly surprised. "Why, yes, he is. How did you know that?"

Musume shrugged. "Mikoto has been giving me reports of your meetings." And Ibiki almost always did the written portion this year.

Minato winced. "Which reminds me, you need to give your report about what happened to Ibiki and Inoichi. It's a wonder that you managed to escape them when you were released from the hospital."

Musume smirked. "They underestimated how much better I was feeling." More accurately, they hadn't realized that she had left a clone there for days and thus when they came to take her in for questioning, she 'escaped'. Too bad for them that those chakra-suppressing cuffs both would have no effect on her actual body and had disrupted the already unraveling clone.

"You really need to talk with the two of them. I have briefed them that the exact nature of how you were able to negate the jyuuken strikes are likely a clan secret, but they will still want to ask you questions about that. As well as about what had happened in general."

Musume winced. "Can I avoid them for a bit longer?"

Minato gave her a disproving look.

She decided that since he hadn't outright forbidden her from avoiding them as long as possible that he had given her tacit approval. She changed the subject to the real reason why she had come before he got it in his head to order her to cooperate.

"Did you ever key me into the wards or do I need to break into your house?" Musume asked.

"I don't think that's a good idea." Minato replied, causing a jolt of ice to drop into her stomach. "We can't afford a show of favoritism at this point."
Musume's belly couldn't decide if it wanted to be mad or not, the result leaving her rather queasy. She put her hand on her abdomen absently. "We don't need a show of favoritism to have the whole village assume that there is favoritism. We are mates." Her voice did not come out as sharp as she intended, ending up in an unflattering no-man's land between whining and depressed.

Minato winced and put down his papers, stepping around the desk. "We're not officially... mated." He raised his hands helplessly as Musume began to twitch and the killing intent in the room rose. "I mean to say, we mated, but we're not married... and there is so much going on at the moment..."

"Fine." Musume snapped before spinning on her heal and stalking out of the room.

Minato sighed and rubbed his eyes. "What the hell am I going to do about this whole mess!" He groaned to himself.

Musume looked down at her hands and felt like something was tearing her apart inside. Being locked inside the damn brat for near infinite loops hadn't even approached this level of hurt. How was she supposed to tell him about her problem now? Not that she could... but she didn't need to tell him how many she was pregnant with...

It seemed like his problem was easy enough to fix- he just needed to propose marriage, right? Something like that. Damn the human customs! Even if he were to reject her at this point, she didn't really know that it would change her mutinying 'feelings'.

She snarled and leapt away.
"Kyuubi-sama. It is good to see you well."

The large fox turned her head slightly, looking confused.

"Kyuubi-sama?" The smaller asked hesitantly, noticing that her lord still looked sort of... translucent?

"Sotan?" The voice was weak.

"Yes?" The fox replied, her five tails swishing uncertainly.

"Hrn."

"If I might congratulate my lord on your soon-to-be-heirs." Sotan pressed on, determined to get to the point of approaching the obviously agitated greater demon.

"You can tell?" The kyuubi asked, blinking in surprise.

"You are somewhat... see-through, my lord." Sotan's tails lashed once, then stilled. "Also, your scent and chakra has changed."

"Hrn." The towering demon once again grunted in annoyingly unhelpful communication.

"If I might make a suggestion?" Sotan said slowly, crouching submissively.

Great demon eyes focused on him again. "Make it quick. It is hard to pay attention to both planes at once."

"Ah... well it's actually about that, my lord." Sotan replied. "Your kits... it cannot be healthy to have them straddle the worlds like that, no? Perhaps you should decide if they should be in one realm or the other, rather than in both?"

Suddenly a huge head was much too close for the smaller kitsune's comfort. She was barely able to keep hold of his bladder and prevent herself from pissing like a pathetic dog.

"What did you say?" The voice rumbled so close that Sotan could feel her entire chest vibrating.

"If you want them to be more grounded in the demon realm that would probably work just as well!" She squeaked. "Might do the human one good, you know, get rid of their weaknesses and uh..." She trailed off, trembling.

"You think we could be solidly in both? The children would grow here?"

"I... well... of course you could... uh... you are our Lord... anything is possible..." Sotan babbled frantically.

The endless row of grinning teeth was the last straw. Sotan felt her body collapse as she rolled over onto her side and her paws instinctively grabbed onto her snout.
"That's right, isn't it? I am a demon. I am a force of nature. I am Lord. Anything is possible for this one... not to be bound by human foolishness." The chuckle burst from the huge form, probably going on to cause minor tsunamis in the demon realms edges. "I think I like you, Sotan."

"I live to serve, my Lord." Sotan managed to gasp out around her paws.

"Yes, yes you do." The kyuubi chortled.

OoOOoOoo

"Oh, hey! Your instructor is Kakashi?" Naruto asked, bounding after Sasuke.

"How did you know that?" Sasuke asked warily.

"Well, what other instructor would leave their team hanging out on a bridge instead of training them or giving them a pep talk or something the Friday before the chuunin exam?" Naruto asked, his arm sweeping to take in the two other genin waiting on the bridge- one pink haired girl bouncing on the balls of her feet and looking at them with puppy eyes and a pale boy smiling with a creepy closed-eye grin.

"Hn." Sasuke grunted.

"You're Namikaze Naruto, aren't you?" The pink haired girl asked.

"That's right! The number one unpredictable ninja, believe it!" Naruto replied, puffing out his chest and indicating himself with his thumb. "Who're you?"

"Eee!" The girl squealed, making Naruto and Sasuke wince. "I'm Hanuro Sakura." She replied.

Naruto turned to Sasuke and, in what he thought was a quiet voice asked, "How did she make it to being a ninja?"

A vein popped out in Sakura's forehead. Faster than Naruto thought was possible she stomped forward two steps and was in his face. "What did you just say to me?"

"Um... nothing." Naruto said, his eyes squinting shut. "I'm pretty sure I was talking to Sasuke." With his eyes half shut, Naruto didn't manage to duck the punch to his head. "Ow!"

"You may be cool because you are apprenticed to a sannin, but that doesn't excuse you for disrespecting a lady!" Sakura shouted.

"What lady?" Naruto asked. He ducked the next swing. "Not only are you punching me, but you are supposedly a ninja. And thus not a lady!"

"Yo." The two turned and looked at Kakashi, who was perched on one of the posts of the bridge. "A wall suddenly rose up in my way while I was walking in the garden."

"You're late!" Sakura yelled, her ire turning from Naruto to Kakashi.

Naruto turned again to Sasuke and this time he whispered in a voice that was actually quiet, "your teammate is scary. I'm kind of glad that I'm not on a team."

"Hn." Sasuke grunted in agreement.

"Is she any good in a spar?" Naruto asked. She certainly had potential to be fast and deadly considering that she had actually hit him. He was pretty good at avoiding such attacks living with
Musume.

"Hn!" Sasuke snorted, as if the very idea was inconceivable.

"Hmm." Naruto held his chin with his hand, regarding the pink annoyance speculatively. He knew that particular Uchiha grunt roughly translated to a 'yes' that the grunter would never admit to saying.

"Oh? Naruto. What are you doing here?" Kakashi asked, hopping down to the bridge proper.

"Eeh. I may have told Musume-chan about the sleeping shirt." Naruto rubbed the back of his neck. Kakashi grinned slyly. "Yes..." He trailed off, his eyes glazing.

"Kakashi!" Naruto kicked him in the shin.

"Right." Kakashi said, not acknowledging Naruto. "Well, since we have an even number, why don't you all spar? It can be fun. Meet you at training field 12." And with that he disappeared in a swirl of leaves.

"Well, he might be a negligent jerk, but I like this much better than Kurenai." Naruto announced.

The pale boy began walking away, Sasuke slouched after him with his hands in his pockets.

"How could you possibly like Kakashi better?" Sakura asked.

"Kurenai didn't want us fighting because we would get hurt or something. Kakashi doesn't care." Naruto replied happily.

"What? That's not a good thing!" Sakura protested.

"That's the kind of thinking that leads to being useless." Naruto said seriously. He narrowly avoided Sakura's fist. "See, if you had hit me now, then you wouldn't have to spar with me later."

Sakura growled but spun on her heal to trot up to Sasuke.

Naruto shrugged. At least neither Musume nor his father had appeared to punish him. And he would get to fight someone. That quiet kid had a deadly sort of aura around him... might be fun to fight him. Naruto knew plenty about fighting Uchiha and the girl was pretty useless. Had some potential... but at the moment not worth the effort.

OoOoOoOoo

Musume dodged a kunai and ran right into a second one. "Ow." She protested as she pulled it out of her arm.

"It seems we have found you, Uchiha Musume." Ibiki said, looking quite pleased with himself.

Musume rolled her eyes and sighed. She rubbed the spot where she had been stuck, but it was already healing. "I suppose I did agree to help proctor your section of the exam... so you would have wanted to check me out before that."

"I cannot endanger the genin entrusted to us by the other villages more than has been outlined by the Hokage." Ibiki agreed, looking rather annoyed at that fact. "And a potential homicidal clan head that refuses to become a ninja of the village is outside of the risk parameters."

Musume sighed. "Alright, come to my office I suppose."
"I would rather we take it to mine." Ibiki said with a malicious twinkle in his eye.

Musume shrugged and gestured for him to lead her there. It was easy enough to follow him, as he was merely going at the speeds that swirled leaves and was not actually leaving this plane.

"Please, have a seat. I need to call Inoichi in here."

Musume tilted her head and bared her teeth. "It is my understanding that clan heads are exempt from having their minds explored, as we have clan secrets that are protected by village law."

Ibiki looked sour that she knew that. "There still need to be two interrogators present."

"Fine." Musume said, leaning back and feeling out the odd chakra on the chair she was sitting on. She was amused to find that it was trying to induce her to tell the truth and be more open than she normally would be. She smirked at its complete lack of efficacy.

Inoichi entered the room in less than a minute and sat beside Ibiki, nodding for the other interrogator to begin.

Ibiki coughed into his fist and pulled out a scroll. "If you would write your account of what happened that night, please?"

Musume smirked. "Already done." She pulled out a scroll of her own. She could feel the seals on the paper that Ibiki had given her from here. She was definitely glad she had taken the time while she was hiding out in Minato's house to write it up instead of brooding. It had both taken her mind off of what the hell she was going to do about him and had definitely saved her from having to battle the seals on the scroll in front of her. Not that it would have been hard to ignore or counteract the disclosure seals, but it had been hard enough sanitizing her report while still making sense without external influences trying to get her to not pay attention.

Ibiki accepted the scroll with a scowl, reading through it quickly before passing it to Inoichi.

"How were you able to remain unaffected by the jyuuenk strikes?" Ibiki asked.

"I was not unaffected, I was simply able to reverse those effects." Musume replied.

"How were you able to do that?" He sneered.

"It involves a lot of chakra and modifications to my body made by others and protected as clan secrets of the Uchiha." Musume lowered her eyelids to try to prevent the corners of her eyes from squeezing shut in amusement. She was claiming herself as an Uchiha clan secret- something as ridiculous as it was legally acceptable. Demon summoning was a Manky technique. The seal that was on her? Technically in this timeline, she was an independent discoverer.

"Fine." Ibiki snapped, clearly frustrated. "How were you able to defeat Hyuuga Hiashi?"

"He had put a perverted seal on top of his own. I could..." She faltered. It was hard to describe what she did, exactly, even though it was more of a human trait than a demon one, and thus fine to describe. "I could feel it as a separate thing. It was... thick and sort of... clotted." Her nose twitched in irritation.

"You can feel the chakra inside a person?" Ibiki asked dubiously.

"Yes, I can. That is how I do sealing." She rubbed her chin with a finger and thumb, not sure how to put what she had done. She wasn't even really sure herself.
"Even the seals on the Uchiha?"

"Yes."

"How did you get so sensitized to the Hyuuga seal?"

"I felt it many times before I came to this village." Musume continued when Ibiki sat forward in interest. "I'm not clear on when those times were or the circumstances." Which she knew showed as the truth, as it was, basically. Temporal paradoxes were not being measured by the chair she was sitting on.

"Could you remove the seals on Hyuuga Hinata and Hyuuga Hanabi?" Ibiki asked instead.

"No." Musume shook her head, actually a bit sorry that it was true. "It is keyed to me. I dare not even touch it. That is much better studied by someone who actually knows what they are doing. I am not a seal master, I can just... move the chakra in a person around sometimes." She shrugged. That was as good as she was going to get it. And she certainly didn't want to accidentally kill both Hyuuga heirs. She was already on shaky enough terms with the village. It would be really annoying if they all turned against her. Her hand ghosted against her belly. Home, safe, den, protect... She turned her attention back to her interrogators. Right. It would be just too annoying.

"How did you learn that skill?" Ibiki asked.

Musume blinked. Because she had been born mostly as chakra wouldn't work so well. However, there was another true reason for why she was good at human chakra. "I was not in control of my body for a long time. Manipulating chakra was not always possible, either, but it was the only way I could affect anything. I needed to do so, or I would have gone absolutely insane." She said in a clipped voice, before standing up. Any more questions and it would be hard to dissemble. She pretended to be annoyed. It wasn't hard- she really had to pee. "We're done here."

"Indeed we are." Ibiki said. "I look forward to proctoring the exams with you."

Musume gave him a sharp look, not sure of his tone. She ignored Inoichi completely and then flashed away with a red spark.

"Well, that was interesting." Inoichi said into the silence.

"Hn." Ibiki grunted. "We got no information out of her."

"We confirmed what the Hokage said. Everything she said was truth."

"You know there are ways of telling the truth that makes it a lie." Ibiki retorted.

"Indeed. But at the least, we have answered the questions enough to satisfy ourselves that neither she nor her relationship to the Hokage are a danger to the village." Inoichi said, using a jutsu to copy the written report from Musume onto the sealed paper beside it. None of the words changed, proving that they, too, were a form of truth.

"Damn. I thought we would catch her with that." Ibiki sighed.

"Perhaps she has nothing to hide." Inoichi said, barely managing to keep a straight face.

"Hah!" Ibiki snorted. "You should torture our next victim with your sense of humor."

Inoichi's mouth twitched until it became a full smile and he chuckled. "Maybe I will. It seems to work
for Uchiha Musume; driving people over the edge into telling rants with her personality alone."

"Hey hey." Naruto pulled on Kakashi's sleeve. "Are you going to spar the Uchiha?" Naruto asked, referring to the woman who had just shown up at the practice ground.

"Uh..." Kakashi looked nonplussed.

"You're the Hokage's son, aren't you?" The Uchiha crossed her arms over her chest.

"Yeah. You're that one Musume-chan had to beat up." Naruto replied.

"My name is Keisai."

"Yeah, that's right!" Naruto looked up at her with squinted eyes. "So are you sparring with Kakashi?"

"You know, it is really disturbing when you do that." Keisai shook her head.

"Do what?" Naruto asked, confused.

"Make those expressions that look just like Uchiha-sama." Keisai shook her head. "But no, to answer your question, I'm not here to spar with Kakashi. I'm supposed to be training Sasuke. His brother called in a favor."

"Aw! But I wanted to spar with him. He said 'hm' when I asked if he liked ramen!" Naruto pouted.

Keisai smirked. "I don't see why you can't. I still need to get a measure of Sasuke's abilities." She shrugged, looking over at Kakashi. Her eyebrow twitched at the sight of him not paying any attention to his students and instead nose deep in an Icha Icha Paradise book.

"Alright, you heard her, Sasuke!" Naruto dropped into a fighting crouch. "What rules you think? You want to go no jutsu? I don't really know anything less than B-rank jutsus."

Sasuke dropped into a fighting stance as well, a scowl on his face. "We use jutsus." He growled.

"No jutsus Uchiha-sama has taught you, Naruto." Keisai said, sounding semi-worried.

"Aw. Fine." Naruto said. He wasn't sure he knew that many she hadn't taught him... but the shadow clone technically she had only directed him to the scroll, not taught it to him directly...

Both boys burst forward at the exact same moment, kunai flashing in the light. Sasuke's went spinning away and he leapt back. Naruto was right behind him, though, the kunai now held backwards against his forearm so the blond didn't slice off his fingers as he quickly formed seals.

Sasuke activated his eyes and started going through the same seals. He got the feeling something was wrong when Naruto smirked at him.

"Sexy no Jutsu!" Naruto cried.

"Sexy no Jutsu??" Sasuke repeated incredulously.

Both of them disappeared in a cloud of smoke. When it cleared a buxom blond was standing coyly in a sea of clouds across from a dark haired beauty who was looking totally blank in shock.
The sound of a book hitting the ground broke the tableau. Sasuke grabbed his nose as blood started to leak out while Naruto threw back his head and laughed. Both movements caused the breasts of the henges to be revealed. Kakashi pulled the headband off of his sharingan eye and got a good view before Keisai smacked him in the face with his own hentai novel.

"Kai!" Keisai called.

The two boys reverted to their native forms with another poof of smoke.

"What the hell has that crazy woman been teaching you?" Keisai said in exasperation.

"I made that one up all by myself!" Naruto protested proudly.

Keisai’s hand slapped into her face.

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A/N: Sotan (technically Sotangitsune, but the last part is more of a description) is a fox demon of Japanese folklore, at least according to the internet. That's where the name comes from. She will probably be showing up some in the pre-chapters, but hopefully will not become a major character.
Chapter Notes

This chapter was posted 1 April, 2010. It is totally crack... funny but not actual part of the story. You can totally skip this if you want- though many find it hilarious, so you might want to give it a read.

I considered not posting it but 1) that would make the chapters different between sites and 2) I re-read it and I lol'ed at the same time I was appalled/impressed/surprised that my mind is so twisted. I had forgot...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"But my Lord! You have to deal with this!"

"No I don't have to do any such thing." The kyuubi pouted.

Sotan tried to be reasonable. "My Lord, your plan cannot possibly work. And how close you are to whelping, it is a terrible idea! Why, you could go into labor at any second. It will likely cause tsunamis of birthing fluid, eruptions of volcanoes in sympathy to your roars, and that would cause even more death and destruction and... nothing would survive!"

"Powerful demons have whelped before and nothing bad happened."

"Remember all those big lizards? And what happened to them?"

"Hmm."

"And that time the earth was a giant snowball for centuries?"

"Coincidence!"

"And when my mate whelped and buried that human city?"

"That's turned out well... in the future the humans are happy to have Pompeii to study."

"You're not listening!"

"That's right." The kitsune grinned.

OoooOoO

"Hey, Sakura-chan!"

"Eee!" The pink-ette turned to Naruto.

Naruto squinted at her. "I was trying to hit on Temari, but I think I was doing it wrong." Sakura blinked, then a vein started to twitch. "But I think you were doing it to me. And I like you ok." Sakura raised an eyebrow. "Do you like me?"

"At the moment?" Sakura muttered.
"Yeah!" Naruto grinned happily. "I like you because you finished the thing."

"The chuunin exams?" She asked dryly.

"Yeah! That means you are super strong!"

"Well..." Sakura softened, somewhat against her inner judgement. Well, Naruto was a bit brash and rough around the edges, but he meant well.

"So do you want to go on a date?"

Sakura felt her heart skip a beat. Unexpected! But... he was one of the two boys their age that all the girls were after. And Sakura had serious doubts that Sasuke was interested in the finer sex at all... although... Inner Sakura loudly and graphically called for her to ask Sasuke if he would be more interested in her if Naruto was part of the package. She began to drool a bit.

"Yay! You're hungry, great!" Naruto hopped up and down.

"Let's invite Sasuke."

Naruto pouted. "Why?"

"You don't think he's pretty?"

"Huh. Jiraiya did have that one book..." Naruto mused. This could work, potentially. The drawings had been quite informative...

OoOoOoOoo

"You're what!?"

"I'm pregnant, you oblivious, unfeeling, cold fish of a MAN!" Musume screamed, hitting the Hokage on his stupid hat almost as hard as she could. And she meant that insult to it's fullest- both his species and his gender.

"But you never...!"

"We had sex! Multiple times! In varying positions!"

The Kazekage coughed, milk dribbling out his nose.

"But that seal!"

"What the hell does that have to do with anything?" Musume threw up her hands.

"You said it stopped you from getting pregnant." Minato whined piteously.

