Demons, Snow And Kunai

by Karralmer

Summary

What if the nine tailed beasts were not originally from the Naruto universe? What if they were created and a part of a certain winged demon from Gaia? What if a certain group of ninja's ended up in the land of this being's creation? What if all it wasn't as it seemed?
Chapter 1

Stories were what brought them there. Stories of demons being seen in the area of trees around his old home town. They were only new, starting at least a week ago, and even though no one was killed-just some seriously injured-the small town was being cut off from the rest of the world more then ever before, tourists would NOT go somewhere threatened by demons unless they were budding hunters (or just stupid-as in gawkers).

After the 'incident' six years ago that nearly destroyed the entire area, the village\small town was still recovering and definitely could NOT afford to lose tourist revenue.

So that was why HE was there, there with his team to investigate these stories and find the truth, to locate this demon or demons, or if it was some kind of animal and why it was there, and either stop it or if it was a threat-kill it.

After all, one of them knew only too personally what demons were like, both physically and intermittently. How could he not with what was inside him?

The well-worn dirt path leading them out of the small town towards the thick tree area was starting to become rockier as the track started to fade into parts not usually tread by human feet as the group headed further in, weapons and all senses ready, not sure what to expect but even the most seasoned of them on alert to anything.

Even the most skilled of warriors could be taken out in a split second by something, anything, and a demon? Of course they were on edge.

Someone suddenly spoke softly, voice a near whisper but startling everyone by its suddeness. "Do you hear? No birds or animals. It's quiet...."

Another, a black-haired male, spoke "if you say 'too quiet' then you'll regret it." There was a slight noise followed by the firsts protest "ow! What was that for? I wasn't gonna!"

"Shut it" another hissed "you'll give our position away to the demons!"

"If there is even is one" the first complained.

"And what do you think has been attacking hunters and villagers? The trees" the black haired asked sarcastically.

"Dunno, an animal. It can't be a demon."

"Why, pray-tell is that" the sarcasm was thicker this time.

"Well an animal would be protecting its territory, or even its nest. It would protect it only as long as it felt threatened. The victims all lived. A DEMON, on the other hand, wouldn't care, it would just kill them for no reason."

The black-haired one just snorted an affirmative and nothing more was said.

"What was that?" a female head snapped around.
"What do you mean?" the first asked her.

"I saw something, a flash just up ahead to our 2 O'clock."
"Huh?"

"Top, slightly to the right. You should know this by now-aren't you a ninja?" The sarcasm was back in the black-haired one's voice.

"Must have slept through that class" the first murmured, only to hear an snort and answer of "THAT class? How many others?"

"HEY!" the other yelled, insulted "I can't help it if I'm a very busy person you know! I have....stuff that needs doing without sitting around listening to all that stuff, you know."

"Quiet" the group leader hissed, eyes intently searching the surrounding trees. Suddenly he snapped "THERE!" and was off, chasing something they couldn't see.

"HEY! Wait up!" the first cried out as the group took of after him, one of their number moving through the trees just ahead of them while the others used the ground, leading the others after the black-clad other while eagle-sharp eyes kept an lock on the slash of silver and black moving lightening-quick ahead of them all.

"You think it's HIM?" the first called to the others "I mean how many times is it now that our 'Great Leader' has faced him, but he come back again?"

There was no reply as others all mirrored the same thoughts.

"Up ahead" the tree-runners smooth melodic voice called to them, soft but despite the distance heard clearly "I see a cave. It's part of an deeper system. Perhaps the creatures nest."

"Direct us" they heard the leader call, "But alert us if you see it around."

"What're you thinking, bossman?"

"If it's an animal nest, there would be remains of meals and possibly offspring we can use to identify the parent."

"If its human there would be man-made things, mementos" the girl said.

"If it's demon" the tree runner said "there will be both."

Understanding this they followed the higher members directions until they reached a small clearing before some pretty large hills.

The tree runner landed in front of them smoothly and softly, withdrawing his weapon and heading cautiously forwards, towards a thick set of brush near one hill "I lost what we were following about five minutes ago. However whatever it was seemed to be purposely trying to lead us away from here."

"Must be a nest then" the leader mused "let's go, we don't have much time."

"What do you mean?" the first asked.

"It was trying to lead us AWAY. Once it realizes it didn't work it'll be back, with a vengeance."

"He means it'll be extremely pissed off" the black haired other explained.

The leader grunted "that's what I said."
"IF it's intelligent" the female said.
"It was trying to decoy us away from the lair, that is something only an intelligent being would do, an animal-depending on its level-would stay and defend its nest."

"It could be a male animal who's trying to draw what it sees as predators away from its mate and offspring" the first said softly "It's what I'D do."

"We won't know until we get inside and see" the tree runner said, moving the brush aside to reveal an low roofed entrance, forcing the group to-one at a time-bend low to get inside.

With the tree runners exceptional sight in the dark leading them they made their way inside and deeper into the network of tunnels and caves, some lit by glowing crystals and others a strange moss, but most dark and eairy, their silence broken by only the echo of dripping water.

Suddenly the way started to get cooler, more airy, sunlight coming in from somewhere higher up, probably a hole or tunnel in the hillside somewhere, things becoming clearer and easier to see.

For them to see the pile of blankets on top of soft ferns in a dark corner, pushed down under an heavy weight, a curled, hidden, MAN SIZED weight, breathing fast, harsh and agonized.

They caught sight of sunshine blonde wild fur-or HAIR-before there was a snarl from somewhere, wild, furious and dangerous and something was in their midst, something red and black, something wild and very pissed off.

"Scatter!" the leader yelled to them as the furious something was among them.

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Chapter 2

Whatever it was, it was fast, and vicious too, among them one minute, out of their reach the next, and even though it seemed to be inflicting only minor wounds or damage they had no doubt if one of them even twitched the wrong way, like maybe towards the 'bed', their throat would be slit in a matter of seconds.

Even with all their team experience the shape was too much for them, they couldn't figure out its moves or actions, there seemed to be no predictability to it, each move different than the one before or the next.

"Definitely intelligent," the black haired grunted as he blocked an attack, "so demon or human."

"How can you tell?" the first asked, moving aside to avoid a blow.

"An animal uses the same attacks over and over again. This guy is using different attacks, he's mixing things up, using different attacks on different people, finding what works and using that. That denotes intelligence, reasoning, even some genius. No animal but man can do that."

As if to prove it the figure threw one of them into a stone wall, hard, and before they could move the unconscious other was held in front of it, something sharp and metal pressed to the throat.

And the growls became words, understandable words, but one's just the same. "Away, move away." They froze, shocked, only to have the blade, and it was a blade, press closer the fragile skin and hiss "I said AWAY!"

"Easy" they slowly backed away from the shape, a set of red eyes fiercely following them "we didn't come to fight or hurt anyone, just find out why the villagers are being hurt out here."

"Villagers!" the shape snarled hatefully. "Superstitious, paranoid bastards! If I had my way all those fuckers would be dead by now! I hate them! It's their fault my mate is in this state! He would have been helped and healed by now if not for their hateful attitudes! My mate could die because they cast us away and refused medical help! This is as far as we could safely come in his condition, do you THINK we like living in a cave! If it wasn't for sensai sneaking into town in disguise and hunting for us, we would have NOTHING! If I had my way I would have killed every one of them and burned the entire place to the ground! The only reason I don't or didn't is I don't want to disappoint sensai after all he's done for us. And if I did I would hurt my mates feelings! I've done enough to him as it is to upset him now and again!"

"Why? You would kill an entire Village for rejecting you, you and some....demon you want to protect?" Before they could tell the other that that was a bad idea to say out loud, There was a furious snarl and a flash of black and red.

Next thing they knew the speaker was sliding down the stone wall unconscious and the figure was back in his position again as if nothing had just happened.

They hadn't even seen him move.

"You are just as bad as these damned villagers and the ones we came from! They all judged my mate by what he held inside him, not who he truly is! He has an truly beautiful soul! He's sweet and kind and loving and with a smile that can light up any darkness! When you meet him you feel as if everything will be alright. As if any darkness in the world doesn't stand a chance against the light of
the sun! He lit up MY darkness! All he wanted was to protect and help those idiots and instead they abuse him, they treat him as a creature, a thing to be feared and hated! I betrayed the fools, I left to join their enemy against them, and I get welcomed back as a favorite son while HE does so much for those fools to be treated like shit!"

Trying to calm everyone down and distract the figure the leader said gently "tell us what happened. Help us understand."

The figure hesitated a few tense seconds but then finally drew in an deep breath and started "twenty years ago there was a great battle in our birth village. The nine-tailed fox demon, most powerful of all the tailed demons, attacked our village, killing and destroying indiscriminately for no apparent reason.

Hundreds were killed, slaughtered, the battles violent and bloody and long and went on and on with no sign of an end until finally HE came."

"Him who?"

"His name was Minato, also known as the yellow flash, the leader of our Village and he was loved by all the people and respected by others. Sacrificing his own life to save his people he destroyed the demon foxes body and trapped its soul inside the body of an newborn baby, for only the form of an newborn could adapt as it grew to contain such power and savagery, ever benefit from it.

The great leader had one last wish before he died "treat my son as the hero he is" he told witnesses "for it's the sacrifice of his life as well."

However the minute they got the child back to the village the council-those cursed 'civilized' men and women wanted to kill him. Despite their leaders wishes they wanted to kill him, thinking they kill the child was killing the demon. They didn’t see the child containing the demon, but the demon made human.

However both the leaders last wish and the timely appearance of the previous retired leader stopped this. However even though they couldn’t kill him, doesn’t mean they couldn’t victimize him, couldn’t make his life a living hell. They threw him in an orphanage and until he was six they abused him there-then threw him out onto the streets, but he survived, he existed until he was old enough to go to the academy-that’s where we met.

I was so self-absorbed then, to me he was nothing but some loser who couldn’t even preform the simplest of tests, I wasn’t to know of course he couldn’t, not only did the demon inside screw with his abilities but that education we all valued had never been given to him.

I was so absorbed in myself, in my foolish quest for revenge I never saw the way the parents encouraged their children to abuse and mistreat him, all I knew was my own loneliness, my self-destructive desire to kill HIM."

“Who?”

The figure hesitated a few long seconds before he sighed and answered “when I was seven my older brother slaughtered my entire clan. Every man, woman and child-except me."

They were horrified.

“I found him standing over them, our parents, covered in blood and blood soaked weapons. He coldly told me they were standing in his way, that he didn’t need them anymore. He told me to hate
him, that I would never be strong unless I hate, I would never be able to beat him unless I learned
how too.

I decided I had to avenge my clan, avenge my parents, but my mate told me that hate wasn’t the way,
I had to forgive. I refused to listen, I thought I knew it all. I was consumed by survivors guilt, anger,
pain, loneliness and hate and the entire village fed that hate and need for revenge, I didn’t see that my
mate was in just as much pain as me, yet despite this he tried to save me, more times then I could
count, he tried to save me from myself.

When I left the village to join an enemy for power he continued to try and save me, over and over,
even when I almost killed him.” He shuddered in remembered horror, grip on the unconscious other
loosening.

"Then one day he came for me again, only this time things were different. He was darker, more
vicious in battle, with a sense of barely leashed violent power to him I had never felt before in any
living being. At first I was jealous, insanely so, he had the power I had covenanted so bad, the power
I was so willing to sacrifice my body and soul for all this time.

But when he killed my 'teacher' so easily, beat some sense into me and then dragged me back to the
village, I feared him.

That was until I finally noticed what was going on right in front of me. How the abuse was twenty
times worse than ever before and how he only accepted it stoically, taking everything they literally
threw at him with a small smile and a shrug.

When I confronted him about it, he refused to talk about it, telling me how it was not the villagers
fault and I would never understand it. I was pissed about it, that he'd just take it, accept abuse like
that instead of fighting back, I did what I normally did to get him talking, I started a fight. For some
reason his temper is the way to the truth with him, when he looses his temper he blurts out things
without thinking about it, he isn't the type to hide anything inside, or so I thought until that day.

It was that day that I learned I never really knew him like I thought I did, that I had been selfish and
blind and even just like everyone else towards him. It was MY fault he was being abused now even
more than before.

All this time he had been treated like shit and I, in my arrogance and self-absorbed world, had treated
him the same. I thought I was all alone, no one could understand me because of what I had suffered
but now I knew the truth. I had been the lucky one.

For six years I had had a family, love, kin. I had a brother who cared and watched over me, a kind
and loving mother and even though it didn't seem it at the time, a father who was in some ways,
proud of me. I had cousins to play with, uncles and aunts to help me learn and guide me, but HE had
never had any of that, no love or gentle guidance, just hate and fear and abuse.

He could have become everything they said he was and it would not be his fault, he could have
turned on those bastards and destroyed it all in revenge, I would have, but he didn't. Instead he
decided to prove them wrong, to show them he wasn't the monster they said he was.

The only kindness and love he ever got before our team was from the leader when he was younger
and one other during academy."

"Who?"

"Our teacher. His parents were two of those killed during the demons attack, yet he never blamed my
mate. He never saw the monster inside him, he saw a young boy crying out for attention and love, just like he had been at that age. He treated my mate as he should have been treated and when one of the other teachers tried to kill him, he risked his life to protect him, being seriously hurt in the process.

Some of the best of my earliest memories of my mate are of those two sitting at his favorite ramen stand, the teacher smiling gently, indulgently as my mate loudly told him all the exaggerated stories of his adventures and his victories and great strengths in battle. He never believed a word of it of course, but just by listening he was giving my mate something no one else did, acceptance, acceptance of who he was. Really I think that simple teacher was my mates first real friend."

Even they saw the smile on the face and heard it in the voice. They were glad he had someone at least, no one should be alone and with their own demon vessel member they knew how judgmental some people could be against those who were different.

After all, each of them were different or changed in some way.

Only their own demon vessel had had a happy childhood—at least compared to this one.

"When I learned of my mates abuse growing up, I was more than a little pissed off, but to learn why it was suddenly worse was the final straw to me."

"What do you mean?"

"To gain the power and strength he needed to drag my sorry ass back he had made the ultimate self-sacrifice, had given up the one thing he had left all of his own, the one last wholly his own thing those bastards had failed to take from him and my selfish actions destroyed in one fell swoop. His soul."

Both concerned and horrified they asked what he meant by that.

"To gain the power to get me back he had to merge with the seal keeping the demon contained inside him. He then-in an epic battle that almost killed them both-overpowered the demon and absorbed him, merging its soul with his so as separate beings they ceased to exist. All the demons savagery, skills, power, knowledge, experience, instincts, personality, all it became his.

Who he now was was more than he used to be more and less than the boy I used to know."

"They became one person didn't they." The female said "that's why the village was getting worse and he was letting them, by doing that he proved them right, at least in their—and his eyes."

"Yes. When I realized what he had sacrificed for me, what he had given up just for someone as stained as me, I had a serious think about every single thing that had happened to me since we met, everything HE had done, everything I had done, everything we had been through together and all he had given for me and our team and how LITTLE I had done for or to him.

I soon reached a decision. From then on I would live for him and him only, I would protect him with my life and dedicate my entire heart and soul to his happiness. I would wipe away his pain from those abusers with love, for every pain filled memory I would create an equal joyful one. For every strike and cut I would create pleasure, ecstasy and desire.

And I would take as long as it took to convince him to be my mate, as we should be, as we were always meant to be.

I didn't care about rebuilding our clan, if our family was so warped that it produces someone as sick as my brother or as easily corrupted as me, it had to end with us."
"What happened to your brother?" they asked as the figure slowly lowered their unconscious companion to the ground, but entire body tense and still on high alert, weapon at the ready in case they moved again.

"It took me two years to convince my mate the truth of my feelings for him, that I wasn't mocking him or just interested in power again. We had many fights in the beginning, about how he felt he was a monster that didn't deserve happiness, how I was supposed to rebuild my clan and I couldn't do that with him. How hundreds of women in the village would jump at such a chance and he couldn't and wouldn't deprive them of it.

And the entire time he spoke all I saw in his eyes was pain and I knew again he was thinking of everyone else but himself, and it just made me all the more determined to do what I planned for him.

I decided to get him the old-fashioned way, romance, our clan were famous for our stubbornness, I would use that to win my mate's heart and soul, demon or not. As I got to know him, truly know him, I discovered things no one else knew about him.

Things like he was really smart, and I mean genius like me, he just had always acted dumb because if he showed how smart he really was people would accuse 'the demon' of coming through, that it was a sign of it being in control. Like it couldn't be a sign of who his father was. How smart do you think the man who previously lead the village into prosperity and became one of the people's most beloved rulers would be?"

This they understood.

"When I decided we would become mates I had only assumed we would be in body and mind but something happened when we first mated, my mate merged our souls. He gave me his power and made me part demon, while he was fox, I am wolf.

One day my mate failed to come back from a mission. I knew he wouldn’t stay away, from me or his human friends and through our connection I had this growing sense of foreboding. So I grabbed weapons and left, following the sense. What I found was the criminal origination my brother had joined had taken my mate. You see their leader was after all nine tailed creatures to try and further his own power and he had been after my mate since he was young and learned about the demon inside him. They wanted to take the demon from him, only now the demon was a part of my mate, it would force my mate's soul from him, killing him."

They were horrified.

"As the foreboding increased I reached them just in time for halfway through the ceremony. When I saw how much agony my mate was in and my brother stepped in my way I flew into an demonic rage. The next thing I remember is sitting by a campfire, my mate unconscious and wrapped in my brother's bloody cloak.

That’s when HE approached me."

"Who?"

"The only other of our clan left. He began to talk to me, convinced he could turn me against the village to his side, but the more that came from his mouth, the more furious I became. It was all his fault! EVERYTHING! My clan’s murder, my brothers betrayal, my mates abuse and persecution, even my defection, ALL HIM!!"

"What do you mean?"
“Two hundred years ago he and his brother founded our village. They discovered the land, started it’s construction and when others came to settle they allowed them. His brother bred, founding our clan. But when he grew restless he wanted his brother to help him with his quest to become the leader of the village. However now I know this prospering village would be driven into the ground under the rule of our clan.

The village refused, they had voted for their ruler and refused his demand, but he felt since he and his brother had founded the village it should be their right to rule.”

This sounded somehow familiar to them.

“The end result was the brother dead and him being exiled from the village, taking with him his brothers eyes.”

“His eyes?! Why!?"

“Our line has an inherited ability through the eyes, only continual use of this ability damages them, you go blind, even become sick, only taking the eyes of another of our clan and replacing your own can stop this. However you can ‘mature’ this ability, to it’s ultimate form by killing you best friend. My brother did it and by killing his brother HE did it. It gave him eternal life. And, apparently, during the fight with the group I had taken my brothers.”

“How did he have anything to do with everything?”

“When he was exiled he decided to get his revenge by destroying the village. But first he needed to set up elaborate traps and plans. He founded the criminal origination my brother was with, he manipulated the guy I went to for power to also hate the village-he was from there originally. He used the inherited ability to take control of the nine tailed foxes mind and force it to attack the village, all so he could use the diversion and steal something he wanted.

He manipulated our clan into believing-as he did-they deserve to rule, and was the cause of my brothers seemingly traitorous act.”

“What do you mean?”

“It turned out there was more to my brothers story than I knew. My brother had betrayed the clan but NOT the village, not ME.”

“What do you mean?” they repeated.

“My brother was raised to be my fathers weapon, yet I was his only light, the only pure innocent love he had. He had always been an loving protective big brother to me, which was why his action that night was so confusing. But it was not what I had been led to believe. You see my brother was trained to be fathers weapon AGAINST the village. He had brother, at thirteen, placed inside the leaders personal forces, NOT as a bodyguard, but an assassin to kill him if they didn’t get their way. Only father didn’t know something about my brother.”

“What?”

“His loyalty to the village outnumbered the loyalty to our clan. Brother was acting as a double agent for our leader, feeding father false information and giving the leader the correct ones.”

“What happened? I mean to lead to what happened?”

“The leader was out of the village when negotiations failed. So that same cursed council that tried to
kill my mate when he was a baby ordered my brother to annihilate the entire clan. Every man, woman, child and baby. Can you imagine being asked to do that? Slaughter your entire family including the one you love the most? Your only light in the darkness of your life?”

They were horrified but confused “but you...he didn’t...?”

“No, no matter what it meant brother couldn’t do it, he couldn’t hurt me. So for the day of the slaughter he choose a day when he KNEW I would be away from our property for the entire day. It was MY fault I came home early that day to see him, that I didn’t listen when he told me to stay outside.

He couldn’t bare to hurt me, he couldn’t bare to tell me the truth and have me hate our family, knowing how much I loved our mother and looked up to our father so he made a split second decision to make me hate HIM.”

This not only saddened then but made them realize how much the older had given for him.

“Now I knew the truth some of the things he said leading up to that day made sense, not only that but when he had left me that night he had stopped and for a split second I saw a tear in his eye. ”

“What did he do?”

“He went straight to the council and told them what happened. They immediately demanded he go back and kill me. He refused and told them if they ever did anything to hurt me, he would return and reveal the truth to everyone, how would the village who all but worshiped our clan react to know the council ORDERED one to kill them all?

He then left to join the criminal organization, NOT as an enemy of the village but as what he does best-a spy. In fact he had an contact inside the village he was feeding information to.”

“If he was a spy, why did he take your mate?”

“By that time my brother was dying and nearly blind. He was sick and damaged from using his ability too much. He KNEW I’d stop the group, but he felt he wouldn’t live much longer. So he decided he’d rather die like a warrior, fighting and going down ‘in a blaze of glory’ as it were. As well as that he wanted to die at the hands of the one he loved.”

This saddened them but also made them realize that at least he died how HE wanted, instead of wasting away with sickness, unable to move, suffering an slow helpless death instead of the honor of a warrior.

They understood and would honor his brothers death as it should be.

"The smug bastard thought after all his manipulations that I would willingly join him in his revenge against the village, and while it was true I now hated the council with a vengeance, HE was a lot worse than them right now. If he had not done what he did, I'd still have a loving brother, our teacher would still have his parents and so would my mate. He would have been able to experience that love and guidance of only a mother and father growing up as he should have, not all that hate and anger and abuse.

So he was shocked when I turned to attack him.

The fight was bloody and viscous and I began to think he'd win and I would die when my mate suddenly rose up behind him and tore his neck and throat open, severing his head.
Then he looked at me, growled and moved to attack me."

"What happened? Why was he moving to attack you? You're his mate."

"I reasoned what they did to him during the ceremony regressed him to an animal mind, he killed the other because he threatened his mate, but now he was trying to establish his dominance over me."

This made sense in a simple, animistic way.

"Our clan is and was known for our pride and stubbornness, when I was younger I never would have let another dominate me, but I was a different person now than that fool. Besides, he was demon now, that stubbornness would probably just get me killed and I said I was living for my mate now, how would it benefit him if I were to die and he be the one to kill me? I mean what would that do to him, coming out and in control only to discover he had killed his mate?"

They understood this.

"So I let him dominate me as an alpha mate would and even though it hurt, I understood he didn't have enough consciousness passed animal mind to worry about my comfort."

After he had finished and I had submitted, he fell unconscious and I was able to take him back with me to the village for help."

"Why didn't you take the other guys eyes? If he was so powerful?"

The other grimaced "he was corrupted by his anger and desire for revenge, while his ability would have been useful, I didn't want to risk being corrupted by them. I wouldn't put it passed him to do something to them to do such a thing to me."

Besides, I had my brothers eyes and while I did I felt I literally had a part of him with me, in a way guiding and protecting me as he had always done."

They understood this.

"We returned to the village and my first act was take him to the leader, she-"

"Wait, she? We thought you said he. Didn't you say-the old leader before Minato was an older man?"

"Oh he died."
"Age?"

"No, in battle with the man I joined. My mate left the village to find an famous healer. But she was an notorious gambling addict and drunk. Not just that but her traveling companion was an well known pervert and famous for writing a series of erotic books my mate called ero-san, the same series of books we had many times coped our sensai reading-and still does."

We once read one" they could see the grimace of disgust clearly, "I don't know how my mate ever put up with that guy."

Back on track he continued "I didn't find out until later that those books were more than they seemed."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you how my brother had a contact in our village, well it turns out it was he and it was the
entire point of the books. For you see my brother and sensai were in the leaders special forces together, in fact they had been partners."

"What do you mean?" they asked again and to their surprise before the figure could speak the tree runner had in his smooth melodic voice "his brother would send the information to the author, he would hide it in the book contents, their sensai would buy one of the books, read it for the information and then give it to the leader."

"Exactly" the figure nodded then went on.

The group frowned "and no one else ever found it or knew what it was saying?"

"No for you see the code was unique, known only to the leader and his personal special forces. Besides, each village has their own code so another can't anticipate and interfere in any messages between them and their forces.

Anyway those two were two of the three strongest fighters in our world-the other being the same man my mate killed to get me back. Those three were a lot like our team though, one female, unsure of herself and her worth in this world-but strong and capable of so much if she tried. The second loud, goofy and dumb, yet it's only a mask for an fragile but extremely loyal and loving heart but extremely smart. The third-I've been compared to-a dark tormented soul. Only unlike those three instead of just letting it fall apart, one of OUR number fought like hell to keep it together.

My mate confronted her, trying to get her to return to the village, but she refused. He bugged her until he got to to her one weakness, her gambling spirit. If he could learn the writers signature move in A WEEK she would return with him. Not just that she was so confident she told him she would give him a necklace she owned, something sentimental she had had for years, all that was left of her dead brother.

And guess what?"

“He learned it” they answered and they could hear the grin in his voice “he not only learned it he IMPROVED IT, like he does with everything he learns. So she, her apprentice and the writer returned to the village and ended up being 'roped in' as the new leader.

It's funny the relationship she shared with my mate, somehow or other during their trip back to the village my mate endeared himself to those three. He called the author ero-san, he called him kid-but in an affectionate way. She called him brat and he called her baa-chan."

"Baa-chan?" This time the first voice answered, sounding amused "grandma."

They were amused by this too.

"Here's a fact not known to us until much later, those two legendary warriors were the ones who trained Minato-the author trained him especially in many seals, including the one used to trap the demon fox. They saw HIM as a son too. They were upset about Minato's death and sacrifice and were not surprised to learn of who my mate really was. Apparently they both had that fun-loving way about them, an innocence that was so carefree you just wanted to know them.

Apparently his mother was more serious but she had the same subtle love and intelligence as him as well. Not to mention boths' fierce loyalty."

"What happened to his mother? You mentioned how his father died, but never mentioned the mother. If she was alive, surely she would have been protecting her son?"
"His mother died the night of his father's—and his 'possession' as well."

"How?"

"Childbirth. She was injured during the demon attack, went into labor but just wasn't strong enough to survive both. Maybe one or the other, but not both."

They were saddened by this but understood, asking what happened when he returned to the village with his unconscious and hurt mate.

"As I said my first act was take him to the leader so she could look at him and hopefully the author would be there so his knowledge of seals could be used to find out what was exactly done and if it somehow interfered with his old seal-causing his problems.

I waited in the hospital outside his room for days—how many I couldn’t remember but soon they came out and I was told he would soon recover, but he needed constant contact from me to maintain the link from it to our souls and demon power, it was THIS that would help him heal.

It took at least a month for him to even regain awareness let alone consciousness. It took three months before he could leave the hospital and come home, a year before he was back to normal.

Then a month ago someone spread the rumor around the village that my mate had taken me by force and used his demonic powers to enchant me into thinking I loved him and want to be with him. The spreader claimed he wanted my families land, that 'the demon' wanted the 'honorable clan grounds of our founder'. ” He spat the last five words sarcastically.

“‘If only they knew the truth. ’” He snarled loudly “I didn’t care about the village, I didn’t care about anyone else and least of all about the damned property. As far as I was concerned he could have it. The only reason I even lived there anymore was HE was living in a shit-hole apartment and had gone through all the trouble of keeping my home clean while I was away from the village, so, as my mate, he had not only a right but a privilege to live there. Better than that crap place he was previously in. I would have gladly sold it if there was another safe place we could live together. ”

“Guess” there was bitterness, fury and anger in his voice.

“They tried to attack your mate” they answered and the other nodded, voice furious “the fools attacked us in our own home!!” he snarled “the idiots thought they could kill MY MATE on home ground that was ours to use! Even outnumbered we had an advantage, when both our sensai and ‘ero-san’ turned up for a visit and walked right into it our sensai remained to help, ero-san left to get help from my mates human friends and his fellow team member. In a warrior village like ours it is forbidden to harm civilians, even if they’re ex-warriors themselves, but this was half the village against three ‘adults’ and about fifteen people forbidden to hurt them.”

This horrified them.

"One of my mates human friends yelled at us to both escape, to head for another village where we would be loved and protected, where my mate is treated as the hero he is because of HIM..."

"Who?" they interrupted before he could continue and after an angry pause for being interrupted he explained "another demon vessel—this one a one tailed raccoon. Apparently he was born only for the express purpose of being his father's—who was the village leader-weapon. He was like my mate in many ways, deprived of parental love and abused, but unlike my mate instead of turning all that into the determination to be seen for who you are—not what you are—he turned it into hate and anger,
became a killer feared even in his homeland as an emotionless monster."

They were horrified.

"Only the man who I went with made the mistake of enlisting that village for help in destroying our village and in the end he faced my mate. Do you know what happened then?"

"He beat him."
"Sort of it was a tie."

They frowned "but wasn't he the most powerful of all the tailed beasts?"

"Ah but there was the difference between the two. My mate saw himself as NOT being the thing inside him, therefore he did what he did as himself, not the creature inside him. He only used its power in extreme life and death situations, while HE only used the demon."

"So?" they asked and the tree runner again spoke "by beating the other AS HIMSELF he not only showed the boy he wasn't infallible or unbeatable, but human, not a monster."

"Right, and by doing it to protect his 'special people' not to mention those very people who would sooner spit on him then look at him he shook the very foundations of his beliefs, about other people and himself, about how caring makes you weak."

"Fool" the leader spoke "It actually makes you stronger."

The figure nodded "exactly. When he returned to their village he made tentative steps to get to know, REALLY KNOW his brother and sister as well as his village. He worked at becoming like my mate-a protector, not a destroyer and when he took over as leader later on, he became a strong and NOBLE ruler, but one with an hard enough law to curtail any lawbreaking.

And when the village found out who they had to thank for this new protector they made him a hero-always welcome in their land."

"So you friends wanted you both to go there, where you’d be safe and treated well."

He nodded.

"When one of them tried to use an strange seal on my mate at the exact same instant ero-san was sending out an attack of his own. The result was both crossed, causing a surge of power and energy around us. Some of the power hit my mate, dropping him on the spot. I ran to his side, sensai already cradling him, when the rest of the power hit us.

When the light cleared and we regained consciousness we were a few miles from here."

"So you brought your mate to the village, hoping for help."

"Yes, we brought him to the doctor there. But once he saw how my mates body healed after cut he refused to help us, he called him a SOLDIER, whatever that was."

The leader and the black-haired frowned at each other, THEY knew and weren't to happy about his treatment anyway. They resolved to visit this doctor and show him exactly what a SOLDIER looked like and what they could really do.

"When we insisted we were not and didn't even know what that was he called us liars. When we insisted and tried to prove it he said if weren't SOLDIER then there was only one other thing we
could be and started screaming we were demons, there to infiltrate and destroy the town.

Sensai started trying to calm the gathering mob down, insisting we were not and even if we were we could have just destroyed it without entering at all, but they wouldn't listen.

I was totally prepared to destroy everything, burn it to the ground, to hell with these racist fucks, only sensai stopped me, telling me my first priority was to mate, we had to get him to safety."

Another of the groups number had the thought of going off to the village and showing them what a demon REALLY looked like, but something was happening inside him, something rising in fury and pain, pain like he had never felt before. He tried to push it down, but this time it would not be denied, would not be ignored. It wanted OUT and would not be denied, would not be controlled.

"We ended up here, hidden and as sheltered as we possibly could, sensai hunting for food for us so I can watch over my mate, living like bloody animals!"

This was the last straw, he heard a snarled "let...me...OUT!" the last word screamed out loud as, in a flash of power that flung everyone around him away, he lost the fight with the presence inside him.

With a snarl, sensing another demon in the presence of him and his mate and a possible threat to his other, the figure flung himself at him.

Only to be knocked into a wall by a huge pare of wings. Before he could recover from the impact the figure had snatched him from the ground by the throat, however they all noticed despite the fact he had the figure by the throat, the other seemed to have NO PROBLEMS breathing.

They realized he wasn't trying to hurt or harm the other, just hold him in a dominant position. They saw the others red eyes flash, he seemed to know this as well, but there was something in them that made him raise his weapon, they saw the strange metal glimmer in a stray beam of light.

They were about to yell a warning to him, but the other growled to him himself "do not. I could rip your spine out and show it to you here and now before you could finish that move."

The red eyes narrowed "only my mate is allowed to dominate me. I don't care who you are, you aren't him."

"You would leave your mate to awaken to find your lifeless body here?" the winged demon growled "I am not bluffing, hanyou."

"Neither am I" the other returned.

"Wait!" the leader stepped forward, trying to play peace keeper "what do you want?" he asked the winged demon in a soothing voice.

"My questions answered."

"Then ask them."

The head turned back to look to the other "what were the names of the others demons? Other than your mate?"

The figure glared but the leader said "just answer him. It won't hurt you to."

The figure glared at them silently then grudgingly rattled off eight names, including the one in the once-killer.
Something sad was filling the winged demons yellow eyes, sorrowful and pain filled "and your mates name? Who was the nine-tailed fox?"

The figure glared up into the others eyes, something flickering in his eyes to mirror the others so his answer was soft and crystal clear, firm and even. "Kyuubi" he said.

The answering scream was heard even in the village.

++++++++++++++++++++++
Chapter 3

Chaos' second anguished tortured scream was muffled as after releasing the figure he dropped boneless to the ground, face pressed into the hard surface as he hunched over on himself.

A third soon followed.

A forth was him reared back on knees-yelled at the roof above them. It caused those around him to back away, startled and frightened by this reaction from something they had previously seen as just an animal-like monster when not completely under his host's control. What was causing this reaction?

The figure looked to them for an explanation, but they couldn't answer even if they wanted to.

"Vincent" Cid started to say, concerned for his friends strange behavior, but Cloud just motioned him silent "Chaos, what is wrong? Why are you so upset?"

Clouds voice seemed to snap the raging demon's attention out of whatever rage or anguish had hold of him at the moment. His yellow glowing eyes snapped to the blonde haired young man for a brief second, but everything he saw there he never expected to see in the powerful soul-devouring demon.

Anguish, grief, hurt, guilt. Cloud blinked as a thought occurred to him. All the feelings of a grieving parent.

What did it mean?

The demon's eyes narrowed before he turned back to look at the other, his voice strong but tinged with pain and regret "they are to me what Sephiroth is to my host."

Cloud frowned deeply as he thought about this comment. It had been at least six months since the newly dubbed 'Omega Incident' had happened, six months since Vincent had learned from Lucretciea's files that Sephiroth was his son all along.

After learning of this Vincent had gone into an even deeper seclusion so that even Cloud couldn't find him. It had taken a great deal of effort to even get him to come on the case.

But what about that cryptic reply? What did he mean by 'they are to me what Sephiroth is to my host. ' What could that mean?

Tifa was the one to figure it out, eyes widening nearly all the way to gasp out "YOU have children, Chaos?"

"Fragments of my flesh and soul, made from me to be my soldiers eons ago. But through my host I have come to not only see them as my children but love them as such."

"How did you get separated?"