"What? I don't know anything about the damned human reproductive cycle. It is so quick! All the time! What the hell happened to seasonal mating? Don't you all listen to the cycle of the world at all? And what is with these gigantic mammary glands?"

"They aren't really all that bi..." The Kazekage's head went flying from his neck. Musume gnawed on the exposed spine until Minato pulled her off.

"What have you done?" He asked in horror.
"Want me to do it to you, too?" She asked, starting to glow red.

"Musume! Your demon..."

"No! Fool human, I AM the demon." Musume snarled, totally frustrated and excessively hormonal.

"What are you saying? You are yourself, Musume." Minato said earnestly.

"Yes, and 'myself' is the kyuubi no kitsune!" She barked. "Fuck it all! I'm going to raze this stinking village. Where is that damn brat, he's going to be my first victim." The kitsune snarled, her Uchiha genes kicking in and causing her desire for vengeance to spike uncontrollably high.

"Musume..."

"Not Musume! That name doesn't even mean anything! Argh! I hate you! You did this to me!" She let go of the human coils, expanding and exploding the room around them into dust. Her full glory as a chakra demon was revealed.

"Musume, don't let the demon take control!"

"Idiot human bug!" The kitsune howled. "Listen to me!"

"No, you're not making any sense!"

"AAAARRRGGGHHH!" She screamed in frustration, squishing him under her immense paw. "And I'm in a man's body you closet bisexual annoyance!"

OooOOooO

"Oh my god! I was so right! Naruto and Sasuke are totally in love!" Kiba sounded thrilled.

"Sakura is in there, too." Kankuro pointed out.

"What? No way!"

"Yup." Kankuro replied smugly. "You know what this means."

Kiba looked at Akimaru mournfully. The puppy let out an emphatically negative bark.

"I'll help you out, kid." Kakashi offered. "He didn't specify if you had to do it with a nin-dog or a summons dog."

Kiba's eyes started to leak tears. "So not fair! Who actually has a threesome! Sasuke had such a stick up his ass I thought for sure..."

"Well..." Kankuro started.

"No, just don't say it." Kiba growled.

"Don't say that you are too dickless to make good on a bet because you are soft like cooked ramen noodles seeing the bitch from my team getting it on with the tiny cocked wonder and the ball-less orange mess?"

"Sai!" Kiba snapped.

"You know what, kid?" Kankuro chuckled. "I kind of like you."
"Thanks puppet-raping freak."

Kankuro's hand tightened alarmingly on Sai's shoulder. "On the other hand..." He muttered. There was a technique to turn people into puppets, wasn't there?

"Please no, Kakashi-sensei!" Kiba sobbed.

"No, no, it will be much better if you use this henge that I learned recently. It's called Sexy no Jutsu." The silver haired man assured the teen. "Just be a good boy and form the seals. That's right. Now bend over just so..." Kakashi said, drooling, his sharingan swirling slowly.

"Kakashi- ew. You are as bad a pervert as that dude with the really long tongue." Kankuro said in disgust.

"Mm hmm... though a good point, the two male sannin will probably want to be here..." Kakashi muttered, sending off his quickest two dog summons to track them down.

"Sensei, you inspire me to better myself with the extraordinary efforts you must go to to gain an erection."

"Not now, Sai." Kakashi muttered.

OoOoOoOoo

"What the hell happened!?!"

"The Lord of Tailed Beasts killed everyone, then whelped six demons, who are now going to the other elemental nations to destroy them, too." Gaara said in a flat tone of voice.

Danzo surveyed the destruction, totally depressed. "But I wanted to destroy Konoha!" He pouted.

"I thought..." Sasori started.

"Uh... I mean, make it a better place and mold it into a stronger nation." The cripple backpedaled. "Hahaha! Good joke." He started coughing wildly.

"Will you prove my existence?" Gaara asked. He crushed the two of them, mildly surprised when one ended up spraying bits of wood. "Interesting, Mother." He commented.

Chapter End Notes

Originally an "April Fools" chapter. More coming soon.
Splitting herself into two parts was disturbingly easy. In fact, it was actually more comfortable to have certain aspects fully in one dimension or another rather than all of her straddling the edge.

It was also nice to now be humanly pregnant with only twins... though 'only' made her snort a little bit, considering that was still double the normal human number. But the three half-fox demons and the Uchiha were safely tucked away in demon-space, growing parallel to their sisters. It was just in time, too. She wasn't sure the human body would have been able to support so many pups for much longer.

"Kyuubi-sama?"

She turned to the little demon, mentally congratulating herself when she was able to turn only the demon head, not the human one. Though the difference between the two bodies was making her a bit dizzy... "What?"

The five-tailed kitsune coughed nervously.

"I'm not going to bite you, Sotan." She huffed in annoyance. "At least not while you are being so useful." She grinned evilly.

"Well... you are still sort of translucent, my Lord."

"And...?"

"Well, perhaps if you got a bit smaller..."

"Smaller!?! She roared, increasing into a dimension rattling decibel just because she could. It felt good to let loose, though she double checked to make sure she wasn't screaming in the human realm.

"Maybe more like condensed!" Sotan squeaked, looking like she was about to faint.

"It's a good suggestion." She mused, wondering how to go about doing that. It would also have the added bonus of making her a smaller target for when Minato ran blindly though not-space. She had already had to dodge out of the way twice... her human body following her desperate movements. Into walls in both cases.

"Naruto, there you are." Minato called to Naruto. The Hokage was confused to note the guilty start his son gave at the sound of his name. But not was not the time to pry a confession about whatever mischief had been wrought.

"Who's the fan girl?" Naruto asked, squinting to look behind his father. "And is that guy dressed up like a kabuki actor?"

Minato could feel a wash of killing intent and hastily spoke before there could be an international incident. "Naruto, I would like you to meet your team for the Chuunin exams. The children of the Kazekage: Temari and Kankuro."

"Oh." Naruto looked a bit stumped. Then he perked up considerably. "So that's why you came
"Yes..." Minato drew out the confirmation warily. He was now even more certain that his son had done something that was going to cause problems in the future.

"It's so nice to meet you!" Naruto said happily, bouncing up to Kankuro and grabbing the Sand-nin's arm and pumping it vigorously. He turned to Temari, ignoring her scowl to grab her hand in turn. "Don't worry about the chuunin exams, I'll make sure you pass! Ow!" Naruto let go of Temari to grab his head where a large goose egg was already forming.

Temari returned her fan to its holder on her back, smirking. "I'm sure we'll find a way to work with each other."

Minato stood stiffly, looking at the Kazekage out of the corner of his eye. This was not the most promising start to the international team.

Naruto looked up at Temari with watery eyes. "You hit me!" He protested. "Really hard!"

Temari looked unconcerned, though her eyes did flick to her father briefly. "We are perfectly capable of passing this tournament without the help of some soft Konoha-nin." she sniffed.

The Kazekage was stony, but Minato winced a bit. If only Naruto would... the Hokage blinked. Naruto's eyes were positively shining, and he was looking up at Temari with what only could be described as a worshipful expression.

"I will do my hardest to make it so! Believe it!" Naruto sighed happily.

Temari's eye twitched and she smacked Naruto again, harder. Naruto fell to the ground with so much force that a puff of dust whooshed out from his body. "Idiot!" Temari snapped. "You can't help us succeed without you. The whole point of doing it by ourselves is that we are going to do it without you."

"Will you go out with me?" Naruto asked hopefully. Temari looked like she wanted to smack him again, but was unsure if that would encourage him more or be interpreted as a 'yes' and thus she restrained herself.

Minato closed his eyes, resisting the urge to squeeze the bridge of his nose with his fingers. It was one of many times he wondered just what he had done to his poor son to mess him up this badly. He consoled himself with the thought that it was more likely Musume who had totally warped Naruto... until he realized that was because the half-insane reluctant clan head spent more time with his son than he did. Minato barely restrained a groan.

OooOooOoo

The restful silence of the hospital corridor was shattered. "What have you done to Orochimaru?" Jiraiya confronted Tsunade as she finished jotting down some notes and snapped the file shut.

"I don't know what you mean." Tsunade replied haughtily. "I have just needed to readjust his treatment regimen."

"You turned him into a zombie!" Jiraiya yelled, gesturing to the tall thin man staring off at nothing with dull eyes.

Musume's head popped out from Itachi's room. "Who's a zombie?" She asked excitedly.
"He was still acting perverted. The Hokage needs him mentally sound in case we need to interrogate the deceased prisoners. But we cannot have him reverting and experimenting on humans again." Tsunade replied evenly.

"What you did to help him overcome his mental illness was one thing, but you have taken his... his soul away from him!" Jiraiya yelled back, not calmed at all by what Tsunade was saying. "The village needs him strong. Especially with the exams and all the foreign shinobi in the village."

Orochimaru twitched a bit at the raised voice and his eyes almost focused on his old teammate before sliding back towards nothing.

"He does look a bit like a puppet run by a novice Suna exile." Musume mused, looking at the once fearsome enemy of Konoha. "What could he possibly have been doing that you needed to get that extreme with?"

"Why are you even part of this discussion?" Tsunade snapped.

"If you are going to have these discussions in the hallway of the hospital, then I don't see why I can't butt in." Musume replied, her nose twitching.

"Answer the question, Tsunade. What did he do?" Jiraiya asked.

Tsunade drew herself up. "I recently discovered he has been hiding his lustful thoughts for men."

There was a dead silence for a few seconds. Jiraiya looked down at the ground and sighed. Behind Musume there was a strangled noise coming from Shisui, causing Musume to turn and look at the other Manky eye user curiously.

After waiting at least twenty seconds for Jiraiya to continue the argument, Musume finally couldn't take it anymore. "Wait, that's it? What kind of logic is that?" She looked between the three sannin in confusion. She knew humans often made no sense at all, but this was completely unexpected.

"Men lusting after other men is wrong." Tsunade sighed in exasperation.

"Why?" Musume asked. Because... they... should focus on fighting?

"What do you mean, why?" Tsunade asked, looking at Musume, not knowing how to explain such an obvious concept.

"Ninja need to pass on their traits to their progeny to continue the strength of the village." Shisui said quietly from behind her.

Musume turned to look at the Uchiha in confusion. "Well, you can do that while sexing up all the men in the village. It only takes laying with a female once." Really! Humans!

Tsunade sputtered, unable to say anything. Jiraiya laughed aloud however, slapping the Uchiha leader on the back. "Life is never dull with you around, Musume-chan." He chuckled.

"This does explain why Kakashi got so mad at me for turning all his Icha Icha Paradise into male on male..." Musumee mused.

"What!? You did what to my masterpiece!?!" Jiraiya shouted, tugging the scroll off his back.

"Heh heh... we're in a hospital, Jiraiya-sama." Musume placated. "Do you really want to cause violence?"
"No, he doesn't." Tsunade said, cracking her knuckles.

"Tsunade! She turned my hentai into yaoi!" Jiraiya protested.

"I don't care how she perverted your already perverted doodles." Tsunade snapped, her fist cracking him on the top of his head so he lost his grip on the scroll and cracked face first into the tiles of the floor. "And don't tell me you don't put elements of that sort of thing in your novels already! You have no shame."

"It's just a book, Tsunade-hime." Jiraya protested from the ground, coughing up a bit of dust. "Nothing wrong with exploring alternate themes in a cartoon."

Tsunade stomped on Jiraya's head, almost knocking him out. The toad sage blinked a couple of times to get his bearings. "You are a part of the problem, pervert!"

Musume ignored them- they clearly had a long history and she didn't care to pay enough attention to sort out if this was sibling-violence or mate-violence or just regular-violence. "I wonder if they still exist... I did spend a lot of time on them. Maybe one or two survived that fire... I should have made them resistant to jutsu when I was exercising my creative muscles. I did go into some nice details." Musume barked a happy laugh. Maybe she and Jiraya could come up with a way to market them...

Tsunade turned suddenly to Orochimaru and poked him in the head.

"What was that for?" Jiraiya growled from the floor, before shaking his head and picking himself up.

"He was having perverted thoughts from our conversation. I could tell based on his increasing heart rate." Tsunade sighed. "I don't know if I'll be able to cure him without a lot more work."

"Well of course you won't." Musume said. "It's not a brain thing at all, it's more basic a part of a person's make-up. It's almost as strong as gender identity." She was very pleased with herself for remembering that. It had only been one loop that Naruto had lived nearly a thousand years and ended up taking classes in 'psychology.'

"Don't talk nonsense." Tsunade bit back. "I can learn how to fix it- I learned how to fix his desire to experiment without regard for the people involved."

Musume perked up. She held one hand out in a 'wait' gesture and then tapped the fingers of the other hand on her temple as she scrunched her eyes closed. "Sociopaths are due to a chemical imbalance in the brain, fixable with some medications along with targeted surgical and radiation therapies..." She frowned. "Or something like that... but sexual preference is some sort of gene metal... er... thing." She cursed. What was it? "Or something. Not fixeable anyway." She shrugged.

"What are you even talking about?" Tsunade asked.

"I dunno. If you let Chi-chan out of his brain wash, maybe he could tell you better. I don't understand the tiny things too well." Musume shrugged.

"I'm not going to just release him because some upstart who thinks she knows everything says so." Tsunade growled, cracking her knuckles.

"I'm just relaying what I know. Why do you care so much, anyway? It's not like he's been soliciting boys, saying he wants them to come live with him and that he wants their bodies, right?" Musume asked, sort of hoping that the answer wasn't 'yes' like it had been most loops.

"No! Of course he hasn't!" Jiraiya yelled.
Musume shrugged. "Then I don't care what he does. If he's not doing it to kits, he can change his sex, wear a dress and make lewd gestures with his 'snakes' for all I care." Especially as she had both seen him do all that and worse so many times in the loops. After a while the shock of how sexual and suggestive Orochimaru's attacks were faded and you sort of came to expect it. Besides which, it would be totally hypocritical for her to judge when technically she was a trans-sexual man. Although... that gave her a really good idea about what to do with Mikoto's latest ridiculous proposal. Though would the council really fall for it again? Fox's balls- the only two that could catch it would probably be on her side anyway. It could work...

"He can't be any use to the Hokage this way, anyway." Jiraiya protested. "And he certainly cannot be settling down and having a family as a zombie!"

"Well..." Musume started, before being cut off by the slug sannin.

"You can take it up with the Hokage, then." Tsunade dismissed Jiraiya's concerns. "He asked me to evaluate Orochimaru to begin with. And I refuse to continue this conversation in the hallway."

Musume shrugged and turned back into the room. If Jiraiya couldn't fix it, she would as a byproduct of her latest plan. It was almost enough to induce evil laughter as she walked away. Jiraiya was still yelling, but since there were no actual zombies and a good chance of getting smashed through a wall if she kept paying attention, she lost interest. And anyway- she had yet to satisfy the reason she had come to the hospital to begin with.

Facing her in the room, however, were three extremely focused eyes, all Sharingan red, though not spinning thankfully. "Yes...?" She asked the two Uchiha. As one, they blinked and looked elsewhere. Musume quirked an eyebrow at them but didn't say anything further about the odd looks that she had gotten. "So, Itachi. You lost an eye, big deal." Itachi flinched a bit at that. "Why are you still here?"

"He hasn't been released from the hospital yet." Shisui snapped a bit more harshly than Musume felt was really necessary.

"Yes, I know that. But the question is why?"

"Shisui..." Itachi said. When the other Uchiha looked at him, Itachi motioned him to move aside with a twitch of his remaining eye. He swung his legs off the corner of the bed and attempted to stand up. His legs seemed to support him just fine, but he kept falling over, his legs scrambling to compensate but really only making things worse.

"Oh." Musume said, as she watched Shisui catch Itachi and look at his friend worriedly. "That is a bit of a problem."

Back on the bed, Itachi was silent.

"I see, then. They hit you much deeper than it looks, didn't they?" Musume asked. She didn't get a response, not that she was expecting one. "You need to tell them about this."

Itachi looked away.

"It is not a weakness to admit needing help." Musume continued, half seriously. Obviously, it was a weakness... but it was even more stupid to pretend that you could do something when you couldn't and the bluff was not longer working.

"Hn." Itachi looked out the window.
"The healer Sannin is here- this is the best chance you are going to get." Musume shook her head. "So deal with it and stop ignoring the problem. I need you at the clan meeting. It's after the first round of the chuunin exams- so you have one week."

OoooOOoo

Musume was bored. Sitting in the classroom pretending to be a nervous chuunin hopeful was perhaps the least stimulating thing she had done since regaining control of her own life. Possibly even less stimulating than being a passenger inside Naruto. She sighed and let her head fall to the desk, looking over at the traitor healer-nin and his team who were sitting in the corner. So far only they had figured out the genjutsu on the second floor.

The kitsune perked up when she heard the voice of her kit coming from down the hallway. "Temari-chan, you are so amazing!" Naruto's loud voice carried easily, unlike the reply from the sand-nin. "Oh, no... I had no idea, I swear!" There was a loud wood-on-flesh crack. "Temaaarriiii!" Naruto whined as they entered the room.

Temari actually growled and stalked to the farthest corner of the room, sitting down next to the slightly sweating Kabuto, who looked like he had wished the irate girl had picked another chair.

Naruto made to flop down next to Temari, but the instructors sharply told him that he could not sit next to his teammate. Pouting, Naruto scanned the room, grinning as he looked at Musume.

Musume slouched down in the chair, trying to subtly check that her disguise was in place. It was, so far as she could tell.

"So, are you taking the exam, too?" Naruto asked, a friendly smile on his face.

"Nn." Musume grunted, then panicked that she had responded too much like an Uchiha. Other ninja refused to reply to questions, right?

"I'm so excited! I need to pass for sure. Otherwise Dad will be all disappointed with me and say how I'm not keeping up relations with the other villages or something."

Musume fidgeted, eying Naruto warily. Did he know who she was or not? She looked at him sidelong.

"Well, not that you care, right?" Naruto laughed. "I bet you know all this stuff already." He elbowed her in the side, surprising her slightly. She let herself exhale in a startled whoosh.

Musume pretended to rub her side in pain. "I can see why your teammates don't like you." She grumbled.

"What! They like me. Why wouldn't they?" Naruto pouted. Musume just raised her henge-ed eyebrow at him. "I'm going to go on a date with Temari." Naruto said proudly.

"Oh are you now." Musume replied. Her voice had an edge to it that somewhat surprised her.

"Yup! She hit me really hard, so I asked her out." Naruto leaned back in the chair, his hands confidently behind his head.

Musume stared at him disbelievingly. Why hadn't Minato taken care of this? She was sure that having a father would have prevented this problem. It had been funny most loops, but honestly...
"What?" Naruto asked, pouting.

"Naruto." Musume sighed.

"Yeah?" He acknowledged, looking puzzled.

"That's not what being hit on means."

"What do you mean? She hit on me clear as day- right on the top of my head!" Naruto protested loudly. There was a snort from Kankuro and a groan from Temari, among the other disbelieving reactions of the genin trickling into the room.

"No, Naruto. When a girl hits a guy, it's because he said something stupid to annoy her." Musume sighed. She couldn't believe that she was having this conversation. It was definitely Minato's job.

"But Jiraiya-sensei is always getting hit by ladies and then he buys them things and stuff!"

Musume rubbed the bridge of her nose with her hand. "That is because he is a pervert, and bribing women is the only way he is allowed back anywhere."

"He's not a pervert." Naruto protested. "He's a one-of-a-kind super pervert!" He grinned.

Musume let her head fall to the table. "I'm too old for this." She muttered.

"Not as old as that grey-haired guy in the corner." Naruto assured her. "I hear he's taken it seven times. This is your first."

Musume growled into her shirt sleeve.

"Hey, hey!" Naruto poked Musume on her shoulder, causing her to roll slightly and growl louder. "What do girls do when they are actually 'hitting on you' if it isn't hitting?"

Musume sighed and propped herself up on her elbow. "They look at you with big doe eyes, wring their hands and say your name a bunch." As far as she knew anyway. Why the hell was he asking her? "You know, like what they do to Sasuke when he is being all emo."

Naruto's face scrunched up. "Eeyeeew! Why would they do that? It is so annoying when they do that! I would much rather be hit."

Musume snorted.

"I'll hit you." Sasuke offered as he walked through the door.

A bark of laughter escaped from the henged clan head before she was able to press her lips together.

"What?" Sasuke scowled at Musume. "What were you talking about?"

"I think that being hit is a much better way to show you want to go on a date with someone, right Sasuke?"

"Hn." Sasuke grunted noncommittally, sounding confused.

"'Hitting on someone.'" Musume added helpfully.

"N!" Sasuke's second grunt was choked and his face started turning a bit red. His fist started to shake with the his desire to smack Naruto.
"I'm sure Naruto wouldn't mind if you hit on him, would you Naruto?" Musume asked sweetly.

"What!?!" Naruto spluttered. "But Sasuke's a boy."

"Oh, is he? The Uchiha are all so pretty, it is hard to tell sometimes."

Naruto gave her a weird look, but Sasuke started snarling slightly.

"Here, Sasuke, sit next to me, ne?" Naruto said, pulling the other boy down into the chair by the tail of the blue Uchiha shirt. Sasuke was still glaring at henge-Musume, but he had snapped out of the focused rage when Naruto manhandled him.

"Now that you all have found a place to sit, I will go over the rules." Ibiki started his speech from the front of the classroom. Musume's mind shut off almost immediately in a reflex sanity-sparing move. The number of times she had heard the same damn speech... she flopped back onto the table and looked over at Naruto, who was listening intently, and Sasuke, who was scowling and fidgeting with his pencil like it was a sharp blade.

When the paper got placed down in front of her, the kitsune didn't bother to suppress her groan. It was the same damn test. She filled in the answers quickly, making sure to make glaring mistakes in each one to make it a bit more interesting. She snickered at the thought of someone trying to throw a kunai in the manner she had diagrammed- it would fall point first onto the top of their head.

The first person she found cheating was doing so so badly that she almost broke cover to smack him. Fortunately one of the instructors docked points and he looked cowed enough to not try it again. Musume sighed. It was going to be a long day. Why the hell had she agreed to do this?

OoOOoOOo

"So you can either leave now, or risk ever being able to reach..." Ibiki's speech was thankfully interrupted.

"Forget it!" Sasuke slammed his hands down onto the top of the desk. Musume and Naruto jumped at the sudden sound. Musume was flummoxed that the Uchiha was the one to start yelling, not her kit.

"Sasuke!" Naruto hissed. "You can't give up now! You can do it, you're not dead last!"

Sasuke glared at Naruto. "I'm not giving up!" He snapped. "That's exactly what I was saying!" He pointed an accusatory finger at Ibiki. "The training I've been going through this past weekend has been hell. I would rather stay a genin for my next life than see what my brother thinks is punishment, if he thinks that was being friendly and helpful."

"That was really great training he set up for you! Keisai is a great teacher..." Naruto trailed off as he felt the waves of killing intent coming from Sasuke. He jumped onto his chair, one foot up on the desk. He pointed his finger at Ibiki, mimicking Sasuke's pose and ignoring the death glare. "You're right, Sasuke!" Naruto cried. "I'll be the first genin Hokage- everyone would always underestimate me. I wish I had been able to figure out a way to be the Hokage and not be a ninja at all, believe it!" He looked warily at the other boy, relaxing slightly when the show of support seemed to calm the Uchiha down.

Ibiki looked miffed. His eyes slid to Musume accusingly before snapping back to the two boys pointing at him. "Anyone else want to leave?" There were no takers. The interrogator sighed. "Well then... you all pass."
"Eh?" Naruto let his hand fall to his side.
"If I can put four of the kits in demon space..." The kyuubi murmured slowly. "Then why not put all of them there? Then I don't have to deal with the whole nonsense!" She crowed happily, rumbling the spiritual energy over/beside most of the land of Fire, stirring the sand demon sleeping in the woods. She noted that subconsciously, but was too busy trying to transfer the babies.

"There!" She said in satisfaction. For a brief second she felt free... then the pain hit. Her human body started to shred and her demon self was unraveling. She could feel the kits wailing in primitive distress. "What?" She gasped, shuddering. The kits' lives started to waver. "No!" She hurriedly shoved (as gently as possible) the twins back into her human body, working frantically to sort out and soothe all the various and complicated connections between her kits and herself. She brushed her chakra over all the little ones, assuring herself that they were unharmed.

"Sorry, so sorry!" The kitsune mourned. She had almost lost them! Even though at one point she had wanted to do this on purpose, how close she had come to doing it by accident was scaring her terribly. "I won't try that again, shh..." She crooned to her kits, in both dimensions.

OooOOoOO

"So... this test is pretty fun, eh?"

Neither of Naruto's teammates so much as looked at him. They had gotten quite good at completely ignoring him in the past six hours.

"Where do you think we should camp later? I sort of like the idea of going up in one of these trees."

"You would." Kankuro muttered.

"Ah? Did you say something teammate?" Naruto bounced over to the other boy.

"I said it's no wonder you would want to sleep in the trees, you damn leaf monkey!" Kankuro snapped.

"I'm a fox, not a monkey." Naruto pouted.

"Oh yeah? How do you figure?" Kankuro asked, swinging down his burden and leaning against it with one elbow on the sort tuft of hair.

"One day I'm going to be a fox sage." Naruto puffed out his chest proudly.

"Uh huh." Kankuro rearranged the hair under his elbow. "Don't you need a contract to become an animal sage?"

"I have a contract. I drew it myself." Naruto smiled proudly.

"Sure you did. Is it on construction paper written in crayon?"

"Will you two boys stop posing at each other. We are not alone in the forest." Temari sighed. Not expecting either to listen to her, she half unfurled her fan and began to scan the area.

"I did! On real scroll paper and everything!" Naruto protested. "Why does no one ever believe me?"

"Because you're a loud-mouthed shrimp and the foxes are demons and can't be summoned?"
Kankuro drawled.

"Can, too!" Naruto bit his finger and slammed the blood into the ground. The resulting poof of smoke was cut by a kunai that sliced the exact area Naruto's head would have been. "What the?"

"Hey, boss. Do you want me to kill those kits up in the tree then?" The fuzzy white fox asked, flicking a rounded ear.

"Ah! Demon!" Kankuro yelled as he scurried away.

"So cute!" Temari burst out at almost the same second. She immediately looked horrified of the uncontrollable moment of female hormones.

The fox twitched an ear in Temari's direction before nudging Naruto out of the way of another kunai. "Boss?" The look on the fox's face pretty clearly suggested that maybe Naruto should either order an attack or at least pay attention to the people trying to kill him.

"Yeah, yeah." Naruto plucked the next kunai out of the air and flung it back.

Temari swept her fan at the trees and they could hear crashing as two people fell from the branches.

"Oooh." Naruto gushed. "That's pretty cool! I thought the fan was just to look pretty. Eep!" He squeaked as he, too, was blown off into the bushes after the other team. The fox weathered the small tornado with a bored expression.

"Should we..." Kankuro started, but trailed off as a dozen Narutos burst from the underbrush, three to a grass-nin.

"Hey, these guys are kind of weak." The Narutos commented.

"Well what do you expect for a minor village?" Kankuro asked. He stepped forward and rifled through the packs of the closest one, moving with the other ninja as he dodged the Narutos strikes. "Dammit! Another Heaven."

The grass-nin looked annoyed that the painted boy couldn't even wait for the end of the battle to steal from him. There was something extremely insulting about being attacked by clones and robbed simultaneously. Fortunately he was soon unconscious.

"Aw!" The Narutos whined. "No luck! Although, that means we get to continue this fun camp-out!"

"Boss, am I here for a reason or did you just want to show off to the lady?" The fox interjected.

"Well, that's a funny story actually..." Narutos replied as they knocked out the other two grass-nin. "Whoops!" He looked down in bemusement as one turned into a bundle of leaves. Several Narutos went up into poofs of smoke and the rest started to run around in surprise.

"Huh. Looks like they have a few tricks up their sleeves." Kankuro commented.

"Ahh!" The fox started to scream, dropping to the ground and putting his paws over his ears. "Forget this!" He yipped before disappearing in a puff of smoke.

"What the?" Kankuro asked, before he grabbed his own ears. "Ah!"

Temari started to yell as well, before reflexively sweeping with her fan, which blasted both the sound waves from the air and the attacker out of the tree.
The grass-nin darted across the way, knocking Temari's fan from her hand and holding a kunai to her throat. Temari blinked, dropping her hands and staring at the blood on them. Ironically only her captor's grip kept her upright as she staggered dizzily to the side.

Kankuro strode forward angrily, seemingly unaffected. "Let my sister go!"

"No! I want my scroll back. Then I'll take my team-mates and be on my way. We'll just both forget this ever happened, ok?"

"Forget it!" Kankuro yelled back, shaking his fist angrily.

"I can cut her pretty little throat at any time!" The grass-nin yelled back.

"Hey Temari!" One of the few remaining Narutos called from behind Kankuro.

Temari glared at him, her head tilted a bit to the side.

"I guess this proves that kunoichi are pretty useless, eh? Always being caught and used as bait..."

The grass-nin wasn't quite sure what happened, but somehow he ended up on the ground, pinned by a giant fan wielded by an extremely irate woman who looked about to fall over.

"You want to come say that to my face, shrimp?" She snarled.

"Eheh... not really..." All of the clones dissipated.

Temari thunked the grass-nin on the head with her fan, knocking him out cold. "Then I'll come to you!" She snapped, taking a step and almost falling over.

"That's not the best idea, sister." Kankuro said. "We need to find someplace to heal up. Right here in the middle of a battle-ground is sure to attract others."

"Yeah! Listen to your brother!" Naruto said uneasily, trying to hide behind Kankuro. "That looks sort of painful... does it only affect women?"

Kankuro sighed and smacked his teammate over the head for his sister.

"Fine." Temari snapped irritably, before turning to Naruto. "I'm only going to let you live because you said that to motivate me." She started walking away from the disturbed area. "I didn't think you were paying enough attention to know anything about us, with all that babbling you do." She muttered, begrudgingly impressed.

"How could I fail to pay attention to such a lovely woman?" Naruto grabbed his heart, pretending to be wounded.

"Uh huh." Temari shook her head, but when that caused her to almost fall over, she concentrated on walking.

"Do you need me to carry you?" Naruto asked, sidling up to her side, just out of striking range.

"No." Temari snapped.

"How about now?"

"No!"
"How about now?"

"Argh!"

OooOOOOO

"Hey, Sasuke!"

The Uchiha turned toward the call, getting a very bad feeling about this.

"Idiot! You're not supposed to call out to the enemy!" A female voice scolded.

"He's not the enemy- we're from the same village!"

"We're not from your village!" Sasuke could see that the blond girl looked like she wanted to smack Naruto on the head. The size of her fan indicated that it would be a very painful experience.

"Well... I'm friends with him, and you're friends with me, so we're all friends so it's ok." Sasuke winced at the poor logic.

"No. We're all ninja in a competition, so we're all *enemies*." The girl retorted. Sasuke began to look around nervously for the third member of Naruto's team, but could see no one.

"So Sasuke, what scroll do you have?" Naruto asked.

"We aren't telling you anything. Shoo." Sakura made the 'shoo' gestures with her hands.

"When you can knock me out, Sakura, then maybe I'll listen to you." Naruto stuck out his tongue at the pink-haired kunoichi.

"Why you little!" She rushed up to Naruto, who easily ducked the blows.

Temari sighed. "You might as well tell us what you have. I don't want to get in *another* fight for the same scroll if I don't have to. This is getting boring." She watched Sakura for a few more seconds before adding: "Though I might be persuaded to fight in order to end this pathetic attempt at skill and show you all what a real female fighter can do."

Sasuke just stared at her with his black eyes hostilely blank.

"You're not as ugly a bitch as the ones I have to travel with. Maybe I can tell you." The pale third member of Team Kakashi smiled with his eyes closed pleasantly.

"What did you just say to me?" Temari asked, her eyebrow twitching.

"I said 'you're not as ugly a bitch as...’" The pale kid broke off his recital in order to dodge the giant fan. "Did you not want me to repeat that, whore?"

"Oh, you are so going to die!" Temari lunged at him.

"Ignore Sai. It's bad for your blood pressure to let him get to you." Sasuke advised.

"Dickless does tend to ignore me, it's true. He seems to have a harder time finding his balls today than usual."

Sasuke sighed.
"Wow. And I thought getting stuck with Naruto as a team-mate was the pits." Kankuro said from right behind Sasuke, who jumped a bit and squeaked, which made his subsequent attempt to make it seem that he knew the other boy was there the whole time kind of pointless. "Well, thanks for the scroll. You can have one of our heaven ones in exchange, k? I'm getting the impression your life sucks enough without being left totally high and dry here."

"Give that back!" Sasuke protested, his eyes flashing red.

"Ooh, pretty, Uchiha. Got anything more interesting to challenge me with?" Kankuro smirked as he hopped backward.

"That asshole painted on my fan! I'm going to kill... oh shit!" Temari's voice interrupted Kankuro from further taunting Sasuke. He looked over at his sister to see her fighting a giant lion, apparently made from ink.

"Ow!" Sasuke started cursing and shaking his hand, looking at Kankuro in puzzlement. It was almost as if the guy was made of... stone or really hard wood. What kind of Sand technique was that?

"Your Uchiha eyes can't tell my beautiful puppet from a real person?" Kankuro('s puppet) taunted. "How unexpected." He said sarcastically.

Sasuke cursed even more vehemently. The Hyuuga could see the strings of chakra easily enough, but the Sharingan eyes had a really hard time predicting where a puppet was likely to head next, as it could move in any direction at any point.

"You could just give up." Kankuro('s puppet) suggested.

Sasuke scanned the brush, trying to see where the puppet-master was hiding. Considering that he hadn't been able to sense the guy before he had basically yelled in his ear (though that was the puppet...), Sasuke wasn't feeling too hopeful. Although he felt a bit better about not detecting the breathing and small involuntary movements that gave a person away as, well, there hadn't been any.

Sasuke had to quickly dodge out of the way to avoid an extending arm of the puppet, noting with unease that the blade seemed to be tipped in poison. He sent a katon jutsu at the puppet, though the flames didn't seem to have much of an effect beyond singing the wood a little bit. It had been a long-shot, admittedly, but sometimes ninja were single minded enough to forget something as important as fireproofing their wood weapon.

OoOooOOoo

"I have reviewed a very interesting proposal by Uchiha Mikoto. And seeing as how she has been doing such a good job representing the clan while I was indisposed, I gave it particular attention." Musume said. Her eyes flicked to the Itachi and Shisui sitting in the corner as they let off a brief spark of killing intent. She smirked slightly, whipping out a thick packet of papers. Her gaze swept the hundred odd Uchiha in the room- all the remnants of the clan in the village at the moment. She was rather proud of them, actually. When she was in the hospital, Mikoto tried to push all sorts of odd agendas, but had generally steered the Council in the best interests of the clan. And the rest- mostly civilians or low level ninja- had come together. There had been chaos, there had been helpfulness, but there had been little stick-up-the-ass behavior.

"It is a great honor to serve, Uchiha-sama." Mikoto said, grinning like a fox in the hen house. Musume approved, but thought that maybe Mikoto should not try to out-fox the highest level fox demon.
"What proposal is this?" Itachi asked, looking like he knew exactly which one, but was maintaining a futile hope that it was something different.

"Why, a proposal to require Uchiha to marry." Musume said.

There was a roar of noise at the pronouncement.

After basking in the near-riot for a while, Musume stood and waved her hands placatingly. "Now, now. It's not so bad! Everyone agreed earlier that this incident with the Hyuuga has dropped our numbers to a low that is unacceptable. And we have Orochimaru's recommendations on how to be a strong genetic population."

"What do you mean it's not so bad!" Aenka asked, glaring at her employer. "You expect me to suddenly marry some fool from the village?"

"You are just trying to pressure the Hokage into marrying you." Itachi snarked.

Musume grinned. "I have no idea what you are talking about, Itachi-kun. The dragging heals of a certain yellow-haired nuisance have no bearing on my decision here." When the protests and calls of support started up again, Musume sighed in annoyance and held up her hand. They quieted. "Now, this will go into effect immediately. I have in my hand the revised proposal. I modified it to better fit the clan. I think that everyone should thank Mikoto." There were glares and smiles directed at the interim clan head. "After all, her sacrifice in this instance is a shining example of the clan spirit that we need in these troubled times."

The grin fell off Mikoto's face and she sat up straight in her chair. "What?"

"You are a single woman of child-bearing age, are you not?" Musume purred. Mikoto's face went white. Musume felt a slow grin slide over her face, totally satisfied.

"What!" Mikoto stood up so quickly her chair got knocked over.

"We are very pleased with your ingenuity." Musume said, keeping a straight face for a few seconds before the look of horror on Mikoto's face made her throw back her head and cackle gleefully.

OoOOOoOo

"What are you doing?" Temari sighed.

"You're supposed to do this when your friend is passed out." Naruto explained, as he stuck Sasuke's hand down Sai's pants and put the Uchiha's other hand on Sakura's flat chest.

"What kind of pervert is your father?" Temari asked incredulously, seriously reconsidering her assessment of the Hokage.

"Oh, no. Dad will probably be mad at me when he finds out." Naruto stood back to survey his work, then bent down to draw another curl to the mustache on Sai's face. "Musume-chan and Jiraya-sensi have taught me about this stuff." He shifted Sai slightly so that his lips were touching Sakura's. He drew a big heart on Sakura's forehead before dropping the brush and slapping his hands together in satisfaction. "That should about do it." Naruto nodded.

"They look like they are engaged in the most awkward orgy known to man." Kankuro said flatly.

"Excellent!" Naruto pumped his fist into the air. "Well, let's head on out."
The two siblings sighed, but followed after their hyper-active teammate, stepping over the three unconscious mist-nin who had come to investigate. "Why are we leaving a copy of both scrolls with your friends again?" Temari asked.

"That Sasuke guy has to deal with the other two all the time." Kankuro answered for Naruto.

"Yeah! And besides, we don't need it. We already had an Earth before these mist guys gave us theirs." Naruto said happily, gesturing at the unconscious ninja beside the Leaf team.

"What if we get attacked and lose it?" Temari replied sharply. "It took forever to get an Earth scroll. Just because we got two now doesn't mean we should assume it will be easy to get another."

"Well... we have been injured when we fight the other groups, but..." Kankuro searched for a delicate way to put it.

"But we kicked their asses hard-core." Naruto grinned. "We're just too good for them."

"It's not good to get cocky." Temari replied, though she didn't sound particularly convinced about her comment.

"We had to put up with Gaara for most of our lives, Temari." Kankuro said dryly.

"Point." Temari acknowledged.

"What? Your little brother is that bad?" Naruto pouted. "I want to fight him!"

"No you don't." Temari and Kankuro retorted instantly.

"Yes I do!" Naruto protested. "He must be even crazier than Musume-chan if he made both of you get so good all at once."

"How crazy is this Musume person?" Temari asked uneasily.

"Oh, totally nuts. But that's why she's so much fun! No one else will teach me the really cool jutsus." Naruto shook his head. "But what does Gaara do?"

"He controls sand." Kankuro replied, shrugging as if to say 'not like it's a secret' when Temari gave him a sharp look.

"That doesn't seem so bad." Naruto said in confusion.

"He can make a coffin and squeeze a man until he bursts into fluid all over the ground." Kankuro said, his voice blank of emotion.

"Oh." Naruto looked down at the ground, thoughtful. "Hey, hey!"

"What?" Temari asked, already regretting encouraging Naruto when he had been quiet for a full minute.

"You want to go collect all the scrolls? Then we'll be the only ones who can say who passes. We could make them do funny things like act like a chicken!" Naruto said, bouncing on his feet.

"No." Temari and Kankuro said almost reflexively.

"Aw, come on. It would be fun! You could have them do whatever you want. How about have them build a statue of you and worship it with flowers?" Naruto conjolled.
"No." Temari repeated. "I want a shower, and to sleep in a real bed, and eat actual food tonight. We just finished traveling here from Suna and I haven't had a decent meal except for the welcome feast and the opening ceremonies brunch, which should hardly count."

Naruto pouted. "You guys are no fun."

"Naruto, some day you will learn that it's just better to agree when a woman wants something." Kankuro muttered.