He glared at them "a human. Eons ago I was called by mother Gaia to fulfill my purpose. Humans were getting too prevalent for the planet, killing it, harming her. They were messing with forces they didn't understand, using dark magic that was hurting her.

That human had amassed a huge number of followers, a cult, to do his bidding and increase his
numbers. He linked their lives to his with his dark magic, feeding off their life-force so even if they
died under his control their souls would be absorbed by him, depriving the lifestream of them."

This both horrified and angered them.

"I knew despite my power I could never fight the human and his followers together, so I, with
mother Gaia's consent, created ten soldiers, my children, to help my battle.

I would fight the leader while my children would handle the followers, keeping them from
interfering. However things did not work out as planned. Every cultist my children cut down only
made him stronger, until there was none left and the leader was swelling with dark magic and the
souls of more then a thousand males and females."

They couldn't believe this.

"The first thing he did was attack my children, beating then and destroying their bodies, but I
couldn't let him take my offspring as he had the humans."

This they understood, how powerful would an human be, using dark magic, feed on thousands of
souls then absorbing fragments of the being created to end all life on the planet?

"I attacked, disrupting his spell. My offspring would end up somewhere neither of us would know,
but at least he could never use them. Nine disappeared but the tenth ended up returning to mother
Gaia. Only in the last century have I found him."

"Who?"

There was a flash of light and the winged demon disappeared just long enough to reveal an huge
bulky horned figure with grey/white fur before the winged figure was back.

"Galian" they whispered in awe, the great horned werewolf-like creature was also Chaos'? In some
ways it explained a few things.

"I fought that human and even though I eventually won, it was with a price. My children are gone
from me so I will never be whole and he cursed me, trapping me inside the center of an pure mako
crystal, trapped until the human woman my host mated with found a way to release me."

"Why did they end up as animal demon's?"

"Maybe without bodies they had to take what they could get and ended up trapped in them. Then
after being in them so long they began to take on their aspects" Tifa suggested then looked at the
figure "did your mate ever mention any early memories from before, the earlier the better."

The red glowing eyes moved as he shook his head "no, but the Kyuubi did once make a crack about
how they were in our world long before humans-let alone any of the nations and how they were
'forced' to live like animals. I thought it was just a crack because of the way the village was treating
Naruto. But maybe he remembers some if not all of it."

"Kyuubi? You spoke to him? How could you if your mate fully merged with him?"

"Earlier on before the merge, one of the other times he came to get me. I tried to use the Shiringan-
our family lines inherited ability-on him, only to find myself inside his head, facing the demon.
Nothing in my life can ever compare with facing a pissed off demon, the size of an mountain, flaring
such power, all turned on you. But he spoke with me, but I refused to hear it, I left him there, the
entire time trying to ignore his words."
The winged demon looked to the figure, something soft and compassionate in them they had never seen before. "Kyuubi is my child, even merged with this human child’s form. As you are mated and part of that human, that makes you my child as well, under my protection and care."

"Your son..." the figure sounded shocked and stunned and they could hear a touch of awe and hope there, like the idea someone might want to claim him was something he never thought anyone would willingly do.

They frowned "you did have a father before, right? Didn't you say?"

"Of course" he seemed to steel himself quickly, only for the bravo to instantly deflate and look vulnerable again "but he never had time for me. He had our clan to run, an take-over to plan, an corrupt Police Force to run and my brother to manipulate and torture. He never really had time for the second son, the disappointment."

This saddened them and when Chaos stepped towards the other, moving slowly and carefully as not to alarm or alert the other, Cloud suddenly spoke "wait Chaos, what does Vincent think of all this? Or haven't you asked him."

The demon glared at him through yellow glowing eyes. "my host sees this as the opportunity it is. He was unable to save his son from the darkness around him, now he has another chance with an son who kept strong against the darkness around him and another who struggled and made his way out-by the skin of his teeth, but made it out still."

"Wait" the other interrupted "host? You're an Jinchuuriki as well?"

"What is an Jinchuuriki?"

"It means loosely 'human sacrifice'. It's the term used on the vessels of the tailed demons."

"Vessels?There's more than your mate and the other?"

"Of course. Each village fought for control of one for 'military purposes'. All nine are part of an human host, but only my mate and Gaara, the one-tailed raccoon, have actually fully merged with theirs, that's how my mate knew it would work to do so-Gaara was the first. Although his was life and death."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you that criminal organization my brother joined to spy on was after them, who do you think they kidnapped in order to extract first? After all, the one tailed raccoon was the weakest of the lot. If they could extract HIM, the others should be slightly harder, but just as worth it. Only one thing, after extraction the host becomes useless."

"How do you mean, useless?"

"In order to survive the possession a Child’s body adapts to the extra boost of power, an adults body is already set in its way and so it would kill them. So the Child’s body grows and adapts to it, even learns to rely on it as its own life. What do you think would happen if that power was taken from it?"

Tifa was again the one to answer "it dies."

"Exactly" the figure spoke "and when my mate and some of his human friends found him just when they were about to finish and provided a distraction just long enough-in order to survive-both the demon and host were able to fully merge, become one. That's how my mate knew he would be able
to survive doing so with his."

"So all Chaos' other children are inside human hosts as well?" The figure nodded.

Chaos looked to the figure "I wish to see my child. Will you allow me to examine him? I may be able to heal him."

"You can help him...father?" Cloud stepped forward "if he can't, if WE can't, we know people who could."

"Yeah" Zack piped up "there's this guy, Tseng. I was almost killed by some guy not long ago, he found me and hid me while I healed. Even though he was risking himself in the process."

"What do you mean?" this time the figure questioned them.

"Well the guy who was trying to kill Cloud and I had been experimenting on us but I got lose and took Cloud here with me" he slung an arm around the leaders shoulders. "he was working for this rich guy here who wanted super soldiers. Both Cloud and I used to work for him too, and so did Tseng, the guy I mentioned. This rich guy was really ruthless with getting what he wanted, he would not hesitate to have anyone killed for betraying him-even if only HE sees it as betrayal. If this guy found out he was hiding me, one of his escaped experiments..." next to Cloud he shuddered "anyway he willingly did so until Cloudy and his group of friends here got rid of the guy. When the guys son took over and was just as bad, Cloud and his friends beat him up until he learned his lesson and became one of the good guys and I could come back to him. Cloud and I are, well, mates too."

"He has doctors, highly skilled doctors and surgeons. They could figure out what's wrong and probably fix it." Tifa said "If they don't know what's wrong, no-one will."

After a slight hesitation the figure moved aside, allowing Chaos and Cloud to slowly and carefully approach the form laying under and over the blankets on the fern branches, the top of the sunshine blonde hair just visible.

Slowly and carefully of his claws Chaos reached out and grasped the blanket, peeling it back to expose the form underneath.

Shockingly he resembled Cloud in a lot of ways.

His hair and eyebrows was blonde and the hair stuck up in a seemingly random fashion-a little long in back-but while Clouds was pale blonde, his was a dark blonde, almost yellow, kind of like sand. His body was built almost exactly the same, short but definitely muscular and looked around the same age.

When Cloud carefully peeled back an eyelid adorned with dark blonde almost yellow lashes they saw beautiful blue eyes along with the first sign of inhuman blood, the pupil diluted in the light from the roof into long vertical slits.

The eye color was a beautiful blue, like the afternoon sky just before it started to get dark, not so dark, not so light but with just a touch of grey to it. Clouds were blue as well, but his were a lot paler than these, like the sky at its brightest with flecks of green from ITS presence inside.

He wore a long-sleeved cloak of white with red flames over the bottom, a swirl in the center of the back and black flames around the collar and shoulders, leather dark finger-less gloves with metal plates on the back engraved in a strange symbol, black knee-length trousers of an strange material, long-sleeved black shirt of the same material, black leather boots with some sort of material that resembled bandages wrapped about his legs between shoes and base of the pants, protecting his legs.
But what was the most fascinating feature was gracing the face or rather the cheeks. Adorning them was six slash-like marks, three on each cheek, horizontally, slight barely there marks that could have been scars from a knife or even shallow sword except...

During their started examination the rest of the group had moved closer to look, including the two now conscious members and it was good-old tactless Yuffie who piped up with "hey, they look like whiskers!"

"That's from the fox" the other said "he had those ever since I've known him, long before he merged with it. Before they were just marks that darkened and widened when the demon came out, now..."

"Now they are real" Chaos said, one clawed hand barely touching the almost invisible lines of white resting slightly raised off the golden skin.

As if really sensing through them the unconscious figures face twitched and the closed eyes screwed up in an obvious sign of confusion.

The nostrils flared as he seemed to take in their sent and when Chaos placed his hand nearby the figures face broke into a happy smile, he sighed what they swore sounded like "daddy" and settled back down into his previous state.

"It seems he, or rather the Kyuubi, DOES remember you" Zack smiled at Chaos while the girls behind them all 'aww, that's cute!' together at the scene.

"Unconscious as he is, in his state, he is relying on instinct and senses. Any familiar sent will make him instinctively react as such. My sent in this form even though it is not mine will be relatively the same, we DO share a soul, they are of my form and flesh, that sent immediately means safety and family. He reacted as so."

"Then if Naruto remembers you, even as the demon's memories then you ARE who you say you are." he sighed, one part relief and one part exhaustion, as if he didn't have to be tough anymore. "I believe you, I will trust you, for now. Can I trust your comrades?"

Chaos raised his head and looked at them silently, appraisingly for a few silent seconds before he said calmly "some more than others."

"What does that mean?" Barrett growled but when the demon locked eyes with him, he soon backed down by looking away.

"The boy and his mate are definitely trustworthy" Chaos eyed Cloud and Zack "They both have been treated as weapons and experiments and will not mistreat others. My host has also been treated as such and through his memories and emotions I know they are worth the trust. The female fighter my host, and therefore myself trusts. The others....to certain degrees."

"We should bring him outside" Cloud spoke out "that way we can examine him properly in the light" he looked at Chaos "I know it takes energy for you to hang around like this, can you stay, or are you going to withdraw and let Vincent out?"

"My host is not fighting me. He is allowing me this time with my son and his mate. Because this is a mutual decision and he is not fighting my control, I have more energy. Which means unless something comes up more strenuous I have some more time. An few minutes perhaps, but we both shall be drained afterwards."

Cloud nodded and allowed Chaos to shift position and, careful of his claws slid his arms under the unconscious figure and slowly stand, lifting the figure with him.
The demon frowned when he felt something he never expected from the form in his arms, a second energy, a second presence. He knew what it was and why it was there and wondered if his child's mate knew, probably not considering the way he had been talking about his mate.

Chaos resolved to talk to him about it later.

The figure rolled into the demon's firm chest, snuggling into the muscle and flesh there, seemingly content, until a small frown creased the forehead and he mumbled "Sasuke" in a confused weak voice.

"I am here, Dobe" the other moved forward and took his hand, the other hand pressed under the shirt to the lower stomach, over the belly button.

When they got outside they lay him on the soft grass in an open field near the cave entrance full of sunlight, allowing them to see the other fully for the first time and again Yuffie was the one to express their thoughts.

"Hey, he looks just like you Vinnie!"

"What do you mean..." the figure shifted his attention from Yuffie and the others back to the demon beside him just in time to sense and witness the slow change of the winged figure.

The body shrunk slightly, wings disappeared, skin went from hard armor-like to cloth and flesh, claws vanished and so on.

In the end a figure of red and black leather stood a few inches above the other.

The group was right though, they both had pale skin, shoulder length black hair. Both looked delicate in a way but seemed to also radiate power and strength in an almost unearthly way.

And most interesting was the eyes. While Vincent's was red from an inheritance in the males in his family line-having some Cetra blood in their ancestry somewhere, the others were also red, but with the strangest iris they had ever seen.

They had three black comma-like items inside the red, one at the top and another one either side.

"Wow" Yuffie said, as she moved up close, pushing her face to his so she could check them out up close "those are so cool!"

The others all moved closer to look but the figure looked uncomfortable, his eyes closed for a few long seconds then when they opened they were black as his hair, only completely normal.

Disappointed Yuffie backed away, the others soon following.

The figure, who's hair stood up in back but also hung loose and quiet long underneath, turned back to the man
demon. He looked him over and frowned "she's right, you could definitely be an Uchiha."

"Uchiha?" they questioned and the figure nodded "my....clan, my family before my team and mate."

"So what are your names?"

"I am Sasuke Uchiha" he bowed politely from his crouched position next to the blonde "my mate is Naruto Uzamaki\Namikaze."

The group took the opening and introduced themselves as well. "Why does your mate have two last
names?" Tifa asked.

"Uzamaki is his mothers last name, Namikaze his fathers. You see as Namikaze the forth Hokage had many enemies outside the village, people ready and willing to kill him if given the chance. Even before becoming Hokage 'The Yellow Flash' was a legend.

When the third Hokage realized that as an orphan Naruto would be in constant danger due to his inheritance, he gave him the name of his unmarried mother.

You see Kushina was a refugee, the last survivor of a village that was destroyed when she was a child. She was given a home and life in our village and she grew up with Minato as his friend before later becoming his lover.

They were unmarried and to keep her safe not many outside and inside the village knew about their relationship. So the third gave Naruto his mothers name to protect him as a child and baby. He planned to tell him who his father was when he was old enough to protect himself and fight..."

"But he was killed" they finished.

The figure-Sasuke-nodded "exactly. That not only made my mate the next in line as Hokage before Tsunade, but the last of two very special clans, he hasn't even discovered his bloodline abilities yet because he doesn't know what his father was capable of, anything... special was classified. Plus because his mothers clan and parents were killed when she was young, SHE didn't know what she could do."

"Bloodline ability?"

"An ability passed down and shared between members of a clan and family. Like the Sharigan..." he pointed to his left eye so they could see them bleed red again, this time the three commas in his eyes merged into something else altogether "this is the Mangekyô Sharigan, the fully mature Sharigan. The early form contains one tomoe, the second stage has two, them three then the Mangekyô. However even though the Uchiha clan rarely breeds outside the clan due to paranoia about tainting the purity of the bloodline abilities, since everyone is different the Mangekyô is different to everyone.

Madara, the guy who betrayed the village after he couldn't take over-the first Uchiha-had the eternal Sharingan. These are my brother Itachi's eyes so I have the Mangekyô Tsukuyomi."

"What does the abilities do?"

The Mangekyô is different for everyone but the first three stages are always the same. The first stage and tomoe is the ability to see an enemies...energy flow, to see where and what area it is concentrated on. The second stage you essentially slow down your enemies moves and even predict them to anticipate and stop them. But the third stage, the third stage is different and more powerful. With the third stage you can not only learn their moves and powers but on an lesser mind you can control their moves.”

"And your brothers....YOUR eyes? What does the fully mature version do?"

"Many things, but that's not important now." They opened their mouths to speak, but stopped when the figures attention turned back to his mate, mouth pursed in a firm line.

They took the hint for what it was, Cloud and Zack dropping to their knees on one side of the figure while Vincent and the red eyed other.... Sasuke, were on the other.

Taking out an scan Materia from his pocket and fitting it in a slot in his clawed gauntlet next to a
regen, Vincent activated it and proceed it slowly examine the blonde laid on the ground before them from top to bottom-from the tip of his toes to the very tips of his wild hair.

Vincent frowned as he spoke "the seal is damaged. That is what is causing this state."

Sasuke frowned as well to this "the seal? I thought it ceased to exist when my mate merged with Kyuubi."

"No, just changed. Even though they merged, the seal holds the majority of Chaos'...." he cut himself off and took a deep steadying breath before letting it out and continuing on "...OUR child's power. Because it is damaged it is leaking that energy inside him, like blood into the lungs."

Although they didn't fully understand why it was serious, the 'blood in the lungs' let them know it WAS serious so they nodded.

Then Vincent did something they had never seen or even expected him to do before. He sat back, removing his single black glove from his right 'gun' hand, followed with an uncomfortable hesitation by unbuckling and loosening the bindings of the ever-present gauntlet.

Contrary to the belief of most the group and some of the public, under the gauntlet wasn’t an artificial limb or even mutilation. Ever since he had joined the group there had been numerous whispers or discussions about why he wore the thing and what was underneath, why he NEVER removed it.

One night just after they had beaten Sephiroth together the group-minus Cloud, Yuffie, Tifa and Vincent himself, had sat around drinking in ‘Seventh Heaven’ discussing various subjects from “god damned Shinra and their god damned Turks” to “what the god damned is that Yuffie chicks problem!? Is she on PCP or somet’in?”

So it was inevitable the subject came around to the crimson gunman’s gauntlet.

After many rips and speculation Barrett seemed to get upset-or insulted. He stood and snapped “You guys are idiots! Don’t you know anything! Think for a minute instead of sticking your collective heads up yer asses.”

Cid had snorted “then why don’t ya tell us what we’re missing, asshole.”

Barrett glared “the guys, like me, an gunner. We’re distance fighters. You guys are close up fighters. If some guy or monster gets too close, you have your weapons, us we don’t. It takes time we don’t have to draw a knife and even he to use those critters of his and in those seconds the enemy could kill you. I have my strength, but HE’S a skinny little ass, even if he WAS an Turk. Of course he needs not only a weapon already on hand but close enough to use possibly WITH the gun.”

This made sense.

Now with the glove gone and the heavy gauntlet clunking to the ground followed by the glove underneath they all saw for the first time what EVERYONE wanted so badly to really know.

Nothing, a normal set of hands, calloused from the gun and frequent use. Except for when he reached out to lay both palms over the stomach of the blonde, just below the bellybutton.

Claws, his normal hands were clawed, baring long sharp curved nails, almost like cat claws.

The hands pressed to the spot under the shirt and coat, skin on skin, and even under the thick material they became aware of an growing red glow, almost moving like wisps of smoke, coming from where he was touching.
"What are you doing?" Sasuke asked, tone somewhere between suspicion, worry and curiosity.

"He is being exposed to too much power through the leak. I am attempting to patch it up temporarily while Chaos is siphoning off the power leaking through-like removing the blood from the lung."

"Why can't you fix it permanently, instead of just for now?"

"I know nearly nothing about seals. Only the very basics. I may be able to temporarily patch it up but until we find an seals expert, it will not last very long. A week or two then either I will have to patch it up again and then on every week or so or until we find someone to do it permanently. Not just that until it is fully repaired Chaos will have to siphon him every few days or risk it eroding the patch faster."

"If there was a way to contact my mates human friends they could get a message to Jiraiya. He could either tell us or if there was a way here again, he could SHOW us what to do."

"Who?"
"I told you about him, one of the three Sanin."

At their blank looks he further explained "the greatest warriors, the one my mate calls ero-san and he called kid. He's an expert with seals, I told you he taught Minato. He's the one who been keeping an eye on my mates seal since returning to the village."

"There's a chance they could come here as well?"

"I'm positive yes. Jiraiya-san just has to learn the seal that guy used, work out what happened when both attacks crossed and how to replicate it exactly and they could probably come here looking for us. However there's no telling how long that will take."

"What about Reeve?" Yuffie suggested "or Tseng? One of them might know about seals."

"That's actually a good idea" Cid said, just as shocked as the others "though why Reeve? He's an engineer. Why would HE know anything about seals?"

"Well first he is the leader of the WRO, they could have found stuff while finding and dismantling any of Hojo's labs, including that stuff in the basement of the Shinra mansion, you know, the stuff Sephiroth was reading when he went mad. Also, he was the one who designed Jenovah's sealed room, wasn't he?"

They had to admit, she had a good point.

"Or what about Shelke?" Tifa suggested "she was Deep Ground's research and computer expert. She had all that info from Hojo, and if he knew of seals, she could go on the Net and find out."

"And why Tseng?" they asked.

"Well he's the leader of the Turks and Rufus' right hand man, he trusts him completely, so he wouldn't hide anything from him." She looked at Vincent "Turks don't just kill and do all the dirty work, do they. They're also, like, information collectors aren't they."

Vincent nodded "at least in my day they were."

"So if Hojo knew anything about seals, either Rufus would know, or Tseng, or Shelke, or both, or all three, and if not either or all could find out. I mean before Sephiroth's mom put Chaos in Vinnie, Hojo did with the others, didn't he? That would mean one or both had to have known about seals to
do that."

They again realized she was right. Only.....

"What would Shinra want in exchange for the information though?"

Yuffie looked at the black haired demon mate "you're an ninja, aren't you." The black haired half-demon looked at her seriously "you know?"

"It's obvious" she tapped her own hitate "although I don't know your clans symbol."

"This is our villages, Konoha, I don't know yours."
"My clan, Kasaragi."

The figure--Sasuke--shrugged "whatever. Why do you want to know?"

"You're good, SOOO much better than I am" she looked excited, bouncing on the spot just as normal with her "can you teach ME! I wanna move and fight like that!"

"Yuffie..."

"Yeah, yeah" she sighed, looking at the Uchiha "if you work for Shinra-or more technically-Tseng, for the information, or if Reeve knows it, the WRO, Shelke might give it for nothing though, she DOES kinda likes Vincent....." at the groups glare she frowned "what? Zack was suggesting it first!"

As much as they hated the idea, they knew she was right.

"Who do we contact first?" Tifa asked.

"Wait" the red eyed half demon's head was suddenly raised, eyes alert "someone or something is here."

The group collectively grasped their weapons as Cloud murmured "what do you mean?"

"I can feel their chakra."
"Chakra?"

Before there was an answer he spun, called "THERE!" and threw one of those strange knives at something in the bushes behind Cid.

Something black that resembled Nananki launched out of the bushes, straight at Cid, snarling ferociously. However thanks to the figures warning the blonde was ready, swinging his mako-enhanced spear around to strike the creature dead-on.

Which exploded on contact, covering the piolet with an strange black watery substance.

At sight of the formerly blonde piolet standing there dripping with a black substance, almost completely drenched, gripping his spear and swearing his head off, Barrett, Yuffie and Zack cracked up, they couldn't help themselves. Even Vincent cracked an barely-there smile.

However the black haired half-demon frowned deeply and walked towards the man, swiping a finger in the substance before bringing it to his nose to sniff for a few seconds.

"Ink" they heard him murmur his eyes suddenly narrowing in anger "I know of only one being who uses ink monsters and can use chakra like Naruto and I."
This had all their attention "who? You know who caused that?"

"Yeah" he growled "and he has a warped sense of humor." He raised his voice loudly "for an assassin and spy, that was sloppy, even for you, come out."

Silence.

At hearing the words 'assassin' and 'spy' the entire group tensed, hands going to various weapons.

"I know you are there, I can smell you now, come out."

Nothing.

Sasuke shrugged "have it your way."

The next thing they knew he was flying through different positions with his hands (I know they're hands signs, but do the rest of the group know what it's called?) before crying out "Fire Style: Phoenix Flower Jutsu" as he raised his hand to his mouth and an sudden huge gout of flame was blown from his mouth between two fingers.

Shocked by his ability to summon flame without the use of fire materia they watched as the fire engulfed the bushes.

There was a flash of black and white and they were in time to see and hear the clang of clashing metal as Sasuke drew an sword from his hip, the blade hitting against another as the other also drew his, except from behind his back.

They watched in awe an sword fight equal to Cloud against Sephiroth.

They suddenly pushed away from each other, back-flipping and landing, Sasuke on hands and knees and the other with one knee down on the ground and one knee up, kind of an half crouched and half kneeling position.

Sasuke raised one thumb to his mouth and bit it with a sharp tooth, again the positions before slamming his hands to the ground, exclaiming "summoning jutsu-wolf summons!"

At the same time the other pulled out an huge scroll, laying it flat on the ground. As they watched hundreds of painted animals leapt out of the scroll, straight at the half-demon.

Just in time to impact with huge ferocious wolves of jet black with red eyes rising from the ground.

Ink splattered everywhere, the wolves disappearing in puffs of smoke.

The half demon snarled in fury, eyes bleeding red and crouching in an decidedly animal posture, power emanating from his every pore as something black, much like the others ink, began to creep up his face on the left side from somewhere on his neck.

"Shit" the other quickly put the scroll and his weapons away, hands up in a sign of surrender "calm down, Uchiha, you are getting too overexcited."

The snarling increased, hands going clawed as they dug into the ground in front of him, the black now reaching his eye, slowly turning the red, white and black there an shining yellow\gold, somehow reminding them of Chaos' eyes.

“"Uchiha calm down, I surrender. If you keep getting angry you’re going to open the second stage.”"
“Second stage?”

The other glanced at them before speaking “Orochimaru the sanin he left our village to learn from put a curse seal on him. It was supposed to be controlling him until the sanin was able to use him for the purpose he wanted him from, but Naruto killed him before he could. We all thought once the sanin was dead the seal would fade but it didn’t. Sasuke hasn’t used it since he mated with Naruto, but if his demon side’s power was to boost the already powerful mark....”

They realized what he was saying and to Cloud it sounded too much like when Sephiroth controlled HIM through the Jenovah inside him. He had done things he truly regretted under his control, he found himself wanting to stop this other from doing the same.

“What can we do?” Tifa asked softly and added “who are you?”
“Sai” he said “I am....one of Naruto’s human friends.”

“HE said you were an assassin and spy” Cloud frowned.

“I WAS. My master had me join Naruto on one of his searches for the Uchiha when he was with the sanin. I was a spy, charged with assassinating the Uchiha once they found him.”

“What changed?”

“Naruto made me see differently. I was raised to be nothing more than they made me, my older brother died being our masters weapon, but Naruto taught me about comrades, about friends and friendship, about the real meaning of living. When it came to it, I decided my mission was to bring him back with us, just like Naruto wanted and sided with him and his ‘human friends’ against my master.”

“How did you get here?”

“I was standing behind Kakashi-sensei when the mixed seals hit them. I ended up in the next village from here and had to try and find them. Fortunately I was heading this way when I felt Sasuke’s chakra spike and was able to track it here.”

“Chakra?”
“Not important right now, stopping the Uchiha is.”

They realized he was right, the power was building.

Before anyone could move there was a new older and deeper voice who spoke out behind them “tsk, tsk, tsk, Sai, are you stirring your teammate up again? It’s always either him or Naruto. One day one of them is going to kill you.”

A figure casually walked out of the trees behind them, head buried in a book with a strange orange cover.

He was lanky and tall, looked about Cid’s age with wild silver hair sticking out on top. He was wearing black cargo pants, an green flak jacket with an long-sleeved black jumper underneath. But what was strangest about the figure was the fact that his face from the nose down was covered with a black cloth mask and one eye, the left, was covered with the same headband as the other three had, the entire side down to the mask hidden by the slouched cloth so only the right side and it’s piercing dark grey orb showed.

The figure, Sai, relaxed visibly at the sight of this person and flashed an somewhat empty smile, continuing in his emotionless monotonous tone “he was with these other people. I was merely testing
“...his feelings towards them.”

“If he’s not trying to kill them all or being his usual Uchiha self, then they’re not threats, you should know that by now. And I thought Naruto told you to stop using that fake smile.”

The figure stopped grinning and cocked his head slightly “I thought that an smile is usually the easiest way to defuse a tense situation, sensai?”

The man sighed “when it’s real and heartfelt, like Naruto does. Yours doesn’t work because it isn’t real, you don’t feel it, you didn’t read that as well, you don’t know that until you experience that. You have to actually experience these appropriate situations, Sai.”

"Uh guys" Yuffie called "what about..."

By now the creeping black was moving down his arm and leg, over his forehead and turning his black hair grey.

"The only person who can stop Sasuke and the curse mark is Naruto." The figure put the book away and that caused the other to frown in concern "the only other option is to fight him until he runs out of chakra" he glanced at where Vincent was knelt beside the blonde figure, hands still pressed to the seal and red wisps of power curling around his fingers and arms.

"How you can siphon the demon power and be no worse for wear, I don't know but THIS may help" he reached into one of his pouches on his vest and threw something to the gunslinger.

A folded piece of paper.

Once unfolded they saw an strange and complicated symbol, a seal they realized. "That's an temporary seal I received from Jiraiya-san himself. It will repress ALL his chakra-including the demon-for a few minutes. If you repress the overflow he should be able to awaken temporarily. At least long enough to either shut the curse mark down or control Sasuke."

The gunslinger raised his hands slowly and placed the paper over the seal over the stomach.

There was a flash of red and a few seconds later the figure stirred "Sasuke?" he mumbled thickly.

"Naruto we need your help. Sasuke's freaking out and activated the curse seal. Only you can stop him."

"Sasuke?" he murmured again, eyes slowly opening. His first sight was of Vincent knelt over and next to him. His nose twitched, taking in the gunslinger's scent and his frown suddenly broke into confusion "father?"

Before Vincent could answer the other teenager frowned as well "that's what the Uchiha called him. Why would BOTH of them call him father?"

"Because he sort of is" Tifa explained as the gunslinger gently sat the other up "Chaos is the demon foxes father, so since Sasuke is Naruto's mate...."

They understood this but asked "who is Chaos?"

"A demon inside Vincent. According to our legends he is the being destined to destroy all life on this world when the planet is dying. Another, Omega, will then take all those souls and seed a new world with them and start another life there. He told us himself he had created ten children from his own flesh, one is still here but the others ended up on another world-yours apparently."
"The nine tailed demons" the other teenager breathed in awe.

"Yep" Yuffie grinned.

"Well that explains it" the silver haired man, that they now realized had been the 'decoy' earlier, said "you did something incredibly foolish, Sai. When you attacked the group in an effort to test his feelings on them, you threatened his father figure. You know how Sasuke lost his family to his brother, Naruto is all he really has left.

Now he finds he has a father, a father who probably already shows he cares for both him and Naruto, who never had a father or mothers love before. YOU threaten that and of course he over reacted."

This made sense to them all.

"Naruto" the silver haired man looked to the blonde "Sasuke needs you, he's out of control."

"Sasuke, Kakashi-sensai?" his head turned slowly towards the power he could feel, seeing the pissed off figure and the blue eyes widened in horror and shock "SASUKE!" he launched himself from Vincent’s arms and towards the figure, the silver haired figure snatching the paper away as he went past.

The two collided with a flash of power.

They heard the black haired boy snarl loudly, followed by an answering one from the other.

"What's he doing?" Yuffie asked curiously.

"Reestablishing dominance" Vincent said softly in answer "he's be unconscious for so long and his mate caring for him his hold has weakened."

Zack spoke out with a laugh "The way they're going he'll burn off that excess energy anyway."

They realized he was right and watched the fight, what they could see of it through the flashes of power. It seemed both were fully changed, the blonde baring nine fox tails behind him and the other-to their shock-something that resembled a mix between bat wings and hands behind his back.

The only problem was, the power seemed to be building with no sign of end when Tifa suddenly spoke "wait a minute, how much energy does the blonde have?"

"Why do you ask?" the silver haired man asked.

"Well Sasuke is half demon, isn’t he?" when the lanky man nodded “he implied that the blonde, Naruto, feeds him power. Wouldn’t this fight mean they’re both feeding off the same energy?"

The silver haired man cursed when he realized she was right.

The other teenager, Sai suddenly spoke “Naruto has almost limitless Chakra. Now with him merging with Kyuubi, his supply has increased ten times.”

“Meaning what?”
“Meaning they could be at it for days.”

This time they cursed.

“I will take care of this” Vincent growled in a voice not his.
“You’ve already used your strength before, can you do this without damage?”

“The strength I siphoned from him will give me the boost I need, both to stop and dominate BOTH. However we will all end up unconscious afterwards.”

Knowing how vulnerable this would make him to them Cloud nodded “we understand. We’ll take care of you all.” Vincent stood up straight, the group backing away to give him room, Zack looking to the silver haired man, nodding with “you better move away.”

With a graceful back flip the silver haired man landed beside Cid.

As they watched the gunslinger rose to full height, his red eyes flashed and with a bubble of power his form changed. The purpose for the bubble was two-fold. One to release the condense the power around him into where it was needed and second as protection from attacks during this brief but vulnerable time between forms.

Once the bubble of power had been re-absorbed the figure of Chaos stood there.

“Wow” the figure called Sai murmured “sexy and scary at the same time” he eyed the demon up and down and something sparked in those black eyes.

The silver haired man shook his head at him “I swear you are only attracted to the most dangerous people, Sai. I swear one day one of your so-called conquests is going to kill you.”

“Don’t worry about me, Sensai, I can take care of myself” this time the small smile was real “it’s the excitement of something no one else can have.”

“Forget it” Zack grinned at other “Vincent’s straight as they come. He had an girlfriend and son.” “He may be straight” the boy looked to him “but what about his demon?”

“What do you mean?”

“I find that the demons are surprisingly neutral when it comes to their sexuality. Despite their hosts preference the demons don’t seem to care.”

"Be that as it may" Tifa said "some good advice is don't screw with either Vincent or Chaos. They aren't afraid of disemboweling you for the fun of it."

The grin the teen gave them was decidedly predatory.

There was a sudden flash of red and black from where Chaos once stood, a roar of the demon's fury. For some reason it sounded like "stop fighting you brats!" to Cloud and looking at Zack's answering grin, he heard it to.

Chaos as a father, this was going to be interesting.

Both boys suddenly stopped fighting and turned to look at the newcomer, the grey-skinned one-Sasuke-raising himself up to full height proudly and snarling back "You can't tell me what to do!"

Zack snorted at this, typical teenager. Although how they understood the meaning of the snarls, he didn't know.

The silver haired man snorted "Typical Uchiha stubborn streak. It's integrated into their line, raised to believe anything else is weakness. Even Obito had it. I tried to convince Sasuke during his training that that would one day get him killed....but as I said, integrated behavior. He is better then he once
was though."

"You hardly talk about Obito, sensai" Sai said "I know how painful it is to you."

The silver haired man shrugged but didn't comment.

Although the group wanted to ask who this Obito was they recognized a painful subject for the man and resolved to ask one of the other three later.

As they watched the blonde looked at the other, whined and lowered his eyes then head submissively, backing away slightly.

"It seems the fox DOES remember him" Nananki said.

They nodded and watched as the winged demon growled once softly at him "good child. Join the others." The blonde nodded and headed over to join them, the tails and claws disappearing, smiling at the silver haired man with a cheeky "hi Kakashi sensai" as he scratched the back of his head.

The book was out again as the silver haired man gave a two fingered wave. When the blonde's eyes moved to the other black haired teen he looked shocked "Sai? How did you get here?"

"I was behind Kakashi-sensai when the seals hit you all."

"I know, I saw you, but you were across the room. How did YOU get hit too from that distance?"

"He said he ended up in the next town and was working his way here when he felt your energy and used it to track you." Zack said to him "could he have been hit by the end of it, that's why he ended up so far?"

"Possible" the silver haired man nodded as he rubbed his chin thoughtfully "but you realize what that could mean, don't you."

"What?" they questioned.

The black haired teen answered softly "I was standing back-to-back with Sakura."

"NO!" the blonde cried in horror.

"Sakura?" they frowned.

"My other student, along with Sasuke and Naruto. She currently is the student of the Fifth Hokage."

They remembered what Sasuke told them about the woman who was one of the three strongest warriors and understood.

"This means" Tifa started "that your teammate could be anywhere in our world."

"She could be in danger! She's all by herself sensai! No one to defend or help her!" The blonde was terrified of this idea.

"What can we do about it? We have no idea where she is."

"Wait" The blonde looked thoughtful "if the summons worked here..."

"They do" Sai said "Sasuke used the wolves against me before he freaked."

The blonde looked suddenly excited "great! Obba-chan still shares her summons with Sakura,
doesn't she?" When the others nodded, he grinned "good."

He bit his thumb, went through similar hand positions and then slammed both hands on the ground with a cry of "Summoning jutsu-toad summons!"

There was a flash of smoke and a weirdly colored toad appeared. "Yo Naruto" the animal waved with one front leg.

"Hey, can do me a favor. I need you to go back to your dad and ask him to check with Jiriaya what happened there. Once you've done that get him to ask how many of the guys are missing from there during the fight. Tell Jiriaya we are safe for now and he can take his time finding us, but we need to know how many of the guys are here. Get him to ask baachan to ask the slug summons if they can find out where Sakura is. If she's here somewhere to ask at the nearest village were she is and stay there until we find it and her."

“Right, it may take a bit though” the blonde nodded and the toad waved and disappeared again.

The next thing they knew there was another snarl-"idiot!" and a flash of black and red and the 'father' demon had seized the grey skinned one by the neck again, only this time even though the grip was undeniably hard, again it wasn’t choking.

The grey skinned figure snarled and his body bucked in the grip, the hand/wing things flashing forward to strike the other.

Only to be trapped behind him by the others own wings.

The next snarl was truly pissed off, he started to struggle more and a sense of power started to grow around him. Only for the blonde to step forward, snarl “Oh no you don’t!” and a flash in the blue eyes cut the power off “if you’re gonna rebel against dad, do it with your own chakra, not mine!”

The grey skinned figure snarled at him furiously, to which the other answered with a flare of power and his own snarl back. The other blinked at him, stunned, then turned back to struggling with the other.

As if getting sick of all the struggling the black clad/skinned (I haven't decided if Vincents' leather is Chaos' skin or clothes yet) drew a deep breath and roared in the youngers face "KNOCK IT OFF!!"

The grey skinned other looked totally baffled at this, like he had no idea why he did it. His eyebrows furrowed and he opened his mouth as if about to protest, but the other roared again, this time with a flash of power behind it "I SAID STOP IT!!"

With a disgruntled look the grey started to bleed out of the boy's skin, turning his normal color and the hair went black while those strange bat wing/hand things shrank and disappeared.

Within a minute or two the more familiar figure of Sasuke was there, hanging from Chaos' grip.

With a pause to make sure he stayed that way, Vincent was also back, gently lowering the other to the ground so he could release him from his clawed grip.

Then, leaning tiredly on each other in a way only family could get away with, the two made their way to join the rest of the group.

The silver haired man frowned at Vincent when he saw them side by side "if it weren't for your eyes I'd say you were an Uchiha. However your eyes could also be seen as a kind of halfway between Sharingan and normal. How is it you have such eyes. They are not normal, even where we came
"Wait, sensai. Remember, Kunerai had red eyes too."

"Who?"

"That woman dating Asuma-sensai before he died. She could almost be dad's female twin."

"Arh, you mean Anko's ex-teammate."
The blonde nodded "yeah, her."

"Indeed they could be twins" the silver haired man nodded as he scrutinized the gunslinger "except she has a preface for fish-net and he likes leather."

"This 'leather' is necessary" Vincent sniffed dignitally "it is reinforced as body armor, it adapts and changes to whichever form I take and allows for freedom of movement in any shape. For someone whose skills relies on agility as well accuracy, that is extremely important."

They realized he was right.

"What about the cape, vampire" Barrett asked, using the name he occasionally called the gunslinger since finding him in the coffin under the Shinra mansion.

Cid scoffed "even I know that one, idiot. Chaos' wings." A 'light bulb' went on in the black man's head and he nodded.

However Cid HAD called him an idiot, so he did have to defend his honor-by abusing the piolet and starting an argument.

Which paused when the blonde snorted "reminds me of Asuma."

They all looked at the blonde "who?"

"The thirds son" Sasuke called out "he's like a mix of you both, tall and really muscular like HIM" he motioned at Barrett "but a real macho guy, always with a cigar hanging out of his mouth. He was killed in battle too, though. Just like his dad. Left an pregnant team mate, Kunerai, and a nephew, Konohamaru."

Now that all the excitement was over they started to fully get oriented, starting with the 'Avalanche' group introducing themselves to the new figures and vica versa.

They found out that the silver haired man had been the 'team leader' of the two boys and their female team mate growing up, that he had been the one Sasuke told them about when he both mentioned his brothers ex-partner and the one who would get the code from the books for the leader. When they found out that was what he kept getting out and reading and inquired why he was still reading it when the 'spy' and messages were gone, he seemed insulted they thought he wasn't a fan of the books and enjoyed the actual stories and authors work, but the man was so funny with the way he acted, the foppish, idiotic way even though they knew it wasn't true, they didn't know how to act.

Although Zack and he seemed to get along excellently, if their conversation was anything to go by. In fact it seemed that Zack had enticed a couple of copies of previous books to read from the guy and they sat together, heads buried.

Vincent and the ‘wolf’ half demon were cuddled in a dark corner, the crimson gunner on the outside and protectively curled around the younger black head. Yuffie had the blonde ninja in a corner of the
clearing, bugging him to show her a few moves, to teach her something.

Cloud watched them for a while, just turning to move away when he heard the blonde yell “Kage Bushi...”

“Naruto no” the silver haired man suddenly called “I think the last thing this group would want was Yuffie in stereo.”

“Hey!” Yuffie put her hands on her hips and pouted, pretending to look offended.

Naruto grinned widely, “Come on, Kakashi-sensai. Yuffie is the only one here with the chakra to pull it off and it would help her in battle.”

The one eye narrowed “Naruto...” The blonde sighed "fine, I won't teach her."

"What was he gonna teach her?" Barrett questioned "and what is chakra?"

"Chakra is the energy that flows through all things" the one called Sai said, explaining about jutsu's and refining and controlling chakra for certain purposes.

"Sounds like mana" Barrett snorted.

"And your jutsu's sound like our limit-breaks" Tifa said before looking around "Hey, where did Zack go?"

"And Cid" Yuffie piped up with, also looking around.

"The high mountain ranges of Nibelheim block nearly any or all cellular signals" Cloud said "and there is also interference from the mako reactor."

"So?" Yuffie asked.

Barrett rolled his eyes at her while Nanaki went on for him "so they have gone back to the village so Cid can summon the Highwind to get everyone out of here and Zack is calling Reeve."

"Who is this Reeve you speak so highly of?" the silver haired man asked and for just a minute his voice was thick with accent.

"He's the leader of the WRO, World Restoration Organization, and a friend" Nanaki answered "they, at the Organization, help people in danger or trouble and try and repair and restore our planet." Glancing at an apparently asleep Vincent, the fire lion told them about Shinra, the general, the destruction of Nibelheim, the meteor and the serious damage of the planet as well as Midgar.

Then with another glance at Vincent the events of the clones turning up and the newly dubbed 'Omega Incident'.

The silver-haired man frowned "it seems your world has indeed been in recent dire trouble." He then returned the favor by telling them his own life and the events of 'The Hidden Leaf Village' leading up to approaching them all in the clearing.

They were curious about these 'jutsu's' and 'kekai genki's', but the story saddened them, especially about the figures best friend dying to protect himself and their female teammate. But now they knew why he had the head-band slouched over his eye. Since he wasn't born with the ability like Sasuke, he couldn't control it as one. Since it was a sight ability, if he constantly kept it covered, he ensured it was ‘switched off’ so to speak.
Also why he wore the mask. As the son of a great warrior, everyone who he met in his world would either know who he was or judge him by his parental.

As a child he probably decided to cover half his face would hide that fact to enemy and friend. After that, he would have built his own reputation and style, so he continued to wear it.

If the skin-tight mask showed them anything about the shape and definitions of his face, he was probably a very handsome man.

A shame to cover it, really.

"What did you mean by, 'Yuffie in stereo'?" Tifa asked.

"Arh that is better explained by example" the silver haired man looked at the grinning blonde "Naruto?"

The blondes grin grew-if it was possible-and flashed though a series of hand signs before ending with an exclamation of "Kage Bushin jitsu!"

There was sudden pops all around them, brief puffs of smoke and before they knew it the clearing was filled with at least two hundred other grinning Naruto's, all exactly the same down to the last detail.

Yuffie, eyes so wide they nearly popped out of her head, suddenly exclaimed "THAT IS SOOO COOL!" She turned to the nearest grinning image and began jumping up and down excitedly, chanting "teach me! teach me! teach me! teach me! teach me!"

Cloud frowned, turning to the silver haired man "illusions?"

The man shook his head and turned to the one called Sai, raising an eyebrow at him. With a decidedly evil grin the once assassin and spy had decapitated a clone next to him, only to get a pop and the image was gone.

"Hey!" the one on his other side yelled noisily and what followed was equal to a fist-fight between children.

Until the ex-assassin scored a direct hit on the other boy's shoulder, causing it to to pop out of existence.

Cloud frowned at it "solid illusions?" he suddenly blinked "clones?"

"Any Ninja worth being called one can create an clone" the silver haired man said "however it's just an illusion, it has no body or solidarity. However Naruto's can do so. They are called Shadow Clones."

"Why is he different?" Tifa asked "is it because he merged with Kyuubi? We've never seen Chaos do it."

"That's part of it" the cyclops answered "you see the jitsu is or was forbidden. Naruto got hold of it and learned it while he was twelve and in the academy" he glanced at one in particular who grinned sheepishly and scratched the back of his head nervously "until then he was failing."

"Why?"

"He couldn't preform some of the simplest jutsu’s."
"Well yeah, of course I couldn't" the one next to Tifa spoke "I tried using my own chakra and Kyuubi's kept stuffing me up. I mean no one taught me how I was supposed to control and separate both chakra's when I want to do something!"

"Anyway" the cyclops huffed "the shadow clone jitsu is forbidden for a few reasons."

"And?" they questioned.

"First point, to create a shadow clone, it halves the users chakra exactly in half and divides it between user and copy. Two clones would mean you're at third strength and so on."

They understood this "it would make the user weaker and more vulnerable, while because of his almost limitless mana, he is barely affected" Tifa motioned around them.

"Correct" the silver haired cyclops nodded.

"What other reasons are there?"

"It allows any knowledge gained by a clone to be spread out among the group, and ALL knowledge gained returns to the original when the clones disperse. Imagine spreading this many clones out in a library."

"Every book it reads, the original would remember" Nanaki answered "however such knowledge all at the same time would not be good. The original would go mad, if not completely insane. In order to avoid such an event, you may as well just read it yourself."

The cyclops nodded "or one or two dispersed slowly. However, in the past, due to Kyuubi's influence that's not a problem. A momentary lapse and he's back."

It was beginning to sound like this thing was made for the blonde and none of them would be able to use it.

Nanaki spoke out again "something like that would make him near unbeatable in battle." The silver haired man nodded but the fire-cat's companions looked at him curiously. He went on to explain "he creates thousands of clones and sends them off to fight an enemy, while he waits and watches. He can learn how an enemy fights, what his weakness are without lifting a finger. Every time a clone disperses, their knowledge comes back to him. Then, when the enemy is exhausted, he can finish them off."

"But that's cheating!" the blonde knelt beside Nanaki and scratching his ears suddenly exclaimed "I mean where's the honor in doing something so sneaky!"

The silver haired cyclops' reply was to bop the one on his left on the head, who dispersed. The man looked startled muttering "I thought that was the original." He looked around the clearing "Naruto..."

Every clone grinned and said in union "try and find me, sensai" in a teasing tone. The silver haired cyclops' one eye narrowed and he was about to move when there was an red and black flash and the one on Tifa's right went down on the ground, crying "TEME!" as he did.

Instantly all the others said "damn!" and began to pop out of existence all around them, leaving little puffs of smoke behind.

Meanwhile beside Tifa and hidden by the smoke, moaning was starting.

She blushed when she recognized the tone of the moans and moved away among the smoke closer to
Nanaki.

There was suddenly two sets of murmurs and an kind of earthen dome rose up out of the smoke, cutting all sound off in that spot.

The silver haired man frowned "where did Naruto learn an earth-type jitsu, let alone THAT one?"

"Probably from Yamoto during our time under his command while you were in hospital" Sai said "his element was earth."

"I know" the cyclops said "we were teammates in ANBU once. I was just unaware of him teaching Naruto any jitsu's. Naruto's wind element and Kyuubi's fire element should make that extremely difficult."

"We are in the Kyuubi's land of origin" the pale black haired boy said "with it's...source. Perhaps that is awakening new or previously inaccessible abilities."

"Chaos and Omega were children of mother Gaia, the spirit and soul of this world" Nanaki started to explain "All life comes from the lifestream, blood of this world just as all dead return. Is it so hard to believe that as his child he may have control now over ALL elements since that connection has been reestablished?"

They knew he had a point.

Vincent suddenly appeared on the silver haired man's left, awake and frowning at the earthen shield for a few seconds before looking to Cloud "how long have Cid and Zack been gone?"

"About fifteen minutes. Why?"
"They should be back by now, should they not?"

Cloud frowned "they should. If the villagers are causing trouble..."

Vincent spoke "they are being paid by Shinra to act like the village is still there. But they are supposed to immediately alert them of any...unusual activity. The fact they have not at the first sign of these people means they are hiding something from their employers."

"You're right" Cloud nodded seriously "they've not only hidden the arrival of such powerful people from the ones they're supposed to tell the minute it happens but tried to get rid of them by hiring us to supposedly 'destroy a demon threat'. If Zack calls Reeve..."

The black-haired demon vessel nodded. Cloud frowned and reached for his sword "I'll go..."

But Vincent waved his hand away "I shall go. I can travel faster and be there sooner."

Reluctantly the blonde released his sword and nodded.

His cloak wrapping around him like it was alive, the demon vessel was suddenly gone. Cloud would have usually gone himself, but he didn't have Fenrir with him and he knew in this form Vincent could dive in, rescue the two men and be back to them in less than five minutes, moving so fast that there was no way the 'villagers' could follow, let alone track.

Yuffie spoke out "when Rufus finds out, those guys are sooo dead!" Barrett glared at the female ninja who just poked her tongue out childishly at him.
An hour later they still hadn't returned and some of them, including Cloud were beginning to worry.

At an hour and a half Cloud was gripping his sword, prepared to go look for them.

 Barely two minutes ago the earth shield had fallen, revealing the two naked sleeping figures, wrapped in each other's arms and legs and nothing else. Yuffie had giggled, Tifa had blushed and politely turned away, the silver haired man's one eye turning into an upside down U as he grinned.

 Striding forward the cyclops removed his flack jacket, laying it over both young men's private area, blocking sight of any such area and earning a pout from Yuffie.

 He then pulled out an rolled up scroll from one pocket and unrolled it, laying it on the ground flat to show the strange symbol in the middle "it's a good thing that I keep extras when on missions with those two. Ever since becoming mates they take every chance they can to 'mate' which usually includes tearing each other's clothes apart."

 Yuffie giggled again and the lanky man placed both hands on the symbol, crying "storage seal, release!" Next thing they knew, two piles of clothes and shoes were sitting neatly folded on the page between his hands.

 He moved to start dressing the two with the other black-haired boy's help (cuffing him over the head every time he stopped and purposely ogled either one-which was often) the scroll was then replaced in a hidden pocket and he shrugged the jacket back into place.

 Once done he frowned at the two behind the mask "it seems Naruto more than Sasuke these days initiating the mating, although Sasuke does his share. It's as if they suddenly loose touch with reality and all that matters is having sex. Naruto may have been highly impulsive in his youth, but there is something more primal here. It's as if..."

 "That is because it is" a rich voice said from the trees behind them.

 They spun to find Vincent there, leaning against a thick trunk, ankles and arms crossed. Once he had their attention he un-crossed and strode forward, heading towards the four shinobi.

 Cloud frowned at him, tensing when he noticed he was alone "where's Zack and Cid?"

 Vincent motioned his question away with "safe" as he continued to approach them. Bending slightly he eased the blonde into his arms, looking at the lanky man "can you carry him yourself?"

 "Of course" the silver haired man easily picked the other up and with the other pale black haired boy in tow they headed back the way the gun slinger had come. After a hesitation the rest of the group followed.

 Vincent spoke out, explaining softly.

 "Chaos' children weren't all males. Two of them, on the moment of their separation, decided to be female. When their souls went to your world ONE must have chosen to inhabit an female animals body to stay that way."

 "Kyuubi" the silver haired man frowned "what are you saying?"

 "What event strikes all females yearly?"

 Tifa answered this "our cycle when we can conceive."
"Exactly" the gunman nodded "only in animals it's called...."

"Going into heat" the silver haired man's one eye widened nearly all the way. "So your saying that because Naruto merged with the fox he's going through his heat. Somehow Sasuke knows instinctively so he's losing control as well. That because both are male they can't get pregnant and the heat is getting worse because it's driving them to reproduce but they can't."

"Not exactly but close" the red and black clad demon vessel said "after he merged with the fox and took the other as his mate, because he is male, his body recognized they would be unable to reproduce, so it adapted to allow, during his heats, to do so."

The silver haired man's eyes nearly popped out of his head "during his heat Naruto can GET PREGNANT!!"

"Correction, he already IS pregnant. Their bodies are still going through heat because his fox is trying to not only ensure pregnancy cements but tapper off the remaining heat effects."

"Are you sure?" Cloud's eyes were also wide.

"I sensed it-a new life inside-when I picked him up before. When I scanned him afterwards it was confirmed."

"It explains Sasuke's sudden over protectiveness" the man, Kakashi, said seriously. "I mean he's always been protective of his teammates in the past and once he almost died protecting Naruto-and that was just on their first mission together. But the way he's been acting since his return to the village was just way too overboard. He's been acting as if Naruto is his and his alone and his whole happiness and life depends on Naruto paying attention to him and being constantly by his side. Naruto joked once he even follows him into the bathroom."

"Eww" Yuffie wrinkled her nose and looked disgusted.

"If he is, he instinctively knows Naruto is bearing his child." Nanaki said "and like a wolf-mate he is protecting his pregnant mate. This I understand as an animal and would do the same." He looked at the boys from his position walking by Vincent. "Perhaps because his own instincts tell him his mate is male and not supposed to be pregnant, they have become overly protective. By constantly staying by his mates' side he is ensuring nothing endangers his offspring and mate during this fragile and vital time."

"Do they both know?" the cyclops murmured, looking at the young man in his arms thoughtfully "or is all this instinct?"

"Naruto would know" the ex-assassin and spy said "I mean how could he not?"

"Not necessarily Sai" the silver haired cyclops said.

"Yes, I think he would know" Nanaki said softly "he backed down from Vincent fast when confronted."

"He used the fox cloak to protect himself when he faced down Sasuke earlier" the sword-wielding ninja added.

They looked at the young man "fox cloak?"

"An covering of the foxes chakra around his body" Kakashi explained "it is like the fox superimposing his image over Naruto, but we call it the fox cloak. Someone outside touching him is
burned and Naruto or the fox can manipulate it to do various things, like making fox tails to use like other hands."

They understood the basic idea of it.

"There is also what happened just before we ended up here with Naruto" Sai looked at his leader.

"What do you mean?" the cyclops looked at him.

"A week before the villagers attacked I was waiting outside the Hokage's office to report from a mission when I heard them arguing. Naruto wanted a couple of months off from mission work, but wouldn't tell her why. It went suddenly quiet for a while then Naruto stormed out of the office.

I saw the Hokage behind him, she looked so horrified and haunted, I thought he had threatened to quite and leave the village and her. She yelled out something about telling Sasuke, that he deserved to know, but Naruto yelled something about if she opened her big mouth he WOULD leave the village."

"Why wouldn't Naruto tell Sasuke that he was a father-our rather WILL be a father soon?" Kakashi seemed confused and alarmed by this.

"I think I know" Tifa said thoughtfully.

"Tell us" they looked at the big busted fighter.

"You remember what he said about his family and line?"

They nodded and Nanaki seemed to follow her line of thoughts "his family betrayed the village and if it could produce someone like his brother and as easily corruptible as him, perhaps it should end with him."

"So you're saying" the silver haired man started "Naruto wouldn't tell Sasuke about their child because he knows this and thinks if he finds out he'll reject not only the baby, but him because he will refuse to leave it, or even give it away."

"It seems so" Nanaki answered.

"Sasuke wouldn't do that" Sai said "he would see any child they had as another little piece of Naruto that is all his, something that he can care for, guide and raise in all the love, protection and gentleness of his brother when they were young and what he wanted from his own family."

"But Naruto wouldn't see it that way" Kakashi said "he may be as intelligent as Sasuke, but in terms of socialization and how others think, he's a two year old."

Any other talk was cut off as they approached a clearing and the sound of engines. There sat the Highwind, engines on, waiting for them.

Standing waiting on the open ramp was a figure and Cloud relaxed when he saw who it was.

Zack met them halfway down, his tall frame and muscular arms surrounding Cloud as he pulled the blonde to him, murmuring something about "stupid Shinra idiots, stupid mountain hicks" before apologizing "no insult meant, Chocoboo."

Surrounded in his boyfriends arms and head buried in his strong chest, Cloud breathed in his sent, cinnamon mixed with the sharp tang of mako, and relaxed, assured of his unharmed state.
He mumbled a reply, something along the lines of "that's okay" and "that place is no longer home to me anymore-Sephiroth destroyed that" and stayed where he was, relishing his relief and relaxed state.

Even when everyone was aboard and Zack was walking him in as well, he didn't relinquish his hold on his boyfriend.

They lay both boys out in the crew room, the other two ninja’s joining them in their state of sleep (the silver headed man pulling the sheet up to cover his face so he could remove the mask), and sat together in a group in Cid's quarters, discussing what had happened. Then it moved to what they were going to do.

Where were they going to house their new friends? Especially with Naruto's 'tender' condition and Sasuke's over protectiveness of him. They also didn't think the other two ninja would want to be far from their teammates.

The silver haired man joined them after an hour or so, the ex-assassin and spy next, probably because both had used less mana/chakra than the other two.

The silver haired man told them any place was fine by them, as ninja they had sometimes slept in caves our outdoors during a mission.

"We would need a place close to Doctors or medical aid" Nanaki said "with Naruto pregnant and being male, there is no telling how difficult or complicated the birth will be. No one will know what would happen."

They agreed with this.

"Tsunade-san would probably be able to examine him and figure out a way" Sai said "she is a brilliant tactician and healer. In our world she is an wizard at potions and cures."

"If she couldn't figure it out, chances are her and Jiriaya-san could" Kakashi said "there are times I think those two could accomplish anything together."

Sai nodded seriously "the Hokage and the Sanin are definitely the real treasures of The Hidden Leaf village."

"And we have Naruto to thank for that."

Again the boy nodded in agreement.

"Did you get hold of Reeve?" Cloud looked at his partner "before those idiots attacked, I mean."

Zack nodded "Cid's dropping us all at Rocket Town and he's meeting us there."

"Maybe Reeve can help with the medical issue" Vincent said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully "he has doctors and medical personal." He looked at Kakashi "if you work for him instead of Shinra he would provide everything you need, medical assistance, food, lodgings, clothes, even help assimilating into this world. Even training in the use of materia and our types of weapons. Have you done bodyguard work before?"

Kakashi nodded "it's part of the training and sometimes important missions require protecting VIP's."

"Good. We've been telling Reeve for years he needs a bodyguard. He's an very important person to our world and the running of the WRO. YOU could be an bodyguard and because of your....unusual
looks the enemy wouldn't suspect you of being one. No insult intended but here bodyguards look more like him” he motioned at Barrett.

The silver haired man nodded in understanding, not the least bit insulted.

"What about us?" the black haired young man asked.

"What are your talents?"

The silver haired man answered for him "Sai's limits lay in only his imagination and chakra."

"What do you mean?"

"You saw his chakra animal. As long as Sai can draw it, he can create it. He can then send it to do various jobs. The creature has no limit except Sai's chakra. They don't eat, they don't sleep, they don't feel pain, they just do what they're made for. He is also trained the same as us and skilled at swordplay."

"So" Vincent said, looking at the young man "if Reeve provides you photo's of monsters in our world, you can reproduce them as your own."

The young man nodded.

"Well then I think you and...my son's could become monster hunters, but when something different and more dangerous comes up, you can do so."

"Like Sephiroth, or Deep Ground!" Yuffie sounded excited.

"Yes" Vincent nodded.

Cloud turned to look at Vincent "you said you sensed the baby, do you know yet if it's a girl or boy?"

"It's too early to tell, but it's strong, as strong as Kyuubi was. The baby is safe and fortunately despite what happened, Naruto's body is nurturing and protecting it safely."

Before anyone else could speak there came a gasp from the doorway "Naruto is PREGNANT!!"

The groups' heads snapped to find two figures standing in the doorway, one shocked and stunned, the other horrified.

Sasuke looked at his mate "Naruto, how could you?!"
The blonde’s mouth flopped open and closed, but no sound came out. “Why Naruto? How could you keep such a thing from me?”

“Sasuke...” the silver haired man started, voice warningly soft. But both boys ignored him. “I thought you trusted me.”

Those five words did it. With a choked sob the boy was gone, but not before every one of them saw the utterly heartbroken look in his eyes and face. “You BAKA Uchiha!” the other black haired ninja snapped.

The silver haired man stood, glaring at the other “I’m disappointed, Sasuke. Even when you nearly killed him, I wasn’t this disappointed in you. I thought you were more mature than that. I thought you knew your mate better than that.”

The boy glared back at the man “he’s keeping secrets from me, sensei. How am I going to protect him if he does that? How many more are there that he hasn’t told me about?”

“Oh Sasuke” the one eyed man sighed “I thought you’d realized how Naruto thinks by now.”

Tifa spoke up “are you upset with him for being pregnant, or the fact he kept it from you?”

The half demon looked at her, horrified “secret of course! How could I be upset he’s pregnant?! Any children of Naruto’s would be perfect!”

“Even with YOU as the father?” she challenged.

“Even with” he answered, totally and obviously believing every word before he suddenly blinked, as if shocked by the sudden realization “father? I’m going to be a father?!”

Tifa stood “I’ll go get him.”

“Why you?” the group asked.

“Sometimes it’s easier talking to someone you DON’T know, then someone you do.”

The group understood and let her go.

Only for Vincent to stand to follow. When she said his name questionably, the one eyed silverette answered for him “Naruto’s an ninja, if he doesn’t want to be found, you won’t find him.”

Vincent nodded “however as a child of Chaos I can track him by his mana...” he looked at the two ninja’s briefly “Chakra. If it is his wish I will return here and leave you both to talk.” Tifa understood and nodded.

As they started past the half-demon, he stopped them for a minute “when he’s upset he likes high isolated places other people would rarely or never go.” Tifa accepted this with another nod and she and the silent demon vessel left.

It took them a full twenty minutes to even locate his ‘chakra’, another twenty to even find a way out to him, Tifa forced to hold tight to Vincent as the high forced winds buffeted the outside of the ship.

There, on the top of the Highwind, using his chakra to stick to the metal surface by his hands and
feet, was the young man.

Tifa’s breath caught in awe.

Before she had thought the young man handsome with an winning personality, but the sight before her was more than that.

Seated on the flat metal surface the blonde was leaning back on his hands behind him. His head was back, eyes closed, medium length hair streaming out behind him in the wind. With his muscular yet sleek swimmers-type body the pose was so male model that for a minute Tifa choked on a mouthful of saliva.

Yet the expression on his face was so thoughtful yet peaceful, Tifa didn’t want to disturb him. But she did, Vincent’s not quiet prodding had her by his side in an instant.

Slowly the beautiful blue eyes opened to stare at them silently for a few seconds before closing again as he asked softly against the wind “why are YOU out here?”

“I came out like you, to be alone.”

The blonde snorted rudely “I might be blonde, but I was never dumb, even if I acted that way.”

“What makes you think I don’t?”

“I might believe that of father...” he nodded at Vincent who stood behind Tifa, bracing her against the wind with no problem, standing like an unmovable object. The demon vessel stood as if it was normal, no sign of strain whatsoever, the only sign of the winds effect on him, his long hair and tattered cloak whipping out behind him.

Tifa smiled cheekily at him “how do you know the two of us don’t come out here together regularly and talk, or just sit and be alone together and that’s how we found you?”

“Alright” he laughed “I believe you” he moved to leave, but Tifa caught his arm “stay, talk with us.”

“About what?” The blonde cocked his head at them.

“Whatever you want to. Your life, friends, Kyuubi. I’m sure Chaos and Vincent wouldn’t mind hearing about their daughter and getting to know one son and about the other.”

After a brief hesitation the ninja nodded and sat back down.

The next thing Tifa knew she was sitting on his left side comfortably with Vincent on his right, laughing with his stories of pranks in his youth, yet at the same time saddened by the knowledge they were a child cry for attention. As an adopted mother, she knew such when she heard it.

She was surprised by the knowledge the two mates has met in their childhood, NOT ‘the Academy’ as Sasuke had said.

When she asked why he wasn’t upset that Sasuke didn’t remember such an event he shrugged “if the big brother I loved and adored suddenly turned around, slaughtered my family-every man, woman and child EXCEPT ME, I think I’d try to forget as much of my past as I could too. His brother told him he would never be strong enough to “kill me and avenge the clan” unless he hated, learned to truly hate HIM.”

“In order to hate he had to bury or destroy all ‘good’ childhood memories. It was the only way to
survive” Vincent said from his spot to the right, the blonde nodding his affirmation. The demon vessel was seated somewhat casually. He had his normal hand stretched out behind him in a similar position to the blonde had before.

The difference was he was turned slightly to face the blonde, left leg laying flat while the right was bent up in front of him at the knee, his right gauntlet arm bent and resting on the top of the cap (think Vincent at the crystal caves-Lucretciea’s ‘tomb’ in Dirge Of Cerberus).

He went on with the story, reaching his fight with ‘Gaara’, the one tailed raccoon. At the name of the demon Vincent told them “she was Chaos’ other daughter.”

“Hah” Naruto nodded thoughtfully “it explains it.”

“Explains what?” they asked.

“Why, for a start, Gaara always called it mother.”

“Mother?”

“Yeah, like ‘mother shall I kill them for you?’, he was creepy like that.”

Tifa shuddered “sounds like Sephiroth was” then realized how it sounded and looked at the demonic gunman “I’m sorry, Vincent!” The crimson gunman just nodded to her.

“Who?”

Tifa gave a quick recap, getting the occasional nod of encouragement or permission from the other black haired figure. By the end the blonde was frowning “he was injected even before he was born with this things blood?”

“Well” Tifa considered for a second “yes.”

“And he didn’t go crazy until AFTER reading that guys lies and becoming highly emotional?” “Yes” again she answered.

“Before then he seemed almost emotionless, incredibly controlled.”

“Yes” again she answered.

The boy sighed “he’s an Jinchuuriki.”

“What?” both Avalanche members froze in shock.

The boy sighed again “contains features of the ‘demon’-in this case silver hair, green cat-eyes...” he traced his whiskers “Gaara’s black eyes was like a raccoon mask. Always in control of his emotions, the one time he let’s loose he becomes insane.”

“What are you saying?” Tifa asked softly.

The blonde rolled his eyes. “The guy you guys fought, the guy who killed your father and burned your village WASN’T FATHER’S SON.” He looked at Vincent “it was the demon inside him controlling him. That one moment of high uncontrollable emotion made him vulnerable to her control.”

Vincent’s top lip lifted and he growled in a distorted rage-filled voice “Jenovah.”

Tifa spoke out, confused “wait, if that’s true, what’s with all the talk of ‘mother’ and traveling the stars like mother did?”
“Tell me, if he had been saying ‘I’ instead of ‘mother’ and ‘she’ would you have just fought him? Or would you have tried to help him? To subdue him and find a way to free him from her control?”

They knew he was right.
Vincent’s face fell when something occurred to him.

“No, father” Naruto seized his gauntlet hand, earnest blue eyes locked to his red ones “I doubt he knew what was happening. Every time Kyuubi possessed me I ‘awoke’ with no memory of what happened. He more than likely went through the high emotions then kind of, shut off, like loosing consciousness.”

“Or” Tifa said “if he was the true warrior he sounds to me, he would have rather have died a honorable death in battle than being HER puppet, HER plaything.” Vincent’s lips pursed and he nodded solemnly.

Everyone settled back the way they were before and the blonde continued their tale. The two Avalanche members listened, Tifa laughed occasionally and even Vincent chuckled softly occasionally.

When he reached the current point Tifa took advantage of it “he’s not upset because you’re pregnant, but because you didn’t tell him. He was upset because he felt he couldn’t protect you properly if he didn’t know you were vulnerable like that.”

The blonde sighed “I can take care of myself. I have been since I can walk.”

“It’s different though” Tifa said knowingly “you’re more vulnerable than before any damage or blow to the area, you could miscarry and loose him or her.”

The blonde’s hand flew protectively to his stomach, stroking the barely there lump comfortingly.

After a slightly uncomfortable pause, the blonde whispered almost shyly “can you keep a secret?” he sounded unsure, shy. Both black haired Avalanche members exchanged looks before Vincent spoke gently “anything you tell us is between the three of us.”

“It’s a girl” the smile as he stroked his stomach was beautiful. It was sexy, innocent, shy and captivating all in one.

“You know what it is already?”
He nodded.
“How do you know already?” they asked.

“She told me” he looked down, smiling while he continued to stroke.

The two Avalanche members froze “who?”
“HER” he stroked under the slight lump.

“You can talk to her already? She can actually talk to you?”

“Not really. Mostly it’s feelings and I can kind of pick up a sense of what she wants or needs. Then there’s the dream…” he frowned, disturbed.

“What dream?”

“Even since I got pregnant there’s been this really weird dream. The further along the pregnancy I get, the more it unravels. It’s different than any other dream, it feels…”
“Real?” Tifa asked.
“Yeah” he nodded “like it will happen, a warning.”
This disturbed them.

“When I awoke and saw father, I knew it was real.”
“What?”
“Because he was in it.”

Stunned silence before Vincent said “tell us this dream.”

After a thoughtful pause to organize his thoughts, this is what he told them.

“I’m sitting under a huge tree, back to the trunk. It’s warm and peaceful and there are no missions so I don’t have to do a thing at the moment. I look around to find the tree in the edge of a large clearing of the thick wood surrounding our village.

To my left I can just see the start of the buildings of the Uchiha District.

Suddenly I hear a child giggling and look back into the clearing to see HER...” his breathe caught in awe “she is so beautiful I can’t move, and somehow I know she’s mine, mine and Sasuke’s. She’s running around the clearing, chasing a butterfly, laughing in such an innocent and carefree way I want to protect and save her from all things evil and bad in the world.”

Tifa got the same feeling from Denzel and Marlene, even though they weren’t genetically hers.

“She has Sasuke’s pale skin, his dead-straight black hair, long, but my eyes and personality...” he smiled as he stroked the growing lump “she’ll be a little terror for us to handle, but she’ll also be daddies precious little girl, his little star.”

His smile widened “she’ll have daddy wrapped around her little finger even before she can crawl, let alone talk.” Tifa laughed “I just bet she will. The toughest men are softies when it comes to kids.”

Naruto laughed too when he saw Vincent’s mock-offended expression. “Come on, Vincent, when Marlene ran into you at the forbidden city, you protected her like a parent, even from Cloud!” Tifa laughed “and you’re gonna be a grandfather too now!”

The blonde went on “then I hear two sets of laughter and look back at her to see Sasuke’s there now and they’re playing tag in the clearing together and I’M SOOO HAPPY!”

For some reason Tifa could see it, a beautiful little girl running around in a clearing, wearing a blue, white and red dress. She was chasing Sasuke around among the flowers and peeling with laughter as long black hair streamed out behind her like a cloak and for some reason, the length of the hair had to be behind the knees, so it looked like a cloak of black shiny silk when she ran.