"Damn right." Temari said, grinning as she saw the tower entrance right ahead. She briskly waved her fan to get rid of the trio of ninja that had shown up in front of them and ran through into the tower. Naruto and Kankuro hurried to catch up, Naruto wistfully looking at the spilled bag that had a Heaven scroll peaking out of it. He looked at his teammates surreptitiously before darting over and grabbing the scroll and then running into the tower cackling gleefully.
Far From Heaven

This world was small... and getting smaller. Energy swirled in and around, but it bent around him as if to flee. Nothing was comfortable with him here. He could tell that he was not really wanted, the feelings of apprehension... not to mention having to fight for his life against his three smaller, but more powerful fellow prisoners.

Well... simple solution to that problem. It would just mean that he would have to get stronger, first. He would have to make them accept and acknowledge him. They who did not have to try for golden acceptance, the glow of love around their ignorant, blind eyes. They sat, content, while he struggled. Didn't they know that they were weak, were pawns? Dependent entirely on their captor.

He would not be like them. He would be himself, and only need himself. He will take every stitch of power from this captor, from these captives. He doesn't need them. He will be strong. He will surpass them.

OooOOooOO

"Hey! Hey!" Naruto tugged on the chuunin examiner's sleeve.

"Yes?" Iruka looked a bit frazzled. Apparently they had finished the test much faster than anyone had thought possible.

"So, do I have to stay in the tower or can I go back out into the forest?"

"Uh..." Iruka scratched his head. He pulled out the rule book and started flipping through the pages. "Well, it looks like you can do whatever you want until the final ceremony after you complete the task. But if you aren't back by the end of the time allotted and miss the ceremony, you may forfeit your position."

"And if he gets himself killed, what happens to us?" Kankuro asked.

Iruka went back to the rule book. "Well, after completing this mission, that is the end of team-based evaluation. So... yeah. If he dies or is crippled, it doesn't affect you guys."

"So cold..." Naruto whimpered.

"Where the hell do you want to go, anyway?" Kankuro (or his puppet?) asked Naruto.

"Oh!" Naruto perked back up again. "I'm going to make other teams do silly things for all those extra Heaven scrolls we have." He grinned happily.

"We already told you that we weren't going to let you do that." Temari snapped.

"Well, yeah, but that was when you wanted a shower. Now I can do it all on my own while you go get clean." Naruto smiled, holding out his hands for the scrolls in Temari's bag.

"I refuse to let you help our enemies." Temari stated.

"Even if I completely humiliate them in the process?" Naruto asked incredulously.

"Well..." Kankuro started to say.

"Especially if you are going to humiliate them. What are you, five years old? We need to be mature if we are going to become chuunin."
"I'm twelve thank you very much." Naruto pouted.

"Oh, ok, twelve..." Kankuro rolled his eyes.

"Aha!" A clone of Naruto made a grab for Temari's bag, and almost had it out of her grasp when she shouted "Sensitive Document Destruction no jutsu!" The Naruto clone pouted when he tipped over the bag and sand started pouring out.

"Hey!" Kankuro protested in horror. "That turns all paper in range to sand! My diar... uh... storage jutsus for important things were in that bag!"

"Then you should have a copy of it somewhere and have duplicates on hand. You never know when your bag will be destroyed." Temari replied primly.

"Uh... just how many Heaven scrolls did you have in there?" Iruka asked, looking somewhat nervous.

"Er..." Temari looked to her brother, who shrugged. "Maybe... a dozen? Half dozen?"

"Well." Naruto held up his hands, fingers curled into fists. "There was that Grass team that attacked us right at the beginning." He put a finger up. "And then the Leaf team with that silver haired old guy." He put up a second finger.

"And then those three teams attacked us because they thought that Naruto's complaining and asking the other Leaf team if they had an Earth scroll was a diversionary tactic to make them think we had Heaven, but we actually had Earth." Kankuro said dryly. "Rather than the truth of him just being an idiot."

Naruto stuck out his tongue at Kankuro. "So that brought us to uh... five. And then Sasuke's team." He put up the thumb on his second hand.

"We gave that one back, though." Kankuro reminded him.

"Right. But that other mist team attacked us." Naruto protested.

"No, no. Both teams had an Earth, remember?" Temari corrected.

"Oh, right." Naruto furrowed his brow. "So five still... and then we got attacked on the way here."

"One of them was Earth, two were Heaven, but we stopped picking them up after that first team." Kankuro shook his head. "What was the point, really? We just wanted to get to the tower before we got jumped again. It was getting really annoying."

Iruka could feel himself sweating a little bit.

"Ooh! But we forgot the team with the lazy guy, the fat guy and the annoying blond girl." Temari tapped her fan to her chin gently.

"Oh yeah..." Naruto frowned. "I feel like I should know who they were."

"That blond girl was kind of cute..." Kankuro started, but gulped at the look his sister was giving him.

"Ninja are not supposed to be 'cute'." Temari snarled.

"It's a diversionary tactic." Naruto cut in, squinting his eyes shut mischievously. "Like my super cute
fox summon. I think I shall call him 'Mo' after that noise you made when you saw him."

Temari's eyebrow started to twitch spasmodically. Naruto wisely started to back away to the exit. "Well, I think I'll go mess with them anyway, since there's nothing else to do for the next four days."

"Fine. Whatever," Temari sighed, moving to the stairs and her shower.

"See you guys!" Naruto waved cheerfully. He turned and scurried outside. He pulled a scroll out from inside his coat. Looking at the 'Heaven' written on the outside he chuckled evilly. This was going to be fun!

OooOOOOo

"Anko-san!"

Anko lazily pulled another dango off the stick and flung it past Iruka's head, who jumped obligingly.

"Yes?"

"The team that just finished..."

"The what?" Anko cut him off, sitting up and taking her feet off the desk and thumping them to the ground.

"Oh, right. There is a team that has completed the challenge. The Hokage's and Kazekage's children's team."

"Huh. Well that is the fastest recorded time, but I guess with those three on a team, it isn't totally unexpected."

"Yes, yes. But that's not the problem."

"What, then, is the problem?" Anko asked, her eyes glittering.

"They had at least half of the Heaven scrolls!"

"Ok..." Anko gestured for him to continue.

"And they destroyed them!"

Anko winced. Those scrolls had been rather expensive to make. She had been hoping to use them for another chuunin exam. Not next rotation, of course- repeat test-takers would be too high. But maybe in a few years...

"So now the other teams can't possibly pass." Iruka finished miserably.

Anko stared at him for a second before picking up another dango stick and laughing. She ate the whole row, watching the man fidget, before she spoke. "I don't really see the problem here."

"No one else will pass!"

"So?"

"We won't have the elimination rounds!"

"So?"
There won't even be enough fights in the expose in a month!"

Anko tossed another dango stick by Iruka's head. To his credit, he didn't flinch this time. "Well, that might become a problem." Anko admitted. Iruka looked vindicated. "But it's not my problem." She shrugged expansively.

"But!" Iruka protested weakly.

"No buts!" Anko said, brandishing the last dango set at him, waving it menacingly. "The whole point of this thing was to eliminate teams. Destroying all the other scrolls is a perfectly valid way of knocking down the competition. Admittedly, rather expensive to us, but we didn't forbid them from destroying scrolls, now did we?"

"No." Iruka sighed.

"In the future, if we do this again, we certainly will need to." Anko mused. "Or get less expensive sleep jutsus put on them..."

OoOoOOo

"That's right! Whoever completes the most ridiculous task will get this Heaven scroll! Believe it!" Naruto crowed from the base of the tower.

"Yeah? Well why don't we just attack you and take it from you by force?" A sand-nin asked aggressively.

"Ok!" Naruto hopped off of his perch and took up a stance. "Let's go!"

"Idiot!" The sand-nin's teammate smacked him on the back of the head. "He's finished already! That means he completed it in less than two days!"

"Seven hours." Naruto added helpfully.

"Seven... hours...?" The sand-nin repeated weakly.

"Well we kept getting the Heaven scroll, and then people were just attacking us right and left. It was annoying! All we wanted to do was get to the tower." Naruto pouted.

"Uh..."

"I certainly wanted to fight people, but Temari wanted a shower." Naruto continued, looking extremely put out.

"Right..."

OooOoOo

"Hokage-sama!"

Minato turned around warily, noting the large mob of Uchiha with some trepidation. "What can I do for you all?"

"You have to stop her!"

"It's not right that she can possibly...!"
"And then she said!"

"Just look at it!"

Minato accepted the stack of papers and tried to make sense of all the shouts coming his way. "Now, if you could all calm down and maybe put forward your concerns one at a time?" He asked hopefully. When that seemed impossible and the red eyes were starting to dominate his vision, he sighed and looked down at the stack of paper. "Marriage law?" He asked in some puzzlement, before he started in on the meat of the ratified clan law.

The stack of papers said that all members of the clan not married at the time of the law's inception must be married to non-clan members to enjoy any benefits including but not limited to voting, going out on missions, promotion, access to clan libraries, training grounds and the ability to call upon their clan head to settle grievances. The sheaf also outlined the list of members affected by the pronouncement (everyone over the clan over the age of 15, including divorcées and widowers/widows), as well as all the historical forms of the law (there were six), people who had edited it and what they had changed, a petition system for marriage approval, a timeline of penalties for not following the guidelines...

"So you see that it's... it's... not right!" Uchiha Aenka growled.

"Yes, I do." Minato pinched the bridge of his nose against his headache. "I'll have a talk with her."

OooOooO

"These humans suck." The fuzzy white fox commented.

"Shh." Naruto shushed the other judge as he watched two sand nin juggle flaming kunai between the two of them. "Now do it standing on your hands!" He shouted to them.

"That's impossible! You can't juggle with your feet." The one on the left protested, causing her attention to not focus on the kunai like it should. She accidentally threw it right at her partner's face, causing him to dodge with a yelp.

"Beeeeez!" Naruto stuck out his tongue. "You fail. Next!"

"Though the attempt to kill your teammate gets you points for style." The fox commented.

"Who are you to give points?" The female sand nin grumbled.

"Ah, ah. No taunting the other judge." Naruto replied happily. "Now who wants to fight me or um..." He squinted his eyes shut in confusion. "I don't know your name." He addressed the fox.

"I didn't tell you." The fluffy animal scratched behind his ear. "And frankly, you're lucky I came back after that kyuubi cursed noise I was assaulted with the last time you summoned me..."

"Well, then. What's your name?" Naruto asked.

"Who cares?" Groaned someone from the crowd in front of Naruto.

Fox and fox summoner ignored the comment. "I'm O.A.F." The fox sighed, putting his foot back on the ground.

"Oaf? Like someone who is stupid?" Naruto's eyes closed in confusion.

"No. Well, yes, that's how you pronounce it. But it's the letters 'O' and then 'A' and then 'F'. It stands
"Well, then who's the other arctic fox?" Naruto asked.

"I'm the other artic fox, weren't you listening?" The fox snarled.

"No, the other other artic fox." Naruto clarified. Tried to... Badly. O.A.F. stared at Naruto with an annoyed and confused look on his fuzzy face. They locked gazes.

"Look, if you're just going to stare at each other, can you maybe toss the Heaven scroll over here and let us fight over it or something?" Shikamaru asked. There was no reply. "How troublesome." He grumbled. Then louder: "Naruto means to ask 'what happened to the first arctic fox that left you with the name 'other arctic fox' rather than simply 'the artic fox'?"

O.A.F. blinked and looked over at the slouching Leaf-nin. "Oh." He turned back to Naruto. "I killed him, of course." And then bared his teeth.

"You did?" Naruto asked, his eyes widening.

O.A.F. Snorted. "Of course not! Some fool human did. Made him into a coat." The fox said sadly. "Though it then possessed the family for several generations until some priest exorcised it!" He finished happily.

"Demon..." Someone muttered and the whole crowd backed away.

Shikamaru looked around, noting he was alone. "Troublesome."

OooOoOOo

Musume finally allowed Minato to find her. It hadn't been a particularly fun game to begin with, and she could tell he was not in the mood.

"What were you thinking?" Minato asked shortly.

Musume blinked. She was pretty sure that he didn't want to know that she had been playing hide-and-seek with him without his consent. "I'm not sure?" She offered up instead. A thick stack of papers was waved in her face. "Ah." She recognized the wonderful new law. "Why do you care?"

"Because I'm the Hokage!"

"So?" Musume scratched her head. She couldn't see why stating facts was helping.

"So I care what is happening to my villagers." Minato threw down the papers onto a nearby table.

"It's clan business." Musume sniffed. She did enjoy that phrase. She could see how Hyuuga Hiashi had lost his balance, and why the Uchiha had gotten themselves so prideful the village had resorted to eliminating them.

"You are ordering them to marry civilians and other non-clan members. That makes it a village issue. This sort of thing cannot be passed without the full council." Minato ran a frustrated hand through his hair.

"You think it would pass in Council?" Musume asked in pleased contemplation.

"No! Of course it wouldn't pass. You're missing the point."
Musume rather thought her dense mate was missing the point, but instead tried to tempt him. "You could make it a pre-requisite of becoming a jounin. Have to have at least one child. Imagine how much talent you would have then! Look at Kakashi- if his dad hadn't had him, then he would have not had progeny when he nobly offed himself."

"That's true... but beside the point."

Damn. Musume thought- almost!

"All those children would be mentally scared."

"They're ninja, they will be anyway." Musume rebutted.

"And won't have parents." Minato pointed out.

"Neither do any orphans, no matter what the cause." The kitsune grinned back. This was a fun game.

"The state will have to take on their costs." Minato said desperately.

"We do anyway- and think of all the ninja we'll get back! Such earning potential."

"It would overload our system. We aren't set up to deal with more than are killed in the line of duty and do not have another parent." Minato replied, crossing his arms over his chest, though his eyes were twinkling a little bit.

Musume paused a brief second, marveling in the fact that this timeline had few enough deaths that an argument like that could be made. It depressed her how many lives she had saved by possessing Madara. Just as Minato was going to cry victory, however, she bit back the comment of 'your son did just fine' and said instead, "We could find a way. Even if it were an overnight problem, we could figure it out. But this way we have at least nine months to plan."

"But..."

Musume didn't let him protest further. "In fact, we could recruit all sorts of people to become primary care for the kits."

"Like whom?" Minato asked, feeling like he was probably better off not knowing.

"Like me!" Musume replied happily.

Visions of hordes of pranking children-nin swam before Minato's eyes. "Absolutely not."

"Hmm- maybe I am too busy. Itachi was thinking of retiring from being a ninja." Musume mused.

That mental image was even worse! "No!" Minato shot the idea down and started to make cutting motions for Musume to stop.

But she didn't. "Well, maybe whatever the clan's use. Like an Inuzuka dog... or maybe one of the fox summons would be a fun caretaker."

"No fox demons..."

"Summons" Musume corrected Minato, not that he stopped or acknowledged her.

"...will be babysitting the children of Leaf. Children will be raised by their parents..."
"Or parent." Musume added helpfully.

"... who are married because they love each other, not because they were forced to by a clan leader."

"Ch!" Musume huffed.

"So repeal the law so your Uchiha will stop bothering me." Minato concluded.

"They've been bugging you?" Musume repeated incredulously. "How great!"

"How do you figure it's great?" Minato asked in exasperation.

"That means that they are comfortable coming to you with problems and feel a part of the village." Musume said happily. All the better to mold them how she felt best...

"Oh." Minato blinked. "That is true." He looked sheepish. "But seeing who they are, I would much rather you deal with all their angst."

"Hah. Only a day and already the mighty Hokage gives up." Musume smirked. "Now you should appreciate the fact that I have to deal with Uchiha angst all the damn time!"

OoOoOoOoOoo

Itachi pointed to a small sentence hidden within the pages and pages of marriage law. "There, you see. I told you that it made no mention of gender."

"Yes, I see that now." Shisui turned to Itachi. "You think she did that on purpose?"

Itachi's expression didn't really change, but from long association Shisui was able to add in the eyeroll. "Of course she did it on purpose. Not only did she write it when she was stuck in that hospital bed, we already knew her position on this issue."

"Claiming that you turned someone's book into homosexual material is not really saying 'I support gay relationships'." Shisui protested. "She also claimed to have turned it into bestiality."

"And you really doubt she did either of those things?" Itachi asked rhetorically. "Our leader is many things, but a liar?"

"Well..." Shisui began. "Only by omission." He said finally.

"Hrn." Itachi agreed absently.

They both went back to perusing the copy. It was leading to some interesting discoveries.

"Hah!" Shisui pointed to another passage. "Look at this- 'no member shall be without the company of a non-member, nor know only a member.'"

"That is... really vague." Itachi put down the section he was reading. "What are the qualifiers?"

"Oh, there's a whole section of definitions after. There are so many loop-holes in here... if this thing was a net, you wouldn't be able to hold boss summons with it." Shisui chuckled. "But it's all implied... I wish we had the original." He said sadly.

Itachis lip quirked upward slightly. "It so happens that I do have an older version. It will be fun seeing how our clan head has corrupted what Mother wrote, won't it?"
"Absolutely." Shisui matched Itachi's enthusiasm with a full grin.
"I feel weird."

Sotan wisely did not reply with the first answer that popped into his mind. He had been spending too much time with his Lord, it seemed. And probably observing the human world through the odd warp around her too much, too. That human kit his Lord had adopted was entirely too cheeky. "Weird how?" He asked instead.

"I don't know. Tight? Itchy?" She squirmed.

Sotan eyed her warily. "Where?"

The kyuubi stiffened. "It's the kits! What did I do to the kits!" She wailed miserably.

"Kyuubi-sama!" Sotan cried out, scooting out of the way as she started to expand back to epic proportions. "Please be calm!"

"How can I be calm! I can't get any of this right! Why couldn't I just have kits with another demon like a normal being? Why did I have to have this happen! Something horrible always happens in these damn exams!"

"What exams?" Sotan asked distractedly, trying to look into his Lord's chakra but having to dodge nine agitated tails instead.

"These chuunin exams. Every time Naruto does them... disaster!"

Sotan stopped. "Naruto has never done these exams before... is he not still a kit?"

"Of course not this time, but all the other times." The kyuubi collapsed to the ground and put her face in her paws, her human self echoing the gesture, much to the concern of the humans around her.

"Is... is my Lord speaking of time travel?" Sotan asked shakily.

"Hah! I hate time!" Kyuubi muttered.

"You... what!" Sotan reeled.

A giant eye looked at the smaller fox balefully. "I went through many time loops sealed within Naruto." She grumbled. "Surely you could sense it?"

"N-no." Sotan echoed his Lord and collapsed to the ground. Demon-space was not exactly chained to time as the human realms were, time passing faster and slower depending on all sorts of factors, many under an individual's control, if they were powerful enough... but it never went backwards!

"Oh, that's good." The kyuubi said absently. "But has no bearing on the current issue." She covered her face with her paws and sighed.

Sotan tried to recover from the new time traveling bomb in order to function well enough to not get squished by his Lord. It was quite difficult, even if it did make a lot of things make sense that he had been totally baffled about before... and he was going to make a killing in the betting pool! He shook himself and looked at the chakra flow around the kits. He gasped.
"What?" The kyuubi trembled between her paws.

"It... your kits... they are already taking control of their own growth!" Ironically, Sotan thought, considering the recent revelations.

"What?" The kyuubi began to shrink back down as she looked at her side. "Well, so they are!" She said proudly. "Who's my powerful little kits!" She crooned happily.

"My Lord..." Sotan started hesitantly, waiting for the female fox to stop cooing and pay attention to him. "That means that..."

"Oh no." The kyuubi interrupted. Sotan did not object- both because she was his Lord and because he didn't want to state the truth. "They're getting bigger... quicker... they... they... first kitsune's saggy tits! I am running out of time!"

OoOOOO

"That was the lamest way to finish the exam." Ino complained. "Challenging a summon to shoji because it was bored and waiting for Naruto to... Forehead girl! How did you get in here?"

"Ino-pig." Sakura huffed shortly. "We got here on merit. What were you saying about how you got in?"

"We defeated a demon in a game of logic." Ino sniffed. "I don't believe you got here 'on your own merit'. We got in on merit."

Shikamaru sighed heavily.