Glancing up at Vincent she saw his shock and realized, he had seen the same thing as well!

The blonde was going on.

“There’s another person with us, standing in the shadows outside the clearing, watching us. Even though all I can see of him is long flowing dark hair, I’m not frightened or concerned he’s there, in fact I feel safe. Especially when our daughter occasionally would pick a flower and run over to give it to him, giggling when he accepts it solemnly and then running back to play with Sasuke. When I first saw it, I thought it was Itachi...” at their looks he answered “Sasuke’s older brother” when they nodded he went on “I thought it was like he was there to watch over his brothers family in spirit but real, you know how weird some dreams can be...”
They nodded again “but now I really think about it, I now know, it was dad and after hearing HIS story, some more parts of the dream make sense.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ll see” he answered, so they nodded him to go on.

“Suddenly the clearing is just filled with all my friends, everyone from the pervert, granny Tsunade and Neji-to even Gaara and his siblings. And they’re ALL playing with our daughter and Sasuke.”

There was awe in his voice at this “all our friends, everyone of them, playing and laughing with MY daughter.”

His hand started to move again and the smile was back full force “but then of course I should have realized that. If our daughter can get someone as uptight as Sasuke to laugh, the others should should be no problem. Like father like daughter...” he beamed in pride before going on “there are other people among the group too that I don’t know, but dad seems to know and trust them, so I’m not worried. One male and female in particular, the male with dark hair and the female a teen, are getting the best reactions from her.”

“Knowing our group” Tifa laughed “it’s probably Zack and Yuffie. Yuffie is the only teen girl among us and Zack is more of a big kid himself, they both are.”

The expression suddenly changed “then they’re gone, even dad is not in sight.”

“What happened?”

“I don’t know, they’re just gone. I’m terrorized, where are they? Who took my daughter? Is she with Sasuke? Is she safe? I start to panic, I DON’T LIKE being alone...” he swallowed in fear and pain.

“Suddenly I hear her, our daughter, she’s laughing again and I am racing through the trees, dark and thick, to find her.

How long I’m looking, I don’t know, but it seems like hours or even days, but I’m finally there. Our daughter is sitting in the lap of a seated man, playing some sort of hand game. Even seated I can see he’s tall and muscular with incredibly long hair.

His voice, as he murmurs conversation with her, is soft yet oddly seductive. But for some reason just his presence near my daughter puts me on edge. I get ready to fight and try to call her away from him, but she just looks at me and says “but he’s my uncle, daddy.”

“Sephiroth!” Tifa gasped, then frowned “the REAL Sephiroth?”

“Perhaps” the blonde said “he seems like a child himself, he sits and plays games with her for what seems like hours, each one an innocent child’s game with no violence at all, like tickling; hand games; tag among the trees and even jump rope.”

They couldn’t imagine this, although maybe if Sephiroth had been allowed to be a child instead of a weapon...

“Everything changes when Sasuke comes across us and attacks the man. Before I can do anything he’s gone, with our daughter.”

“What happens?”

“We chase him, finding him. He’s standing with this big-assed sword to our daughters throat, going on about ‘mother’ and ‘betrayal’ and how our daughters kind was responsible for his mothers destruction.”
“What does he mean by that?”
“I don’t know.”

“According to Hojo and Sephiroth later on, the ancients were responsible for Jenovah’s destruction” Vincent said.

“Ancients?” the blonde asked curiously. So, careful not to use Aeris’ name, he told him about her and her clan. His reply was “sounds like the sages.”

“Sages?” they asked and the young man explained, finishing with “Jiriaya-sensai is one, the last.”

“Jiriaya-sensai?” could there be another ancient alive somewhere?
“Yeah. He and Tsunade are the last of the three Sanin, the only three Sanin.”
“Ah” Vincent nodded “the one you call pervert-san.”

Naruto giggled then went serious. “that’s just one side of him. He and Tsunade used to have this thing for each other, but Tsunade had a stronger thing for Orochimaru, their teammate,” he shuddered in disgust “sorry, Orochimaru had been abused in his past, sexually, mentally and some said physically by his dead father, apparently to make him his perfect little heir, so he was warped and obsessed with living forever.”

“Let me guess” Tifa said “Tsunade had this romantic notion and dream of saving his soul and making him an worthwhile ninja.”

The blonde nodded “is it a woman thing? ‘cause Sakura did the same with Sasuke when we were young.” Tifa nodded to him “I think nearly every woman has that dream growing up. What happened to have him leave the village?”

“He was discovered experimenting on children, trying to reproduce the bloodline abilities in other than those born with them. Can you imagine how powerful he would be if he could transfer the bloodline abilities from anyone he wanted, either into himself or his brainwashed soldiers?”

“My god” Tifa breathed in horror and awe “children?!”

“Yeap. Something about kids being more open to the influx of chakra of the ability. However it didn’t work.”

“What do you mean?”

“The children all died, burned out from the inside out by their own chakra by the influx of foreign chakra in their system.”

“NO!” Tifa almost screamed “how could he do that! To innocent children!”

“He was too far gone by then. The village drove him out and he founded his own village and continued on orphan children, brainwashing them to be completely dedicated to him. Sasuke was one after he willingly joined him. But I freed him.” Tifa motioned that away “he told us about that, go on.”

“However there was a secret only a few knew, a secret The Third protected.”

“What?” they asked.

“One of the children they had managed to save, one of the children had gained the power of the very First Hokage, a man, it was said, who had the ability to contain the Kyuubi when it went out of
control.”

“You” Tifa said and the young man nodded “he helped me, taught me not to rely on it, that I was powerful enough on my own without relying on her chakra to get me out of things.” He looked away “after a while it was like a drug, her chakra. I used it whenever I could, but I was losing myself to it every time, becoming more the fox…” He shuddered “I could feel it, my temper getting shorter, my emotions getting out of control, the constant anger and desire to kill…” he curled into himself and shuddered harder.

“What’s the difference between then and now?”

“Then I was young, amateur, instinctive, untrained. Now, I was more mature, more in control of myself and trained by some of the best.”

“What happened between the three?”

“Aafter Orochimaru’s betrayal, Tsunade shut down. She had lost her younger brother, her first love and now her crush and teammate, who else was there for her?”

“Her OTHER teammate.”

“Exactly, but she didn’t see it that way. She locked her heart away and left the village. Leaving the one person who needed her the most at the time, the other who was suffering like her at their teammates betrayal, to suffer alone.”

“No” Tifa gasped, “she was wrong!”

“I know, but the damage was done, the one who needed her also locked his self away, only behind a mask, an illusion of idiocy, of perverseness. If people saw him as some perverted idiot, who’d want to get to try and get through the shield to the REAL him? So he trained my fathers team and then left as well. He became a hermit, traveling always alone and somewhere along the way became an Sage. Until me, always alone that was.”

“Go on, with the dream” Vincent said.

The blonde frowned “That’s when things get REALLY weird.”

“What do you mean?”

“There is TWO endings to the dream, one good, one bad.”

“Huh?”

“Yeah, I know” he breathed.

“Tell us” Vincent said softly “BOTH of them.”

“Well the bad has father coming out of the trees and pleading with him to let her go, that ‘that thing’ was not his mother, but no matter what he says, he doesn’t listen. ALL of us tries to fight him, but he kills everyone, even Sasuke and me. The end result is he destroys this world and takes our daughter as his slave, his SEX SLAVE.”

This horrified them.

“And the good?” Tifa asked softly as if afraid to.
“Father steps out, but has a woman with him with long hair. They start to plead with him, telling him how they were going to be together and be a happy family, if it wasn’t for ‘that man.’ How they STILL could be one if he let go of his delusion.

He tells them ‘mother is NOT a delusion’ and the woman with father shrieks angrily ‘that bitch isn’t your mother! I AM!!’

“Lucretcia” Vincent whispers, then blinks at the blonde “what happens next?”

“He’s so shocked by that he drops our daughter who runs to hide behind me and Sasuke-who’s suddenly by my side again. I get Sasuke to take our daughter to safety, but he argues with me-of course-so when I turn my attention back I see that dad and the woman are getting to him.”

“What do you mean?”

“They’re pleading with him, talking about the life they’ll have together and rolling about on the ground screaming, one minute sounding like a woman, threatening and cursing them, the next pleading with them in a little boy’s voice to ‘please be quiet, they are angering the ‘bad lady’ and she’s hurting him.’”

“Jenovah” Vincent cursed again.

“Go on” Tifa prodded.

“I suddenly remember something, a genjitsu that will save him. I go through hand signs I’ve never seen before or can remember even now, yell out “true soul jitsu, separate souls dragon!” and ‘IT’ happens.”

“What?” Tifa asks.

“At first he just screams louder but then I notice they are different.”

“How so?”

“Instead of a female then a child’s voice, they are BOTH talking AT THE SAME TIME. Not just that, his body is starting to glow and become blurry. Soon there is TWO shapes moving in the light and when it dies down there is two figures, a boy our daughters age the spitting image of father curled up at the feet of a woman, only she’s like no woman I’ve ever seen.”

His face twisted in disgust “she has tentacles.”

“Jenovah” Vincent hissed again, then “you separated them?”

“I guess so” the blonde blinked, going on “she picks the kid up with the tentacles and something says I have to save him, but before I can move, father has slashed the limbs away and catching the boy and giving him to the woman.”

Vincent felt soothed, even if it’s a dream, he got to save his son. However Chaos was telling him different. As a child of Gaia and as close to the lifestream as they were, the dreams had meaning a purpose.

“Are you saying it will come true?” he asked the demon mentally.

“Perhaps. Or some version of it.” The demon answered. Vincent wanted to hope, but the OTHER version of the dream still chilled him to the bone.
The blonde was going on “...our friends are fighting her, ALL of them, even fathers friends. But it’s not working.”

“What do you mean?”

“Any wounds inflicted heal almost instantly and she laughs at us. No one can really harm her, but she swats us away like flies. That is until she makes a mistake.”

“What?”

“She took who I know was Jiraiya-sensai. She was about to kill him when I hear three screams of fury, two female, one male.”

“His teammate.”

Tsunade-hime was one of them, yes.”

“Doesn’t hime mean princess?”

“Or lady. I mean she IS the current Hokage, not to mention was the granddaughter of the First. That’s why the council wanted her as the Fifth. It was kind of her birth right.”

“But so was yours.”

He shrugged “the First was appointed because their clan helped found the village and build it. That makes her born to the role. Me, my father was voted because the village idolized him. A son has to get the vote the same way. Fat chance of THAT happening with them, especially now” he shrugged “I gave up on that long ago, even if I acted I didn’t.”

“Who were the other two?”

“They come from behind me, the cries, and two young people almost my age burst out of the trees. They head straight for her. HE has a long thin katana and SHE has a staff.”

“Sephiroth and someone else, your daughter perhaps?” Tifa said, followed by Vincent “Sephiroth, the REAL Sephiroth, fights with your daughter against Jenovah?”

Naruto nodded “as she goes past me, I know it’s her and scream her name in panic, but she doesn’t stop. The male’s sword slashes the tentacles, freeing Jiraiya-sensai, the female creature rearing back and shrieking in fury and pain.”

“They hurt her?”

“Yes, for some reason they are the only one. And while our friends zip in and out to strike at wherever they leave a wound, slash or crushed area, they steadily hack her away. Soon all that’s left is a head, neck and torso.

While our daughter uses her staff to smash the head, HE impales the heart on the sword. Then everyone collects any trace of her, from blood-stained grass and leaves to traces of skin and piles it together and, like daughter like father, she uses an fire genjitsu to completely destroy every trace of her. She is gone, never to return.”

“No more Jenovah?” Tifa asks.

“No more Jenovah?” he confirms.

“That’s not possible” Vincent said “you forget Tifa, both Zack and Cloud contain Jenovah cells inside them from the four years Hojo had them.”
Tifa looked crestfallen and worried at the same time “you’re right.”

“Then the last part of my dream, the part I had just before waking up here makes sense then.”
“What part?”

“The last of the dream. Our daughter moves to two of the others and says “it’s not quiet finished yet.” And she goes through some hand signs then touches both. They writhe in pain and even scream some, but when she releases them, they are different, cleaner somehow.”

“She cures them? Cleans it from their bodies?”
“Apparently so.”

“Sounds like our daughter will be just like her ‘mother’, Dobe.”

Spinning around on the spot with the two Avalanche members following more cautiously they found the black haired Uchiha standing behind them, the silver haired one eyed man just as surprised as they could tell.

Standing the blonde whispered one word “Sasuke?” voice vulnerable and unsure.

There was silence as no one moved for a long time until the Uchiha suddenly smirked.

As if a signal the blonde threw himself into the others arms with a glad cry. The Uchiha laughed a little then he pulled back a little to lay his palm on the slight lump “how is she?”

“A bit restless right now, but happy.”
“How far along are you?”

“About eighteen weeks. Tsunade says she should start moving more now, even if she’s fully formed she’s still only the size of a tomato. Soon, in the next weeks, she’ll start reacting to my...to OUR voice and moving more and even do things like put her hands over her ears if sounds are too loud. Right now it’s just fluttering and feelings not really mine.”

The Uchiha put his arm around him and started leading him back to the window “well being out in the cold wind couldn’t be doing you both any good. Come inside, we have a lot to talk about. Besides, that Captain guy says we’re landing soon.”

“‘Kay” the blonde smiled at him, letting himself be lead away from them.

As the three of them moved ahead to return inside, Vincent once again took hold of her to carry, but both froze in shock at the conversation ahead of them floated back.

“So, Dobe, what’s our daughters name?”
“Huh? what are you asking me for? I haven’t even thought of that yet.”

“Dobe you said it in your dream and we both know since you merged with Kyuubi every one of your ‘weird’ dreams come true, what was it?”

“When did I say I said it?”
“When you said you yelled it when she went past you. Or have you forgotten it?”

“Oh, THAT, no I remember. It’s just that it was weird, I’ve never heard such a strange one before.”
“What WAS it?”
“Aeris.”
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Marlene's story—gleaned from various sources including hints from FFVII

Denzel's story—anyone with Advent Children knows this. It was a mini anime on the disc of Denzel telling it himself. I can't remember if it was to Tseng or Reeve.

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Naruto, flanked protectively by both Sai and Kakashi, led by a careful Sasuke (who in the last few hours had discovered just what everyone was talking about when they mentioned pregnant women and mood swings now that Naruto didn’t have to hide or control them) as they followed their new ‘friends’ and ‘family’ through the small town towards the inn the man they were about to meet was waiting for them at.

There was a new sense of urgency now than before, because of the message the blonde had received from his ‘summons’, a summons he apparently shared with the pervert.

A few hours after what happened on the roof of the Highwind, the group—minus the blonde who Sasuke had persuaded to go back to bed to sleep—were sitting around discussing the dream and it’s possible meanings.

Even though Tifa and Vincent had swore to keep it a secret Sasuke and Kakashi hadn’t. Having heard the important parts the two were as concerned as them.

Hence the meeting.

They were just discussing really—about the name of the daughter and it’s meaning when they heard shouts outside the room and the door was flung open, revealing a panicked and puffed Naruto, clutching something in his arms, looking like he'd been tearing around the ship looking for them. “Dobe...” Sasuke started, raising to his feet to give him a speech on running around in ‘his condition’. “No time!” the other puffed, wide eyed, looking at what was in his arms “tell them what you told me!”

A male voice croaked out “they’re gone.”

“Who’s gone?” Sasuke frowned at his pregnant mate “who are you talking to?”

Out of the blonde’s arms hopped the same multicolored frog/toad from before “All the kids friends are missing.” The Uchiha frowned at it “from the village? The ones during the fight?” The frog/toad nodded “but not just them.”

“What do you mean?”
“Apparently according to dad ALL the kids friends and those he sees as family in the village-at the fight or not-disappeared in a flash of light the same instant you guys did.”

“Even Iruka sensai” the blonde looked at his mate, eyes almost full of helpless tears, “he’s a teacher, Sasuke, not a fighter.”

The group remembered what the wolf demon said about the ‘academy’ teacher who had been the boy’s father figure and had cared for him when everyone else had hated him, and were worried as well. A man that kind and....“He’s a ninja, Naruto” the Uchiha said, interrupting their thoughts “he survived the Kyuubi’s attack on the village when it killed his parents, he saved YOU from Mizuki when he tried to kill you...”

“...Yeah, and almost got killed because of it!” the boy interrupted HIM, panic increasing. “Dobe” his firm voice stopped him. Then just three words “TRUST IN HIM.” Then he looked down at the toad “I have a feeling there is more to it. Tell us.”

“The kage and his siblings are gone as well. Not just that, the villages are in an uproar. The tailed demons who survived the Aksutki are gone too. Villages are blaming each other and are threatening war.”

“What about Leaf?”

“Destroyed. They broke into half-those who blamed that guy’s genjitsu for the loss of Tsunade and everyone who could have safely protected them from danger and those blaming Naruto” he looked at the pregnant blonde before going on “most the smart ones fled to the places protected by The Fire Lord, but not enough. A few entire clans left, I think only Nara and Inuzuka didn’t though. The Hyuuga and the Aburame left first I think.”

“Shino once told me that their bugs are naturally wanderers” the blonde said “that they are only able to stay in the village ‘cause of them joining with their clan. ‘Humans are nesters’ he told me ‘we’re ninja’s to satisfy our brethren's need to move, to travel. By keeping our others happy they will happily protect and serve us.’”

The Uchiha nodded “it wouldn’t have bothered them, up and moving. The Hyuuga would have done it to save their own skin-those bastards were like that” he suddenly looked at Naruto’s frown “sorry.”

“No need” the blonde agreed with his mate “I know the Hyuuga’s and Uchiha’s have hated each other for a long time-and aren’t afraid to show it-and the clan are all egotistic bastards who care nothing for their kids and think because they’re a foundling clan they’re better than everyone else.” He shook his head “all that talk about ‘fate has determined I am the victor’. Sometimes I just wanted to beat Neji up...”

“You did, at the Chunnin exams.”

“I know and he’s kinda passable as a person now, but he still pisses me off sometimes, even IF he’s my friend.”

“You don’t have that problem with the heir though.”

“Yeah, Hinata” the boy sighed fondly “I’ve known her since we were kids. Kinda shy, stutters and faints around me a lot” he looked at the group “she used to have such a crush on me, swooning
whenever I spoke to her.” The wolf demon growled and the blonde laughed, swatting playfully at the others arm “jealous teme! You know I’ve been yours since the day we met. Besides, she and dogboy are a couple.”

“The Inuzuka heir?”
“Yeah, Kiba.” They got back to subject.

“The Naras’ are...WERE...established, they had the deer sanctuary. I think they couldn’t just up and leave. As for the Inuzukas’, being as close as they were to their ninkin’s-their integrated loyalty means they couldn’t abandon the village, even if it IS falling down around them.”

“Ninkin?” the group asked curiously.

“Yeah. It’s hard to explain. Apparently their clan adopted dogs as companions and weapons and grew so close to them that somewhere along the line they started taking on aspects of a dog. Claws, eyes, enhanced senses and even behaving dog-like in some ways-the fierce loyalty for one. Now they get a dog companion when they’re young and grow up with them. They are rarely apart, they eat together, fight together and even bathe together, train together even. Can you imagine what it’s like to know someone so well you can move the same without even thinking of it? Especially in battle?”

They saw the advantage in this.

They continued to discuss the situation, all of them aware of how now the fox demons dream had predicted this, it was a red flag the dream was starting to come true. Was Sephiroth going to come back and destroy them and everything or was Vincent going to get the son back that was taken from him before he had a chance?

Now that Naruto was here he could recount the FULL version of the dream, bad and good, without the two black-haired members breaking their word.

By the time they had heard it all again, the airship was landing and they were ready to leave.

While everyone was gathering their things to leave, Cloud getting Fenrir from the cargo bay-Zack his ‘bike’ Odin-Tifa called Reeve to let him know of the new developments, including the fact they had to now find who knows how many people, all trained ninja’s, INCLUDING ones like Naruto and Vincent, demon vessels, extremely dangerous, one of them a known demon\human who’s temper wasn’t exactly controlled.

They just hoped his siblings were with him and could control him in the meantime.

Of course Reeve was understandably worried, both by Naruto’s pregnancy and the dream, and the fact of highly dangerous ninja’s and demon vessels were loose on their world, until Tifa pointed out as Chaos’ children, Vincent would be able to control them and that an WRO filled with ninja’s would be more effective and able to protect the planet and it’s people than even SOLDIER could.

“Besides” she added “they could even train your troops. Can you imagine WRO members with training in materia AND ninjitsu and even Genjitsu?”

Tifa knew this was a sort of a low blow, she knew playing on the leaders protective desires regarding his troops was beneath her, but this HAD TOO work, they had no choice. The engineer had always felt protective of his troops, considering most were boys barely into their adulthood, and was often
friends with either them and of their family and how much it grieved him when one died or was killed, often taking it on himself to inform the families in person.

Consequently he had endeared himself to the people, they seeing him as a caring and dedicated leader, someone who cared about the world and those upon it, not just his forces. After the cold rule of Shinra and SOLDIER, the cold treatment and recruitment of their children, this caring and dedicated treatment made the people more willing to join or let their ‘kids’ and loved ones join the military, knowing someone was there who cared about them and their lives.

When Reeve made some comment about Yuffie and ninja’s, Tifa snorted “Yuffie isn’t really a ninja, I thought you’d realized that by now. She’s a spoiled clan leaders only heir who took up a hobby either because she was bored and wanted to fight, or her father was getting annoyed with her, so sent her off for training to get her out of his hair, let her be someone else’s problem.”

On the others end of the line, she heard him quickly try to repress a laugh.

She grew serious “these guys are serious ninja’s, Reeve. They are trained from childhood to be assassins and bodyguards. We fought one, he could have killed us in seconds if what we saw later was anything to go by, but he chose not too, he was testing us. I think if it wasn’t for Chaos we WOULD be dead. They are Chaos’ children Reeve, how strong would that make them?”

The thoughtful hum the WRO leader made her realize he was considering it. “But what would they want in return?”

“Food, lodgings, medical care-especially for Naruto in this vulnerable time-just the necessary things. It’s not like they want anything else, Reeve. They don’t need expensive things when they could die on a ‘mission’ at any minute.” There was a thoughtful pause on the other end before he sighed “I’ll meet with them, we’ll go from there.”

“That’s all they ask, Reeve and don’t worry, we’ll be there as well” she left the ‘we’ll protect you’ unsaid. Then, as if suddenly realizing something “can we meet somewhere where there is food? I don’t know how long it’s been since they ate, but Naruto was unconscious a long time and he’s eating for two now…”

“Okay, there is a small inn where they also serve breakfast and lunch.” He gave her directions.

Now they were making their way inside the inn, the four ninja’s and eight Avalanche members looking for the blue and black of the WRO leader. The first sign was a black and white shape popping up in a dark corner, waving to them with large hands at them to approach.

Recognizing the cat-like features they headed towards it and the figure there at the large table to seat twelve, counting the figure already there. When they heard the cry of joy and ‘RAMEN!’ and a blonde flash past them, followed by four laughs-one Vincent’s-they realized Reeve had already ordered. The blonde was already seated, eating like he hadn’t in years. Tifa laughed and looked at the well dressed man, hugging a robotic cat to him like a stuffed toy “looks like you’ll need to order more food, Reeve” as the rest of them seated themselves around the table, the three ninja’s again flanking the pregnant male.

Once settled and everyone was eating the conversation started up with introductions “Reeve, these are the ninja’s of Konaha. Sasuke Uchiha, last heir of the Uchiha Clan, now wolf demon. His pregnant mate and last of the Uzumaki and Namikaze clans, fox demon and son of Chaos as well as
Sasuke’s teammate, Naruto. Ex assassin and spy but now companion, Sai. Then lastly their team leader and sensai, Kakashi Hayate. Guys, this is Reeve Tuesti, Commissioner and leader of the WRO, plus Cait Sith his...creation.”

The group gave polite hello’s, echoed by Cait Sith. Of course the blonde gave an enthusiastic “HI!” followed by a wide winning smile before shoving more food in his mouth, only to almost choke on it as his mate slapped him over the back of the head “hey!”

“Dobe you’re being impolite.”

“I said hi!” he protested.

“Forgive my students” Kakashi eye-smiled at the man “Naruto never had any manners.”

“Well yeah of course I didn’t” the blonde said seriously “I had no parents to teach me that stuff.”

“That’s no excuse Dobe,” Sasuke said “I KNOW for a fact that Iruka-sensai taught you that sort of thing.”

“Well yeah, but it’s ramen, Sas, RAMEN!!”

The group laughed and the silver haired ninja looked at the man in blue across from him “I apologize for my students rudeness, but he is obsessed with ramen. Always has been.”

“Quiet alright. Feel free to eat, ALL of you. I take it as a compliment. Besides, as Tifa pointed out to me earlier, he’s eating for two now.”

“Of course, you’re right” obviously Kakashi was playing peace keeper and spokesperson for the group here.

It didn’t take long after eating for a bit for conversation to begin around the table about abilities, chakra vs mana and genjitsu’s, the origins of bloodline abilities and then Ancients vs Sages. “The pervert was gonna teach me how to become a Sage. He said now I’ve merged with Kyuubi, I’m more open to the flow of the planet, but he hasn’t done it yet.”

“What do you mean?” they asked.

He explained and they were shocked to find out Sages could manipulate the chakra of the planet into their own body and use in battle temporarily. It reminded them oddly of how Sephiroth had been trying to gain the power of the lifestream. Since it was only a temporary thing to be used for a short time in battle, least it burn out a person’s body, too much power so suddenly could overload a person’s ‘chakra lines’ and kill them in the most agonizing way, even as enhanced and tough as them.

This lead everyone to believe that if Sephiroth had of succeeded he would have died anyway, there was oddly something comforting about that thought. However it was possible that was the entire point. What if, possessed by Jenovah, Sephiroth’s death in the center of the lifestream energy, Jenovah could then possess the actual lifeforce of the planet, tainting EVERYTHING, turning it to what SHE wished. Some of them shuddered at the thought.
Something happened to increase the group by three during this time. Someone had made a comment about their skills and the blonde took offense “We’ll show you!” he seized his mate’s arm and shot to his feet “C’mon Sasuke, let’s go spar!”

“No” the wolf demon said bluntly.
“No?” the blonde looked down at him, shocked.

“No” the other echoed “sit down, dobe. We are not going anywhere and doing anything like that in your condition, let alone anything THAT strenuous. Don’t you remember that pregnant kunoichi DO NOT work during that time? Because any change in chakra could endanger the baby, This is also MY CHILD, Dobe, you will NOT endanger her.”

“But Sas...” the blonde’s bottom lip trembled and his eyes teared. The others were thinking ‘oh shit, mood swing!’ but the wolf just repeated “no.”

“Pooh, you’re no fun!” the blonde flopped back into the chair, arms crossed over his chest and a pout on his face. Suddenly his head snapped to the window, face and body tense, expression intense. The others all came to attention at this “Naruto? What is it?”

“Chakra” he said levelly “familiar.”

“One of the others are here?”

Before he could answer there came a furious call of “PERVERT!!” and something red and white went flying past the window, followed by two others, a blonde furious woman wearing green, white and brown and a young man, tall and lanky with brown hair in a ponytail spiked at the back.

The blonde jumped back up, screeching “GRANDMA ‘NADE!!” in joy and excitement at the sight.

The woman froze, head turning and mouthing a name, the boy’s name. With an articulate cry the boy was gone. The next thing they saw of him he was flinging himself into the other blonde’s arms tearfully. The two hugged each other, crying like they wouldn’t stop, the boy behind them just rolling his eyes.

The group looked at the Uchiha “grandma ‘Nade?”

“Lady Tsunade, the fifth Hokage, granddaughter of the first, one of the last two Sanins in existence. She kind of adopted Naruto, she’s like a big sister-or mother.”

“A friendly hint, DON’T make her mad at you” the ex-assassin and spy said. “Jiriaya-san does it all the time. You saw what her reaction was.”

“That red and white flash was him?” they asked.

“Yes” the cyclops nodded “don’t worry, he’s more resilient than he seems.”

“She looks too young to be her. She looks in her early thirties the most. The woman we were told about should be at least double that.”

“She IS. She uses an genjitsu of her own making, running on her own chakra to not only APPEAR younger, but enhance her strength, hence Jiriaya-san getting thrown so far.”
“What a drag” said a voice behind them. They looked up to find the young man who had been with them standing at their table. “Everything’s a drag to you, Nara.” The figure moved to a nearby couch, lay down and seemed to fall asleep. The Uchiha rolled his eyes this time. “This lazy ass is Shikamaru Nara, heir to the Nara clan, our resident genius...” he snorted “his bloodline ability involves controlling an enemy through the shadow, THEIR shadow.” Whether in reaction to his comment, as a greeting or trying to show he was asleep the figure snorted loudly. “I think I’ll leave the rest of the introductions to you guys whenever.”

As he finished, the blonde returned, dragging the woman with him “they’re here, granny! And father! I’ll show you!”

The woman was tall and well-built, obviously used to fighting, with a bust almost equal to Tifa’s ample bosom. She wore sandals, tight tan pants, an white blouse with green vest. A tilak adorned her forehead, just like a certain Turk leader they knew. Her eyes were the most beautiful amber they had ever seen.

The blonde dragged the other to Vincent side “see! My father! And he’s like me!”

The woman frowned “you’re an Jinchuuriki?”

“Not in your way, but yes. I contain Chaos, Squire Of Omega, source of what you all call the Tailed Beasts. To them that means...”

“You or rather the demon inside you is their father.” The demon vessel nodded.

“Here Lady Tsunade” Kakashi rose, offering her his seat, “there are some serious things we need to discuss. Naruto’s pregnancy for one.”

“Besides Tsunade-san is...WAS Hokage, she can answer more of your questions than we can.”

“What do you mean, was?” the woman asked as the cyclops grabbed another chair “Naruto, go get Jiriaya-san while we break the news.” The blonde nodded and headed out to the direction they had seen the red and white blur go.

By the time he returned, Sanin in tow and conscious, the woman was frowning, disturbed, while the Nara heir looked shell-shocked. “The village is gone” she murmured as Naruto retook his seat, then “stop perving you idiot! This is serious!” when she noticed the red coated man leering at Tifa. The group sized up the man, the other Sanin and Sage.

Even seated on the arm of the sofa the Nara heir sat on, they could tell he was very tall and very muscular with wide shoulders. However even though he wasn’t like Barrett he looked more than capable of feats of great strength. He reminded them a little of Rude, imposing, but the muscular mass you KNEW was there seemed lost in their clothes. He wore similar to the other Sanin, tan pants, a white shirt, but instead of a short green vest he wore a long red one. Instead of sandals he wore wooden ‘thongs’.

He definitely looked his age, but he wasn’t an old man, no, he was still a formidable looking man, especially when they looked into those grey eyes and saw though the facade of the idiot to the powerful warrior he was.

Two red marks almost like slashes, long thick red lines ran down his cheeks from just under his eyes
to the mouth, for some reason making them think of tribal marks, a small barely noticeable gold stud in the left side of his nose. But what really got their attention was the mass of hair. Thick and long it tumbled down his back to almost his tailbone, but the style...

“Hey Zack, he has hair like you and spike!”

Sure enough it stuck out wildly, spiked up here and there, similar to Zack’s, but where the black haired ex-SOLDIER had let his grow out slightly (mainly because Cloud reluctantly admitted he more than just liked it that way, hint, hint) the man’s was what could be described as ‘wild’.

Somehow it made them think of his connection to the planet and seem appropriate. And it was white, so white, like freshly fallen snow. Despite the ‘harmless’ air the man tried to put on around them, the ‘helpless old man’ and ‘idiot’ they could feel his power and strength and it reminded them oddly of Aeris, but way more powerful and more masculine, aggressive.

Reeve apparently felt it to, for he frowned at the man, and having heard from them earlier the story Naruto had told Tifa and Vincent about the Sanin’s and the man’s connection to the planet, he seemed now more than ready to believe. “Please, sir, feel free to grab a seat and eat.” The man gave Reeve and Cat Sith a leveling sizing up before shrugging “I’m not hungry.”

Naruto spoke to him “have you summoned or spoke to Gamabunta or any of the toads since you came here?”

“You mean about The Hidden Leaf village?” when they nodded he just shrugged again “I know.” Tsunade looked furious “you didn’t TELL US!!”

The man looked at her “would it have done anything to change our current situation? No, it would just have caused you to worry more about something you have no control over, ‘Nade.” The woman’s anger deflated “I suppose you’re right.”

“You care about those under your...leadership, THAT I can relate to” Reeve said.

“Who are you?” Tsunade sized him up.

So began introductions all around, followed by a recap of the events leading up until then. The only thing of it all that worried the Sage was “your seal is damaged?!” he seemed alarmed “I have to look at it!” then, interpreting their looks sighed “later.”

“You just found out Naruto was capable of conceiving, let alone IS pregnant, and you’re worried about THE SEAL?!” The man shrugged “I already knew.”

“You KNEW!” they exclaimed.

The man looked at the other ninja’s “You forget, I’ve been looking after the kid’s seal since he was a teen. That requires me to examine the chakra paths and their flow and connections. Just after he merged with the fox, I examined him and it. I sensed the developing...equipment, warned him to get ‘Nade to keep and eye on it and told him not to have unprotected sex.” He glared down at the blonde “obviously he didn’t listen.”

The young man scratched his cheek and grinned cheekily “you try saying ‘NO’ to the teme when he’s horny” and ducked an swipe for the back of his head. “Besides, when the pervert starts talking about girls and sex, I tend to just tune him out.”
“BRAT!” the man spluttered “how are you gonna learn if you don’t listen!”

“Come on, when you start talking about all those soft and firm bits…” his face twisted in disgust before looking at Tifa “no insult intended” which she accepted with a smile and nod “on the other hand, there’s ONE firm body part that only interests me…” ducking another swipe by his mate.

Zack wrapped his arms around Cloud and leered comically “I know what you mean,” only to yelp as Cloud mimicked the Uchiha, looking at the blonde beside him, mock hurt. Tifa laughed “I’m partial to that myself.” Naruto cracked up, followed by two black haired others.

Frankly it wasn’t THAT funny, but there was something infectious in the boys laugh, it made the three feel like they were sharing a secret. Before anyone else could speak, a new one had “What’s so funny, yo?” Behind Reeve’s chair stood a figure, long red spiked hair tied behind him, rumpled black and white suit. Naruto, who had stopped, laughed at the sight of him, suddenly choked on another laugh. “Penguin” he managed to say—before he bent over with another fit of giggles.

“What DID YOU CALL ME?!!” the red head yelled.

“Reno” Reeve said firmly “meet Naruto Uzumaki, Chaos’ son.”

The red head-Reno-stopped dead “CHAOS’ son? I never knew the demon had kids, could even HAVE kids. Don’t you mean Valentine? His TURK profile never mentioned kids.”

“They’re Chaos’, and therefore also Vincents. Chaos created them long before our time. This one, Kyuubi, completely merged with his host, so making NARUTO Chaos’ son. Kyuubi was Chaos’ most powerful child.” The last six words sounded like a warning.

The red head frowned and was about to speak when there was a metallic beeping. Fishing through a pocket he brought out his mobile, opened it with a practiced flick of the wrist. “Yo” he spoke, a long pause then “I haven’t completed the assignment yet. No something came up, boss. Did you know Chaos had kids? Yeah, he’s having dinner with Reeve. He is! No fooling!” Zack looked up “is that Tseng?” When Reno nodded he held his hand out “give it.”

Reluctantly the red head handed it over.

“Tseng it’s Zack. Yeah, I know, but we need to meet, it’s important. Well for a start certain Nibelheim employees are hiding things from you guys. Then there’s a group of people around the planet we need help finding. Also a possibility of ‘The Nightmare’ returning. Yes we’ll explain Naruto.” He listened “yeah call Reeves’ secretary” then he handed it back. “Hey bossman? Yeah, okay, but what about Rude? You’re the boss, bossman.” He hung up then grabbed a chair moving to Zack’s other side “scoot over closer to spike would ya, SOLDIER boy.”

“Why are YOU joining us, Shinra dog!” Barrett snarled.

“The bossman says to stay and keep an eye on you guys, may as well do it among you, yo.”

“And fish for information, right dog?” The red head just shrugged and snagged a breadroll off a plate nearby. “Well we don’t feel like explaining everything again and then telling it to Tseng again, so just butt out!!” The red head just shrugged again, tearing the roll apart and slowly eating it as he watched them, slouching back in the chair. “So, what were we talking about before the TURK
interrupted?”

Naruto’s head snapped to Vincent’s “TURK?” You mean like what you were, father?”

“When I was about your age, yes. But today’s generation is a lot different then in my day.”

“Your day?” the male Sanin’s eyes snapped to the demon vessel “how different could it be? You are still young yet.”

“Actually according to the TURK personal files, Vincent Valentine is this year-soon in fact-in his very early seventies.” This was Reno’s helpful comment, ignoring the glare he got. The man frowned “you no longer age? How?”

“I died at my physical age. Chaos’s demon energy and the proto-materia brought me back and sustain me. My body is a mere vessel for the demons inside me.” The man blinked at him and the blonde woman asked “did you say DEMONS? As in more than one?” Vincent nodded. Tifa answered “Chaos, Galian, Hellmasker and Death Gigas. Chaos is the most powerful, Galian is Kyuubi’s brother-another of Chaos’ children and the other two, well, we’re not too sure what they are.”

“Can I see your seal?” The Sanin\Sage asked “it must be powerful to allow you control over FOUR demons.”

“I don’t have one.” The man snorted “EVERY demon vessel has one, even if well hidden.”

“But you forget, I was never a child-merged to it. I was a dead body preserved by a madman’s experiments and the very lifestream itself, it’s not a matter of me controlling them, they need me to stay in this world and the proto-materia allows them to to not only control themselves, but each other. They allow me to control them to an extent because THEY WANT IT.”

“Proto-materia?” the woman frowned, followed by Avalanche and Reeve explaining the workings of the Lifestream, materia, mako and Shinra and SOLDIER.

An hour and a half later and Tifa wasn’t the least but surprised. She had watched as steadily the blonde pregnant demon had won the respect and affection of EVERYONE in the inn, guests, staff, everyone from the manager down to the janitor. He had this innate beauty in him, a shining light that drew people to him like a moth to the flame-or plants to the sunlight.

He ESPECIALLY loved and was loved by children, not that it surprised her though, what with him being pregnant. And the fact the Third Hokage, who had practically raised him was an elderly man. Tifa remembered the Uhicha saying how his mate had inherited the personality of his father and realized it explained how the Forth became Hokage in the first place. The man had been adored, which came from winning over the people as his son was now.

Then the people had voted him their leader when the Third had retired.

Tifa was saddened, if the village had of not been so cruel to him, if they had of got to know him, they would have found another great and noble leader. As it was, his mere presence and actions right now was obviously bumping up Reeve’s popularity. It began when, while they were telling the ninja’s about materia and mako an incident had happened.

An elderly couple who had been seated nearby finished their meal and started to leave. The man
passed them with no problem, but his wife—who hobbled along on a cane—started past. She didn’t make it. Obviously weakened by pain and age, one of her knees gave out, sending her crashing to the floor with a cry. Only she never reached it; the next thing they knew there was a blonde blur and a pregnant fox demon was there, the woman cradled in his strong arms.

“I got you, grandma” Naruto said.

“Oh dear” the elderly woman said in surprise, looking at the floor she had almost landed on then the young man, “such a sweet boy.”

As he helped her to an empty chair, Naruto was firing off questions “are you alright? Are you hurt anywhere? If you are, we have a healer who can help. If she can’t heal you completely, she can take away your pain. Do you want that or are you in pain? Or I can…”

He stopped talking when the elderly lady reached up and lay a worn hand against his cheek, giving him a smile that showed very few teeth “such a sweet boy, worried about an old bird like me. I’m fine child. It’s just these old bones aren’t as strong as they used to be, it comes with age. You are so kind to be so worried and break my fall. You remind me so much of my grandson.”

“Here, I can help” the blonde woman moved to their side, her hands glowing green as she examined the limbs “at least ease your pain.”

“Oh” the old woman’s eyes widened in wonder and surprise “that DOES feel better, young lady, thank you very much” as the blonde male gently helped the elderly woman to her feet.

After a series of thank you’s and goodbyes the two left. Tifa looked around to find people watching, guests, staff and even management, some murmuring about ‘the kindness of Director Tuesti’s guests.’

Later Tifa became aware of two young sets of giggles.

Looking for the sounds she saw two twin children—a boy and girl—seated in high chairs at the table opposite them looking at them. Following their line of sight, she was just in time to see the blonde playing peak-a-boo with them, but with a difference. Whenever the blonde moved his hands away, he pulled a funny face. This would make the twins peel with laughter. Looking at the parents, Tifa saw them smiling at the blonde like a favorite nephew. Not just that, she suddenly noticed how the guests around them eating were all seated closer.

It didn’t take long for other children to wonder or even sneak over to them, each enamored by the boy and wanting a chance to play. What surprised Tifa was how the boy handled those sneaking away. He didn’t yell or ‘go off’ on them, no, it actually took her careful attention to discover his secret.

Disappointment.

The children clambered for the blonde’s attention and approval but the idea that they upset and caused the blonde to be VERY disappointed in them scared them way more than a speech or yelling would have. They got that from their parents. So the blonde seriously informed them how he had never had a mum and dad, he had grown up alone and hungry and how if he had a or two loving parents he would NEVER wonder away from them, he would only leave for play, school, toilet and
bed.

How it upset him to see other lucky kids yell and upset their parents because they were not thinking about how much they hurt them.

Children are naturally empathic until they are taught to hide their feelings and ignore others, so being told that the man they were drawn to had no parents like them, upset them and the ones who had sneaked off wondered back to their families, apologizing and promising to never do it again, seriously. They even stayed if told, although they didn’t want to obviously, but they kept their word.

However most parents allowed them, having watched the blonde and instinctively trusting the pregnant male. It helped that they had moved closer, they could eat in peace and still keep an eye on their children and the group. Naruto kept all the children entertained, all of them laughing.

When a couple of the parents approached the group for Naruto’s PHS number and were told he had none, they were confused. So, with money from Reeve, Tifa volunteered to go get some, Reno volunteering to help.

Wanting to pump Tifa privately for information, they guessed.

An hour later she was back with seven activated PHS, one each, and the group proceeded to teach the ninja’s how to use them and the features. Naruto sat on the floor, the children gathered around him to show him how to use it, giggleing as he took photo’s of them with it. Now armed with one most parents came forward for the number, stating Naruto would make the perfect babysitter. He replied back he’d be happy to, as long as it didn’t interfere with his work with Reeve.

After getting it most parents finished their meal and left to put their kids to bed, leaving the blonde ninja on the floor, leaning against his mates chair leg, exhausted. The wolf reached down to stroke the blonde, eyes soft and concerned “tired Naruto?”

“Yeah” the boy mumbled sleepily, hand going to the lump, “she’s a little restless right now and tiring me out. I think it was the kids. They excited her.” Avalanche and Reeve exchanged looks, knowing how THEIR Aeris had loved kids. Reeve spoke up “I have booked some rooms at the inn just outside Midgar for you all. Three rooms. All they had was one couples room and two doubles. Sorry.”

“That’s fine. Sasuke and Naruto can take the couples. Jirayia-san and Tsunade-san can take one room, the three of us...” Tsunade went to protest when Tifa spoke “two of you can take the last room, the third can use the spare room over ‘Seventh Heaven’. That way they’ll have a bed and can come with me to Reeve’s office, that way you can easily contact them through me.”

“Or use the PHS” Cloud said.

“Or use the PHS” Tifa agreed.

“I think I’ll go with you” Kakashi said “that way it evens out, the mates, the Sanins and the other boys.” To which the Nara heir mumbled “troublesome” from his seat. “That depends” Tifa looked at the man “how good are you with children? I mean YOUNGER than twelve or thirteen? Normal children?”

“Why?” the man frowned behind his mask.
“I’m currently caring for two children. Marlene, Barrett’s daughter...” she motioned at the big black man. “And an orphan Cloud picked up, Denzel. Both aren’t always there-Marlene spends time with her father and Denzel spends time with Cloud and Zack on their farm just outside Midgar—but they’re around enough to be noticed or sometimes underfoot.”

“In that case” the male Sanin spoke up “I suggest I stay with the lady and kids while you guys stay there.” The female Sanin glared suspiciously at him to which he held up his hands in a helpless gesture “you KNOW I get along with kids like Naru’ does, ‘Nade.”

“He has a point” Naruto pointed out “You may not be able to trust him not to perv on a beautiful woman, but that’s ALL he does.” His comment was answered by a mock hurt look and “I don’t perv, I research!”

“Yeah, yeah” Tsunade looked at Tifa “if you cop him perving on you, feel free to knock him through a couple of walls, not you’re own of course. I can tell just by looking at you that you’re strong, stronger than most.” Tifa grinned and cracked her knuckles without a word, making the Sanin pale a bit and the rest of the ninja’s grin maliciously.

Their course decided the group of three ‘demons’, two young males, one adult and two ‘eldery’ ninja’s one businessman and his ‘toy’ cat, one fire lion, two ex-SOLDIER, a teen female ninja, coal miner turned rebel fighter, rebel fighter turned bar owner and piolet Captain left the inn together for the refueled and loaded airship for the short trip back to the city of Midgar.

The blonde slept briefly in the chair next to his mate, only rousing to following behind him sleepily, just following directions and not even looking where they were or where he was going. Outside the ship they separated, Reeve taking the group to the inn, Cloud and Zack returning home and the rest of Avalanche also. Tifa lead the Sanin towards Seventh Heaven, the two chatting as they did.

She found the man under the mask was more than he first seemed. He was definitely more like Naruto than anyone realized, but also a lot like the one eyed sensai.

He had grown up in the shadow of his great father, had been judged by those around him, only instead of everyone treating him like a freak or something to be feared, they had extremely high expectations, so high he couldn’t possibly meet them, then when he failed the entire town treated him like not only an disobedient child but a disappointment. So of course as a child he had decided if they SAW him as a rebellious child, that’s what he’d be, a disappointment and rebel. Until his team that was, and Tifa knew how that turned out.

What SHE saw was different. He was a gentle and kind soul, like Naruto, dedicated to those he cared for so much when he was treated badly he somehow blamed himself. Cloud had been like that growing up. It wasn’t until his relationship with Zack that he started to change, to have is confidence in himself and his abilities boosted.

Zack was a good-and sometimes BAD-influence on her childhood friend.

Further proof to her of this man’s truly good soul was it took, once they reached the bar, mere minutes for the two children once they got home from school to trust him. Soon both kids were play-wrestling the man on the floor, even Marlene who was giggling as she sat on his chest. And later on when she opened the bar for the night he became her bodyguard. He told her after she closed that the
But the biggest shock she received was on the way to Reeve’s office the next day. “Tell me about the kids” he said seriously “the girl obviously isn’t your friends true daughter. How did you end up with them? Where are their clans?”

“As far as Barrett is concerned, Marlene IS his daughter, in every way.”
“But she isn’t.”

“No,” Tifa looked thoughtful “all I know of it is her mother died long ago and her father was an incredibly close friend of Barrett’s. When he started Avalanche it was because his friend was killed somehow and Shinra had something to do with it. So Barrett blamed Shinra, started Avalanche to get revenge and took in Marlene as his own daughter to honor his friend. Somehow along the way Marlene became his REAL daughter at least in HIS eyes. I have a feeling Marlene knows the truth though and let’s him be her father. Whether that means she was told the truth at some stage or she remembers her real parents, I don’t know.”

“Humm” the ninja looked thoughtful “what about the boy?”
“Cloud found him just before the incident with the three clones. Or rather HE found CLOUD.”

“Tell me.”

“According to Denzel himself, his father worked for Shinra and his mother had a shop in Sector Seven. Just before they dropped the plate on it...” she motioned at the missing section of above city. “His dad found out and broke the rules to come down and save his family. He got them to safety, but when his mother found out she went back to try and save the people she knew and cared about...”

“...And the husband went back to get her” the man finished, nodding.

“Yes. They both died. Denzel made friends with an elderly lady who took care of him. They both survived when meteor fall, but both were infected by geostigmata. The lady died so, in his delirium, Denzel went looking for his parents. He found Cloud instead.”

“Humm” the man hummed, thoughtfully again “probably drawn to someone of power similar to him.” Tifa looked fully at the man “what do you mean?”

“He looked at the woman seriously “BOTH children have extremely high chakra levels, levels like I have not sensed in children so young in a long time. The girls is equal to and surprisingly similar to ‘Nades true level. The boy’s, well, he reminds me of a young Minato, but infinitely more. But somehow it has been locked away, sealed. Not just that, they both have a bloodline ability.”

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Tifa looked at him, stunned “sealed? But how?”

“I don’t know, I’d have to find a seal and I can only do that by examining him from head to toes with ‘Nade’s help. For that I’d need both his and your permission. I wouldn’t do that without consent. But that’s not all, the girl can already use her bloodline ability. She used it the minute she got home, but HIS is locked away with his chakra. Whatever the boy’s ability is, SOMEONE was so afraid of it and what he could do, they locked it away, maybe forever.”

Tifa asked, numb with shock and concern “you said Marlene used hers when she got home. What did she do?”

“I sensed her reach out with her chakra and scan everyone inside. She seemed confused by me, probably because my chakra was developed and controlled and no one else she knows has. That’s why she was so curious about me when you introduced us. She kept asking me about where I was from and being a ninja.” He looked sternly at her “I think once she realized I had been trained to control and use my chakra she wanted to learn how, but thought if she came out and asked...”

“She would reveal the truth.”

“Exactly” the man nodded, “perhaps you should have one of us teach them—for self defense of course.”

Tifa frowned “Cloud and Zack would consent with Denzel if we tell them this, they may even want to help by doing some training themselves. But Barrett...” she slowly shook her head “he has this image of Marlene that he refuses to shake. To him she is his sweet, innocent CHILD. He refuses to see her as other than that, he won’t even see she’s growing up.” The man nodded “I understand that. He wants to keep her innocent and carefree as long as possible. However he’s endangering her also. Her bloodline ability is obviously a passive one, it is not going to save her alone, and you won’t be there always to protect her, and neither will he.”

He started stroking his chin thoughtfully “her chakra is a lot like ‘Nades. Perhaps we can convince him to let HER train her. That way we can say she’s training to be a healer and sneak in other lessons ‘to learn chakra manipulation’ for her studies. ‘Nade can be very convincing when she sets her mind and heart to something.” Tifa frowned though thoughtfully as well “But can we really lie to Barrett, can I? And for what?”

“For the good of the children and their protection, yes you can.”

“What do you mean?” she frowned at him.

“Sooner or later someone else is going to find out about them. Do you really think they’ll see anything but a potential weapon? ESPECIALLY the boy. They’ll take them away from you and use them, I don’t want to think of what they might do to them to turn them. There is ALWAYS people out there willing to do whatever it takes to hurt others, who step on those around them and don’t care, just to be better than everyone else.”
Tifa realized he was right. First Regenald Shinra, then Hojo, then Sephiroth (although now Tifa knew that wasn’t his fault), then Rufus and the clones, then Hojo again (or maybe that was STILL) then Deepground.

And before them all, Jenovah.

And if Naruto’s dream was true, either Jenovah-possessed Sephiroth or Jenovah herself was going to return, along with a bigger and better Aeris. Because, let’s face it, as the daughter of a fox and wolf demon and ninjas, granddaughter of The Squire Of Omega, last of the Ancients and surrounded by ninja’s. ex SOLDIERS, healers and fighters of all types-including hand to hand, guns, swords and staffs or spears, Aeris Uchiha would not only be the most versatile and highly trained warrior ever to exist, she would be the most powerful and well protected girl out there.

Could Tifa really leave the kids vulnerable and unable to protect themselves when the ‘shit hit the fan’? Especially since Denzel had shown such promise against that hell-hound?

“I’ll do it” Tifa pursed her lips in determination “if you can persuade Tsunade, I’ll tell Zack and Cloud. Then we can all work on Barrett. If all of us do it...” a sudden idea hit Tifa “…we need to ask the kids themselves tonight. If Marlene asks her father herself....he’s never been able to say no to her.”

“Actually” the man smiled at her “I was talking about the others last night before you opened the bar. The girl wants to be a healer like ‘Nade. She mentioned how she tried to help the boy when he had some sickness before...”

“Geostigmata, yes she did.”

“...And how helpless she felt not being able to. She asked me if ‘Nade would teach her and I said I’d ask her. As for the boy, he idolizes both you and the blonde. If given the chance to ‘become a hero’-his words-like the both of you, he’d jump at the chance.” Tifa nodded “then we tell Zack, Cloud and Lady Tsunade when we get there, and work out our plan of what to say to Barrett together.” The older man nodded back at the plan.

They were almost at the office when they received three new members of the misplaced blonde’s friends.

They were just walking past the glass window of an cafe when they heard a shrieking cry of surprise and desperation “JIRAYIA-SAN?!”

Spinning around both were just in time to see a blur as someone threw themselves into the man’s arms with a sob of relief and repressed fear. The man’s eyes widened as he saw her, stuttering “Shizune?” Tifa frowned at him “another of Naruto’s friends?”

“Sort of” the man started, only to have the woman’s head snap up with “NARUTO?! You know where Naruto is?!”

“Not just know, we’re headed there now” he told her. “Jirayia-san, is Lady Tsunade..” The man smiled at her “is with Naruto, Shiz. In fact, we have team Seven minus Sakura, Sai and the Nara heir.”

“Jirayia-san” the woman said seriously “WHAT IS GOING ON?!?”

“We’ll explain on the way” the man started to turn her away in the direction they were heading when
she stopped him “Wait!” and dashed back into the cafe. Once gone Tifa turned to the Sannin “Who was that?”

“Tsunade’s apprentice” he explained “her uncle was Tsuande’s lover years ago. So when he died and ‘Nade left Hidden Leaf, she took it on herself to help and protect ‘Nade and went with her. The two are practically inseparable since then. ‘Nade’s been so worried about her since we arrived here.”

Tifa understood this.
The woman returned within ten minutes and then insisted they wait a few more.

When the Sannin’s PHS went off, he answered it with “Yeah I know we’re late, ‘Nade, but we have a good reason. You’ll see when we get there....” his face went red and he began to splutter “NO! I AM NOT RESEARCHING!!”

So Tifa took the mobile from him and spoke for him “No he’s actually been a gentlemen the entire time. We were discussing some concerns about Denzel and Marlene. No, we’ll explain when we get there, just don’t mention anything to others or you’ll freak them out. We want to talk to YOU first before we do or say anything else.” When both ninja’s suddenly perked up, seeing something she couldn’t yet, “we’ll be there in a few minutes.”

They both smiled and the woman waved to catch someone’s attention.

The next thing Tifa knew two other young women had run to their sides, both with the same bands as the others, one around her neck and the other like a headband. And both were overjoyed to see the Sannin with them, both’s first question of the blonde.

“Naruto’s fine” the Sannin said “he’s with ‘Nade, the Nara heir, the Uchiha, that kid Sai,” he looked at the girl with the headband “and your sensai.”

“Thank the gods” she breathed in relief. The girls then seemed to notice Tifa as she handed the mobile back to the man. “Hi” Tifa reached out to shake their hands while she introduced herself.

When the women did so in turn she raised an eyebrow at their identities “Naruto is very worried about you both. Come with us, we’ll take you to them.”

On the way to the office they quickly recapped what had happened.

“So Naruto’s pregnant to Sasuke and having dreams of some big evil in this world returning? That we are ALL here, everyone who means anything to Naruto. That we have to FIND them from scattered all over. That not only is there no way back, but even if there was, Hidden Leaf is gone anyway. And the guy the tailed beasts came from is here and INSIDE ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS!”

”Essentially yeah” Tifa said.

“I don’t know this guys story, but I’ve met him and he DOES feel like Naruto and you should see how he and the Uchiha and Naruto act around each other. Like overprotective family. He even looks like an Uchiha, pale with red eyes and black hair.”

So for the rest of the walk, Tifa told them Vincent’s story.

One of the women frowned “I don’t understand, how can an older male’s body handle 4 demons
inhabiting it along with his own chakra? I mean Naruto always had such trouble trying to control the nine-tailed, how can one guy survive not just the distraction of 4 wills against his own, let alone a creature infinitely more powerful than the fox?"

“One HE DIDN’T, Hojo killed him, experimenting on his corpse before Dr Crescent took him back. Two it’s the protomateria, it’s the only one of it’s kind, created by the planet for Vincent with the express purpose of allowing him control over the horde inside him. Dr Crescent had visions during her pregnancy of Sephiroth and what he would become, so she tried to turn Vincent into her champion—even though she knew she would never be there to help him herself. She echoes constantly from the lifestyle of her guilt, her grief that it was THEIR child that caused it, driven mad by an insane scientist calling himself his father and a demon calling itself his mother. The General never knew the truth.” She looked at them “hopefully THIS time around we can kill the demon and give Vincent his son back.”

“Which means that Naruto will have a brother if we do” one of the women said “well, half brother.” “Jirayia-san, have you seen any of these demons?”

“Not yet” he answered ‘but apparently everyone but ‘Nade, myself and the Nara have. Kakashi states he is quite powerful and was able to dominate both Naruto in demon form and Sasuke in second stage quite easily.’ All three girls gasped in shock and surprise. Tifa nodded “it’s true, I saw it, I was there.”

Before they could question any further, they arrived at the office to feel the flair of Chaos’ mana\chakra.

The three women tensed in alarm, only to have Jirayia raise a hand with “it’s safe, ladies. Tsunade last night mentioned wanting to examine him, compare him to Naruto and the other tailed beasts. She must have decided to do so while they wait for us.” As he finished speaking they all heard the two blondes arguing and the woman yell something about brats being even more of a brat because of pregnancy hormones. The next thing they knew the blonde was storming out the door, mate close behind silently, yelling back “AT LEAST I’M NOT PMSING!!"

“NARUTO!!” the blonde woman roared back “THE ONLY REASON YOU’RE NOT FLYING OUT THAT DOOR IS I DON’T WANT TO RISK HARMING AERIS!!!!!!”

“Humph” the blonde sniffed at her “don’t do me any favors now, old hag!!” He turned towards them, only to be immediately covered by three sobbing but joyful women, all sobbing out his name and promoting the emotional hormone-driven pregnant male to burst out too, babbling their names over and over again while the Sanin rolled his eyes and mumbled about women and waterworks.

The crying groups reaction was as one without looking up to punch the Sannin, hard enough to send him down the road like a rocket.

With a shake of her head Tifa entered the building into the outer office of the WRO headquarters. In the ‘lobby’ of the outer office all the group stood, most of them on one side while Chaos and the blonde woman stood on the other. The winged demon stood tall and almost regal, towering over everyone in the room, wings spread fully the entire width of their side of the room, standing still and patiently while the woman examined him, her hands glowing green.

“You are truly an amazing being, Chaos, intelligent and unique.”

“Thank you” the demon said with a slight chuckle “I rarely get to have an intelligent conversation
with anyone. My host seems to think I’m corrupting him when I do. As for the others, Hellmasker and Death Gigan think more in terms of ‘can I kill it?’ and ‘can I eat it?’ and as for my son Galian...” he laughed heartily “I’m sorry to say he’s simple. ‘Fight’, ‘Flee’ and ‘food’” he suddenly looked at the silver haired cyclops and grinned widely “and ‘mate’.”

As the silver haired man paled dramatically the woman glanced back with an evil grin. “Attracted to Silver Wolves, is he?” Chaos laughed evilly “silver, just like Galian’s own fur. On a human he finds it fascinating.”

The ninja paled even further.

Tifa laughed as well as she entered, approaching the large group. Tsunade frowned at her when she saw she was alone “where’s the pervert now?” Tifa grinned wider “he pissed the girls and Naruto off” her grin was almost evil as she went on with “he’s probably halfway to Kalm Town by now. Not that he didn’t deserve it.”

“I have no doubt” the Sannin sighed “I suppose he was the usual pervert at your home last night as well.”

“Actually” she said “he was the perfect gentlemen.” She told them about his attentiveness and play with the kids, then his body guarding her in the bar, her eyes on the woman silently saying “we’ll talk about THE OTHER THING later.” The woman nodded minutely to show she understood then frowned “the girls?”

Before she could explain Naruto peaked in “you guys finished talking? The girls want to come in. And Reno’s here with some other guys.”

“Yeah come in” Tifa answered for them.

The first in was Naruto himself, followed by his silent mate of course. They joined the group on the opposite side to the demon and woman, although Naruto soon wondered over to be hugged by both the demon and woman, obviously seeking comfort and emotional support. While he did he mumbled an apology to the woman who accepted it easily.

While Tifa made her way to Zack and Cloud to start a whispered conversation of about Denzel and his seal, the first girl walked in, looking around. She gasped at the sight of Naruto cradled in Tsunade and the demons arms before spotting the silver haired man, crying out “sensai!!” before running into his arms. “Sakura?” the man asked in shock, arms surrounding and holding his lost student tight.

Behind her came the other, who joined the ninja’s shyly. The last in was the one who had initially found them, somehow ending up in the middle of the other group, being held fiercely tight and close by the blonde woman.

The pervert came next and when Tifa next looked the two Sannins, demon, pregnant blonde and assistant were deep in conversation, probably-she hoped-about the problem with the children. Turning back to the rest of the group she was soon deep in conversation with them.

Tifa didn’t know how long it was before she looked around again to find the pregnant blonde and his pink-haired teammate in a corner together, but there was something about the way she was moving, and her hands....She gasped, her hands flying to her mouth in shock to try and muffle the sound, she knew what that movement meant! After all, she had been watching Naruto do it since they met!
Unfortunately her gasp caught nearly everyone’s attention. “Tifa? What is it?” Not looking away from the two, Tifa spoke to the girl “you’re pregnant too, aren’t you.” The girl’s eyes widened nearly all the way and her hand flew to her stomach almost protectively “how did you...”

“You keep touching your stomach almost comfortably like Naruto does, and you stroke it too, like you’re comforting him or her and are assuring yourself they’re safe and comfortable.”

“Sakura?” the Sannin woman looked at her in shock. The girl pursed her lips, tears gathering in her eyes and nodded. “Why didn’t you tell me? No wonder your chakra’s been going haywire lately. Why didn’t you tell me, I should be keeping an eye on you both.” True to the boy’s raging hormones, the blonde screamed furiously “IT’S ALL THAT BITCHES FAULT! SHE’S THE REASON SHE’S HAD TO HIDE IT FROM EVERYONE, EVEN THE FATHER!!”

“What bitch?” they asked “what did she do to Sakura?”

“My mother” the girl whispered.

“What do you mean?” they asked her.

Slowly the girl looked up, eyes tortured and sad “my mother. Do you remember a few years ago when Lee almost died protecting me?” The ninja’s nodded together “you wouldn’t leave his bedside while he was unconscious.”

The girl nodded herself this time “Lee has loved me since the Chunin exams. I was too obsessed with Sasuke though to see. But as I sat there by his side I began to seriously think on everything.” She looked up at the group “It has always been just me and my parents. We aren’t rich or have any clans like other people. When my mother found out I was in the same class as Sasuke she started pushing me to be with him. Mother fancied herself an socialite and to have her daughter be the new and only Lady Uchiha.....” she grimaced visibly and they understood, privilege.

“For years over and over she drilled it into me, I was the next Lady Uchiha and NOTHING was to stand in my way, even my friendship to Ino” she choked back a sob “I ignored Lee, even though his feelings were true to me and mine for Sasuke were not. After Sasuke left, she made me feel like it was my fault he was gone” she choked on a sob “like I didn’t try hard enough.”

This pissed everyone off. How could a mother treat her daughter like that? Naruto was right, she was a bitch. They felt guilty about it but they were glad she was dead with the village.

“When Sasuke returned she started pushing my again. But Naruto had risked himself so many times for him when I realized that they were in love with each other I couldn’t do it. They are my best friends and teammates, the brothers I never had, I couldn’t risk hurting that, what we had together, no matter how much she hated me and hurt me, blackmailed me.” Tsunade’s eyes narrowed dangerously “blackmailed you, how?”

“She would disown me if I didn’t seduce Sasuke. She would throw me out on my own. So in public I pretended to try but I was starting to crack. I thought I was going to just fall apart every time I saw Sasuke and how happy he and Naruto were together and having to try and take him away from Naru” her shoulders started to shake with sobs. “If Sasuke belonged to anyone it was Naruto! When we all gave up on him, Naruto didn’t, even when he almost killed him! They were destined!” The blonde took her in his arms in a soothing hug, followed to their surprise, by the wolf who received a dazzling smile of gratitude from his mate in thanks.
When she had calmed down somewhat, the grey haired cyclops asked “what’s that got to do with Gai’s student?”

“One day it just got too much. I found a place outside the village to do just break down and loose it, to cry and scream and break things, Lee found me there. I thought he was going to make fun of me or something, but he seemed to know what was going on—or guess—and just told me that if I ever wanted someone to talk to that he would listen and NEVER judge me in, in an serious voice and then left before I could speak.”

“Did you?”

“It took a while. I was sure he was going to use it against me somehow but it just got too much. He never judged me and he listened seriously and only would touch me if I allowed it at first, like a hug or touch of comfort. It was a side of Lee I never realized as behind his ‘Bushy Brows’ act. But then I should have realized we are all more than we show others, even those we care for.”

They nodded at this.

“Then he nearly died trying to protect me. I decided there and then I wanted something more for him then just my bitching, he deserved dates, more than that, he deserved ME. So I made up with Ino, I no longer would go after Sasuke, I would date Lee in public and proudly like he had earned, like he deserved. There was something oddly freeing in this decision, I wouldn’t have to hide anymore. I could be open about how I truly felt!”

They understood the appeal in this.

“But then he told me he didn’t want me to be disowned, to be separated from my parents, how close he knew I was to them. He said to keep up pursuing Sasuke in public and in private we would get to really know each other and even date. He called me ‘My Little Sakura Blossom’ and I couldn’t help it, I fell in love with him! About three weeks ago we made love” she buried her face in hands and sobbed louder “now I’m pregnant and he’s not here, I want my Rock! I didn’t even get to tell him yet! I need the father of my baby!!”

Naruto pulled her closer, tighter as his mate did them both “we’ll find his Sakura, he’s here somewhere looking for you, for ALL of us. We’ll find him then you can tell him.”

“How!” she nearly screamed “how!? He can’t track us through our chakra and we can’t track him through HIS, he doesn’t have it!!”

“What does she mean?” Tifa asked the silver haired cyclops. “Rock Lee doesn’t have chakra like ours to use. No bloodline ability, no genjitsu’s or Ninjitsu’s. Instead he has had to learn forbidden techniques and taijutsu.”

“Taijutsu?”

“Taijutsu Literally meaning ‘Body Techniques’ and is a basic form of techniques and refers to any techniques involving the martial arts or the optimization of natural human abilities. Taijutsu is executed by directly accessing the user’s physical and mental energies, relying on the stamina and strength gained through training. It typically does not require chakra, though chakra may be used to enhance its techniques. Taijutsu generally require no hand seals to perform, occasionally making use of certain stances or poses, and are much quicker to use than ninjutsu or genjutsu. Taijutsu is simply put: hand-to-hand combat.”
Tifa got it, the young man was like them, not the ninja’s, it would make him harder to find. Unless he managed to meet up with another one of the group.

The pink haired young woman was sobbing brokenly in the blonde and dark hair men’s arms, breaking Tifa’s heart. What would it be like to be in her shoes? A woman who had suffered so much at the hands of her own mother, pregnant and unwed and now her only true emotional support, the man she loved and father to her child was gone, missing, most likely worried to death about her too.

She resolved to find this guy and reunite the lovers, the two had a baby on the way, they deserved to be together and happy after what they had been through. HE deserved to know he was going to be a father. “We have to find him!” the young woman clutched to the blonde, eyes wide and begging “please, Naruto find him, please! HOW do we find him?!”

“Perhaps I can help” said a dignified voice from the doorway.
Chapter 7

In the doorway stood a tall blonde man in a white suit with a black vest underneath, flanked by three men, a red head in a rumpled suit, a large muscular black man in a neat suit; sunglasses and a freshly shaven head and an Wutain man-also in a suit-with long hair tied in a single plait behind him and an tilak similar to the blonde woman's on his forehead between the dark brown eyes.

"Shinra" Barrett snarled, but Tifa snarled at him "shut it and play nice!"

Stunned the man looked at her "Tifa?"

"Don't you get it, Barrett? We have a young pregnant woman here, separated from not only the man she loves, but the father of her baby! He's out there somewhere, alone in a strange world he knows nothing about, no mana, no summons, no chakra, just his hand-to-hand against monsters and who knows what else! What if it was Marlene out there? This guy's life and safety is more important than your prejudices!"

Properly chastised the gunman mumbled an apology and promise to be quiet and if it wasn't for the seriousness of the situation, the group would have found it funny. However a pregnant young woman and her missing love, the father of her unborn child who was supposedly in danger was too important.

All eyes turned to the four in the doorway "How exactly can you help her? Help US?"

"May we come inside first? I doubt such a subject is safe discussed here in the doorway."

Reeve took the opportunity to call out "perhaps this would be best if we gathered together in the board room? More room for everyone and everyone can sit if it's their wish." The group agreed and followed the man to another room, a large tasteful board room with a table long enough to seat them all.

The first in the room was Reeve, it was his office after all, pulling a chair out so Chaos, carrying the pregnant exhausted pink haired young woman, could gently sit her down. After all, having almost boundless energy may help the blonde male, but the woman was human and after the emotional jaunt she had just been through it was enough to drain off what her body wasn't using for the baby.

Next to her sat the blonde male, his mate and so on so it looked like this. On one side-Reeve at the head of the table. On the left side the ninja's ascending down towards Rufus at the other end.

It went-Jirayia first then in order Tsunade, her assistant, the silver cyclops, the exhausted pink haired woman who was now leaning on her sensai's shoulder; fighting sleep. Then Naruto, Sasuke, Sai, Hinata and Shikamaru on the end.

Avalanche sat on the right side and again ascending towards the white clad blonde it went this way. Cloud, Zack, Tifa, Barrett, Yuffie, Cid, Vincent and Nanaki on a set of cushions set up by the secretary for him.

Next to the blonde president the Wutain man sat, both to show they were there as no threat, but it was informal, even though Reno stood behind the head of the TURK's, and Rude the president.

Reeve spoke first to the ninja's "my friends may I introduce you all to Rufus Shinra, president of the Shinra Electric Power Company, his second-in-command and head of the TURKs Xain Tseng, You have already met Tseng's second-Reno. The other is Reno's partner, Rude. Much like your ninja
teams, there IS a third, a female, Elena..."

The man in white spoke "...who is currently away on an assignment right now."