"The whore means we snuck in the back of the tower yesterday while the complete idiot was distracting everyone out front." Sai said helpfully.

"Is that so?" Ino said, her eyes sparkling in happiness.

"Yes it is, harlot." Sai replied agreeably. Ino twitched but restrained herself due to Sasuke's put-upon sigh. It distracted her enough that her smiled vaguely until Sai opened his mouth again. "If dickless had pulled his balls out of his ass earlier, we could have climbed the walls and gotten in a day earlier."

"Don't insult Sasuke!" Ino and Sakura shrieked, running at Sai and trying to punch the sweetly smiling boy. They missed and nearly knocked each other out.

Sasuke started to hit his head against the wall.

OoOoOoOO

"So, in an almost unprecedented outcome... we only have three passing teams." Minato announced to the small gathering. "Team Diplomacy, Team 7 and Team 10."

"Which team are we?" Naruto whispered, though everyone could hear him.

"Diplomacy." Kankuro replied, sounding like he had just eaten something sour.

"That's... sort of stupid." Naruto stated.

Minato's eyebrow started to twitch, but he pretended he hadn't heard his son shoot down his super clever team name. "So congratulations! You have one month to recover and train. I suggest that you
do it strategically, based on who you will be facing. You will now all draw numbers in order to determine the matches."

"Me first!" Naruto crowed, leaping over to his father and grinning up at the Hokage happily.

Minato's lips quirked upwards in amusement as he held out the bag of numbers.

"Woohoo! I'm number one!" Naruto jumped up and down.

OoOOoOoo

"Uchiha-sama!"

A shiver shot up Musume's spine, almost making her choke on her apple juice. Which would be a shame- she couldn't seem to drink enough of it lately.

Musume turned around slowly to face Uchiha Keisai. Keisai was so irate that her face had become a blank Uchiha mask. Well, the point of the marriage thing had been a bit (well, maybe a lot) about pissing off the Uchiha...

"Yes?" Musume asked, wondering if she could substitute herself with a clone without the other Uchiha noticing.

"You said that your seals would keep us from having children." Keisai accused.

Musume blinked then narrowed her eyes suspiciously. Why would that make Keisai angry? She had taken them all off, hadn't she? And Keisai's first. "Yes..." The clan head agreed, not sure how to deny it in a way that would diffuse the situation.

"Then why..." Keisai choked on the end of her sentence.

"Why...?" Musume prompted. When the other Uchiha just shifted uncomfortably, Musume stared at her. And then looked deeper into the chakra swirling angrily around Keisai, swirling in an odd...

"Oh, wow- it is really obvious in the chakra flows." She stopped herself before she blurted out that her fox demon minion had told her so.

Keisai flushed and her lips twisted in an interesting and confusing mix of snarl, smile... something else?

Musume stared at her subordinate before shrugging and saying, "Well, congratulations, I guess. It had better be a non-Uchiha for a father." She gulped down the rest of the juice angrily, noting that it did nothing to quench her thirst. She could drink a whole lake of this stuff, it seemed... why did that seem familiar?

"That's the problem! We used protection. Except when I was under the seal." Keisai looked about ready to cry.

"Oh." Musume replied, peering down into her glass and wondering if the juice really would be better if she drank it with a side of pickles. Then her head snapped up to look at Keisai. "Ohhhh!" Musume nodded. "Then it was a non-Uchiha?" It had to have been, really.

Keisai nodded miserably.

"Well, that would be why then." Musume set the glass down decisively.

"What do you mean that would be why?" Keisai retorted, swinging back to anger.
"I don't know anything about … female reproductive tracts." Musume wondered if saying 'human' in this context was telling or not?

"What the hell do you mean? Aren't you a woman?"

Musume bit her lip to keep from laughing hysterically. "Ah... aha." At Keisai's odd look she decided to 'explain'. "Well, I never messed with my own reproduction. That would have been... unwise." She left it at that. Messing with her own energy in that way probably would have both lost her the head fox position and had some sort of immediate (probably explosive) disastrous consequences. It was dangerous enough manipulating your energy to get stronger, though everyone did that so there were manuals on the subject. Demons had no reason to mess with reproduction, though. What an odd human concept.

Hopefully the other Uchiha would take this as one of those 'because Madara would have done something' moments.

"But messing with males I came in contact with, well..." She trailed off. That had been almost necessary. With her sealed inside him, Naruto's stamina and fertility was almost epic. Especially combined with that Hyuuga girl... or even worse- the one time he had gotten together with the girl holding the two-tail. She shuddered dramatically.

"I... see." Keisai still looked like she was going to cry.

"So really only the males were sterilized." Musume finished hurriedly, eying Keisai warily. If the other female started to bawl, Musume wasn't sure what would happen. The damned hormones had been making her tear up at the most inconvenient moments- like seeing a squirrel when hopping from roof to roof and how cute it was almost making her crash into a building.

"What am I going to do?" Keisai wailed. "I haven't told him! He has no idea. And he doesn't seem to want to acknowledge the relationship at all." She put her face in her hands.

For once, Musume completely understood. Something she desperately wished were not true, both due to the indignity of empathizing with a human and for the wretchedness of her own situation.

"I don't know why I'm telling you this..." Keisai trailed off as she caught the stunned and rather stricken look on her clan head's face. "But... you do unde... oh by the Kami!"

Musume winced. She couldn't help it. She blamed the hormones.

"You, too?" Keisai whispered.

Musume's eyes went hard and she leaned forward. "You will not tell him!" She hissed. Her eyes narrowed further. "You will not tell anyone!"

Keisai made a small noise that was suspiciously like a 'squee'. "Oh, this makes me feel so much better!"

"Really." Musume said dryly. She was definitely losing her touch if threats gave comfort.

"Oh, definitely." Keisai's eyes widened in horror. "You can't tell him, either!"

"I can tell Minato whatever I damn well please." Musume snapped. She was almost tempted to flash over to the Hokage's office and declare it right then and there. In fact, she should. Might get her recalcitrant mate the kick up the butt to finally commit to her properly.
"What? Oh, no no. You can't tell him."

Musume was confused for a second before she figured out who Keisai was talking about. "I don't even know who 'he' is." Musume replied dryly.

"Oh, really?" Keisai's eyes widened. "You always seem to know everything."

Musume smirked. "I'm glad it seems so, but that is a lovely combination of good luck, keeping people on their toes, and pretending I know what it happening long enough for someone to spill the beans or me to figure it out."

"Oh." Keisai looked rather overwhelmed.

"Sh. Clan secret." Musume winked.

"O...k..." Keisai replied slowly. "But what am I going to do? I don't want to... you know... get rid of it. I've... felt it kicking."

Musume swallowed around her suddenly tight throat. "I know." She patted the other Uchiha awkwardly. She brightened suddenly. "But there is a handy marriage law on the books, at least for a little while longer."

Keisai's grin suddenly turned predatory.

"Whatever you're thinking right now, you should do it." Musume said seriously, her own mouth stretching into a matching grin.

OooOOoOoO

Itachi swung his legs over the side of the exam table, nodding to Tsunade. His treatment was finished for today. He stood up and was able to walk with only a slight deviation to the side. He was able to compensate when he concentrated on it, but he sighed at the thought of trying to fight with this handicap.

"I'm reaching the end of what I can do for you, Itachi." Tsunade sighed. "There might be slight improvement in the future, if you keep up with the physical therapy."

"Thank you, Tsunade-hime." Itachi said without inflection.

"We'll be back for the rest of the treatments." Shisui added, walking alongside Itachi and pretending not to notice when his friend would stumble slightly.

"There you are!"

Itachi winced before opening his single eye. "Hello, Mother."

"What do you think you are doing? Supporting our clan head?" Mikoto stopped just shy of toppling her son over.

"Do you want to say things like that in public?" Shisui asked threateningly. Itachi's hand lightly touching his arm got the other to snort and settle slightly, though he was still glaring at his best friend's mother.

"Don't start." Mikoto snapped. She turned back to her son. "You were against this the whole time. Why are you suddenly changing your mind?"
"Perhaps I feel that it is beneficial for all members of the clan to be put under the same pressure." Itachi offered, his face blank. He reached up and adjusted his eyepatch back over the hole that Tsunade had been working on.

Mikoto looked stricken. "Itachi, it wasn't..." Her son just stared at her. Mikoto closed her mouth over the last words.

"This law has a balance to it that is pleasing. It is beneficial for the clan to move forward." Itachi still had no emotion in his voice.

"Itachi." Shisui sighed, but his lips were twitching upward. "We'll see you around Mikoto-san." He couldn't resist a last barb. He felt he could blame it on the personal interest their busy Clan Head had been giving the two of them. It was obviously a corrupting influence. "Maybe at your wedding?"

Sinc they were still in range to hear Mikoto's teeth grinding, the pair wisely held in their laughter.

OOOOoooOO

"So, Naruto." Musume wrapped her arm around her sort-of-son and grinned. "Congratulations, I suppose. Even though I knew you could do it."

"Eheh. Thanks Musume-chan." Naruto grinned before slurping up his celebratory ramen. The sight and smell of the slurping noodles made Musume both hungry and disgusted, making her confused and a bit nauseous.

"We'll work on some techniques with you, of course, but we're both really busy." Minato said, swirling the broth a bit in his bowl. "I've arranged for one of our jounin to help you out with your taijutsu."

"Aw, Dad!"

"You know it's your weakest skill." Minato said sternly. "Even though it isn't as 'cool'." Always had been true, probably always would be true. Thankfully, he didn't really need good taijutsu as no one could ever predict him.

"Not even a little bit as cool." Naruto mumbled around his second bowl of noodles.

"So who are you matched up with?" Musume asked, having skipped out on the ceremony... mostly because she had forgotten what day it was.

"Well, I'm against Ino. And then if I beat her, Sakura has a bye so I'll be fighting... what?"

Musume's face had paled and she was starting to shake.

"You don't think I can beat them?" Naruto asked, incredulous but then starting to get nervous when she didn't say anything.

"Minato!" Musume snapped, making the Hokage inhale ramen broth and start to choke.

Minato looked at her with leaking eyes, wheezing.

"How could you let this happen?"

"It was random." Naruto protested, confused.

"Sure it was." Musume snorted. She turned back to Minato. "How could you let him battle those two
weaklings? How is he supposed to show off his skills without looking like a totally bully?"

"It really was random..." Minato protested.

Musume ignored him. She had put up with his ignorant, stupid presence for Naruto's sake, but now that she was doubly annoyed with him there was no way she was staying. Especially with the seemingly deep-seated human satisfaction of having another female sharing in her misery. "Come on Naruto."

"But.. ramen!" Naruto protested as he was pulled away from his sixth bowl.

"Where are you going?" Minato asked suspiciously.

"We are going to find those girls. You know where they would be, don't you Naruto?" Musume said absently as she pulled him out of the restaurant.

"Well, probably. Sasuke was saying something about a meeting..." Naruto replied in confusion.

"Sasuke!" Musume huffed. "And he's probably fighting someone cool."

"He's fighting Kankuro and isn't happy about it." Naruto replied.

Musume stopped her charge toward the training ground to a dead halt. "What? Why?" She frowned in confusion. Kankuro wasn't all that great, was he?

"Well, Kankuro uses puppets and beat Sasuke to a groaning pulp in the forest." Naruto grinned in memory.

"What?" Musume blinked.

"Sasuke says he can't see the strings or something and puppets are evil, etc. etc. He just kept ranting. I didn't know he could talk that long." Naruto shook his head.

"Interesting..." Musume mused. She could see chakra strings just fine. Though perhaps that was more her native demon sense and Sasuke meant with the Sharingan?

"Well, let's go. I already had to give up my ramen." Naruto pouted. "Should be for a reason." He muttered.

"What's that, Naruto-chan?" Musume said silkily. "I know that grin about Sasuke getting beat up was too pleased to be the full story."

"What!" Naruto laughed uneasily and started to briskly walk away. "I didn't pose them while they were unconscious or anything. Hahahah! That would be wrong!"

Musume smirked.
"Argh! I have three more tails then you! Why do you keep winning?" Sotan groused.

"Some things are not about power," OAF replied smugly, raking in the winnings.

"Ch!" Sotan huffed. "So... what's it like being summoned, anyway?"

"Changing the subject from your abject defeat, eh?" OAF snickered. When the buff colored fox bristled before the white continued. "I'll allow it, as the new subject is quite interesting." They both leaned forward, the collection of game tiles and bone winnings forgotten for the moment. "It is the best decision that the Lord has made since the bald monkeys sensitized to chakra. So many of us are killed, as you know... but if you are killed when you are summoned- you just come back here! Plus it is fun!"

"Fun how?" Sotan scooched forward.

"Well- you are summoned to attack humans. But you have a human on your side, too. They do those funny things with their fingers to help you. And you get their power as your own while you're there, at least a little bit."

"And the Lord's kit has a ton of power..." Sotan trailed off, his eyes going distant.

"You got it." OAF grinned.

"I think next time I might..." The two foxes stopped talking and flew backward from each other, barely missing being squished by a giant foot.

"Hey, what the..." OAF stopped, his eyes bugging out slightly. "Is that...?"

"What is she doing here?" Sotan hissed, trotting around the tanuki warily.

"Yes, kill, they don't love you like I love you, feed your mother with blood..." The giant hissed, sending reverberations through the forest.

"She has the same look that the Lord usually does." OAF commented, dancing uneasily on all four tiptoes, his two tails lashing so quickly around each other they almost tangled.

"That's... exactly what she looks like." Sotan mused, pacing after the large coondog nervously. "Can you see a human?"

"What do you mean can I see a human? Are you on some kind of drug?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. Being able to peer into the human world is one of those things that requires power not anything more ephemeral." Sotan smirked. "Ah, there it is. A small red-headed thing. Eugh... that human does not look healthy."

"The one-tail was trapped?" OAF asked, a twinkle in his eye. "But the Boss has never been fool enough to be trapped." He said confidently.

Sotan looked at the other fox with a wry smile. "No." He said finally. "But she is occupying a human and paying attention to their reality. It makes how they travel very linear, their time-sense constrained, their general appearance distracted. That was a good call."
"So what do we do about it?"

"The Lord is in no shape to battle the intruder." Sotan mused.

"But she's the only one with the tails to be able to!"

"I know." Sotan scowled. "When they are trapped in the humans they seem to be unable to cause trouble here. Plus the Lord's mate's protections seem to be holding relatively well..." He barked in frustration. "I don't know!"

"Well next time we are summoned you could tell the kit." OAF offered. "If they can get rid of the human carrying the one-tail, then problem solved, no?"

OoOoOoOo

"Hi Bastard! Pinkie! Douche-bag! Lazy Pervert!" Naruto called out, causing Team 7 to cringe and then sigh. Except for Sai, who simply smiled the same as he usually did.

"Naruto what..." Kakashi started, then noted who else was walking beside the hyperactive blond. He stiffened.

"Sensei? Is it really ok for them to come to our team meeting? I'm going to be fighting Naruto unless Ino-pig beats him." Sakura said, then coughed in a way that sounded suspiciously like 'no way'.

"It is, you fool girl, as I refuse to make Naruto look like he is kicking a puppy when he fights you."

Musume growled.

"Hrn!" Sasuke snorted, crossing his arms.

"What's wrong Sasuke?" Naruto whispered, loud enough, of course, for everyone to hear him.

"Hn!"

"Oh, because she's training someone else again, not you? I thought your brother was going to train you?"

Sasuke closed his eyes, as if in pain.

"Itachi won't be that bad! He only has one eye, ne?"

"Naruto." Musume scolded. "You should know by now that Uchiha are cheap enough that having two eyes just adds to their fun, not make them more effective at overpowering opponents. I'm sure Itachi can find multiple ways to get Sasuke stronger that involve intense emotional pain. That is what he's best at."

Naruto squinted his eyes shut. "Hmm. I'm sorry Musume-chan." He turned back to Sasuke. "But he's your brother, so he won't do anything too damaging!" Naruto grinned, though it faltered slightly at Musume's barely stifled bark of laughter.

Sasuke let out a very un-Uchiha groan.

Musume grinned evilly before turning to face the rest of Team 7. "Well. Like Sasuke grunted, I'm training you, pinkie."

"Why her, cunt-rag?" Sai asked.
"You want to train me?" Sakura squeaked at the same time.

Musume gave the pale boy a long look. She had never had any particularly strong feelings either way about Replacement-Sasuke, though he did seem to be turning said Uchiha slowly insane when they were both on one team... which was always a plus. "You know, I really want to find you funny, but I have a feeling you have a legitimate mental disease, and that would probably be against some social more." Musume mused.

She then turned back to answer Sakura. "Yes. You are pathetic." Sakura visibly wilted. "Unless Kakashi objects?" Kakashi threw up his hands surprisingly quickly. Musume narrowed her eyes. Why was he so willing to surrender? It was suspicious. "Weren't we not on speaking terms?"

"Uh..." Kakashi's visible eye flicked to the side quickly, then back to look at Musume.

"You're really that bad of a sensei? You would just let someone you hate steal away one of your students without even a 'be good'?!" Musume was almost annoyed enough to want to rescind her offer.

"..." Kakashi's eye shut in a nervous eye smile and sweat started to form on his brow.

"You weren't going to train her at all, were you? Why the hell not?" Musume stomped up to him, poking her finger into his chest. "Females are worth the time and effort just as much as males. And you can't just overpower one member of your team or rely on your own skills to get through missions!" Musume continued to wind up, endless loops of frustration boiling over and combining with her general stressed state.

"Kakashi, I..." Keisai stopped what she had been saying, as the leaves settled around her from her quick movement. She felt a chill down her back at unmistakable presence of her clan head poking the ninja in question. Both Kakashi and Musume froze, the Uchiha in confusion, Kakashi with sweat now running down the side of his face.

"You look rather... guilty." Musume noted, looking between her clan member and the Kakashi's single visible eye, which was now open and looking dilated.

"Keisai is with them all the time!" Naruto said helpfully. "She sometimes helps us train, but usually her and Kakashi go off somewhere..."

"Him!" Musume burst out in surprise.

"Um..." Keisai started, but shrugged helplessly when she could find nothing to say.

"Oh, that hardly even counts!" Musume protested. "He has a Sharingan!"

"Implanted!" Keisai protested hotly.

"You are splitting hairs, kiddo." Musume growled.

"What?" Naruto looked between the three adults, turning to the other genin, but they were no help. "Is this about the baby?"

Everyone looked at him in shock.

"Or the marriage?" Naruto hazarded.

"How do you know that?" Keisai asked, scandalized, right as Musume burst out "Marriage!"
"Heh heh!" Naruto looked pleased with all the horrified attention. "Trade secrets!"

Musume was torn between being proud and wanting to strangle the brat. "Wedding?" She growled instead.

"Uh... in a few weeks. That is, if you approve our proposal." Keisai said nervously, moving closer to Kakashi. Musume's eyes pinched closed when the stoic copy nin wrapped his hand around Keisai's protectively.

"Of course I approve." Musume sighed. "I'm beginning to get the feeling that only Itachi and Shisui actually read the damn proposal. All up in arms about something that they don't even understand at all!" She pumped her fist into the air in frustration. "Why such a sheep mentality?" She bemoaned.

"You approve?" Keisai asked in stunned disbelief.

"Ask me one more time and I'll say 'no'." Musume grumbled.

"Thank you!" Keisai squealed, glomping her surprised clan head.

"Um..." Musume held her arms out to the side helplessly, though fortunately it was soon over.

Keisai ran back to her fiancé and snuggled up against him. "See, it wasn't that bad." She said, beaming. Kakashi put his arms around her slowly and then looked up at Musume, a complex expression in his one visible eye.

"I have to go." Musume said quickly, starting off. She suddenly stopped and pointed at Sakura. "I'll see you here tomorrow at dawn. And bring that blond friend of yours." Sakura opened her mouth in protest. "No buts! I don't care what your current squabble is, bring her or I will do terrible things to everything you hold dear. Ask Kakashi." She snapped, before whirling on one foot and running away as fast as she could and not slip into demon-space. At this rate, if she did, she would immediately give birth.