Reeve nodded in understanding.

"What's a president?" Naruto questioned.

"Like your Hokage" Reeve answered "only instead of running an entire village they run a company or corporation, a business. This one is world wide."

"Oh" Naruto said.

So Reeve turned to the opposite introductions "Rufus may I introduce the Konoha ninja's. From my end-Jirayia, Sage and one of the last of the two last Sannin warriors, author of the Icha Icha Paradise series. Next to him, healer and second of the last Sannin, granddaughter of the first Hokage, current fifth, Lady Tsunade Senju. Then her assistant and apprentice Shizune.

Son of the Great Silver Wolf-a great warrior in their world-known as The Copynin because of his ability to learn an enemies attack, Last of the Hatake Clan, leader of Team 7-Kakashi Hatake.

Then his team, Sakura Haruno, also an apprentice of Lady Tsunade.

Last of two clans, son of the Forth Hokage-clan Namaike-and clan Uzumaki, demon fox son of Chaos, Naruto. He is also nearly five months pregnant to his mate."

The group saw something spark in the blondes eyes at this, but his mate saw it and tensed protectively beside the other.

"Last of one of the founding clans of their village, mate to Naruto and also son of Choas, but wolf, Sasuke Uchiha. Ex-ROOT assassin and spy, now allie and friend of Narutos, Sai. Heir to another of the founding clans and mate to another clans heir, Hinata Hyuuga." The girl blushed and looked down, hiding her face in her hair, obviously at the mention of being this boy's mate.

"Heir to the Nara clan, Shikamaru. He's also their resident tactical genius" Reeve laughed when the young man slouched in the seat and seemed to nod off "don't let his behavior fool you, he's actually smarter than he seems."

The Nara's reply was an snort then soft snore.

"Now introductions are over" the blonde woman spoke out "how do you plan on helping us find Lee and the others?"

The other blonde sat forward, hands together, elbows on the table and fingers in a temple in front of his face. "I'm sure you know how I have employees and offices in every major city or town in this world. I can have my men and women-even my TURKs, keep an eye out during normal running for anyone or thing...unusual. Once found they will contact me. If I could get a description of them..."

"Wait!" Naruto went searching through his pouch on his belt "it's here, somewhere...got it!"
Triumphantly he withdrew an old photo, a long one. The wolf frowned "you STILL have that old thing Dobe?"

"Of course!" Naruto laughed, poked his tongue at his mate "you were SO CUTE then" and then cracked up at the disbelieving incredulous look he got back. As Naruto tried to hand the photo over, the wolf took a swipe at it, prompting a game of 'keep-away' between the two.
So Tifa took it from him, seeing if she didn't step in this would dissolve into something more...instinctive.

After a quick glance at it she handed it to Reeve "maybe you can get Adam to blow it up into an overhead so not only can we all see and get them identified but can learn about them all? It might help when we find them."

"Of course, good idea" the Director called his assistant and handed it over, telling him what he wanted and ASAP. The man nodded and ran off to do so.

The next thing Tifa knew-the two demon mates were arguing, stupid things like "OH YEAH, Teme!" and "Idiot Dobe." She looked, confused, at the other ninja's to see them relaxed and unconcerned. "Aren't you going to stop them?" she questioned but the silver-haired man just rolled his eyes and said "you don't know these two, they've been like that since they were twelve or thirteen. I'd advise you NOT to interfere if you value your skin."

The pale skinned ex-assassin agreed "any interference and they turn on YOU to mind your own business."

"Anno" the violet eyed female ninja said, poking her index fingers together in a nervous gesture before suddenly blushing again and looking away, mumbling softly "it's kind of become a type of, well, foreplay for them."

Tifa blinked at her "Foreplay?" Just as she finished speaking the blonde yelled "OH YEAH? I'LL SHOW YOU, TEME!" and had launched himself at the other and knocked him to the floor. They rolled around each other, snarling fiercely for a while then the tone began to change.

The minute the moans started up the copynin rolled his eyes and flashed through hand signs until an earthen shell similar to last time popped up around the two. The sage followed up with something that cut off all sound coming out of the dome.

There was two brief flashes of power from inside then it was silent.

"What was that all about?" Reno yelped.

"I assume they are both still in heat, despite the pregnancy" Tseng said, to which Chaos nodded. "Then it will probably last until the last month or so" the TURK leader said, "...and it seems they are acting very...animalistic as well."

"What do you mean boss?"

"The fighting before? Domination. The...mating in public? Same thing as well as the mating need."

"What do you mean, boss?" Reno asked again.

"When was the last time an animal cared about being seen mating in public?"

They got his point.

"Neither do demons" Chaos said, yellow eyes sparkling in amusement on Kakashi.

"Neither are ninja SUPPOSED to" the woman, Shizune said. "What do you mean?" they asked the woman.

"A ninja, to their village, is nothing but a weapon, they can't afford modesty."
"What do you mean?" they repeated.

"Look at it this way. You're having a relaxing bath—or shower—when a group of the enemy burst in and attack, trying to kill you. Who has the advantage, the one fighting back without hesitation, or the one trying to cover him or herself?"

They understood this.

"Besides, when you're in a position where any mission can be your last it's just some stupid thing holding you back."

They acknowledged this.

Adam suddenly returned, pushing an overhead projector, setting it up before leaving to use the photo to make individual files for the missing, hopefully to contain the information on each person, their skills and so on. He would put the photo of each member in, with the notes Reeve would take inside.

Once he was gone, Reeve rose and switched it on, revealing a photo of at least thirty-one people, fifteen teens, one animal, twelve adults and surprisingly three kids around Denzel's current age at the front.

"Lady Tsunade" Reeve spoke "these are your ninjas and people, you know more about them than anyone else, why don't YOU do this?"

The woman nodded and stood, making her way over to it, slipping into an authoritative manner as she did.

"Of course the first two are myself and Shizune. I have various Jutsu's and abilities..." she rattled off a list "I am an member of the Senju clan" she told them about the first Hokage and the origin of the hidden villages. She told them Shizune's history, jutsu's and abilities. "Next is Jirayia..." she told of his abilities and Jutsu's. The next was an red eyed black haired woman "this is Kurenai Yuhi. She is Hinata-chan's sensai. She just gave birth before all this happened to Asuma..." she pointed to the cigarette smoking man next to her "their daughter." She explained both their jutsu's and abilities and the man's connection to the third.

"You don't need to worry about finding him, though. He was killed in battle" she looked at the spiked haired young man "sorry, Shikamaru." The young man nodded without speaking. Obviously he had cared for the man.

"This" she pointed out the child with goggles in the front "is Konohamaru, Asuma's nephew." She grinned widely "since meeting Naruto he's idolized him and often calls him 'boss'. In fact many of his techniques are Naruto's or variations of his, including shadow clones and the rasengan."

She moved on "this is Ibiki Morino, my head of T&I."

"T&I?" they asked and she explained before going on "Naruto somehow made friends with him too." She explained his abilities and Jutsu's.

Next was a strange black haired man in green "Might Gai, also known as 'The Green Beast Of Konoha'." She explained his abilities and laughed "he...takes some getting used to. He not only is Kakashi's self-proclaimed rival" she motioned at the man who muttered under his breath "but he's a little...outgoing."
Next was a black hair and eyed woman "Anko Mitarashi. She was once a disciple of my teammate and the prototype to Sasuke's curse seal is on her." She opened her mouth to go on with the rest when the silver haired cyclops spoke "This next one should interest you."

"Who is he?" they questioned.

"Iruka Unimo."

They group immediately looked closely at the man. The smile on the man's face was kind and caring and he looked down at the blonde. He had long brown hair tied back, brown eyes and an distinctive scar from one side of his face-across his nose to the other side but oddly it just highlighted his handsomeness. He may have looked like a plain everyday person normally, but the kind face made him more...noticeable.

After telling his jutsu's and abilities the woman stated Kakashi's, next in the photo was a man with sunglasses, Ebisu, who was training the three kids.

The last adult was wearing a strange head-guard, the collar of the black jumper pulled up to his chin. Again Kakashi spoke "this one Naruto told you about" he looked at Tifa then Chaos "the only survivor of Orochimaru's experiments on children."

Tifa remembered and nodded.

When the others questioned this, they explained. "Sounds like Hojo" Reno shuddered.

"Hojo?" the woman looked at the red head.

"Yeah, the guy responsible for Sephiroth going nuts, three of the four demons inside Valentine here" he made a motion in Chaos' direction "SOLDIER and Deep Ground."

The white clothed blonde spoke out "we've all suffered under his tender mercies, I think, though none like Valentine." This was obviously news to the rest of his group because they looked at him in shock and horror "boss?"

"I was born smaller and weaker than most with a weak heart, do you think that President Shinra would really put up with such a weak heir? As soon as I was old enough, the old man killed my mother to prevent her interference and handed me over to him. I practically grew up in that lab along side Sephiroth. The only difference was while I left for other types of training, he didn't, it was me who got Sephiroth in the SOLDIER program, I thought it would get him out of the lab and Hojo's influence. I thought it would give him experience and the influence of normal people..."

He shook his head sadly "unfortunately it was Hojo's influence in the end that turned him against us, against the entire planet."

Tifa realized something. It explained many things about the man. Being raised in a lab, by tutors after his mother was killed by his father, that detached him from normal people, plus the trauma of his mothers murder...

How would that screw a kid up? Especially with a father like that.

And Tifa remembered how badly the blonde had had the geostigmata, worse than Cloud, and Cloud had been rife with Jenovah's gene. Could Hojo had used the aliens gene to build up Rufus as well as Sephiroth? After all, all SOLDIERS had been enhanced with it, even Zack, though HIS enhancement was dormant, so much so that stigmata hadn't affected him.
The woman was going on so Tifa quickly paid attention.

She pointed to the first teen in the start of the second row. It was a red head male, face blank and skin pale, eyes the most intense green she had ever seen, more intense than even Sephiroths had been, made all the more intense by the thick rings of black around his eyes.

It was almost like a mask...and instantly Tifa knew who it was.

"This is Gaara, the once vessel of the one-tailed raccoon-dog called Shukuku..." she looked pointedly at Chaos "he's the first to fully merge with his demon to save his life. Sabaku No Gaara is now—or rather WAS—the Kazakage of the village of Suna hidden in the desert. The full extent of his jutsu's and abilities are unknown, Suna is pretty hush-hush about their ninja's, but I can tell you what has been observed and mentioned..." she rattled off a list before going on "funnily enough, he's the only other male Sasuke trusts completely around Naruto without jealousy and possessiveness."

"Perhaps because Shukuku is my other daughter. It would be like being attracted to your sister."

"Anno" the Hyuuga heir spoke out again. When they looked at her, she visibly fought not to look down as she said "Gaara-san and and niisan have been seeing each other, a lot." The blonde's eyes widened "NEJI? Gaara and Neji! Why wasn't I told of this?"

"Um" the girl fidgeted "the clan wouldn't approve of Neji-san. They would demand he marry a Hyuuga woman and produce children that way. They would punish him for wanting someone outside the clan. In secret would be their only way to be together. Gaara-san said he cared for Neji-san too much to let him get into trouble. He said he would 'slaughter the whole damned clan, even if it means war.'"

To Tifa that clenched it, the demon was in love.

The girl was going on "I don't know if they have done anything...physical yet, but they have been taking their time. Apparently Naruto-kun gave them his apartment to use so they could be together in private."

"Naruto KNEW!"

"Hai, he knew pretty fast, before anyone else, even me. He promised not to tell though."

Tifa spoke out "they can be together now."

Everyone looked at her "What do you mean?"

"Well the only member of your clan here are you and him." Tifa looked at the pale-eyed girl "So if you don't care if they're together they don't have to hide it anymore. It also means you and YOUR boyfriend can be together without fear."

The girl's expression became a mix of absolute joy and confusion "hai, you're right, we can! How did you know?"

"Naruto and Sasuke mentioned it. They said you were dating the Inuzuka Heir. Now neither of you have to hide it."

The blonde woman choked on a laugh "KIBA Inuzuka? You're dating THAT buffoon?"

"The young woman glared at the older woman "he's sweet and loyal and fiercely protective of me and my feelings, and like Lee and Sakura-san, he's waited and watched me while I mooned over
"Naruto" the woman supplied and the young woman nodded "it was Naruto who made me see how much I was hurting him by ignoring him and chasing someone else who would never return my feelings in the same way."

"Which is this Kiba?" Tifa wanted to keep an eye out for this young man, "Naruto said they had an connection with dogs and had...evolved features similar to them."

"Yes" the older woman pointed to a young man astride a huge white dog in the third row on the end. He wore brown tight pants and a white furred hoodie almost hiding his face. But Tifa could see black strangely designed eyes and thick red lines on the face similar to Jirayia but so thick they were almost triangles, kind of like fangs.

The hand he held up was clawed as well as the fingers almost a little longer than normal.

"The dog is Akamaru, his ninkin and friend. They've been together since he was about five. The Inuzuka clan are secretive about how they connect to their partners but whatever they do, it allows a kind of link in their chakra's so as the ninja progresses, so does their companion and they can understand them just like you and I can. The ninkin can, even for a short time, become their master."

"What do you mean, become their master?"  
"As a decoy or to use certain attacks or jutsu's the animal can take the form of his master, mimicking him."  

Again the spark in the blonde's eyes.

The blonde woman went on after stating the two's jutsu's and abilities.

"Beside Gaara is his siblings, Temari the oldest and Kankuro the second oldest. Gaara is the youngest. Don't let Kankuro's appearance scare you, actually he's an handsome young man under all that."

"Why was the youngest used as a vessel? Why not any of the other two?"

"Temari was born female, so useless in their father's eyes. Kankuro was born premature, so they didn't have time to do what was needed to trap it. So Gaara was conceived. The youngest was kept away from his siblings until they were thirteen and became a team. By then the lack of love and abuse had turned Gaara into essentially a killing machine that even his siblings were afraid of..." she looked at them "where Naruto had Iruka and the Third, Gaara had no one and that's help make Naruto very protective of the Suna nin. It's Naruto's influence that's made him a better person, and it started with tentative steps to get to know his siblings." She told them the two siblings witnessed jutsu's and abilities then went on.

"This is Ino Yamanaka, one of Shikamaru's teammates. Next to her is his other, Choji Akimichi. These three are the new generation of Ino-Shika-Cho, a team the same as their fathers were previously" she explained their individual jutsu's and abilities, then their combined.

"After Shikamaru is Tenten, one of Gai's students and Lee's teammates. Next to her is Hinata's cousin, Neji Hyuuga." She explained their Jutsu's and abilities then said "the Hyuuga's and Uchiha's are distantly related, so they both have a kekkei genkai-or dojutsu-eye ability. Uchiha's have the Sharingan, Hyuuga's have the Byakugan."

She motioned at the girl who went through a series of hand signs and then ended with a yell of
"Byakugan!"

Immediately the veins and nerves around the eyes became more pronounced, standing out under the skin. The girls eyes moved as if drawn to the earthen dome. She suddenly looked away, FAST, a giant blush growing on her face before she looked down.

"Oh so the Hyuuga heir gave in to her inner pervert!" the Sannin Sage crowed with a cheer "tell me, what were they doing in there? Were they getting down and dirty in there?"

"I...I..." the girl could only stutter, her blush obviously growing more and more out of control until she finally couldn't take it anymore and to Tifa's surprise she fainted. The instant she did the Sage was serious again, muttered "pity" and turned back to the overhead of the photo leaving Tifa to believe he had done it purposely to get her to faint.

"Jariaya!" the female Sannin exclaimed to which he snorted with "c'mon 'Nade. You know as well as I that Naruto and the others are trying to get her to stop doing that. The only way is too-well-desensitize her to it. So far they can't get her past anything to do with Naruto. She even faints at his Sexy Jutsu still for Kami sake!"

"So do you" the female Sannin pointed out to which he snorted "I'm a guy, I'm supposed to."

"Sexy Jutsu?" they questioned.

"We don't know where he got it from and the only other who seems to know it is Konohamaru. The standing theory is because of the demon. After all, it IS female. Also it is a kitsune and they are known for illusions and trickery."

"Yes but what IS it?" The Sanin grinned "Naruto?"

"Yes Sensai?"

Tifa's head snapped around to find both boys re-seated calmly, the only sign of what had gone on was the rumpled clothes and wide grin on the blonde, the slight smell of sweat and...other things. "Why don't you demonstrate?" he said, none of the males-save his mate-looking at him.

The blonde rose with a huge grin, flashing through hand signs, and cried "Oiroke no jutsu!" There was a large flash of smoke that covered the young mans entire form, then it started to clear. Every male in the room-save two, got an instant nose bleed, even-to Tifa's surprise Cloud and Zack.

What didn't surprise her was Chaos didn't but the real surprise was neither did Reeve. When she looked at him with a frown he just shrugged good-naturally "not my type." Standing in the once pregnant males spot was-well-the sexiest and also the cutest woman Tifa had ever seen. The only features she recognized from the 'boy' were the sky-blue eyes, whiskers and blonde hair, the rest had drastically changed.

A voluptuous woman stood there, wearing an skin-tight red bra and panties suit. But the surprise was the high red fox ears perched on the top of the head among the unruly butt-long hair and from the base of the spine on the back-just above the buttocks were TWO red fox tails, tipped in the same blonde as the hair. Sasuke frowned at his mate "what's with the new form, Dobe, this isn't the normal oiroke no jutsu." The others looked at him curiously "It's not?"

"No" the Uchiha answered.

The ninja's all looked. Through his nose-bleed the Sannin frowned as well "he's right it's not like any of the three variations I've seen."
"THREE?" the others were shocked. The Hokage looked at the Sannin "most of us only know of the one!" The Sage looked embarrassed and the boy\woman looked sheepish, playing with one of the tails "sometimes it was the only way to keep the perverts attention on training."

His wolf mate growled.

"Why did you choose THIS one?" they asked to which he mumbled something lowly.

"What was that?" they asked.

"I said" he breathed deeply "that this is how it's been since I merged with Kyuubi. For some reason it happens every time and the only way to stop it is use a hedge ON TOP of the jutsu."

"Why didn't you tell us you were having trouble?" He shrugged "I just figured it was because I fully merged with Kyuubi, you know, some of her features showing through. You know, like Naruko is really me AND her combined."

This made weird sense.

She\he suddenly seemed to remember them, struck a pose and in a heavily seductive voice said "Hii boys."

Only to be pounced on by his mate with a dominate snarl.

The Sage and cyclops both rolled their eyes and again produced the earthen dome and sound-proofed it.

Tifa took the opportunity to speak out on something she had been curious about "I was wondering."

"What?" the ninja's asked her. "The one, Gaara. Can HE get pregnant too? I mean he's like Naruto. His demon was female, he fully merged with it, and he's 'dating', possibly having sex with a male as well." The group looked thoughtful. However Chaos shook his head slowly "even though it is possible, I highly doubt it."

"Why?" they looked at the demon who started counting off on his clawed fingers "Kyuubi was my most powerful of my children, SHE was the weakest. When Kyuubi merged with Naruto, he was already in love-therefore receptive to his mate, he wasn't. When they fiirst mated Naruto-and therefore Kyuubi-merged the...chakra with his mate, therein making him almost equally as strong." He looked at them intently "more than likely the child, when she's born, will be fully demon with next to NO human blood in it."

"So you're saying" the blonde woman said "that because Sasuke became at least half demon as well, this allowed Naruto to become...fertile to him."

"In a manner of speaking, yes."

"Huh" she said "I suppose we won't truly know unless it does or doesn't happen."

"Going on" the blonde woman turned back to the photo\overhead. "This" she went on with, motioning at the boy in green and with black hair, a mini version of one of the previous teachers. "This is Rock Lee, Gai's little clone. In the academy he looked a lot different to this. He can not do ninjitsu or genjitsu so does tiajitsu, excels at it as a matter of fact, thanks to Might Gai. Apparently he was failing at the academy due to his inability to use or manipulate his chakra until SOMEONE..." she glared directly at Kakashi, who looked unconvincingly innocent "...happened to mention him to Might Gai. Gai went to the academy to meet him and was so impressed by his spirit that he took him
"Let me guess" Tifa said "he was failing UNTIL this guy took an interest in training him. As his skills started to improve he started dressing, acting and even talking the same as him, maybe even believing the same."

"Yes."

"Hero worship" Cloud said softly, Zack nodding by his side.

"How do you know?"

"It was like me and Sephiroth, just, not as extreme."

The woman nodded and went on. Now that Tifa knew what the pink haired young woman's love looked like, she memorized it, vowing to keep an almost constant eye out for him. Next was a teen with spiky black hair, sunglasses and wearing a white trench coat with the collar turned up to hide his face-or at least most of it. For some reason he reminded the group a lot of Vincent.

"Shino Abruhame, heir of the Abruhame Clan. The Abruhame clan have an unique relationship with insects. They understand them and the way they work and think and can even communicate with many species."

"Naruto mentioned 'their hive' and 'their brethren'. What exactly did he mean by that?"

"What exactly did he say about it?" Chaos spoke out "Shino once told him that their bugs are naturally wanderers. They are only able to stay in the village because of them joining their clan." Tifa nodded "also that humans are 'nesters' and they are ninja's to satisfy their 'brethren's' need to move. Then something about they keep them happy and they'll protect and serve them."

"Yes. You see the Abruhame clan have a symbiotic relationship with a certain species of beetle called Kikaichuu-or destruction Beetles." Chaos' eyes narrowed "just HOW symbiotic is it?"

"As in like you and your host." Tifa's eyes widened in shock and horror "they live INSIDE them?"

The woman nodded "each Abruhame from birth are taught extreme control over their emotions because when they receive their own hive, they react to their hosts feelings and emotions. Anything overt-lust, anger, pain, anguish, fear, can cause the hive to react, and not necessarily in a good way."

"Although Naruto taught Shino sometimes emotions are a GOOD thing" Kakashi spoke out "that emotions can make you stronger and more 'human' is a good thing."

"So how exactly is it symbiotic between them?"

"The Abruhame clan are living hives. The beetles live, reproduce inside their hosts, eat their chakra, and in return they act like their host is their queen, obeying their commands-even at the cost of their own lives- and are fiercely protective of them. The Kikiaichuu-or Kiki as they are known as-can even feed off an enemies chakra to weaken them during battle." she explained the boy's abilities and Jitsu's, the Kiki's, then both together before going on.

Next was obviously the now pregnant girl, the blonde and his mate. The pinkette was staring adoringly at the Uchiha who was skillfully baring a look that although dark, seemed to be three expressions in one.

The first seemed aimed at the pinkette on one side, disgust. The second was boredom, probably at having to sit for the photo. The third was exasperation at the blonde boy on his other side, pulling a
face while he obviously joked with the Inuzuka on his other side.

Tsunade explained their abilities and jutsus before moving to the three kids. Kohonamaru and his teammates Moegi and Undon, students of the sensai Ebisu from the first row. "Of course this is an old photo, so they are older-but not that much different and some have either updated or changed their clothes..." she described the updates or changes.

"Yo, none of those guys look like HIM, sir" Reno said softly. "Hmmm" the blonde man looked thoughtful "you are correct, Reno." All eyes turned to the four "him who?" Tsunade's eyes widened "you've located one already?"

"We are not sure. We received reports of a figure being seen in the forest of the Ancient City. After the clones were using it as a base I decided it best to investigate. Reno was headed there when he encountered you all."

"Here" Tseng pulled a folder out of his suits inside Breast pocket and threw it onto the table towards them "this is all we could get." Kakashi was the closest and caught it up, glancing briefly at the report before passing it down and instead took out the photos to scrutinize. He went through each picture, looking it over closely, a frown on his face. "The shape and movement caught are obviously ninja, and the shape is familiar, young, but..." he suddenly reached the last one and his eye widened so much it nearly popped out of his head. "No" he breathed in denial "it can't be."

Instantly everyone was alerted, that denial hadn't been a good sound.

"Kakashi?" the Sage asked in concern to which, with trembling fingers, the cyclops handed the last photo over to him "Naruto and any of the tailed here may still be in danger" glancing at Chaos as well.

The Sage took it and his eyes widened too, handing it over speechlessly to the blonde woman. HER reaction was completely different, furry "those bastards!" the photo went flying as she nearly destroyed the table, slamming her fists down on it "how did THEY get here?" This instantly woke both the pregnant pinkette and clan heir, the pregnant girl catching the flying photo. She immediately looked at it, her hand flying to her mouth to gasp one word in horror "Akatsuki!"
The group frowned at them and they’re reactions, concerned and confused “Who?”

“Wait” Chaos frowned then spoke after a thoughtful pause “you mean that criminal group that was hunting my children to use, do you not? The one my son’s mates brother joined to spy on for your village.”

The pinkette jerked in shock and horror “Itachi Uchiha WAS A SPY??!”

“Yes” Jiraiya nodded “for his safety I was never told who the spy was among them, only the council knew that. And apparently somehow Kabuto knew.”

“But...” the young woman started, the other two young people looking just as shell shocked “the clan massacre? He hurt Naruto! And Sasuke!”

“I suppose with no village anymore to protect, you can know the full truth” the blonde woman sank into her chair with a sigh “the truth is Itachi DID murder his clan, but the council ordered it.”

“Why?” the pinkette looked betrayed, as if the council had personally turned on her. Tifa decided to explain to her what Sasuke had told them, she learned by questioning the Sannins’ and the cyclops and she had figured out by herself. “Have you heard of Madara Uchiha?”

The girl frowned “He and his brother were two of the founding Uchiha’s, Why?”

“How much do you know of him?”

“Just he wanted to be the first Hokage but was rejected, why?”

“Apparently something happened and he tried to take it, but was stopped, his brother was killed and he fled the village with his brothers eyes. You know why?”

She nodded “the Sharingan. Kakashi sensai got his from Obito-san. Overuse of the Sharingan starts poisoning the bodies chakra system, killing the bearer, blinding them or at worse burning them out from their chakra pathways. By transferring eyes or transplanting other Sharingans, they can slow the progress down or outright stop it, why?”

Excuse me” Rufus interrupted politely “Sharingan?” Kakashi raised the slouched headband to reveal the red eye that spun before he covered it again. “Because Kakashi’s wasn’t a birth trait but a transplant and he’s not an Uchiha, he can’t turn it on or off. So since it’s an eye ability, he has to cover it.”

“Go On” the pinkette looked at Tifa.

“Well apparently he decided to get revenge on your village. He’s responsible for everything from the Kyubbi’s attack, the clan murder and the criminal organization, not to mention Sand’s attack on you.”

“But Sand was Orochimaru!” Sakura protested. “And who do you think was responsible for Orochimaru?”

“WHAT!” the blonde woman jumped to her feet, slapping both hands on the table “how is he
responsible for him? Explain!” Tifa blinked at her in surprise “didn’t Sasuke explain it to you?” The blonde visibly grit her teeth in anger and frustration “No” she managed to get out evenly “Just tell me how a guy 200 years ago managed to do all that.”

“Haven’t you ever wondered why your ex-teammate wanted Sasuke so badly? Badly enough to attack you to get to him. He could have gone after his brother…” The woman snorted and sat back down “he already tried that, but had his ass handed to him. He wanted the Sharingan…”

“Yes but why? He couldn’t copy it and to use it either in Sasuke’s body or transplant like Kakashi would just mean the same problem. So either he had found a way around the problem or….”

“He wasn’t after the Sharingan, someone else was,” she breathed.

Tifa nodded “what if this guy KNEW Itachi was already sick or even on his way to blind, so couldn’t use him, who better than an teenaged boy, young and strong, who has barely used his own?” The blondebreathed in awe “so knowing our ex-teammate was obsessed he convinced him he could give him the immortality he sought, in return for Sasuke and aiding his revenge on Hidden Leaf.” She frowned “but where does the fox attack and clan massacre come in?”

“He wants something from the village, Sasuke didn’t know what. It turns out that other than the first, only one thing in your world can control an the demon.” The Sanin woman’s eyes widened “the Sharingan. And there were none of the First’s clan left with his abilities to stop him, or rather HER.” Tifa nodded again “it also helped decimate your ninja forces, making you vulnerable to him, to future attacks.”

“It also means less who possibly know about him inside.”

“The clan massacre?”

“He convinces the current clan of their superiority, that it is their RIGHT to rule. He convinces them that a show of force is needed to prove it. So they corrupt the Police Force and start threatening to move against the village if they can’t get their way. Meanwhile the clan leader is raising his eldest son in violence and corruption, turning him into a spy and weapon, moving to get him inside the the personal guard of your leader so that if their threats fail their spy can assassinate him.”

“NO!” Sakura exclaimed in shock and horror.

“Only no matter how evil and corrupt, no matter what they do to eldest son, he remains loyal to the village, the darkness gathering in his soul held at bay by the pure love and acceptance of one person, one child, someone he loved and was able to protect and soothed him against the pull of his clan.”

“Sasuke!” the pinkette gasped and Tifa nodded “he was able to convince himself that if he let the clan destroy the village he would ruin his happiness and innocence. So he kept the truth from his little brother, letting him grow up in a child’s idolization of his father, never knowing just WHO and WHAT he idolized.

Instead he went to the Hokage and told him all. For a while the clan and Hokage were in peace talks, but it was just an act, they continued their plans and the older playing double agent, giving his clan false information but the Hokage the true ones. Until that faithful day…”

“What happened to cause it? Why did he do it? The Hokage wouldn’t....”
“...Wasn’t there. He went to some annual summit of the rulers of all the Hidden villages, leaving the council in charge. THEY didn’t want to negotiate or make peace, so they called the older son to them. “Kill them all” they said “they are all traitors to the village, and traitors to the village, and traitors are to be executed, least we look weak to the other villages for allowing it so. Prove to us your loyalty to the village and kill every last one of them. Any failure will deem YOU a traitor to your village as well. Remember, you’re a Kohona ninja and as such are a weapon we wield and nothing more. Do as we command. Go.”

“So he did.”

“But...” she looked at their faces “he didn’t kill Sasuke!”

“No, no matter what it meant he couldn’t kill his little brother. So he choose a day he would be gone all day and did so. However Sasuke decided to come home early to see his beloved big brother. Itachi told him not stay out of the house, but he didn’t listen. In those few seconds the door was opening, he had two choices. Tell his brother the truth and destroy his innocent love for his parents and family by the betrayal of those he loved, watch it turn to hate at his family and clan, or...”

“Make him hate HIM” Sakura’s eyes widened “make him hate HIM and keep believing in the purity of his family, that they were a loving and dedicated clan.”

Tifa nodded “he returned to the council and told them what he had done, they demanded he go back and kill his brother, but he refused. “If you do anything to harm him, I will return to tell the entire village what you made me do, my brother is innocent of the clans crimes. Harm him in any way and I will slaughter you all as you made me do my clan” then he left to join the criminal organization as a spy.”

Tifa looked at the pinkette “can you imagine what it felt like to risk your own life to save your brother, only to have to continue saying hateful things to him every time you meet? Yet never once killed him, did he? He probably had plenty of opportunities, but didn’t once take them.”

Eyes wide she nodded “you’re right, he did.”

“He was already ill from using it too many times, probably already going blind, all he wanted was an honorable death at the hands of the one he loved so much, but Sasuke wasn’t strong enough yet to protect himself from the council and himself. So they kidnapped Naruto after learning of their becoming mates.

It was on the way back to the village with his mate that Madara approached him and told him everything. He thought if he did then Sasuke would join him in his revenge on the village. But Sasuke recognized it was all his fault that his mate was hated and his brother ended up as he was and attacked him. He was loosing until Naruto awoke and killed him for threatening his mate.”

Kakashi grunted and looked at the woman “Tsunade-sama, ALL Akatsuki members are dead. Except for the onces killed earlier, I SAW the bodies, I cremated them myself. There is NO WAY they are alive, let alone here.”

“Could someone from our world have found one of their cloaks and be using it?” Sakura suggested “I mean what if it was a prisoner of them who escaped and took the cloak to keep warm after finding the bodies? Before Kakashi Sensai cremated them.” She suddenly lit up “like one of the other Jinchuuriki! They could have had one captive already when they took Naruto and he or she escaped after Sasuke took them out! That’s why it’s here and wearing the cloak!”
“It’s entirely possible I suppose” Jirayia stroked his chin “We know of only one other survivor after Gaara and Naruto, a guy from Cloud Village called Killer Bee” he looked at Chaos “Gyuuki. He was the eight tailed, just below Kyuubi for power, but VERY smart. It’s possible another escaped, but was hiding. We know of four definite, but two others were not confirmed. And my spy....” he took a deep breath “...Itachi, never was able to tell me for sure.”

“Who were the two unconfirmed?”

“Nii Yugiro and Utakata.” The blonde woman frowned “the two tailed and the six tailed?” When the Sage nodded she looked thoughtful “well it couldn’t be the two tailed.”

“Why not?” they asked. “Because Nii Yugiro was a woman and the figure in the photograph is male.”

“So it’s Utakata” Jirayia said. “Or it COULD be Killer Bee.”

“I don’t think so, he’s bid and muscular, like Asuma-san was. This guy is built differently.”

“The trouble is we just don’t know. There is only one way to be sure, go and find HIM and see.”

“I will go” Chaos said “if it IS one of my children, I will be able to control them.”

“I’ll go too” Tifa answered. “You’ll need one of us to identify the person” the blonde woman said “Kakashi, you go.” Kakashi nodded. “Reno will go as well” the blonde man in white said “he can transport you all by chopper there and back and provide back up or distraction. Besides, Reno is the one who took the photographs, and so is the only one who knows where it’s...HE has been sighted and where he last was seen.”

They had no choice but to accept this.

“I also have an newly restored apartment building I was going to lease to Reeve and the WRO. It has eight floors with three apartments each. It is yours to use to house your people. You all will need somewhere to live while you find the rest of your people. You can pay for rent by doing odd but dangerous jobs for Reeve or my company, however food, clothes and other necessities are YOUR responsibilities.”

As Reeve-san said, these are MY ninja’s, so any missions is given to me first to look at. I will give them out to who I think fits and no trying to contradict me or learn our secrets of jutsus if we’re not willing to give them. We’ve heard about your company and I WILL NOT tolerate any abuse of my ninja’s. If you cross me, your forces will never stop me.”

“Of course” Rufus nodded, motioning to Reno who took a large ring of labeled keys out to hand over to the woman, followed by two copies of a bundle of forms, one he handed to Reeve, the other to the woman as well. “each apartment is two bedrooms as well as all the normal-bathroom, kitchen, lounge, dining room. There is a laundry room in the basement for tenants. The top floor has only two apartments, both three bedrooms....” he motioned at the set of keys “...T1 and T2. I suggest you, Lady Tsunade, take T2.”

“Why?’ she frowned at him suspiciously.

“T2 is for an business person. It has an large officestudy plus an open sitting room. If you are going
to handle all the ‘missions’ for your people, you’ll need the large office, and the open sitting room will let you...entertain any clients others than myself or Reeve, should that happen.” She nodded reluctantly “I’ll take that under advisement.”

“All apartments have basic refurbishments such as beds, dining tables and chairs, sofas, but the rest is up to you if you want anything suspisific. As the cases I will request your help from will be dangerous past what my forces and the WRO are capable of, not only will it count as rent, but you will also receive an large gil payment on completion as well.”

The head of the Turks by his side spoke next “as this figure is obviously dangerous past either organizations skill, this will be your first case. Think of the apartment building as the deposit, the payment will be paid on completion, whatever the outcome.”

“I think we should go to the apartment first, Hokage” Kakashi said to her “we have two pregnant shinobi we need to get to bed as well as a wolf demon who after all THIS...” he motioned at the earth dome “will be exhausted. We also need to get our 'base of operations’ established before we look for the others.”

“Quiet right, Kakashi-san” Tseng spoke out “after all, if you have nowhere to put them, why even look?”

“Fine” the blonde woman said grudgingly, turning to Reeve “if you can provide me with a map of the town so my ninja’s can learn their way around here if this is to be our home-at least for now....”

“Of course” he nodded “I will get you all the important information you will need. Plus your friends will need their own PHS.....”

“We will be ready to leave tomorrow morning, if that is convenient” Chaos looked at the silver copy-nin. The man nodded “it is still early yet, we should have everything done by then. Where and how do we meet?” Rufus spoke out “there is an helipad on the roof. I had it installed in case Reeve needed any people picked up directly. Reno can meet you all there at about ten am. Is that acceptable?”

Chaos and the silver haired man nodded.

“Now, what is this I hear about certain Nibelheim employees keeping things from me?”

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When Vincent arrived at the apartment block the next day he found what appeared on the outside to be a run down old building, but the INSIDE.....“Wow” the word slipped out of his mouth before he could stop it.

First he had to be buzzed in, so security wasn’t a worry. Second there was TWO sets of doors, the entrance and the ones between, allowing access to the mailboxes for postal workers and the intercom and inside the actual building he went through to get in. They were not only baring tinted glass, but were obviously mirrored, you could see out but he had been unable to see in.

Third the lobby was large with cushioned seats, so people could sit while waiting on tenants.

The walls were papered, gold lining just under the roof, a fresh white then a medium blue about a little less than half the base, with medium blue chairs and sofas and gold end tables. The carpet was
white with a gold runner leading from the doors all the way back to the emergency exit stairs door and an alcove of a series of elevators.

Against the wall of the entrance was the mailboxes, labeled for each apartment-only six labeled.

Heading over to look, Vincent chuckled darkly, Chaos echoing it in his head, when he saw it.

Obviously their son had been their recently.

While the six labeled held the surname of those who had claimed them, they each also bore an sticky post-it in a flowing almost childish hand, with comments on each owner.

They were Know-all Nara and a slug, a toad and a witch and added an artist obsessed with the size of certain male body parts. An shy water nymph and a silver scarecrow who belongs in a field and lastly A fox, a wolf and a pregnant banshee. Vincent was just starting to chuckle again when a voice came from behind him, speaking his name softly in confusion. He spun to find Tifa there, behind him and unsure at his humor.

Without a word he moved aside so she could read it. Tifa laughed remembering the fox-boys prankster nature. She looked at Vincent “I wonder if the others know yet?”

“Doubtful” the demon vessel said “or they would not still be here.”

“True” she laughed, taking note of the silver haired man’s floor and apartment number and joining the crimson gunners’ walk towards the elevators, changing the subject as she did “you think with eight floors and twenty three apartments they would have spread out, giving themselves room and a place of their own instead of boxing together all on the top floors.”

“They are ninja’s, they live constant lives of danger. On the top floors there is less chance of intruders or assassins entering from the outside, and close together means easier to hear and get there should someone need help.”

“And Naruto, Sasuke and Sakura sharing an two bedroom apartment together instead of the three or two separate?”

“Naruto and Sasuke would share the master bedroom, so Sasuke and he can mate whenever the urge hits them. Who else can live with them than someone used to living in close quarters with them, especially during a highly dangerous time such as a mission?”

Tifa realized he was right.

Another voice spoke “Naruto and Sakura are both pregnant, it’s better we put them both together in a place one person can keep an eye on both, just in case.”

They had been talking so long they hadn’t noticed the emergency hatch in the roof of the elevator was open and someone had entered through it, hanging upside down just by his feet, head buried in an book with a glaring orange cover.

Vincents gun was pressed to the figures forehead before Tifa could blink, however not once did the man flinch or put the book away.
Over the last couple of days Tifa had come to read the man in many ways. Being a genius he did things like Naruto that may seem foolish or even foppish, but in reality he was constantly testing those around him. And Tifa had learned one outside sign of his, when he thought a situation was important he tended to put the book away. When he was confident he could handle it easily or had a plan, he buried his head in it.

She didn’t know if he was actually reading it at all, because he had never seen him turn a page, but she DID notice the title changed. Like currently he was reading one titled “An Geisha and A Ninja-An Icha Icha Paradise Love Story.”

She was positive the one he was reading at the meeting yesterday was called “Smooching In The Snow-An Icha Icha Paradise Story.”

Vincent seemed to be thinking along the same lines because he slowly replaced the hammer and took his finger from Cerberus’ trigger, replacing the trio-barreled gun in the holster on his leg. “You were almost shot, scarecrow” Vincent murmured, “I almost shot before I checked.”

“Sorry” the silver haired ninja grinned as he replaced the hatch and walked across the roof, down the wall and to their sides “the Hokage has us checking the air ducts and so on, so when I felt you coming, I decided to meet you.”

“Why are you checking the air ducts?” The man counted off on his fingers as he answered, WITHOUT putting the book down or away. “Security, possible escape routes, places to hide in case of an enemy getting into the building, Naruto prank sites....” Tifa imagined Naruto filling the air ducts with some sort of stink gas and shuddered “we get it.”

They reached the cyclops’ floor and the doors opened just long enough to allow them to see Naruto go tearing past, peeling with laughter, followed by his pissed-off mate. Tifa frowned “what was that about?”

“I mentioned Naruto’s pranks for a reason” the cyclops said. “Naruto PRANKED him?!”

“Let’s just say pregnancy hormones, an Uchiha that is not easy to rattle, an kitsunes prank and trickster needs and a bored Naruto definitely DO NOT mix.”

“I can imagine” Tifa had to choke back a laugh.

Two more floors and they reached the roof to the noise of a running chopper.

Heads down and running against the wind, the two Avalanche members leading the silver haired ninja to the open cabin door. Once in they grabbed headsets, put them on, strapped in after Vincent closed the door and Tifa told Reno they were ready. They were then off.

It didn’t take long for everyone to relax, Tifa and Vincent talking in low tones about what to expect when they landed and Kakashi up front in the copilots' seat chatting with Reno. Ever since the silver haired ninja had asked the red head about the helicopters inner workings, the Turk had been so excited, bending the cyclops ear off about the mechanics of a chopper like this one. And the silver haired sensai seemed to understand every word, for he was constantly asking questions during, which excited Reno all the more.”I had no idea you were so...mechanically gifted Reno” Tifa spoke out.
“Oh yeah!” the red head gushed happily “I mean Tseng like his swords, Elena has her cooking, the Big Boss likes his crosswords and training and Rude likes his explosives, But me, give me a tool kit and a broken engine and I’m in heaven! In fact I take pride in maintaining all the major mechanical items the five of us use every day!” Reno gloved in pride “in fact this baby right here is one of my projects!” Reno stroked the console in front of him like a lover.

He continued to enthuse all the way to the chosen landing site just outside the forest.

Gathering their gear they made their way inside, Kakashi looking around them, stunned “what is this place?!” They told him about the Ancient City there centuries ago and the lake where Cloud had returned Aeris to the lifestream.

“I’m not surprised” the man said “if these trees are anything to go by.”

“What do you mean?” they asked.

“The trees surrounding Kohona were specially bred and had a dual purpose. They were laced through with chakra, meaning any weapons made from them were stronger and harder to break. Secondly they would hide our village from anyone of ill will who had been unallowed entrance. Anyone looking for multiple chakra signatures would confuse them and make it difficult.”

They understood.

The ninja looked around “but here, these trees, they are pure chakra! I’ve never seen or felt anything like it before! If your ancients could commune with the planet, this would be the perfect place to do it.” They had never considered it before and realized he was right.

“It also makes it the perfect place to hide or plan an ambush for someone like the Akatsuki. Someone like me would be unable to track or trace them by their chakra due to the interference of them.” That’s when they noticed the book was away and the eye exposed and spinning and they realized the man was unnerved. This in turn put them on edge as well, Vincent withdrawing Cerberus, Reno his MagRod and Tifa pulling on her pair of Tiger Fang. “Lead us Reno” Tifa said “show us where.”

“I just know roughly where it was” the red head said “I mean it was near where Stryfe left Aeris so I assumed....”

“He’s using the last standing structure as a base, as the clones were” she supplied to which the red head nodded. Vincent, now knowing where he was going, suddenly disappeared ahead of them in a streak of red. Reno yelped “what the....is Valentine doing?”

“Decoying” Tifa said before she took off after him, the silver haired ninja keeping pace with her.

Looking around at the chakra trees around them, unnerved by their glow and the knowledge there as an possible enemy somewhere inside, Reno yelped “Wait for me, yo!” and took off after them. By the time he had caught up to them, a full-blown battle was going on. The cloaked and hidden figure was moving as if injured, but still was a force to be reckoned with. It was using some sort of ice attacks and was obviously protecting the entrance to the ‘house’.

“I know this guy” Kakashi frowned “and he’s NOT Akatsuki, no Akatsuki had ice element attacks. But why he’s wearing Akatsuki robes, I don’t know.”
“Do you know who he is?” Tifa asked as she ducked a kick to the head “maybe he’s an allie who doesn’t remember you, he’s injured, maybe when he got the injury he hit his head as well. Something similar happened to Cloud years ago.”

“I don’t know” the silver ninja said “I have an idea” he brought both hands up to sign and then slammed both hands on the ground with “summoning jutsu-dog summons!” In a puff of smoke a pack of at least six dogs of various sizes and breeds appeared.

“Yo boss” the smallest, a pug, wearing one of those bands Yuffie called a hitate-around its head and a blue vest said, the pack separating to circle the man. “Pakkun” the man said “the woman in black, red head in black and white and man in red and black are allies. The one in the Akatsuki robes is an unknown. We need to identify it. It is familiar but still unknown. Also it is protecting something in the structure. That needs to be identified also.”

“You got it, boss” the dog ‘saluted’ with a front paw and the dogs moved, spread out with various growls. Tifa raised a brow at the man “dog summons?” The cyclops looked embarrassed “they’re inherited.”

“ Summon CONTRACTS. Inherited summons and a general summons are two different things.”

“How so?”

“Inherited summons are passed down and are only with a set family or group of summons. I can’t call on any other dogs then Pakkun and his pack. General summons are open, if approved by the big boss, the user can summon ANYONE listed in the contract. For instance, the toad summoning contract Jirayia-sensai shares with Naruto allows them to call ANY of the toads they want. From the big boss Gamabunta to his weakest son.”

“What about Sasuke? Those wolves he used earlier?”

“Ah, that’s a general contract. Sasuke has a few of them. However I am unaware if he inherited the Uchiha clan contracts before the massacre.”

“CONTRACTS?! You can have more than one?!”

“As many as you want. A lot of people have more than one. For instance, Naruto has the toads and just after merging with the demon, he gained a fox contract. Although I have no idea how he gained that, whether it was through the fox like an inherited, or he just knew where to find it after the merge. Sasuke gained the wolves after he mated Naruto, through Orochimaru he gained the snake summons, but his clan had two inherit, crows and cats. Itachi himself had both clan summons but he also had a weasel summons.”

“Ah boss” the pug called “you may want to look at this.”

The man spun back fully to see one of the dogs, the largest of the lot, had caught the edge of the cloak and was yanked it back, forcing the figure to loose the cover or be pulled off balance with it, which revealed the figure almost fully to them all.

A young man it was, about a year or two older than Naruto. He was very beautiful in a feminine
way, long black hair and black eyes with pale skin. With the cloak gone they saw the injury that was hampering him, an fist-sized burn mark on the chest, obviously old but infected, the blisters and raw flesh bleeding blood and puss down his front from the wound.

The sight of it horrified them, Tifa especially, but jogged the cyclops’ memory. His eye widened slowly and the pug spoke out “hey, isn’t that the kid you guys fought on the kids first mission? The one who killed the Uchiha and caused the blonde to freak out and go fox?”

“Haku” the cyclops murmured.
Chapter 9

“Yeah, that’s his name. Didn’t you kill him, boss?”
“Apparently not” the man said, then his eyes widened with sudden realization “but before the fight he and Naruto met in the forest around the village and became friends!”
“So the same force that sent you all here took him-apparently from his grave-resurrected him and brought him here, for what, another chance?”

The cyclops shrugged “you said it yourself yesterday. Here we can be who we want to be and with who we want. Perhaps Haku has also earned that right by his loyalty to his master and his death.”

“You say he made friends with my son?” Vincent joined them, Reno in tow, and they noticed the fight was no longer going on. Instead the dogs were sneaking towards the ‘structure’ while the figure stood still and silent, frowning while he eyed the cyclops up and down as if trying to either remember him or the actual event. “Tell us what happened” Tifa said, aware of the dogs actions and trying to keep the figures attention on them for now. Besides, she was curious. How could he kill the wolf, cause Naruto to ‘freak out and go fox’ and yet it was Kakashi who ‘killed’ him.

Kakashi explained about their first mission as a team years ago, protecting a bridge-builder, the ‘demon brothers’, Haku and his master Zabuza, what he had gleaned about the boy’s life and Gato the man hiring them. Then he told them about the battle on the bridge, the boy jumping between his master and Kakashi’s Chidori attack, the betrayal of Gato and the swordsman’s last act and his dying lament he had not treated his young servant as a son instead of a weapon.

“He wanted you to have a life, to have a family-a clan. Here you have a chance, here no one will fear you or reject you for your bloodline. Here you don’t have to be a weapon, you can be whatever you want to be.” The figure looked at them like “what could I ever be but a weapon? It’s all I am or ever was.”

Vincent spoke softly “I understand what it is like being nothing more than a weapon. My....previous employer treated employees as expendable weapons. I was a bodyguard. I....died for them as you died. I KNOW now there is more to life than being what others make of you, the one determining what you should be is YOU.” The figure shook his head, fevered eyes saying “I can’t. What is there in life for me now?”

Tifa had a brainstorm.

“What about a mission then? What if we could give you a mission to do for the next few years, one that is not only as an weapon, but something honorable?”

“What did you have in mind, Tifa?” Vincent asked her.

“You’re friends with Naruto, right?” she asked the figure who nodded solemnly after a brief thoughtful pause. “Now that you’re no longer an enemy or working for one, would you ever hurt him or his other friends again?” The head shake was desperate and horrified.

“How do you feel about children?” The figure signed something and Kakashi frowned “when he was on the streets before Zabuza, he cared for various other orphaned street kids younger than him.”
“Good. You see not only do I have two young children in my care—I have recently found out they are powerfully full of chakra—but both Naruto and Sakura his teammate are pregnant.” She looked at the figure “as you all get established here and go on missions, you’ll all make enemies. Who’ll protect the children? Wouldn’t it be better if they had someone like you who looks too...feminine and weak-no offense—to guard them? Someone they all trust and who would die to protect them?"

She looked at Vincent and told him of what the Sage had told her about the two children.

“I thought so” the demon vessel sighed “I knew there was something unusual about the girl. Chaos knew, but felt it was amusing to make me try to figure it out for myself.”

Tifa turned back to the figure “so what do you think? Think you could be happy protecting a couple of kids, aiding their training and when the time comes, protecting and helping raise your friends perhaps demon child and their teammates?”

The eager and excited look on the others face spoke of his willingness. He placed a hand to his chest and bowed to them solemnly, mouthing something even though no words came out. When Tifa looked curiously at Kakashi, the man spoke “he gave a vow on his life to protect and care for the kids and future children. Although....” he looked at the young man “why aren’t you speaking, Haku?”

The young man touched his throat and shook his head.

“You can’t speak, can you” they said.

Solemnly he shook his head.

“Then we’ll get you to Lady Tsunade. She can look at that wound and your throat and try and heal it.”

“Meanwhile” Vincent murmured, stepping forward, hand raising “I can at least ease your pain.”

“Trust him” Kakashi said when the figure turned to him “he’s....Naruto’s father.” The figure gave the man a disbelieving stare. “I know” the Cyclops sighed “it’s complicated, just trust me. I’ll explain later.” The figure shrugged and stood still for the demon vessel to put his clawed gauntled hand just over the wound and concentrate the heal there. Most of the minor areas of the wound not infected or too sever immediately healed, but the rest would need treatment—or a healer.

Kakashi caught the figures attention “the one you’re protecting, Haku, we can help you both. Let us see him or her.” After a hesitation the young man nodded, leading them towards the ‘structure’, signing as he did, the silver haired ninja translating as they did.

“He doesn’t know who he is, but just after appearing here he was attacked by some creature. He thought he was going to die, but he saved him, killing the monster. However he was injured as well and has been getting progressively worse. He doesn’t know any of the plants or herbs around here, so apart from washing and binding their wounds he can’t help. The only thing they’ve eaten or drunk since appearing here was water and some berries he saw some animals eating.

He can’t leave for help, if he doesn’t make it he leaves him unprotected, so he’s been forced to stay. But he says it’s not just the sickness affecting him, it’s like he’s possessed and lashes out like a hurt or furious animal.”

“Possessed?” the rest of the group frowned at him. Before the ninja could speak there was a series of animal growls-dog—a flash of power and a deeper more ‘demonic’ growl from the structure.

Immediately both Vincent and Kakashi went into action, the silver haired ninja crying “release!” and
the demon vessel tearing forward, snarling in a voice not his own “stay here!”

“Vin....Chaos?” Tifa asked softly.

“One of my children are in there, and injured!” the demon growled.

“Can you tell who?” Kakashi asked.

“Not yet...” before he could finish the previous flash was followed by six completely different flashes, one human, and all seemed to be fighting for control over the others. VincentChaos skidded to a halt, eyes wide “it is not possible!” yellow and red eyes wide in horror as he spun to the young man “you said there was only ONE other with you!?” The demon started swearing loudly which seemed so out of character on both the demon AND his host.

“What is it?” Tifa asked, worried.

“One is dangerous enough, but whoever the host is holds SIX of my children inside him!” he looked back at the structure “it is no wonder he has not healed yet! With that many all tearing at his mind and body for dominance, it is a wonder he still lives!”

“How is that different from YOUR situation in any way?”

“The protomateria” he growled. “Galian does not fight me and the others recognize me as their dominate. The protomateria allows me control over not only myself but the others if it comes to it. Besides, Death Gigas and Hellmasker are NOT demons, they are the warped remains of two of Hojo’s previous experiments, the echo of form and memory.” This was news to Tifa about the other two. They had been trying to figure out what they were since meeting him.

“Enough talk!” the demon roared, taking form in an instant “I have to help them!” He started forward, pausing only long enough to say “stay here” before starting off again. What happened next was obviously a fight of chakra mana between father and children for dominance. All they could feel was powerful flashes of chakra, one after the other, each trying to outdo the other, before there was one overwhelming one Tifa hadn’t felt since ‘the omega incident’ and all was quiet and still. “I just realized something” she said “Chaos said that there was SIX of his children here, yet we only felt five.”

“You didn’t feel it?” the cyclops asked as he replaced the headband over his eye. “What do you mean?” she asked. “One was boosting the hosts chakra, helping him both fight and stay sane, but they are both weak.”

“So one of them are helping and protecting him while the others are fighting for control. Which one is helping?”

“I don’t know.”

“You may come in now” the demon’s voice called out “I have control.” Together the group approached the structure.

The first thing Tifa saw in the light of the trees was Chaos crouched beside a figure laying almost completely hidden under one of the cloud covered cloaks. The second was long black hair and pale pale skin. The third was the fact Chaos FELT different. Stronger, more powerful, and more complete. Before he had felt empty, lacking, and now he felt more like an normal intelligent being.
Tifa frowned “you took them back, didn’t you. The six others, you’re absorbed them.”

“Five” the demon said “One has stayed.” He looked at the silver haired ninja “Matatabi.”

“Two tailed cat” the man answered “but why is he remaining?”

“The host is very weak. My child senses an affiliation with his chosen animal and wishes to remain.” He looked at them evenly “he was protecting the host from the vengeance of the others, he feels protective and after viewing the memories, decided to help him” the look they got turned worried and deadly serious “they are merging, and there is nothing I can do to stop it.”

“You mean he’ll be like Naruto, Sasuke and Gaara?”

“IF they both survive, yes” he nodded “as weak as they both are, they may not survive the transition” he looked to Reno, “go, prepare the chopper for immediate departure. We need to get his body healed as soon as possible.” He looked at the silver cyclops “there is another here, one of the ones in the photo. He is unharmed but isolated. Through my children’s memories I know he left him not far away and was seeking food for them when he encountered this other being attacked by the Malboro.”

He described the general area and direction. The man nodded “I’ll take Pakkun, he’s the best tracker I’ve got. We’ll meet you back at the transport” and was suddenly gone, none of them seeing him move. So was Reno, and in the distance they could hear the chopper’s rotors starting up. As Chaos bent to pick the figure up, Tifa turned to the injured young man, holding out her hand “let’s go home, now.”

The figure hesitated, looking at her, eyes asking “home?” with all the begging of a child in them. When her answer was to nod solemnly he reached out to take her offered limb, walking out by her side. As they walked side by side she watched his face. It struck her how much he didn’t FEEL like the others, like a ninja. The others—even Naruto had felt like tightly coiled power, barely leashed danger. BUT HE didn’t, he felt...he felt soothing, like a doctor or healer, like he was doing the wrong job.

And Tifa realized he WAS doing the wrong job, what life and circumstance had forced him into. However now with his acceptance of his new position he had another chance.

Just as everyone else did now, she realized.

He could become what he was always meant to be, not was made into.

Tifa realized that the solution to the problem with the kids had just been handed to her. Here was an injured very effeminate young man—which would call to Barrett’s protective urges. Because he felt harmless, like a healer-instead of a fighter, it would relax the dark skinned man to his presence around Marlene. The boys desire to protect the children would only increase his ‘trust’. Add to that the boys injured state and he got that way sacrificing himself to save his ‘master’, well, it all added up.

Here was someone Barrett would see as a babysitter who would protect with his life, but could help train the children ‘behind the scenes’. After all, ALL babysitters taught their charges SOMETHING during their time together.

Denzel he could teach to defend himself-to fight back- Marlene what herbs and plants were
medicinal and how to do basic healing. Tifa had always felt guilty about leaving the kids in situations like this and worried about what they would do if she didn’t return, she knew Barrett felt the same and now she had a solution, someone who would be there for the kids if she was killed in battle, someone who would train them and protect them as she herself would have.

The kids would love him because he could help them develop who and what they really were, including their potential power and whatever that was capable of and could do.

Someone else who could help them, train them without Barrett’s interference or knowledge.

Any further thought on the matter ended when they reached the idling chopper. After convincing the young man it was safe inside, getting him on board and strapped in with the noise-reducing headphones, Tifa moved to help Chaos strap his weak soon-to-be son on a cot set up by Reno.

Usually used during the ‘war against Wutai’ to transport injured troopers and SOLDIERS home, ingenious in design the cot was made of a tough fabric made of Bandersnatch hide stitched over a fold-able metal frame that locked onto the floor of the cabin between seats, allowing field medics or Doctors to sit strapped in, but still tend to the casualties.

They didn’t have long to wait for the silver cyclops to appear, leading another man around the same age, telling him about what had happened and why they were there.

Tifa recognized the man from the photo called Yamoto, the only survivor of the man Orochimaru’s experiments on children, the one who taught Naruto not to constantly rely on the Kyuubi’s power and was able to contain him when she got out of control. Naruto had spoken highly and fondly of him, like a second teacher or ‘team leader’ like Kakashi himself.

And the way Kakashi was openly speaking to and with him, the two were friends.

It didn’t take long in the trip back to find out why and how exactly. Apparently the two had been part of a private highly trained and skilled force in their village called Ansatsu Senjutsu Tokushu Butai, or ANBU. The two showed them their tattoos that showed their part in it. The group was created as a secondary but secret force among the village, their members secret and identities hidden by porcelain animal masks, that deal with threats to not only the village and its people, but most importantly the council and its leader, the Hokage.

It was THIS force that the unconscious man on the cot between them was put in by his father as a double agent. And it was this force that the cyclops had ‘retired’ from and it was this force the council had got the other from to ‘take over’ the groups team when Kakashi was ‘injured’ in battle to keep an eye on and control the then unpredictable demon vessel.

However he had taken the job as a ‘favor’ for a friend.

Namely Kakashi.

Some three hours from the building, Kakashi was on his PHS. First he called the Sage, telling him about the two casualties and how they needed Tsunade to be ready when they landed, also himself possibly to help Chaos stabilize the transition.

Then he called the pink haired pregnant young woman. “Listen Sakura I need you to do something, call it a mission if you will. It’s something only YOU can do. I’m entrusting you with this one. You and you alone.” He paused, waiting a few seconds then said “I can’t explain it all right now but two
of the three men we are bringing in can NOT be seen by Naruto and Sasuke right now, at least not until they are at least some version of healed. You NEED to get them out of there and somewhere else, at least for as long as possible. Use your mood-swings to guilt them into it if possible, but just get them away and keep them occupied as long as you can....”

“I have an idea” Reno called over the headphones “I’ve told the boss what’s happened and he owes you a payment. Get your girl to ‘go pick it up’ and pressure them to go with her. I can get the boss to conveniently keep loosing the paperwork for at least an hour.” Kakashi nodded “then she will need help carrying all the food and other necessities for us she’ll have to buy...”

Tifa grinned, getting in to it “and I know a great food market with cheap groceries near an ramen shop.....”

Plan worked out they each gave the details and directions, the cyclops telling her she had three hours, one too work out what to say and one to convince them, anything less than an hour away from the building and they would probably see or hear the returning chopper and want to return to see if anyone was injured or what had happened.

Three hours later they were touching down on the roof of the building to be met by the blonde woman, her assistant, the Sage and Nara heir.

Yamoto helped the injured boy off while both Chaos and Kakashi detached the ‘stretcher’ from the floor and lifted the still unconscious other out. While they held it steady the blonde woman and Sage gave the figure a quick once over. “This is serious” the blonde woman frowned while her assistant went over the young man’s wound opposite them. The other Sanin frowned then spoke “he WAS dead, but someone with at least basic Sage knowledge used the Impure World Reincarnation to bring him back.

However it was incomplete and unstable so they used the Akatsuki’s captured Biju in the hope of stabilizing it, probably thinking they would heal him like Kyuubi does Naruto.” He looked at them “WHAT?!”

“The only Sage we know of it you.”

“It wasn’t me!” the Sannin protested.

“It was Kabuto” a weak voice rasped out.

They all looked down at the figure on the cot. Black eyes looked up at them, eyes Tifa had last seen on Sephiroth before he had gone nuts. Eyes of regret and torture, someone who thought they were too ‘stained’ to live a normal life, too far gone in death and murder to ever be saved. Only HE had made it back from that precipice by the skin of his teeth, something or someone had barely anchored him there on the side of sanity-and she realized who.

Maybe if Sephiroth had had someone like him to anchor him, someone who had meant that much to him then he wouldn’t have given in to the seductive whispers of ‘mother’ and lost himself to her. She suddenly heard her name and looked up at Reno in the window. Calling out over the engine noise he asked “are you gonna hang around for a while, yo?”

“Yeah, probably until the kids finish school for the day, why?”
“If they are still there when I get back to Head Quarters, I’ll help with the distraction. When they leave I’ll call you so you know roughly when to start expecting them back here.”

“Thanks Reno” she called and waved as he ducked back and soon was taking off again. Once gone they turned back to the man “Kabuto? You mean Kabuto Yakushi, our old teammates little pet?”

“Yes” he rasped painfully, large shuddering breathes as he spoke. “He wanted revenge...on the fox for his masters death....Manda and the other snakes took him in....taught him to be a snake Sage....called me back.....Madara’s eyes.........use me to kill Sasuke.....punish him by killing his mate.....use the Buji we collected to preserve me long enough.....knew he was no match for the fox.” His eyes became cold and hard “wouldn’t let him, MINE!!” then the cold was banked, as if he neither had the strength or will to maintain it.

Tifa understood the gist of it and spoke “this.... Kabuto wanted revenge on Naruto for killing his master. He knew he was too powerful for him so the snakes took him in and made him a Sage-or their version of it. Using that jutsu he brought him back, using Madara’s eyes, but because of how powerful Naruto is and how unstable the Jutsu he was forced to use Chaos’ captured children to try and stabilize it. He thought by sending him out to kill Sasuke he’d destroy Naruto as his mate, but he couldn’t let him do it to him, so he killed him.”

The man nodded tiredly against the cloth and closed his eyes “let me rest, I am soo tired. Just let me rest” the words were slurred and exhausted. Tifa recognized the exhaustion as more mental-spiritual than physical. Having had to drag Cloud out of it after Zack's apparent death a year or two ago she knew the signs.

She seized his shoulders and shook him, snapping in his face "NO!". The eyes flew open and for just a second Tifa saw the true man inside, the man behind the clan's weapon, the man behind the spy and S class criminal. She saw the protective older brother, the gentle loving soul behind the murder and disguise of 'evil' and it gave her hope that the real man was still there and could be brought out again.

She may have been too young and naive to save Sephiroth, but HERE she could do something. "You can't give up!" she snapped at him "you have so much yet to live for here! So much that needs you! So much to live for!!"

"I'm tired" the eyes closed again, but not before Tifa saw a defiant flash of the old spirit. Tifa could use that, use his old feelings, to force him back. "Your clan was corrupt, it had to end to birth a new one. But the new one can only begin with your guidance.” The eyes opened and Tifa saw intrege in their depths.

"Your father was leading your clan away from the right path and despite your actions you stayed strong, just as your brother did. You know of all your clans history and ways, you know of what should be carried on and what should be left behind, things your brother doesn't. Here you have a second chance to leave your and your clans past behind and make a new future, a new and better clan."

He opened his mouth to speak but Tifa beat him to it "but you are not alone here. You'll have FOUR brothers to help you, two fathers who know and understand how you feel and what you went through...." when he looked about to continue his desire to protest Tifa added "....and you're going to be an uncle.” His mouth snapped shut and he blinked at her, stunned. Tifa knew she had him. He may have felt he didn't deserve to live, but part of him wanted it, part of him missed his family and clan, no matter how corrupt they might have been they had Been his life growing up.
Tifa smiled at him "her name is Aeris and she is yet to be born."

Black eyes slid to the blonde woman, seeking confirmation. She snorted crossing her arms over her chest, below the rather large bosom "it seems that Uchiha plus demon wolf chakra equals extremely powerful potency. Naruto merging with fox vixen equals extremely receptive. You do the math."

"Those two have been going at it like rabbits since they first mated" the Nara rolled his eyes "they have been almost non-stop. They're probably at it right now." The Sage grinned "I counted twelve-and that was just before they left."

"If those two keep it up, they'll have a litter, not just one" Tifa added with a smile "I've only known them a couple of days and I counted three times just in public alone!" When the eyes swung back around and past her to Kakashi besides Chaos, Tifa caught a glimpse of what was in his eyes.

She blinked that hadn't occurred to her.

The man wanted a daughter of his own, the mixture of jealousy, pain, absolute joy and yearning was unmistakable, he wanted his own child and it was NOT a boy as most men-clan heads and ninja's would want, no, it was a daughter, someone feminine and beautiful to look at and remind himself there was still goodness inside him, there was still innocence and purity in the world.

She seized his head in both hands and leaned down so he was forced to look into only her face "you can have it. Here you can have what you truly want and never thought you could. But you have to hold on, you have to live, not for THEM..." she motioned behind her "but yourself. YOU have to decide for yourself if you want to live to fulfill all those dreams you gave up on in your youth-whether they included brothers and nieces and nephews or not."

She couldn't help it but her voice was suddenly husky with emotion-just one word "choose."

He looked at her long and hard, unblinking, before he suddenly pursed his lips and nodded solemnly, allowing the group to carry him and lead the injured other away. Tifa looked at her watch, then looked at Chaos/Vincent to find the demon had receded and now the other was back "are you going to stay here a while, Vincent?" He nodded "I will watch over my son and aid his healing and the transition until his brothers and companion return."

"Good. I've got to get back, the kids should be home shortly then I've got to open the bar. When Reno calls, I'll contact you." The man nodded, allowing her to say her goodbyes for the day and leave.

Before she could however, she heard a desperate noise of protest and a cry of "HEY!" and "What the..." followed by an authoritative GET BACK HERE, YOUNG MAN!" and she turned to find the injured young man had struggled out of the supporting arms and was staggering towards her, barely able to stand. Tifa caught him as he reached her side, legs giving out under him.

His eyes on her were wide, begging, confused "no you can't come with me yet, Haku."

"Why?" they begged.

"You're badly injured, you need to heal."

The eyes, however, protested.
So Tifa said the only thing she could think of, something a 'weapon' would understand. "You're no use to me or the children in this state. You can barely stand, let alone teach and protect two rowdy children."

Seeing one last protest Tifa compromised "how about this. Tomorrow is Saturday so the kids have no school then. I was thinking of bringing them around to meet everyone and so Lady Tsunade and Jiriaya could check Denzel for the seal-then I figured they'd be too busy with healing, so I wasn't. How about I DO bring them after all? I think you three should get to know each other first, before you start spending so much time together. That way you can try and figure each other out first, see if you like each other."

After a thoughtful pause the young man nodded, steely eyes of determination on her. As the female Sannin's assistant helped him back to his feet with surprising strength, Tifa called out to him "get plenty of sleep and take it easy. You want to be as strong as possible tomorrow. You'll need Lady Tsunade's help with that."

The young man nodded and Tifa was gone.

+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
Tifa arrived early at the building the next day—though not too early—Marlene and Denzel in tow. They were buzzed into the lobby by Jiraiya who stated he'd meet them on his floor at the elevator doors. They were barely inside a few steps when Marlene paused, frowning "what's that?"

"What's what?" Tifa asked her.

"That sound, it sounds like...."

"Laughing" Denzel finished for her, also now looking around. Tifa now heard it too, a low giggling like someone trying to muffle laughing but not quiet managing, and it was familiar too. "Naruto? Where are you?"

"Shhhh!" a voice hissed through giggles "if he hears you talking to me, he'll know I'm here!"
Following the sound, Tifa looked around with a smile "who did you prank this time?"
The giggles only got louder for a second "it's his own fault for being such a horny bastard!"

Immediately she snapped "Naruto, language! Mind what you say around the kids! I hope you won't talk like that around your own when she's born!"

"Sorry" the voice winced before addressing the two "forget what I just said." Denzel just rolled his eyes "as if we haven't heard worse from Uncle Cid and Barrett, and Cloud first thing in the morning when he stays over, and when I stay over their place."

Marlene nodded in agreement, blushing slightly. Tifa frowned at him "Cloud? I've never heard Cloud say anything bad first thing of a morning. He just grunts a lot." Denzel grinned "that's 'cause you don't see him until he leaves his room and is half awake and your room is down the hall. I'm right next door."

"Like what?"

Denzel grinned wider "like how much Zack's cheery attitude first thing pisses him off, how even waking up at the crack of dawn he's that way. His favorite is that Zack can be a...pain in the butt then and he wants him to leave him alone." he blushed deeper "only insert swear words nearly every second word. He's worse than Cid first thing." Tifa laughed "I don't remember him ever doing that when we were traveling together before meteor fall...." she grew thoughtful "although I do remember being woken up a couple of mornings to Cid and Cloud swearing a blue streak at each other. Maybe Cid coped him during those times and thought he was swearing at HIM."
"Knowing uncle Cid" Denzel grinned "he heard Cloud and couldn't hack someone else swearing more than him!" Tifa laughed harder I think you're right!" she looked around for the blonde "come out, Naruto. I want you and the kids to meet each other." There was a pause, then "alright, but if the teme finds us, I was with you guys all this time."