She was feeling a maelstrom of emotions, majority hormonally driven so she could ignore them, but some were all hers. She was growling and snapping to herself and not really paying attention to where she was going, which is why when she tripped she went crashing through two trees before smacking into a third. "First fox's hairy ballsack!" She snarled incoherently, untangling herself from the trees and pouncing on what she had tripped on. "Oh, you have got to be kidding me.

They had been knocked apart, but it was obvious that Uchiha Itachi and Uchiha Shisui were acting like slightly more than 'just friends'.

"Of course. Awesome. This makes my day." Musume punched a tree so hard it exploded. She turned back to three Mangekyo eyes staring at her. She instinctively dropped into a crouch and started to snarl.

"Uchiha-sama, we can explain."

"Explain why you are making those eyes at your clan head when I specifically told you to be careful with them or explain why you are disobeying my order about Uchiha-Uchiha relationships?" Musume snarked.

Both Uchiha looked a bit guilty, but did not take off their Sharingan, nor even lower it to a more normal level.

Musume sighed, suddenly feeling tired. "I'm not mad at you two."
"You're not?" Shisui asked dubiously.

"No." Musume's eyes flicked to the trees with some chagrin. "Despite the destruction to the contrary."

"We are disobeying you." Itachi pointed out in a monotone.

"Well, I suppose. But I did say Shisui could use it with my supervision and I never mentioned it to you. I figured you would have enough sense not to show those eyes to anyone. But perhaps I should have been more explicit..."

"You knew?" Itachi asked, surprise barely coloring his voice.

Musume snorted. As if her luck was good enough that the traumatizing experience that gave Shisui his mangy eyes would not give Itachi the same. Especially since the one thing Uchiha had bigger than their egos and tendency towards being totally emo was a misplaced guilt complex.

"But... we were..."

"Lalala! No details. Can't handle that right now. Anyway, no children, no foul in my mind. You two won't be making inbred babies with each other."

"That's true..." Shisui allowed. Both of their eyes relaxed back to black as they looked at each other in confusion.

"For clarity, you are sanctioning our relationship?" Itachi said slowly.

"It seems like I'm sanctioning everyone's relationships but my own." Musume grumbled to herself before she waved a hand dismissively. "You can always donate your sperm later." Both males choked on that. "Oh, whatever. You can do it in a cup or something." She turned around and looked at the fallen trees, strangely sad. Their long, leafy lives were over, and for no other reason than she had tripped then lost her temper. She glanced back at the two humans. "I see now why you always had such a stick up your ass. You probably enjoyed it."

Itachi pretended he could not hear her, though the blooms of red over his cheekbones showed they he was not entirely successful.

"Uchiha-sama, that goes too far." Shisui said nervously.

Musume turned back to him, her eyebrow lifting. "Oh, the oppressed asks for rights?" Shisui winced and Itachi's eye started to bleed red again. Musume grinned. "Good for you."

Shisui looked to his lover in helpless confusion again.

"It is probably impossible to understand her. Her logic is practically inhuman." Itachi said softly.

Musume looked at the Uchiha sharply, but his expression gave away nothing. "You two should know at least, that I like it when things are changed." she said finally, her eyes now watching Itachi. He had always been such a dangerous one.

"What do you mean, 'everyone but yourself'?" Shisui asked, breaking the tension.

"What?" Musume asked.

"Uh... never mind. We'll just be on our way." Shisui said nervously.
"No. You know what- I will rant to you two. We have a bond of silence, that way!" Musume said, smacking her fist into her palm. "Why is it that Minato thinks our relationship is so taboo? We are the correct sex, similar age..." In the relative sense, sort of... "already mated for kami's sake! And everyone knows about it anyway. It looks like we are hiding what we are not hiding this way, doesn't it?"

"Well..." Shisui hedged.

"Yes." Itachi replied, his lip twitching, unsure whether it wanted to curve up or down.

"Itachi!" Shisui hissed, flicking his eyes to the clan head nervously.

"She agreed to an exchange of confidences; we will not be revealed." Itachi said confidently

"When? And all she has said so far is stuff that is going to come out eventually."

Musume snorted. "You two will have to come out eventually, as well." Shisui twitched unhappily. "But it will not be I that makes that decision." She added. "That is not a fun sort of chaos- people will lose their mind to their irrational and boring prejudices. Maybe once we free Orochimaru and set him up with some young spiry lad, preferably a turned spy or a former missing nin..." Musume trailed off, smiling happily.

"That... won't happen, will it?" Shisui asked worriedly.

Musume grinned, but her teeth looked too sharp to be joyful.

"Stranger things have been made to happen." Itachi's mouth was now decided on a definite curve upward.

"Well." Shisui said carefully. "Why don't you then make something not-so-strange happen?"

Musume tilted her head to the side.

Shisui coughed. "Just make him marry you."

Musume looked at him with big eyes. "How?"

Itachi nodded to the felled and exploded trees. "You are quite angry, and quite powerful, are you not?"

Musume's slow smile lit up her face. "So I am, aren't I?" Something that was becoming easy to forget in her self-inflicted mediocrity and human-riding vacation from demon space. Something that she could make Minato remember... without hurting him too badly, of course. Her hormones and... feelings wouldn't allow for that.

"He is spurning you and making you sit in the cold like a guilty teenager when you should be treated like a precious thing." Itachi said, almost perfectly calm. Shisui started to say something, but he stilled at Itachi's raised eyebrow telling him to wait and see. "Seems silly to wait for him to make a move. Are you or are you not in favor of equality for all sexes?"

Musume's eyes narrowed, her rage coming back to the forefront from the simmer it had calmed to. "I have a dandelion head to see about an attitude problem." She said, right before dashing off so quickly it seemed she had teleported- or used Body Flicker.

"You are good." Shisui said in awe. Itachi's lip finished its curl into a full self-satisfied smirk.
“Someone has to control her. The Hokage certainly has no clue how.” Itachi replied easily.
It was almost time. He could feel it. All that needed to happen was a trigger. When would it be? When would be too soon?

The darkness was beginning to bore him.

OoOooOoOO

"If you don't marry me and acknowledge that we are mates, I will flatten your house, steal your children and raise them as Uchiha." Musume threatened.

"But I only have one child, and he's already an adult, legally speaking..." Minato trailed off in confusion. Considering that he had been accosted in the middle of a coffee break with no warning, he felt like that was a pretty reasonable response. What in the world was she talking about?

Musume glared at him, waiting for it.

"What!" Minato gasped, his hand going to his chest as he listed sideways slightly.

"Yes." Musume eyed him, still a bit too angry to be concerned... though she was getting there.

"You're... you're pregnant?" Minato said weakly.

"Yes."

"That's... I mean..."

Musume closed her eyes, pretty sure she would be unable to control her desire to raze the village if she was rejected again... she was almost literally startled out of her skin when arms wrapped around her and squeezed her tightly.

"Oh, Musume, that's wonderful."

Musume looked down at her mate, relaxing a tenseness she hadn't really realized she had been carrying for the past seven months. "Yeah?" She whispered.

Minato kissed her on the mouth gently and then looked into her eyes. "Yes, definitely."

Musume melted into the embrace, not caring that her human hormones were making her act irrationally, at least while they were making her happy. "That's good."

"Marry me, Uchiha Musume?" Minato asked.

"Ok." She smiled back.

"We can have the wedding right after the chuunin exams."

"No!" Musume shouted, causing her mate to look at her in shock. Visions of giant snakes and sand demons trampling her spouse as he finally acknowledged her to the village sent a shiver of horror down her spine. But she couldn't give that as a reason. "We don't want to overshadow Naruto." She said desperately. "And Keisai and Kakashi are already getting married this month." She remembered with relief. "We should wait."
"Hmm. Good points." Minato mused. "But when's the baby due?"

"Well, babies..."

"What! How many?" Minato asked.

"Six." She felt him sag alarmingly. "Twins, you idiot." She smacked him gently on the head, though a large part of her was saddened she couldn't really tell him the truth.

"Twins?" Minato got a silly grin on his face. "But people will know that we were involved before marriage, if we don't do it soon."

"Little late for that..."

Minato looked down at her incredulously. "How pregnant are you?"

"Um... eight months?" She hazarded a guess. In this timeline less, of course, in 'real time' but that one in particular had been speeding things along. And demons didn't take as long to 'cook' as it were as humans usually did. "I don't know."

Minato took one of his arms from around her waist to pinch the bridge of his nose.

"Besides, people already knew about our nightly activities." Musume continued pragmatically. "After I did the Hyuuga thing wearing only your nightshirt."

"Who told you that?" Minato asked, somewhat horrified but more resigned.

"Naruto."

"Of course."

OooOOoOoO

Naruto kept punching the log that was stuck in the ground, frowning as the chakra inhibitors strapped to his arms clanked together. After they ripped from where they were stuck to his sweaty skin, of course. He looked over at his sensei, whom his father had assured him was the best of the best when it came to taijutsu training. Naruto didn't really see how this Gai-sensei could be... he looked rather like the wilted spinach Musume-chan kept buying saying it would give them strength or something, but then never ate. The green-clad nin was practically crying and had barely gotten the 'punch this pole' command out before choking up.

"I can do this all day!" Naruto finally burst out when his stomach started to growl. "How is it supposed to help if it isn't a challenge?"

A manic fire sparked into life in the black eyes. Naruto flinched involuntarily. "How do you expect to be a genius of hard work with all this complaining!" He snapped, his somewhat shaggy bowl cut wobbling dangerously.

"I just want to do well in the chuunin exams..." Naruto said with uncharacteristic quietness. He jumped when the jumpsuit-wearing nin collapsed and started bawling. "Um... there, there." Naruto patted one shoulder awkwardly.

"My cute..." Gai sobbed.

"Cute what?" Naruto grumbled. There was nothing cute about this whole thing.
Sakura and Ino were waiting in the field, glaring at each other.

"Why did you bring me here, forehead girl? Is this your idea of a prank? It's not very funny."

"No! She said to be here, and Kakashi-sensi got really pale when I asked him what she would do to me if I didn't come. Nothing rattles Kakashi!" Sakura huffed.

"Well, I'm..."

"Hello kits."

"Ah!" Both girl shrieked in surprise before whipping around and pointing at the dopey smile of Uchiha Musume. "You're late!"

"Am I?" Musume mused. "Well... that's not totally unexpected, I suppose." It was a wonder she remembered to come at all... heh...

When the Uchiha didn't say anything further for almost a full minute, Sakura cleared her throat. No change. "Um... Uchiha-sama, you said to meet you for training?"

"Oh, right!" Musume shook her head and focused on the two girls. "I'm really going to hate this more than you will. It pains me deeply, but sacrifices must be made so Naruto gets a decent fight."

"I don't..." Ino started, just as Sakura said, "Is this really..."

"Tsukuyomi." Musume intoned, catching both girls with her spinning eyes and watching dispassionately as they fell over catatonic. She tapped her forehead and put the seal back in place. Wouldn't want that to happen by accident!

"Uchiha-sama..." a hesitant voice came from behind the gate to the park.

"Yes...?" Musume turned around, looking at the girl with the buns on the side of her head. What the hell was this one's name? "Er.. Leia. No... no... um... Chun Li?"

"Tenten." The girl snapped, then closed her mouth and biting her lip.

"Tenten!" Musume nodded. She hadn't had much interaction with this girl... she had a disturbing tendency towards cutting herself to pieces experimenting with new blades before she got to chuunin. "Yes, so...?" Musume prompted.

"Um... what did you do to them?" Tenten asked warily, leaning to look around the older kunoichi.

"Oh, nothing really. They're just in a gengutsu." When Tenten looked at her in horror, Musume clarified somewhat stiffly. "It's for training."

"You can't just put the heir of another clan under a gengutsu..." Tenten trailed off weakly. "How long will it last?"

"Eheh." Musume scratched the back of her head. "All day. It probably will wear off in time for dinner."

"Probably?"

"Yes?" Musume turned back to the two passed out girls and tapped her chin with a finger.
"Probably."

"Um... actually, I wanted to talk to you about something else." Tenten straightened, coming almost to attention.

"Ok." Musume turned back to the young ninja and waited.

"Well... do you know my teammate?"

"Neji?" Musume asked, feeling very pleased that she remembered the kit's name. Well, not quite a kit anymore, as he was now the acting-head of the decimated clans.

"No." Tenten looked annoyed. "Lee."

Musume thought that name sounded familiar... "Oh! Mini-Gai. With the big eyebrows."

"Yes." Tenten said with some relief. "He got poisoned on a mission we went on to Wave. Well, we all did, but it was designed to drain chakra and he doesn't have any, you see, or his coils are messed up, rather, and Tsunade has been trying to help him, but he's really messed himself up because he opened all his gates to fight against this missing-nin and..."

"Whoa, whoa." Musume cut her off, putting her hands out to ward off the string of words. "Why do I care?"

Tenten glared at Musume, but the killing intent barely made the demon itch. "Because I talked to Naruto and he said you increased his coils!"

"And...?" Musume prompted.

"So you can do it for Lee, too. Tsunade says she can't help him, it was a birth defect."

"Why are you coming to me now?" Musume asked dubiously.

"He can't get rid of the poison all the way because of his coils, and it's killing him." Tenten looked like she was about to cry. "He's an idiot, but he tries so hard..."

Musume shifted her weight a bit and blamed her growing kits for the spark of emotion she felt. "Well, that was sort of dangerous, and really a special circumstance..." She prevaricated. More accurately, she had figured out how to open Naruto's coils through trial-and-error, killing him many times in the process. "Also, Tsunade doesn't really like me much. I doubt she would want me interfering in her stuff."

"Tsunade told us that we might want to consider saying goodbye." Tenten sniffed. "Gai-sensei took on Naruto today to try to think about something else for a while, but I can tell he isn't into it. He didn't talk about the 'power of youth' or comment on the hyperactive knucklehead's energy at all."

"Mmhmm." That did sound serious. "So... again, why do I care?" Musume asked, bored.

"Gai-sensei can't train Naruto well if he's not into it." Tenten wheedled.

"Uh-huh." Musume started to pick her teeth. Not like Naruto really needed training to make chuunin, unlike the two useless lumps over in the corner. She looked at their collapsed forms in disgust.

"If you did Gai-sensei a favor, I'm sure he would train those two." Tenten changed tactics.

"Hmm..." That might be good... and certainly amusing. In all the loops, the two prissy girls rarely got...
their acts together, and when they did, it was much too late to be helpful to the village.

"You could at least take a look." Tenten begged. "What's the worst that could happen?"

"I could easily kill him." Musume replied seriously.

"He's already dying." Tenten riposted stubbornly.

Musume sighed. She had cleared some time to deal with these two this morning... which she had spent with Minato. And then she had spent some more time with Minato... by this point she had already missed most of the meeting the Uchiha were having with various Council members about repealing the marriage law. Not that she cared if it was repealed now anyway. She felt a general sense of well-being settle over her. "Fine."

"Yes!" Tenten pumped a fist into the air. "He's in the long-term care ward at the hospital."

"Lead away." Musume gestured generously.

OoooOOOooOOo

"Hey, Tsunade." Musume called to the slug sannin, narrowing her eyes at the woman's guilty start. "Long time no see." The Uchiha said suspiciously.

"Uchiha-sama." Tsunade replied frostily, recovering and turning from the bedside of a kunoichi. Or at least, Musume assumed it was a kunoichi. This wing of the hospital was segregated from the general admittance ward and the woman on the bed had that somewhat dead look to her eyes that many ninja wore who were not as awesome and/or insane as her favorite people.

"Tsunade-hime." Tenten said from behind the Uchiha head. "I know that you said that you couldn't do anything for Lee, but Naruto said that Uchiha-sama did something to his coils and I thought..."

"I told you that anything at this point is as like to kill him as to help him." Tsunade said, her eyebrow twitching as she shooed them out of the room, spreading her arms as if to hide the woman behind her. Musume craned her head over her shoulder and looked back into the other room curiously. It seemed like a perfectly normal pregnant female human to her. Maybe this was one of those privacy things? Tsunade looked like she was actually sweating trying to hide the female, though, which really, really made Musume want to investigate.

"I know you said that, Tsunade-hime. But you also said that he only had days to live and wouldn't be able to even see... see the chuunin exams." Tenten replied, her breath hitching.

"True." Tsunade sighed. "Have you asked Gai for permission? He is the boy's acting guardian." She closed the door and looked at Musume suspiciously. Musume tried to pay attention to the conversation... but... mystery!

"Gai-sensei was incoherent and crying on Naruto's shoulder." Tenten said bleakly. Musume's eyes flicked to Tenten and she winced at that- wow, poor kid. She would have to take Naruto out to ramen after this... assuming she wasn't fighting off Gai after killing his student, of course. Suddenly this seemed like a bad idea. Worse idea.

"Maybe we should get the Hokage's permission, then." Musume asked nervously. Surely Minato would put a stop to this? Or at least take responsibility off of her.

"I've never known you to hesitate before, Musume-chan." Tsunade purred maliciously. "It seems there is something outside of your abilities."
Musume felt a spark of rage. "There is nothing beyond my abilities." She growled, barely stopping from saying the 'human' that would have so naturally rolled off her tongue. She slammed abandoned the female's room and marched down the corridor to open the door to Mini-Gai's sick-room, growling even lower at the satisfied smirk on Tsunade's face. She'd show her, the arrogant, annoying...

Lee was lying comatose on the bed, sweating and pale. He looked pathetic and Musume put aside her other thoughts for a moment to focus on him. She walked over to hims side, looking at him with her deeper vision. She could see the poison in his system; a sickly glow eroding his twisted channels and eating away at his entire essence.

"Uchiha-sama, thank you so much. He hasn't been conscious for the last ten hours..." Tenten stopped when the Uchiha glared at her. Why had the fool girl waited this long? It was almost too late for any intervention besides a resurrection technique.

"You, quiet." Musume snapped. She snagged a chair and pulled it angrily to the bedside. Her hand reached out to the sickly boy, feeling out the poison inside him. This might actually be easier than she had originally thought- this was the same poison those puddle-twins had gotten Naruto with in more loops than she really wanted to think about. It simply needed to be burned out with chakra. Which... the boy had none of.

Musume checked her belly cautiously, spread her awareness more evenly between dimensions. Her babies were running out of room and annoyed by it, but not in any distress that she could see from her chakra manipulations. As long as she only used her human chakra, only in the boy's body and went slowly, she should be fine.

The touch of the poison was an annoying in its familiarity, but she ignored it. Instead she let her consciousness run through the boy's coils, smashing through the places where the chakra was pooling and stagnating. It was a gross but satisfying sort of feeling, like lancing a boil. Soon the chakra was flowing, though not smoothly. It was much easier than what she had killed Naruto doing so many times as she was not trying to allow the boy to channel all the chakra of a legendary beast. All she needed to do was punch a few holes in his native chakra system.

After that, it was a tiny push of chakra in a familiar twist and the poison was gone. She felt a tiny flow from her belly and panicked, but her babies were all sitting happily. She frowned a bit in confusion. Ignoring that for now, Musume opened her eyes with a sigh. Maybe she should just curl up in a cave until the babies were born. It would certainly be less stressful.

"Ah!"

Musume almost fell off her chair in surprise, which was fortunate, as she would have otherwise been hit on the head by Lee's wildly flying fist.

"Lee!" Tenten exclaimed happily, leaping over the bemused Musume and landing on top of a wild-eyed Lee.

"Ugh." Lee grunted as he tried to pry his teammate off of him. "Tenten, what?"

"How do you feel?" Tsunade asked, a curiously blank look on her face.

"I feel... good." Lee blinked in surprise. "Why?"

"Uchiha-sama healed you, Lee." Tenten replied happily.

"I didn't know that she was a medic-nin." Lee said in confusion, looking toward the now bored clan
head who was wandering out of the room. "Hey! Uchiha-sama."

Musume turned back. "I feel like I left something important somewhere." She said. "I really should be going."

Tsunade coughed and it sounded a lot like 'bullshit'.

"You did leave Sakura and Ino passed out in a field this morning." Tenten said helpfully.

"Shit!" Musume cursed, looking out the window at the dark sky. She rushed off, hoping that they weren't still there...

"Tenten! I wanted to thank her!" Lee protested. "She has restored me to my youthful self! I need to show her my good-guy smile!"

OooOooOOO

"Inoichi..." Musume skidded to a stop, looking around the dark field. It was pitch black and her eyes glowed slightly red as she looked intently- but there were no teen girls passed out on the ground.

"What did you do to my daughter?" Inoichi growled, advancing close to Musume, but staying just out of the reach of her arms.

"Training." Musume replied shortly.

"You put her into a coma!"

"Temporarily." Musume protested. She paused uncertainly. "Is she still out?"

The look on his face was answer enough.

"Well, paint me black and white me and call me a panda..." Musume muttered. Inoichi grabbed the front of her shirt and she was so surprised she didn't even attempt to dodge the punch. The mental attack that came after it, however, she ducked under and brushed aside. "Hey!"

Inoichi was beyond words, though, and continued to attack. Musume dodged him at purely human speeds... well, shunsin speeds, so much faster than Inoichi could manage.

"She'll be fine. Usually it doesn't last this long. Either she is a masochist or... uh..." For once Musume realized it would probably be wise to not say 'she is too much of an idiot to learn what I set her to learn and break free'. Inoichi already looked like the masochist comment had put him over the edge.

Inoichi stopped, panting. With one last gulp of air he stood up from his fighting crouch. "The Council will hear of this. There will be consequences."

"Ok." Musume agreed readily. There usually were. But rarely did she have to actually pay attention to them. Plus- she was almost ninety percent certain that this technique would move the useless duo from marriage bait to decent, if not good nin. And who could do anything but thank her for that?
"You must kill soon or I will cease to exist. Do you want to disappoint your mother?"

Sotan hit his head against the ground. "I hate this damn demon. She practically has me driven to killing sprees."

"Yup." OAF agreed.

"Why does she have to constantly rant like that? It's annoying! Have some sense of awareness for what dimension you are in!"

"Yes, yes." OAF sighed. "Move."

"It's not decent. Especially in another's marked territory. Can't she smell! And has she no imagination? At this point I could say her entire speech by heart. There's only so many ways you can say the same thing and this has been going on for weeks I'm about to bite her right on the butt!"

"Listen." OAF snapped. "No matter how much you rant, you are still in check. Move or cede the game."

"I'm not..." Sotan stopped with something close to relief as the raccoon dog started to howl.

"YES! That's right!" The booming voice shook the landscape, though it had an uncomfortable slithery tone to it unlike the fiery kyūbi's voice. "Now, turn towards the town. They are all busy, easy prey!"

"Does she mean the Lord's pet town?" Sotan asked nervously. They watched the tanuki head towards the small flame burning fiercely in the distance- their Lord's chakra.

"Oh shit!" The two foxes winced.

"Why now?" OAF wailed, looking down with a pout at the large pile of earnings- including enough energy to give him another tail- that were just sitting there.

"We have to warn her. She has been almost completely unable to pay attention to this world so far into her pregnancy. Especially with being on such high alert in the human realm." Sotan scrambled after the giant one-tail demon.

Tails twitching once in indecision, OAF scooped up the earnings and then skipped after the buff colored fox and the sand demon.

OooOoOooo

Musume twitched and Minato put a hand on her arm. "Inoichi?" He asked her.

Musume looked nervously over at the other clan head out of the corner of her eye and nodded. A chill ran up her spine when the interrogation commander's eyes narrowed. He had been trying to invade her mind more or less subtly for the past month. She was beginning to think she would give birth from sheer nerves... fortunately he had been toning it down a bit now that she was showing. A weakness on his part... but a convenient one for her.

"What's his problem anyway?" She hissed. "I'm sure that his daughter improved. And she was only
out for two days, anyway. There was plenty of time for him to train her in the clan jutsu before the final. It's been weeks can't he just get over it?"

Minato sighed and sat back in his judging chair. "Only you would say 'just two days'." He grumbled. "And it's going to take him a lot longer than a few weeks to get over it. You completely changed her personality."

"He's very welcome." Musume sniffed.

"Musume! He has nothing to thank you for!" Minato groaned, rubbing his forehead.

"What? I spent at least forty minutes crafting that jutsu! It is a marvel of super-fast training." Musume huffed.

Minato raised an eyebrow at her.

"Ok, maybe more like forty seconds. But even so, it was designed to teach them all the chakra stuffs and jutsus that I know, which is a lot. I mean, the ones that would work for them and be safe, of course." She added at her fiancé's(!) sharp look. She smiled at the thought of it, even though that wasn't exactly the best response.

Fortunately she had a handy distraction available. "Oh, look- there she is now! Give my brat hell Ino!" Musume yelled and waved. Down below in the stadium Ino stalked toward the judge and didn't bother turning around as she gave the Uchiha head the finger.

"First match- Yamanaka Ino vs. Namikaze Naruto!"

OoooOoOo

"Hi Ino!" Naruto said cheerfully. "Uh... Ino?"

"I am not weak. I will destroy you." Ino said flatly.

"O...k...?" Naruto replied weakly.

"Match... begin!"

"Whoah!" Naruto dodged quickly to avoid the onslaught of flying kunai from the deadly serious kunoichi in front of him. "Ino- we're from the same village!" He cried in dismay, having to do several handstands, summon a clone to pull him aside, substitute with a rock and leap into the air to avoid Ino's many weapons. Which seemed to be charged with some sort of invisible energy. Finally he could not avoid them and several kunai embedded in his arms and shoulder.

OooOoooo

"Naruto!" Musume wailed, watching the brat being impaled. She had to admit that the girl was good... maybe too good? No, nothing like that would make her Naruto anything but a bit annoyed. "Naruto?" She tilted her head, leaning back into Minato's comforting embrace as she saw him fighting... the air.

"The Yamanaka clan gets into the mind, you know that Musume." Minato chided gently. "Don't worry for Naruto, we've trained him well."

"We haven't trained him at all." Musume grumbled. Though seeing him fighting invisible enemies did show off his newly improved taijutsu skills. After Lee had been cured the two green wonders
had worn Naruto to the ground with training. Lee wanted to get back up to his old level and was ridiculously excited to have a partner interested in 'hard work' and 'pure taijutsu'. Even though Lee could do ninjutsu now, he refused to on principle.

Down below Naruto seemed to have figured out the pattern of Ino's movements and was more consistently hitting for the real girl, not the enemies only he could see. Naruto paused in his fights when Ino jumped away. He tilted his head and summoned a horde of clones. They all scattered around the arena and began to form mini tornadoes that swirled up the dust, obscuring the field. Musume could still see... sort of. But everyone else, including Ino, could not.

"Do you think he is working off of smell?" Musume mused.

"Ino should know enough gengutsu that she can incorporate all the senses." Minato disagreed.

"This is the mind-reader's daughter?" The Kazekage asked from beside them in the Kage box.

"Yeah." Musume replied.

"I am impressed that she is standing up so well against your child." The Kazekage said mildly.

"All of Konoha's clans are quite skilled." Minato replied just as mildly- with the same razor edge, of course.

Musume rolled her eyes and looked back at the field. She sighed and settled down for a long wait. "I want to fight." She pouted.

"One: You are pregnant and need to be resting, not putting the babies in danger. Two: You never can fight anyone for more than thirty seconds before they piss themselves in fear." Minato scolded.

Musume scowled. If she had known that Minato would get this overprotective, she might have kept the whole pregnancy thing a secret and birthed them all into the demon realm. Believe it!

OoOOoOoOO

By lunch Musume felt like she was about to drool she was so bored. She had seen/ lived through so many iterations of the fights in question that there really were no surprises after Ino. Though the girl had lost to Naruto, it had been by a narrow margin. It boiled down to the fact that Musume had been training Naruto for his whole life, but Ino for several months (subjectively) and any watered down version of Musume, no matter how many mind-tricks, was not going to beat Naruto.

Shikamaru had managed to lose in a spectacular method that was sure to get him promoted without him having to do more than stand around for one battle, though Sai was always fun to watch. He had some real artistic talent and it was unashamed eye-candy jutsu. Temari had beaten the snot out of Choji, though it had taken her a while to get over being disgusted about being chased around by a giant human boulder.

Well, ok- this Sasuke/Kankuro fight was pretty fun.

"Go Kankuro!" Musume whooped, jumping up and down.

"Musume!" Minato hissed. "Root for your own village- your own clan!"

"Pfft!" Musume replied dismissively. "Puppets are too cool. Look at them make the Sharingan totally useless! I need to learn this skill."
"Are you not the Uchiha clan head with the Sharingan unlocked to its highest level?" The Kazekage asked, looking genuinely confused.

"Yes, yes." Musume waved him off, focusing on the fight. Kankuro had usurped all of Sasuke's weapons and had turned them into a giant blade-puppet. "Look at that ingenuity!"

Sasuke spared her an annoyed glare before he had to dodge a storm of senbon and kunai. "Katon: Hoosenka no Bushin!"

"Ooo!" Musume cooed. "That's new!" Apparently Itachi and Sasuke working together could lead to good things. She was worried in between smiling happily at the black burning clone-Sasuke kamikaze-ing against the puppet and its master.

"Is she always like this?" The Kazekage asked with an odd mix of trepidation and disbelief.

"Yes." Minato replied without expression.

OooOOoooo

"Mother, I am trying to watch Sasuke." Itachi said tonelessly.

"How could you, Itachi?"

"I did train him, after all. Our clan head helped me with some Sharingan training techniques."

"Don't you even mention that... woman!" Mikoto roared. "And don't change the subject. You know very well what I'm talking about."

"Uchiha-sama has yielded the law to my hands. She agreed that it was a good convalescent vocation." Itachi murmured, his lip twitching as he watched Sasuke use their new cloning technique to great effect. His mother's emotional disturbance was an added bonus. "Perhaps not intentionally, but when she did not arrive at the meeting I had to take over for the sake of this very important law."

"Itachi!"

"No, Mother. It is how it should be. You will just have to find a nice girl to settle down with." Itachi cut her off without looking from the match.

"A nice what?"

"Ah, Mikoto-san. Did you not read section 23 subsection 1g?" Shisui asked innocently, whipping out a much-worn copy of the law. Fighting for it to be kept for the past several weeks had lead to a lot of highlighting. Fortunately Musume's notes on previous versions of this and other Clan laws of similar nature had meant there was a lot of legal precedence that had to be shot down, one argument at a time.

Itachi smirked slightly, but he didn't look around. And it was also a somewhat sad smirk around the edges. This would surely be the death of the law- but it was a calculated risk. No one actually wanted the Uchiha marrying and having kids post haste. Especially with that clause in it that "consummation" had to be "observed" before the marriage would be considered viable. The thought of his mother doing... that was bad enough without having to literally watch.

OoOooooOO

Sakura's entrance onto the field caused some stir in the audience- she had long, flowing pink hair
after all. But right after the match was begun, the doubters were silenced.

"She used my favorite area effect jutsu!" Musume purred happily. No one else shared her enthusiasm. The floor of the stadium was turned to molten lava.

"That... seems rather chakra intensive." The Kazekage said finally.

"Oh, you would be surprised." Musume replied happily. She didn't elaborate. There was impressing the enemy and then there was admitting that you had taught an 11 year old a jutsu that summoned a volcano god. It really was more of a control jutsu than a power one, though it was deceptively awesome that way.

Minato gave her a knowing look, but didn't say anything.

Down below Sakura rushed Naruto, her fist glowing. She leapt and then punched down at Naruto, who sprung out of the way. Behind him a shower of lava shot into the sky before hitting against the seals on the stadium protecting the crowd.

"I don't think she'll be able to keep it up for very long." Musume added. "Even though it is relatively chakra-lite for what it is, it is still rather intense." Even as she said it, there were ripples in the lava indicating the volcano-kami's loss of interest and the edges were cooling back to grass and sand. A fact that had Musume rather annoyed. How come it had turned to glass when she dismissed it?

Naruto gratefully retreated to the edges of the field... except that it had been turned to grass not because the jutsu was failing.

"Ah, very clever." Minato smiled approvingly. It was becoming clear that most of the field had been changed by a genjutsu, not the lava jutsu, and that some parts of the grass were in fact other earth jutsus designed to trap in various ways. He turned to Musume worriedly. "How much did you train this girl?"

"Same as the Yamanaka. But Sakura has always had better chakra control and a more fiery temper." Musume replied, tilting her head to the side and looking deeper into the intricate web of thin chakra threads supporting all the various jutsus. "I can't imagine she has much more planned with how elaborate her opening savoy is." Musume said dubiously.

OooOOoo

Four hours later Naruto had defeated the pink-haired kunoichi and then promptly collapsed, snoring. Musume had almost followed him.

Temari shrieking and running away from Sai who was wielding a paint-brush brought her out of her stupor. Temari was leaping and twisting desperately over Sai's brush-strokes.

"Don't you dare you artistic freak!" Temari howled. A drop of ink landed on her fan. "Not again!" A mosquito burst from the paper of her fan and swarmed Temari. She swatted it out of the way with the wood of her fan but was not able to avoid Sai as he sketched a lion on the edge of her weapon. "Kami curse it!" She howled, blowing it away with a large gust of wind.

"Temari... why are you so upset?" The Kazekage muttered.

"And why is Sai not using his scrolls?" Minato added.

"It's more fun to see her whining?" Musume hazarded. Both kages turned to glare at her. Except subtly, of course. "Or not, sure." She grumbled, sitting back and sighing.
"And for the final match- it will be a three-way battle between the victors of their respective matches: Namikaze Naruto, Temari of the Sand and Uchiha Sasuke."

The three ninja started in a rough circle, facing each other. Naruto was bouncing on his feet, fully recovered after his nap. Temari was attempting to look bored, but was eying her sometime-teammate with a great deal of trepidation. Sasuke was scowling. It was his 'no one is paying attention to me again' scowl, version G. On a field with two kage's children, the slightly above average heir of the former Uchiha clan head was not worth much note. Sadly, no one understood why this made Musume chuckle. But they were used to it... by now even the Kazekage.

"Ready, begin!" The three sprung apart and began to circle each other, no one willing to make the first...

"Kage Bunshin!" Two dozen clones burst into existence, a dozen running toward each opponent.

"Katon: Grand Fireball!" Sasuke's technique blew away half of the clones and he engaged the remaining six. Naruto's taijutsu skills showed through even in his clones and soon Sasuke was glowing with fire and whipping streams of it with his every move.

Meanwhile Temari lashed out with her fan and sliced through a good number of clones and the fireball that had burned though the clones and then gone right past into her.

Sasuke flashed through seals quickly and two dragons roared into being and flamed toward the other two opponents. Temari swept the air with her fan and Naruto cut at the one coming at him with a weak pseudo-rasengan.

"Oh, no..." Musume and Minato groaned in horror. The flame/compressed air sparked against the rush of air literally fanning the flames and the resulting mega-jutsu escaped the control of Sasuke, who must have been at least planning for such a possibility as he was well out of the way. Temari quickly brought her fan up and was blown up and back. Naruto, however, was swept up into the inferno.

The arms on both Minato and Musume's chairs cracked under the pressure their fingers were exerting.

The fireball was expanding- it looked like it might be too much for the protective seals to hold... and then it burst apart, a golden tinted tan form whipping though the remaining flames elegantly.

"Demon!" The Kazekage shouted, jumping to his feet.

"It's a sand demon!" Musume gasped, going to the ledge and almost jumping off. "Oh, wait. That's just..." She clamped her teeth over the name. "One of Naruto's fox summons."

"There is no such thing as fox summons!" The Kazekage snarled.

"Your spies are pathetic." Musume replied seriously, earning a glare from both kages. "What? It's not like Naruto's been subtle about it."

"First foxes hairy balls!" Sotan groused, shaking the burnt tips of his fur off and regrowing it. "I did not sign up for this!"
"Thank you for coming to my aid, fox-san." Naruto bowed. "That was even scarier than the flame traps Musume always puts me in. I know she is controlling those and will only kill me if she wants to."

"You can understand me?" Sotan blinked. "I mean, you're welcome!"

"Of course I can talk to you, I summoned you." Naruto pointed out as the two of them dodged collateral damage from Temari and Sasuke.

"Yes, of course." Sotan agreed readily. That seemed to be true now, but he wasn't used to it yet. Humans had only been able to hear growls before without the contract. Only the Lord seemed to have gotten the knack, and that only recently. Probably due to her time looping? It was good evidence that it had actually happened anyway.

"Are you going to help me fight or not?" Naruto pouted.

Sotan looked at the brat with round eyes. "Really?"

"Obviously!" Naruto jumped up and down, waving his arms in annoyance. "You're making me look bad!"

"I really, really want to- but I came to tell you about the demon in the forest." Sotan said regretfully. But loudly. He did want his Lord to hear as well.

"What?" Naruto blinked, sending some clones to ward off the other two fighters.

"A great demon of sand, the tanuki Shukaku." Sotan reported, directing his voice toward the Kage's box. "It is being held in a human."

Naruto was speechless for several seconds, a measure of how serious the perceived threat. "We need bigger summons! I'll leave a clone to finish up here, but we have to go!"

"Naruto! Take this seriously! A clone can't defeat us." Temari stopped her battle with Sasuke, apparently realizing that clones had been doing just that.

"Hn!" Sasuke said in disgust.

"You know, it's been there for a while. I'm sure you have plenty of time to finish up here..." Sotan protested weakly.

"We need the big boss fox!" Naruto said, biting his finger and slamming it into the ground.

"No! Don't do that!" Sotan raced forward, but all the speed in his five tails was no match for Naruto.

OoOoOoOo

_She was being summoned. It was something she could allow or not and she was torn. Her kit was in danger, but her mate was right. There should be no battling now, not with her unborn at risk. And the servant was correct- Shukaku had been on the edge of her senses for over a month. Likely he had come with the human encroachment._

_No, now was not a good time to be summoned._

_Something did not agree._

OoOoOoOo
"This feels really weird." Naruto said, wobbling slightly. "I think I'm only getting part of the boss-lady." He started to look rather green. "Oooo... I don't feel very good."

"Part?" Sotan squeaked.

OooOoOoOoo

Pain! The kits, they were screaming! She fell to the ground, gasping. A wave rushed out of her, but it was not the usual tsunami of demonic energy. This was almost like her life-blood. Almost like... oh no!

OoOoOoOoO

"Musume!" Minato caught her as his fiancée fell to the ground screaming, her water burst all over the stand. The Kazekage leapt onto a wall and stuck there, looking as disgusted as a man can while wearing a full mask.

"Aaaa!" Musume screamed, then snapped the air, rolling onto her side and panting.

"Musume, listen to me!" Minato pleaded with her, starting to panic as her eyes began to glow red. And not Sharingan red, either. "We need to get you to the hospital." He grabbed her up and activated the emergency seal in the hospital lobby. Or at least tried to. He blinked in bewilderment to find himself still in the stadium.

"No not-travel!" Musume hissed, then growled low in her throat.

"We have to get you to help." Minato said in near panic.

"Something always happens..." Musume muttered to herself, panting before another contraction hit and she started to scream again.

OooOoOoOooO

They were coming too quickly. They were scared and crying. (Let me out! It is time!) The siblings in the human world were coming naturally but were vibrating in sympathetic pain. She could cut off from the pull of it, but she would definitely kill the brat. She might well kill her unborn kits as well. Not acceptable!

"Move aside, my Lord!" Came a barking command. So surprised was she that, while she did not obey, she did not move against it, either. "Ieee

OooooO

Eeee!" In a poof of smoke, OAF tumbled into the stadium floor, bowling over Naruto and then Temari. Blinking, the white fox picked himself up. "Learn when to give up, you human idiot!" He barked, before passing out and disappearing with a second poof.

OoOooOoo

With a sigh, the kyuubi relaxed, her contractions now coming without the urgency and painful pulling. She grunted as the first slipped out of her, instinctively turning around to pull the film from its face, licking until a squeaky mewl of protest came from the little black kit.

(I can do this myself! I don't need anyone! I am the Destroyer!)

OoOoOoOoo
"Musume! What are you doing?" Minato gasped in shock.

Musume looked up at her mate with confusion in her eyes, slime on her lips. She looked especially confused with her tongue sticking out of her mouth. Tsunade was just behind her mate, looking very green. The sannin was staring at the umbilical cord stuck in Musume's teeth and her gaze followed the bit of flesh as Musume spit it out and it fell to the ground. "My babies?" She asked/replied.

Minato, used to her oddities, answered the question and subconsciously forgot the rest (trauma can block out all sorts of things, thank kami). He took the first twin from her grasp and set the reasonably human-looking baby next to the first. "Twin girls," He said, his face splitting in a huge smile.

"Welcome to the worlds, my little ones." Musume whispered- in both dimensions.

OoOOOo

(Ch!)
Sakura attempted to shatter the sand fist that was rushing towards her face, but the sand wrapped around her and started to squeeze. A pink-haired comet burst from the sand coffin as it melted to slag and made the tree that she had been standing on burst into flame. Sakura panted and almost fell over, but Sasuke steadied her before leaping out of the way of raining glass shards— it seemed that the sand demon could control the melted sand to some extent. The ANBU Giraffe-san put the fire out with a burst of water before it could spread.

"Listen, Love-kun." Naruto said earnestly to the boy. Since the only thing Naruto could be see of the boy inside the sand demon was the 'love' symbol that looked to have been carved into his forehead, he was sticking to the name. It really wasn't polite that no one had introduced the red-head, especially since his chuunin-exam teammates seemed to know who the possessed kid was. But it was even more impolite to call the boy 'hey you'. It didn't seem conducive to talking him down from destroying the village.

Naruto could also see one turquoise eye, currently glaring at the blond annoyance stuck to his/the demon's neck. "There are too many of us here, you can't do anything but get yourself killed." Naruto tried again.

"Killed- need to prove my existence!" Love-kun grated out, then coughed out fine sand.

Naruto banged his head against the stony exterior of the tanuki's shell.

OOooooooOO

"You cannot hurt him! He is my son." The Kazekage shouted hotly down below. His other two children's eyes shot to him in surprise before turning back to the terrifying sight of Gaara really cutting loose. Though the Leaf-nin were doing an almost equally terrifyingly good job at not dying.

"You broke the treaty sealing a demon into him, and doubly so when you brought him here." Tsunade replied coldly.

"I did not bring him here! He must have followed us. Any of my men could testify that I ordered him to stay."

"Even if we could believe your men would say anything else, are you admitting to having no control over your son?" Tsunade looked at the demon with a cross expression.

"No- I have perfect control over my son. I do not have control over the demon. Who has control over a demon?" The Kazekage protested.

"Hmm." Minato looked up briefly from where he and Jiraiya were working on a large seal array written on seven scroll seals. "You said that he had a modified Shifting Sand seal in four points?"

"I said I didn't remember." The Kazekage snapped.

"Right." Minato mused, licking the bite wound on his thumb. "Gods!" He cursed as clone-memories
came back to him. "Please take my wife to a plane of rationality! Please!"

"Fiancée." Jiraiya corrected absently. "Do you think here it would be best to use a reverse Kemda array?"

"Yes! That might just work, but only if we use..." Minato happily forgot his clone's memories for the moment.

"Maybe... but that would make him..."

"You're right, better to leave the boy some ability to reason."

"What do you mean some ability to reason?" The Kazekage put in hotly. "Who are you to meddle in the affairs of Sand anyway?"

"Your Seal Masters are welcome to join us. We would appreciate the new perspective." Minato said, his face carefully open.

The Kazekage crossed his arms and looked away. He knew that he was in no position to argue. Tsunade was right- the treaty would only still be good if Minato allowed it to be. Considering that the Konoha-nin were holding off their ace in the hole with mostly rookie genin, the Kazekage rather hoped the powerful village would want to still be friends after this.

OooOooOOO

"You don't know what it's like to be alone." Gaara argued, his body otherwise frozen, though not for long if the paleness and the sweating of the Nara clan members was an indication.

"You're right." Naruto said sadly. "I was lucky."

Gaara broke free and smashed his tail into the forest floor in irritation. His eyes then crossed and he started to sway. Inoichi and his daughter were side-by-side with their arms held up in similar poses.

"But you don't have to be alone." Naruto pressed earnestly.

"That's right. I need to prove my existence." Gaara muttered, blinking rapidly. "No? I don't need to? Who are you two? Mother is not happy..."

The two Yamanaka gasped and broke their poses, grabbing their heads.

"Only Mother wants to keep me happy."

"My mother grew up like you- her father hated her and terrible things were done to her. But you don't have to listen to that voice." Naruto pleaded with the red-head.

"No one knows me! Mother is on my side!"

Naruto stood sideways on the tanuki's head and bit his finger, pressing the blood to his other hand and asking very nicely for a moment of the Fox Lord's time.

OoOoooOo

"Not now, brat. Ask the tanuki if she has any particular thoughts on tea kettles."

OooOoOOoo
"Tea kettles?" Naruto asked in puzzlement. "Whoah!" He yelled as he and all his clones were thrown from a suddenly enraged tanuki. Gaara's eyes slid shut as an earth-shaking roar ripped through the forest.

"That's it!" Minato shouted from the sideline. "The host is no longer mentally connected to the beast! Disperse the seals."

"What's so bad about tea kettles!" Naruto cupped his hands as he yelled at the demon. "Don't you like tea?"

Another roar and a huge sandy paw slammed down to where Naruto had been standing.

"How about coffee?" Naruto yelled from behind Shukaku. The tail smashed into the round hard enough that it burst into sand and then had to reform.

"You know you need a tea kettle to heat up the water for instant ramen, right?" Naruto huffed. "Yikes!" Two arms bore down on his location. "That settles it! You are evil! Not liking instant ramen! I'll feed some delicious, heavenly ramen to Love-kun and you will be sorry!" Naruto hollered up at the giant demon, flitting out of the way just in time to avoid getting clobbered.

"Now!" Jiraiya and Minato yelled, they and five other nin activating the scrolls they held in synchrony. Blue seal energy shot up from the scrolls then turned toward the demon, whose howls of rage became more and more pained as the light swirled around her and got brighter. With a final flash the clearing was silent. So silent that the wet thump of Gaara's body hitting the ground carried to all the listening ears.

"Gaara!" Temari gasped, surprised at her concern.

"Love-kun!" Naruto wailed, running up to the limp form of the youngest Sand sibling. "He's alive!" Naruto crowed, holding aloft the non-responsive red-head in proof. "Ow!" Naruto whined as Sakura hit him so hard he flew out from under Gaara.

Sakura delicately caught the other boy and laid him gently down on the ground. "Idiot!" She snapped. "Just because he is alive doesn't mean that he doesn't have internal injuries! You need a medic-nin to look at him before you move him." She growled, her hands turning green as she did just that.

Minato walked over to the prone boy, looking down at him and tilting his head this way and that. "We'll need to keep him here to see if that seal works or not. It will probably require tweaking. Any seal made in a time of duress like that is bound to have huge flaws." Like the one he had been about to put on Naruto he subsequently discovered could lead to his son's death from overwhelming chakra if he got too upset. Minato winced internally at the thought. It could have also broken down the fabric of life and death and caused ghosts to appear as hallucinations and who knows what else. He really should have known not to mess with death gods, even if he was trying to contain the most powerful of the tailed beasts.

"No." The Kazekage flatly refused. "We did break the treaty technically with his presence, but he was not in Konoha proper by any stretch of the definition. And he only lost control of himself when you attacked him. I will not let my most powerful nin be kept by another village, no matter what treaties we have." The Kazekage could feel his heart thumping at an alarming rate. This would surely anger their ally, but if Suna did not want to be a glorified colony of Konoha, this could not happen.

"I understand." Minato replied. "How about we treat this as an exchange of sorts?"
"An exchange?" The Kazekage asked in bewilderment.

"For cultural enrichment and to solidify our alliance." Minato agreed. "Naruto, would you..."

"Yeah! I'll marry Temari, sure!" Naruto bounced up and down on his feet. Temari's mouth dropped open, too shocked to be able to decide what to do about the blond annoyance.

"That... wasn't what I was thinking..." Minato replied faintly.

"But everyone else is getting pregnant and married!" Naruto protested.

"I'm not going to marry you and I am definitely not pregnant!" Temari growled as she batted Naruto into a tree with her fan.

"I was thinking more that Naruto could stay with you in Suna while Gaara stays with us in Konoha." Minato replied, pinching the bridge of his nose with his fingers.

"Since they get along so well." The Kazekage said dryly.

Minato sighed.

OoOOooo

"So, how did it go?" Musume asked from her bed before eating another spoonful of ice cream. It was the only hospital food that was even slightly palatable. She thought getting bundled off to the hospital after she birthed everyone just fine, despite Tsunade running off as fast as she could to "take care of the demon" and not the woman giving birth. Ch! Apparently premature infants something something check up.

"Naruto is going to spend some time in Suna while we tweak the new seal we put on the Kazekage's youngest son, Gaara, who is apparently the vessel for the one-tailed beast, Shukaku." Minato sighed as he flopped down into the chair beside Musume's bed. He flopped his front half over onto the bed. Musume licked one hand free of stickiness and ran her fingers affectionately through his rough hair, making it stick up even more wildly than it usually did.

"There, there. Naruto's been off for years at a time before. And he'll only be a dropped kunai away." Musume soothed, almost more to herself. Having a bunch of other brats to worry about helped her fear of him leaving, though.

"That's not what I'm worried about."

"Oh? Then what are you worried about?" Musume asked in puzzlement.

"The Council has called a session to deal with the marriage law. And they will not let you escape this time." Minato grumbled into the pillow, waiting for the outburst.

"Ok. A bit cowardly of them to wait until I'm bedridden and have two kits hanging off my teats to put their foot down. I would have thought that law would be repealed already. It was wise to not stir up trouble while we had foreign dignitaries here for the chuunin exams. And Itachi was doing such a good job with holding them off. But I suppose it was only a matter of time."

"What?" Minato asked in confusion.

"You don't think so?" Musume asked, perking up. "Because if you think it has a chance I have a new version I like to call 'old folks procreate before you die, dammit!' What do you think?"
Minato groaned.

"Now, now, we already did, so it wouldn't apply to us. But there are those two wizened old geezers on the Council- have they ever had kids?" Musume paused. "Are they even ninja?"

"Musume... please don't make this unduly difficult." Minato pleaded.

She contemplated her mate with a cocked head. "I only grant that request when you are looking particularly haggard or I've become predictably destructive. Have either of those conditions been met?"

"Yes?" Minato asked hopefully.

Musume just grinned at him.

"How about you behave and I won't ask you why our children have scars on their cheeks." Minato raised an eyebrow.

Musume's smile dropped off her face and she regarded her mate warily. She had no idea what he was thinking or what he was getting at with the comment. She cursed herself for not even noticing. She was so used to seeing it in the mirror...

"Do you remember your mother?" Minato asked gently.

Musume hunched defensively, her fingers twitching as she tried to decide whether to pull them out of his hair, shake him, or just hold still and hope that he forgot they were tangled there. "I thought you said that we wouldn't talk about it.

"Hmm." Minato sat up and propped his elbow on the side of the bed. "We don't have to if you don't want to." Musume sighed in relief. "At least, not before this Council matter is settled. But I need to know anything you do about our children's futures."

Musume shifted guiltily. "I... I'm not totally sure what it means. I think it might be a clan mark." Technically true. She would eat the first fox's balls if that wasn't how the Uchiha got their eyes. No human was that creepy.

"It's not one I've ever heard of." Minato muttered to himself.

"Well, we'll just have to see how the kits grow." Musume replied happily. At least Minato would suffer with her. "Also, since we have now discussed it, I feel under no obligation to behave myself at this council meeting." Musume finished smugly.

"Wait a minute!" Minato yelped.

"Ah, ah. You set the terms." Musume grinned widely. She was doubly pleased- one, that this unexpected drama had turned out so well and two, now she had won a logic battle (almost as good as an actual battle, especially at the moment with the kits and the weakened body to consider).

Minato groaned and Musume let her fingers trail through his hair before patting him sympathetically on the head. At least the hospital would be good for one thing- their "testing" could be her baby-sitting while she was at the Council. Hopefully they were human enough to pass... hmm.

OoOOoOoOoOoOo

"And so we propose that the marriage law be repealed by order of the council." Uchiha Mikoto
finished. She bowed to the Council and stepped aside.

"Do you have a response, Uchiha-sama?" Minato asked, wincing a bit internally as his mate sauntered up to the podium to address the Council. He was somewhat relieved to only be the moderator for this meeting. It meant that he only had to ask the formal questions and keep things from getting too rowdy. On the other hand, he was not looking forward to today because he had to keep things from getting too rowdy. It was probably an impossible task. Especially considering what she had said earlier...

"Yes, yes I do." Musume said, putting her hands down on the podium aggressively.

Minato sighed. Of course she did. "Proceed."

Musume eyed her mate with a special twinkle in her eye that made him want to hide in his back yard and play with experimental explosive jutsu. It would be less dangerous. "I protest this whole process, actually. You have continued this charade without my presence or consent." She decided to ignore that she had been avoiding them all and not going to the meetings even though she was invited. "It is the clan head's prerogative if not sacred duty to dictate the direction the clan should go in. As the elected clan head, I feel that my decisions should have even more weight than a normal hereditary clan head as I was appointed by the will of my people."

"You weren't even born in the village!" Mikoto protested.

"Ah." Musume nodded sagely. "It does help me to have a unique third-party perspective on the issues. It allows me to see new solutions to problems."

When it looked like Mikoto was about to protest again, Minato cut in as moderator. "Uchiha Mikoto, it is your clan head's turn to speak. There is a question period after the initial presentations."

"Thank you, Hokage-sama." Musume bowed and put on her serious blank face to continue. "This law that I passed for my clan serves to integrate them more into the village and to give incentive to increase the clan numbers after the decimation that happened due to the Incident." Everyone relaxed slightly when the unpredictable clan head left it at that. "And there have been many so far that have benefited, such as Uchiha Keisai who was just married to Hatake Kakashi and is expecting a child.

"As for the charge that it puts undue hardship on the members of my clan- that is ridiculous. All clans put pressure on their members to marry and have children. I have simply put the unspoken into written word. If anything, they should be grateful. Now everyone knows exactly what to expect so far as the clan's policy on relationships." Musume finished and then sat down.

The Council members whispered with each other for a few moments. Musume could hear what they were saying if she wanted to, but didn't. It would spoil the surprise.

"The Council has deliberated on this matter for some time." The Head Councilor announced finally.

"That was barely five minutes." Musume pointed out.

The Head Councilor glared at her. "If you had deigned to show up to the other meetings, you could have better influenced our deliberations then." He snapped. "The Council has decided the following; the marriage law of the Uchiha clan will be repealed."

"You can't do that!" Musume protested hotly.

"We can and we have. Stenographer- write the following down so that we may ratify it."
Musume stood up, cutting a hand through the air angrily. "This is impinging on clan rights! It has always been that what the clan head says is law regarding their clan members, superseding anything the village proposes!"

The stenographer looked up at the Council Head patiently and with a small smirk of satisfaction, waiting for the official words.

"Clan leadership will not impinge on the personal freedoms of their members." He began.

"I could have made the males marry multiple females, or share females with other males, or be betrothed as children!" Musume barked in annoyance.

"Uchiha-sama, silence please." Minato said mildly. He just wanted it to be over, please dear kami.

"Clan heads will not tell members of the clan who they must marry, not in numbers, age, gender, or in any other form. The personal relationships of all members of this village are the business of those members alone." The Council Head finished, looking satisfied. The stenographer finished writing it with a flourish and handed it to Minato.

The Hokage shot a warning glance at his future wife, who was slouching in her chair and pouting. He quickly signed the official form and stamped it, passing it to the Council Head, who put his signature and seal on it as well. "It is now village law." Minato intoned officially.

A slow grin dawned on Musume's face. Minato's spine shuddered so impressively he thought it was trying to crawl away.

"I would like to present a petition." Uchiha Itachi said, standing up with a blank expression on his face.


"In light of the new law, I request that Orochimaru of the sannin be released to his own recognizance." Itachi said, his eye flicking to Tsunade, who predictably exploded.

"What?" Tsunade slammed her palms down on the desk, making it creak alarmingly, even as chakra reinforced as it was.

"He has been kept to attempt to 'cure' his desire for his own gender, but the new law states that personal relationships are the prerogative of the individual, not the state."

"That does not include aberration." Tsunade hissed.

Itachi lifted an eyebrow. "I do believe it does, unless you mean assaulting a child or abusing animals with sexual advances. Neither of which Orochimaru-san has been convicted of doing.

Minato blinked. "You are correct, Itachi. But what do you mean by 'released'?" Minato asked.

"Orochimaru has been kept in a zombie-like state by Tsunade in an attempt to cure his sexual desire for other men." Itachi reported.

"That is not accurate." Tsunade said shortly.

"Oh, it's accurate." Musume smirked, leaning back in her chair and lounging.

"You only think so because you coached him to say it." Tsunade snapped.
"I did no such thing." Musume replied. She looked much too pleased for that to be anything but the pure truth as far as Minato was concerned. His future wife had the look of a conspirator whose plots were coming to fruition both before schedule and better than expected.

"The law was not designed for this." The Council Head protested. "She interrupted and caused our wording to change at the last minute."

Minato looked into Musume's eyes. He noted they were half lidded in satisfaction and he wondered why she was so pleased by this. Did she not want more control over her clan? Had she really put the entire village through such mayhem to force them to assure personal freedoms? He knew that she did not desire women, so what was the big deal?

He was confused. But having grown up an orphan and a refugee, his views on appropriate relationships was nowhere near as strict as the conservative Council. He looked around at the other villagers and clan heads and saw some anger, but more approval. The Hokage squared his shoulders and guarded the paper from the Council Head's grasping hands. "Regardless of any slips at the end, it is now law." Minato intoned. "It was agreed to by the full Council and cannot be reversed without another hearing."

"And in that hearing would the subject of the marriage law be reopened?" Musume asked sweetly.

"It would." Minato nodded.

"What!" Several voices cried.

"Ohohoho! I have an especially good revision waiting!" Musume crowed. "Don't worry, Council Members! You are not too old to have precious offspring!"

Musume cackled gleefully as she jumped onto the ceiling to avoid various attacks. Fortunately, and quite tellingly, few actual ninja went after her. Though whether that was because they had more practice with not letting their feelings spur them to action, they were more aware that a Council meeting was not a time for attack (unless on wanted to end up like Fugaku) or because they agreed with Musume was up for debate.

Minato sighed and wondered if there would ever be a council meeting that ended with everyone happy. It seemed he was doomed to have to sort out shouting matches at the end of every single one. He tried to remember if anyone had ever cursed him with an interesting life. Probably an Iwa nin...

OooOoOoOoOoOo

Minato went to go check on the twins. The little girls looked up at him and grasped at the air, making him smile. He let Yoko grab the index finger of one hand and Koshin grasp the other before turning to his mother. "You know, I need to make an honest woman out of you." He mused. And then was a bit shocked at the look of horrified terror on her face. "Marry you properly, I mean." He clarified.

"Oh." Musume almost deflated in relief. "Well, here."

Minato accepted the piece of paper in confusion. He looked down at it and then back up at her in shock.

"You're the Hokage, so you can just sign it twice and have one of your ANBU file it." Musume said happily. "I know they have been following me even more than usual. Get one of the extras to go."

"But... that's... wedding?" Minato protested weakly.
"We can throw a party if you want I suppose." Musume mused. "But I'm not planning it."

"That's... not how it usually happens." Minato protested weakly. He's not entirely sure why he expected any different though.

"You keep making all these demands! Is it really so difficult to just acknowledge me already?" Musume growled.

"No, no." Minato replied hastily. "This will work wonderfully. Excellent idea."

"Good." Musume huffed. "And whoever complains can plan the party."

Chapter End Notes

In the original manga, Shukaku was sealed in a tea kettle before being sealed into Gaara, apparently a nod to an old Japanese tanuki legend. (What you learn looking up on Narupedia!).

The title of this chapter is a nod to Trigun, a most awesome anime: "This world is made... of love... and peace!" (Anyone who does not cackle at that scene is wrong. Anyone who doesn't know what Trigun is needs to go watch it ASAP).

Initially posted/updated 14 Dec 2014. Updated again 11 June 2017 to add a bit to make this make sense as the end of part1.

End Notes

Updated 3/9/2014

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