"Deal!" Marlene giggled.

"Where are you?" Tifa asked.

"Look up." Tifa did so and, like his sensei the day before, Naruto was hanging upside down from the roof by his feet. "That is so COOL!" Denzel cried out, Marlene giggled again but Tifa frowned "is that safe in your condition? What about...."

"Nah, it's fine" Naruto dropped off, landing softly on his feet in front of them "SHE wants me to do it. Sounds strange but for some reason it soothes her" he giggled slightly "must come from having an batty grandfather." Tifa frowned thoughtfully "you know, I never thought of it that way before, as him being like a bat. Now I do I can see it, he is like one in some ways. What else can or does she do that's bat-like?"

"Well she's doing something right now."

That's when Tifa felt it, waves of energy coming from the blonde's lower stomach and radiating outwards to wash over them. In a way it kind of reminded her of the radar of a bat-their echo-location ability. But what surprised her was the children's reaction to it, suspifically Marlene. Almost exactly she was sending her own energy out and Tifa was reminded of the Sannin's words about her actions the night he spent there, how she had 'scanned' him when they came home.

She was doing it again apparently.

The two seemed to push against each other as if testing the other, when it seemed to slowly become playful, Marlene even laughed happily at it. Tifa opened her mouth to speak, but at the same time both energies shut off and Marlene looked stunned "Miss Aeris?"

Naruto frowned in confusion and concern "well yes, but..."

Marlene gave a sob of joy and ran forward, hugging the young man over the lump, face pressed to the spot where she lay, sobbing and talking a mile-a-minute to it. Both Naruto and Denzel turned bewildered and baffled eyes to her. Tifa sighed, she had forgotten Marlene had known the original Aeris-however briefly. No one had obviously told Naruto the truth yet.

So she did, "Naruto there is something you need to know about you and that ancient we told you about..."

As she told him about the flower girl and his connection, the boys eyes grew wider and wider, hands flying to his lump protectively on either side of Marlene's head, who drew away in concern when she felt his distress. She looked back at Tifa, confused, saying her name softly in question. "Come here" Tifa said softly, motioning her to her and Denzel's side. The girl did and Tifa was about to speak when there came a hostile "what did you do to him!"

Behind them stood Sasuke, looking thunderous at his mates obvious distress with added teary eyes.
“Teme” the boy choked out.

Forgetting them for a second in face of his mates misery, the wolf demon strode to his side, taking him in his arms and clutching him tightly to him. While they were both distracted Tifa bore a strategic retreat and lead the two children to the elevators. If Sasuke was going to yell at her for upsetting his mate, she preferred he do it while the kids were with Jiraiya and Tsunade.

Once inside and the elevator doors were closed both kids turned to her “WHO was that!? Marlene added “how could Miss Aeris be inside him?” Denzel added “why does he feel like mister Vincent’s brother, Mister Chaos?” Tifa’s eyes widened at them “HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CHAOS!?”

“We’ve met him” Denzel explained “one night about a year ago when Mr Vincent was at the bar. Remember that night he got drunk?”

Tifa remembered. One night about a week or two after “The Omega Incident” Vincent had come to the bar, depressed about Sephiroth and his ‘mother’ and gotten completely drunk, so completely that Barrett and Cid-who was surprisingly still sober-were forced to carry the gunslinger upstairs to the spare room to sleep it off, after disarming him of course, can’t have a drunk man with four demons inside him without conscious having access to a gun.

Only an hour or two later they had sensed Chaos energy make an appearance, only when they they reached the room they found CHAOS in a drunken sleep on the bed, not Vincent. By the next morning he was back with no memory of the night before, and they never mentioned it to him. At the time Tifa had wondered how a genetically altered, mako enhanced demon possessed man could actually GET drunk considering he never had before, but now she thought she understood.

Both Vincent AND CHAOS had wanted it.

Chaos had said that through Vincent he had started to see the fragments of himself as his children, and Vincent had just found out not only did the woman he loved bore him a child but she had allowed a madman to turn it into an experiment. An experiment that had gone mad himself, killed hundreds of innocent people but he himself had helped kill.

All Vincents' guilt, grief, betrayal, disbelief and so on must have triggered or reminded Chaos of loosing his own children and depress him as well. “You mean you SAW Chaos that night?!” It made sense, Marlene would have sensed Chaos emerge and investigated, probably dragging Denzel with her. “He growled at us, but Marlene said he was Mr Vincent’s brother and wouldn’t hurt us. She said he was like Miss Aeris, connected to the planet.”

Tifa looked at Marlene who nodded.

She sighed and started to explain about Chaos and his children and fighting the ‘badman’ and then being sent to another world. About another ‘badman’ there making one of those children, a girl, attack a small town where the leader-not knowing the being was a girl-trapped the soul inside a baby boy so she couldn’t hurt anyone else. Then how that boy had fallen in love with another boy-like Cloud and Zack were-and and because of the girl child of Chaos inside him, he was able to get pregnant like a woman can.

Denzel frowned “but how and why did Miss Aeris get there?”

“Sometimes if people have important destinies to fulfill and they die before then, the lifestream will
and send them back as babies. It’s called reincarnation. Aeris was the last ancient, the last Cetra, her destiny was REALLY important.” The children understood this and asked how many kids Chaos had had.

“Ten” she answered “but only four are still around and on Gaia. One is with Chaos inside Vincent, the other five became a part of their dad again, so don’t exist separate anymore. Naruto is one, another one is here as well and the last two we have yet to find. Three of those four are no longer two separate people-like Vincent and Chaos are, the host and demon are one person, they are merged together.”

“Like Mr Vincent and his brother are becoming?” Marelene asked. Tifa looked at her sharply “what do you mean?! They are merging?!” She opened her mouth to deny or protest this, but stopped suddenly and frowned. Was she right? Now that she thought about it, when they first found Vincent and he allowed Chaos control during battle, the demon looked just that, a demon. However in recent years he was appearing more and more humanoid, like a mix between Vincent and Chaos.

She had just assumed that Vincent was gaining control of the demon, harnessing its power to use to an extent, but that wasn’t it, no, the two were beginning to merge, gaining aspects of each other, slowly becoming one whether they knew it or not. And Tifa realized that now, with their shared feelings over their children and the acceptance of those fragments of Chaos returned, the merge was coming faster now.

That was why he had isolated himself from them all, his feelings plus Chaos’ was driving him out of control.

She had never seen Chaos emerge so many times as she had the last couple of days, especially since usually just once wipes Vincent out afterwards.

Should she be worried about it?
Should she tell the others or more importantly, should she tell THEM?

Before she could speak or even consider what to do, the elevator doors opened to a scene on their floor. After stepping out Tifa frowned as she listened. Apparently the Uchiha heir was refusing to lay down and sleep unless he saw his brother. It seemed they hadn’t even told the younger yet, instead keeping the badly injured young man in an jutsu-protected room in an drugged sleep. Now he was refusing the medication or treatment until he saw his brother.

And the Hokage/healer was telling him he wasn’t in the condition to handle any physical or emotional stress. With what had happened between the two brothers the last time they met, there was a definite chance they’d fight again-despite Sasuke knowing the truth—and his body was in no shape for such stress.

“Tifa?” both children frowned at her in confusion and concern at the sounds.

“It’s all right” she assured them “Sasuke’s big brother won’t go to bed and he needs to sleep, he’s badly wounded. But he wants to see his brother first.”

“Why won’t they let him?”

“It’s a long story. Their family were REALLY REALLY bad people and Itachi had to kill them to save his brother. Only some people told Sasuke his brother was the bad person for killing their family and made him hate him. Itachi was.....away at the time and couldn’t tell him the truth or they would be both in trouble.
When they finally met up Sasuke...hurt his brother badly because he was really REALLY mad, but after he left him someone told him the truth. The others think if they let them see each other now Sasuke will still be mad at him, or Itachi will get upset enough to move around too much and make the wounds worse. They want Itachi to wait until he’s fully healed before he sees his brother, but he doesn’t want to.”

Marlene mumbled something about “stubborn boys” and moved towards the room, pushing between the legs of the ninja’s crowding the doorway to stomp in. There came raised voices, Marlene’s among them and when Tifa and Denzel reached the room they found the young girl gently guiding the injured Uchiha to lay down on the bed and under the covers, making sure he was laying out properly and had drunk the liquid the Hokage had held.

The Uchiha’s eyes were wide in confusion and something indistinguishable as he allowed her to guide him, never looking away from the girls face. Just as he was almost down fully, someone made a crack about the heir letting a child boss him around. As if broken from a trance the young man blinked and tried to rise again. Marlene started to try and soothe him down again before glancing back at someone in the room, snapping "if you're not gonna help, get out."

"But..." the owner of the voice started to protest, Marlene spinning on him "YOU HEARD ME, GET OUT!!" Tifa had never heard this side of her before, it was actually frightening. Denzel sounded embarrassed as he laughed nervously, rubbing the back of his head "someone's discovered the number one rule of our household, don't screw with Marlene in doctor mode." Tifa looked at the boy "she's done this before?"

"Oh yeah, she used to do it all the time whenever one of us 'guys' were sick. Not so much now, even Zack learned to let her have her way, or suffer the consequences." Tifa was about to ask what they were when to her shock it was KAKASHI who came out, mumbling about bossy females, only to be knocked to the floor by a coffee mug flying into his head.

"Great" someone else murmured "another Tsunade" before all other males in the room beat an hasty retreat, but not before the Nara heir was struck in the back of the head by a flying tea tray. Once out of the room Tifa stopped them, introducing each to Denzel who seemed excited to meet them. He particularly seemed interested in the artist/assassin Sai, why Tifa didn't know.

The ex-assassin and spy even hung around so the two could talk.

It didn't take long for everyone to leave, Tsunade holding an serious conversation with Marlene as she shut the door and protected it. Tifa frowned, she'd expected Haku to be there, maybe helping the healer, But he was nowhere in sight.

She questioned the woman.

"He's still sleeping" she glanced back at the door "unlike some stubborn Uchiha heirs." She looked back at Tifa "but he's due to awaken in a few hours if you and the kids want to stay until then." In chorus both looked overjoyed "can we Tifa, please?!!"

"All right" she nodded.

The children looked ecstatic and thanked her excitedly. Tifa calmed them down and explained why they were there and what they knew thanks to Jarayia and the female Sanin explained how the group could train them in control and manipulation of their bloodline and chakra. Marlene was excited and immediately agreed. Denzel however looked scared "can I think about it first?"
Of course you can! We would never force you to do it if it makes you uncomfortable or even frightens you. Just have a think about it."

"Just know this" Tsunade said to him softly "Jirayia and I have encountered or fought some of the most powerful and frightening beings in our world before and survived. You don't gain the title Sanin for nothing. Whatever you're afraid of, we can handle it, and if it turns out we can't, well w 'll just lock it back up again. Agreed?" Denzel nodded "I'll think about it" he promised.

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Hours later Tifa received a urgent call from Reno. "Meet me on the roof again, yo, it's important. Life and death important." Moving towards the elevator with an nod to the Hokage who understood and nodded back, Tifa asked "what's wrong?"

"Something big is going down in North Corel. It looks like the entire town is in the square trying to lynch someone, and I mean they are all majorly pissed off." Tifa swore at this but then frowned "why are you calling ME though?"

"First we think just by the pure energy being shown that this is one of the demons kids, but Valentine is not answering his phone to anyone. Second you and blondie are well known and liked in that area, they may listen to you both and calm down, but Blondie isn't answering either."

"That's because Cloud and Vincent are investigating possible sightings in Fort Condor with Nanaki. If they know myself and Cloud, they will know Zack. I'll get him to meet us there."

“Right.” Tifa reached the roof to find Reno waiting and she wasted no time getting on board. On the way there Reno told her what little she knew, including the fact the figure had some sort of shield up around him and two others. “Do you know what started it?” Tifa questioned.

“Something about a murder.” Tifa shook her head “the ninja’s are not allowed to attack citizens let alone murder, it’s part of who they are and is drilled into them during training. Tsunade told me that ALL the good villages go by that. Since we know no one else but Narutos and allies are here, that means…”

“Either it was a moment of self-defense, or....”

Tifa nodded “since those here are friends and allies, they would defend each other-especially since they don’t know where they are and anyone else. Think about it Reno, something must have happened that was so bad one of them was forced to break that rule and kill in order to protect another, you DID say that one was protecting another two, what if one is badly wounded-even gravely-and he or she is protecting the one caring for the other?”

“Shit!” Reno swore. “Do you know if there is any WRO there yet?”

“Don’t have a clue. Boss got the report, told me to take you and or Cloud and Valentine there.”

“Patch my headset through to WRO headquarters, I know they have a radio signal with you guys. I need to speak to Reeve. Any WRO soldiers in the area might make the situation worse. They need to control the crowd until we get there. When we do, fly over it a couple of times so I can see what we
have.

“Right” Reno did so.

“Reeve” Tifa said once the engineer and WRO director answered “I’m on my way to the situation in North Corel. Do you have any people there and what did they report?”

“They came in late, I’m afraid.” He answered “just before the shield went up.”

“Did they see who it was?”

“Just two young men and a woman, I’m afraid.”

“This is important Reeve but was one hurt at all? Injured in any way?”

“Well.....” he started slowly, thoughtfully “one of my men DID state the woman was being carried by one of the men and she looked like she had been in a fight, she was covered in blood and her clothes looked ripped and torn. He saw it just before the shield went up.” Tifa swore this time. “looks like you were right, yo” Reno said to her.

“Listen Reeve” and Tifa told him the same thing she had told Reno, adding “these people are in three person teams, can you imagine how close you would get when together you are facing untold dangers and death side by side? Now imagine something happens to your teammate, your FEMALE teammate?” Reeve understood. “How many people were murdered there?”

“One, but quite a few were injured.”

“Probably those who attacked them after the initial murder. Don’t you find it strange only one person was killed and then they just shielded themselves? I mean as ninjas they could have just killed everyone who attacked them and called it self-defense or even escaped, even with their teammates weight.”

“Hum, you’re right. What do you suggest, Tifa?”

“Tell your men to keep the crowd under control or surround the shield and protect them until we get there. If they have to, tell the crowd they waiting ‘specialists’ to come arrest them.”

"And how will you win their trust if they hear that?"
"If all else fails, I have a back up."

"What is that?"
"Naruto's PHS number."
"What's that...." he realized "oh."

"Yes, they may say I'm faking knowing Naruto, but hearing him on the mobile...." Reeve went on for her "...and speaking to him personally on the handset, if they're in any doubt..." Tifa finished "they just have to ask him a more personal question, something only known between them."

"I will contact my forces there then."
"Good, thank you Reeve. We'll contact you and let you know the outcome-whatever it is."

It took at least another hour or so to reach town and when they did, Reno flew over the scene a few times.
"I know who it is" Tifa gasped as she watched a crowd of the entire town surround something in the town square. "Land, let me off, I'll need you to keep trying to contact Vincent while I try and settle this."

"There's SOLDIER-boy" Reno pointed out Zack, still perched on his bike near their landing spot waiting for them, his face creased in worry. Riding over to them he questioned them on what was happening. Tifa explained what they knew and what she suspected. Zack frowned "why are WE here and not the vampire?" using Cids sometimes nickname for the demon vessel. Tifa explained that too.

"Right so since I'm with Chocoobo-head, they will probably listen to me as well since we can't get in touch with him."

Tifa nodded.

"Then let's go" Zack tapped the back of his bike for her to get on. Climbing up Tifa turned to Reno, motioning with her PHS "I'll call if we need you. One ring, we need you to come in in the chopper, guns blazing if necessary. Two rings, we need your back up, so grab your magrod and hurry. Three we were successful and are ready to leave, so start the chopper, we're on our way back to you."

"Right" Reno nodded, watching them leave, murmuring after them "good luck, yo." The two of them rode into town, approaching the crowd of pissed off people. "How are we gonna handle this?" Zack called back to her. "Just ride up there, force them to part or get in our way. If they move aside for us, them it won't be so difficult for them to 'move aside' in mind as well."

"You're the boss" Zack grinned and gunned the engine, reaching the back of the crowd, yelling "hey! Outta the way!" Soon they reached the line of WRO who blocked the way to the dome. "I'm glad you're here, sirs" one called out, so they headed for him. "How bad had it gotten?" Zack called back to her. "Just ride up there, force them to part or get in our way. If they move aside for us, them it won't be so difficult for them to 'move aside' in mind as well."

"Bad enough. If they didn't know we are armed and think we had an summon materia, they would have moved in on us by now."

"Well we have back up waiting just in case, but hopefully we can talk them down before that's necessary."

"How do you know these guys are innocent?" the one beside the one they spoke with asked. Tifa looked at him "did Reeve tell you anything about these people he's got you looking for?"

"Just not to approach them in any threatening way. If possible keep an eye on them until he can get an 'specialist' out to them and they are highly dangerous."

"If we find them all, they may be able to give us better training" the 'Sergeant' they had spoke too said. "That's right but we have to find them all first. As for they being highly dangerous, yes and no. Yes they are but they all live by a code, they don't hurt civilians."

"Then what happened here?" The Sergeant frowned then called out down the line "Private Jacobs, you said one of their number was wounded?"

"Yes sir" one called back "a woman. She was covered in blood and crying brokenly. By the time you guys arrived she had dropped into shock and one of the males was holding her. He was trying to keep everyone away from her when the third brought up the shield. I wanted an medic to look at her, but too many saw the body and jumped to conclusions about our presence there. Now they're out of
"So as far as we know, it was self defense" the Sergeant frowned, disturbed "I mean this guy could have attacked her, even tried to rape her and she defended herself, unable to harm him due to this code, but when he seriously wounded her she was either forced to kill him to protect her body and life-or her companions found them in time to save her life and were forced to kill him to protect her."

This disturbed the WRO members in line, who murmured to one another.

And it wasn't just them, apparently recognizing Tifa and Zack, some of the more reasonable in the crowd nearby were listening intently and hearing the words, plus the WRO members memory of what happened, plus WHO the two AVALANCHE members were, plus a lot of people in the crowd understanding what it is like to be THAT helpless, word was spreading through the crowd like wildfire, some calming down and becoming willing to listen while others upset and pissed off they weren't told the truth by the rest of the mob.

One or two small groups, not many, even broke off from the mob to head home, content to let the WRO and two AVALANCHE members take care of it. "How are you gonna get their side of the story when they're hold up inside there? What about proof of this guys guilt?"

"I'll have to do THIS" Tifa walked to the front of the huge sphere made of a thick yellow/white grainy substance "don't be alarmed or attack if he pulls me in." Before they could speak Tifa had, calling out a name over and over again a few times. "Who are you?!" a voice called out, muffled and male, from inside. "My name is Tifa Lockhart and this guy is my friend Zack. We know who and what you are and are here to help."

"How can we trust you" the voice was suspicious "we don't know you. You could just be trying to get us to let our guard down so THAT can happen to he  again, like before." Instead of asking what he meant, Tifa spoke out "Zack and I share an mutual allie and friend with you all, a certain blonde haired male with six marks on his face and used to have an glaring orange and white tracksuit-then orange and black."

There was a gasp from inside before another voice spoke, low and barely restrained rage "what color are his eyes?"

"The deepest blue, just as night starts to break."

At the hesitant pause Tifa added "how about not only is he your brother through your...other, but you are currently 'involved' with one male Hyuuga and have been meeting him in his apartment for a few months now. Would someone HE doesn't know and trust know that? Especially since you are no longer on your world, or that even your own siblings know this."

"They do now" came the first male voice, disgruntled and just a bit angry, making Tifa realize that the first had been the 'older' brother, the second the youngest. That meant the girl was...There was arguing male voices for a few seconds when Tifa called out "hey guys, I don't think that's going to be good for your sister in her state."

The first voice yelped "shit, Temari!!" then spoke to the other "let her in."

"She will know what happened then."

"I KNOW THAT! I know she wouldn't want others to know what that bastard did to her, but we
have no choice! I know you could kill every last one of them, and would to protect us, but you promised you wouldn't anymore to Naruto. You killed HIM for what he did, but there are innocent people out there-stupid and blind people-but innocent nonetheless. Are you gonna break your promise to him?"

Tifa added "he's your brother, are you going to break your promise to your brother? Or will you three come with me and return to him?" The first voice was startled "he's HERE?! You can take us to him?!

"Of course he's here and of course I can. Let me in, let me talk to you IN PRIVATE about what happened. The sooner we can resolve what happened to you all, the sooner we can reunite you all with him."

"Do it" the first said to the second and before she could blink she felt herself yanked inside. Once there she looked around, surprised that not one grain had gotten in her eyes, nose, mouth or clothes, his control over it was just that great. Despite the fierce sun outside, it was cool and darker inside.

In front of her stood an red headed male about a year or two younger than Naruto, skin seeming to move as the granulated substance moved over and around him and Tifa remembered being told how he used a layer of the stuff over his skin like armor. The male wore what vaguely looked like brown leather trousers and white shirt of some sort, the same sandals as the Kohona ninjas, but around the waist where a belt would go-just peaking out from under the shirt-was a metal plate she recognized, only engraved with what looked like an hourglass.

Tifa saw he stood up straight, legs slightly parted and hands outstretched and raised into the air, the grains on his body flowing from one hand out and into the shield to mix with the ones there while they flowed back over him by the other hand. It suddenly struck her how much it resembled an heart, like he was the very muscle and the grains were the blood, one side flowing in to him to be purified and cleaned while the other flowed out to circulate again.

Then she realized fully what he was doing and her eyes widened, they had come just in time! The brother had said that he could kill everyone there and while Tifa knew as a 'son' of Chaos he probably could, without his gourd he would find that difficult, and probably not before he or his siblings were injured in some way.

So while under the protection of the dome his own chakra-infused grains were acting like ants, collecting others from the wide expanse of the area around them, bringing it back to him where he was using the power of his demon side to turn the normal substance into the same as his, then sending THAT out-as well as his own original for more.

Which meant he could have 'infused' the entire area by now and just be waiting until the situation broke down before he instantly killed everyone. And if Tsunade was right that his demon grew stronger by absorbing blood through the grains......

Tifa repressed a shudder as she looked for his siblings.

Between and behind the red heads legs she saw another male about Naruto's age. His back was to her as he clutched someone to his chest. She could see them wrapped in a long coat of brown leather identical to what the red head wore, as well as bloody long slim legs and bits of white/blonde hair here and there, but the rest seemed hidden by one brothers cloak-or long jacket-and the others shielding body.
The other brother— a brunette— turned his head to look at her. Tsunade was right, the older brother WAS a very handsome young man without his 'warpaint'. Without moving the male asked "You Tifa?"

"Yes" she answered. He frowned at her, looking her up and down critically "you're NOT a civilian, you're too fit for that and you move like a ninja."

"Thank you" she took it as a complement "I'm not ninja though. I've been training to fight since I was little, I suppose compared to you guys, I'd probably be more like the one you call Rock Lee. We don't use chakra here, we use mana."

"Tifa," he explained the differences "we also have a drug called Mako." She explained what it did and how highly dangerous it was, AND how rare it was to get hold of and use. "Only Zack and his lover and my childhood friend Cloud, myself and an ally Vincent Valentine have been exposed to it."

She changed the subject "can I examine her? Will you let me near? I'm a girl so I shouldn't frighten or set her off." Reluctantly he nodded "but move slowly and don't touch her injuries. I've barely got control of these two as it is. Any new signs of pain and they'll both probably freak out as it is."

"I'll try" she said "but no promises" she looked up at the red head "she'll move around and that might set any numb injuries off. But I have an heal materia, once this is resolved I can completely get rid of any and all of them." She looked back at the brunette "or if you don't trust me, Lady Tsunade is here, with Naruto. Once the crowd is gone we can leave and while you are being reunited, SHE can heal her."

"The Sannin is here as well?"

"Both are" Tifa nodded.

"WHAT IS HAPPENING!!" the brunette nearly screamed in frustration, just remembering at the last second not to. "I'll make you a deal" Tifa said "you tell me what happened while I examine her and I'll tell you what's going on—or at least what we've pieced together. Deal?"

"Deal" the older male nodded "you have my word."

"And you have mine as a warrior I'll help you and your sister and brother and reunite you three with Naruto and the others."

"Accepted" the brunette nodded and they turned back to the blonde young woman. She looked only a year or two older than the younger brother, hair out of the four tails she had seen in the photo, just shoulder length otherwise. But the blonde was red with blood in places that was fresh, but also Tifa saw the rust-brown of old blood as well.

While she examined the girl the brother told her how for a week or so 'the man' had been romancing their sister. How she had an rigorous tests for any man wanting to do so, but he had passed them all. How she had told them last night he was taking her out to dinner, she would be back later. When she didn’t return hours later, they grew worried. When she didn’t return by dawn, they went looking for her. Then they had felt her chakra flare. "It was so much at once, she would only do it that way if..."

"She was in danger."

"Worse than that. If she was into something like a battle she would send us an long controlled burst as a signal. This was worse, it was an huge uncontrolled burst all at once, that would only happen
“Pure panic and terror, she outright panicked and had no control over it. She just tried to use it to either get herself away or signal you or......”

“......She hadn’t known she was doing it, she was breaking, HE was breaking her.” Tifa shook her head, but not in denial “tell me what happened.”

“The bastard drugged her, and with something we’ve never encountered before. We tracked her chakra to an hidden door in an alleyway. It lead down a long flight of stairs, down underground and to an heavy steel door. And when we opened it.....” the brunette swallowed visibly in horror “our sister was screaming, screaming like nothing I’ve heard before, even brothers bad years.

We heard that bastard” the brunette curled his upper body more protectively over their sister, subconsciously using his own body to shield her from what happened and any further harm “he was telling her she belonged to him, she was nothing more than his property now, her life belonged to him and she no longer existed as a person or individual. He told her she was all alone, we weren’t coming for her and she was nothing but his toy from then on, she would obey his every command and whim-no matter what it was. If he wanted her for THAT......” the male swallowed in horror “she would willingly and obediently do EVERYTHING he tells her.

I...brother freaked when he heard this” he looked at her, eyes tormented “our father used to torment brother, isolating him in an locked stone room underground, tell him over and over again he was nothing but a weapon for our village. When he joined our team I was scared of him and tried to avoid him when we weren’t on missions, but Temari ...even though she was scared too she didn’t see a weapon, she saw a little brother like me. She tried reaching out to him, but he didn’t want anyone but the voice in his head anymore, he barely heard us as it was.

When Naruto and he fought and he began reaching out tentatively to us, Temari was the first to get inside him, the first to get close to him.”

Tifa realized what it meant.

Growing up the boys only source of love was the demon inside him, he latched to it so desperately he not only called it ‘mother’ but very nearly blocked everyone else out. After learning the truth through Naruto-his brother-that loving and being loved by those around you didn’t make you weak, it actually made you stronger, he finally noticed his sisters attempts at reaching out to him and actually cautiously reached back.

The result was an protective and loving older sister who helped ease him out of his own head and became a brother and family, making it easier for an uncertain big brother to join their little family. With their father dead to the enemy the youngest took over leadership and applied all the things his siblings had taught him to the village.

Which is why the village loved him and revered Naruto. The blonde had turned a killing machine into a strong but noble and caring ruler, more than capable of protecting them-especially since the village was surrounded by the very substance he so easily controlled.

The young woman was the red heads first TRUE source of love and acceptance, the unconditional love and acceptance of family. To hear what was happening to her, to know his strong loving big sis was essentially going through the same or similar abuse he had in his youth......No wonder he killed
the man in an open street in front of civilians and in such a gory way. He probably was barely able to keep control of his demon side as it was.

“He ran past me, I heard him blast open another door and then the man was cursing him, telling him to leave or he’d kill him. I heard Temari scream brothers name, I heard him snarl in such fury and I ran forwards to help. I saw the bastard go flying past me and he was stalking after him, but I was more worried about our sister, he could take care of himself.

What I saw in that room...by kami” he shuddered and shook “I never want to see anything like it again. Brother had covered her with his coat, so I freed her, wrapped her in it and carried her after him. You know what happened next.” Tifa nodded and frowned “do you remember the location of the basement?”

“We’re ninja’s trained for things like that, why?”

“Because it’s your proof” she took out her PHS “this is an communication device. With it I can tell my friend outside what happened without anyone else overhearing. He can take the WRO out to the basement, take photo’s and evidence and use it to prove what you said and get rid of the crowd so we can get you all back to Naruto and Lady Tsunade can help her. I just need your permission to tell him what you told me and....” she hesitated “take some photo’s of her injuries to help. Then with your description of the place we can resolve this, Naruto and the others are waiting for you.” After a brief hesitation the brunette nodded “just hurry.”

Tifa called Zack and explained what happened after taking the photo’s. The young man was an heroic soul who liked people and needed to be liked, being told the situation was worse than an mere injury, he was understandably pissed. He explained it to the sergeant, the man consenting to send some men with him, showing him the photos as proof and while they were gone Tifa told the two males about finding Naruto and his team and everything afterwards and so on.

Of course the two were upset and horrified to find out their home was probably destroyed and their people either dead or had abandoned the village, but realized they couldn’t do anything to save it and at the moment their sister was more important. They questioned her and she answered as much and whatever she would, letting them examine her materia-or rather the brunette brother.

When Tifa’s PHS rung she assured them of its harmlessness and answered “Hello?”

“Tifa?” the voice was rich, smooth and sensual. “VINCENT!” she sat up straight, glad to hear his voice “thank gaia!”

“I have numerous unanswered calls and a message from Reno telling me you urgently need my aid. What is going on?”

“We found Shukaka-Gaara” she told him what had happened and the current situation. Chaos’ growled voice came next “my daughter was RAPED!!”

“We don’t know if it got that far, but she’s bad, Vincent, I’ve never seen shock this deep, she’s practically catatonic.”

“She has grown up a strong and fiercely capable ninja, proud of her ability to defend herself against anyone and anything only to have one person strip that away and he was just an civilian, someone she would have seen as weaker than her.”

“I suppose you’re right.”

“I’m on my way there.”
“No, wait!” Tifa exclaimed urgently. “Why?”

“You won’t do any good here now and Chaos will probably just make things worse. Go to the hotel and see Lady Tsunade and tell her what’s going on. Tell Naruto these guys are going to seriously need his support when we get there and find a way to keep the kids away-this isn’t the sort of thing I want them to see. If Haku’s awake yet he could help you that way-and then meet us on the roof. We shouldn’t be much longer, Zack and some WRO are checking out the basement now.” There was an uncertain silence on the other end. “Vincent, you can be more use this way, you can help them more.”

“Of course” the demon vessel murmured uncertainly “call me when you are about to return” and he hung up. Tifa did so as well. “Who was THAT!” the brunette asked, obviously upset that she had told someone else. Tifa smiled at him “your father, he was worried about you all and wanted to come, but I talked him out of it.” The young man froze “our father....” Tifa continued to smile as she turned to the red head other male “when you merged with Shukaka, how much of her memories did you get?”

“All of them” he answered “however many are locked away from me.”

“I can understand why” Tifa said softly “all you own memories combined with the hundreds of years worth. It could drive you mad. Anyway, since you arrived have you sensed anything about this place, something familiar?” The red head hesitated “it feels familiar......like.....home.”

“Home?” the brunette looked at his brother. Tifa smiled “that’s right. You see this world is the original world of the tailed beasts.” The brunettes eyes widened “But the Juubi.....”

“The tailed beasts were once one being, yes, but the Juubi was just a part of another, one of two, or rather ten separate parts of one being-Chaos, Squire Of Omega.” The two males frowned at her “who?”

Tifa looked at the red haired one “you probably know him by a different name, but that’s what we call him.” She explained about Gaia, the lifestream, Chaos and Omega and the purpose of the two. She then told them about the ‘evil man’, Gaia helping Chaos separate the parts of his soul to fight the man, their being sent to another world. “so you see, even though your Sage Of Six Paths fought and beat the ten tailed, it wasn’t the complete being. But like the Sage, Chaos is now a part of humanity.”

They frowned at her “what do you mean?”

“My friend, Vincent? He’s what you call an Jinchuuriki. Not just that he’s the vessel of Chaos” she looked at the red head “that makes him-at least in their eyes-your father.” She looked at the brunette “and as HIS brother, that makes you their son as well. It applies to your sister too, Vincent sees her as a daughter and just as pissed as you both. Naruto and Sasuke have been reunited with him as is the two tailed. Apparently only the eight tailed is left to find somewhere, the other five are once again a part of Chaos so they don’t exist as separate entities any longer.”

“Five are gone?”

“Yes. The three to the seventh are now a part of Chaos once again along with Galian, your other brother. Like Gaara, Naruto and Itachi, Vincent and Chaos are merging with each other, but slowly over time.” Before anyone else could speak, Tifa’s PDA went off again. Checking the number Tifa answered “Zack, did you....”
“Tifa” the voice was low and authoritative, Zack’s SOLDIER voice, cutting her off, “I need you to check her eyes.”
“But.....”

“JUST DO IT!” he snapped.

“Alright” reluctantly Tifa leaned over the young woman enough to gently lift an eyelid. In the dim coolness of the shield, the orb glowed bright green. “Mako!” Tifa gasped as she quickly let go. “What’s wrong with her eyes!” the brunette yelped.

“Damn” Zack swore “I was hoping he hadn’t gotten that far yet.”

"Far? Zack what's going on? Why are her eyes glowing with Mako? I thought only Hojo could use it, let alone had access to it. Did she encounter a natural spring of the stuff like Cloud and I?"

"No. I don't know how he got hold of the stuff but we found diaries Tifa, hundreds of diaries. That bastard was sick, god, worse than Hojo" Zack's voice was thick with nausea. "They were all about his sick step-by-step plan to kidnap some poor girl and torture her until she broke, 'training' he called it, then he would enhance her with Mako and program her mind so she was his willing sex slave- who, because of the Mako-could survive any of the sick perverted things he put her through" she could hear the young man swallow his bile, "there were things in that basement I never want to see again, Tifa."

She tried to soothe the young man, but he interrupted her "you don't understand Tifa! It's bad enough he did this to her, but think about it! What if he had chosen some innocent defenseless villager! Someone without any hope of escape or help!!" Tifa's eyes widened in horror "He'd be successful by now."

"And that's not all!" he went on "he planned on doing it again, numerous times! He was going to sell them in some underground sex trade! If it wasn't for what Vincent's sons did....."

Tifa shuddered then looked at the red head "you're right, he's actually a hero." The red head frowned at her but Zack was going on "there are some things here that the WRO think may lead to the underground trade-or at least to others who could lead them there. The good news-for what it's worth-was he hadn't had the chance to rape her yet. And when her brothers found them he was just beginning to break her. Apparently he knew about Mako enhancing the senses and thought that if he injected her first then breaking her would be easier-enhanced reaction to pain."

So her catatonic state is both the Mako sickness from the drug as it enhances her, and her body reacting to the increased pain signals." Something occurred to her "Zack we know how mako affects someone like you or me, but what about someone like HER? Someone raised as an ninja with their chakra pathways as they are? What would it do to them? Would it burn them out, or worse, mutate them?"

"I hadn't thought of that" Zack swore, "what do w do about it? How do we help?"

"Get rid of the crowd first, tell them what this guy was, what he was doing and planning, what he almost did. Make them see that by killing this guy that he's actually a hero and saved them and their daughters. You can convince nearly anyone and anything, Zack. When you've done get the WRO general to ask Reeve to send an doctor-someone who specializes in mako and mako sickness-to head straight to their hotel. I'll call Vincent and tell him what you've found and that the man is headed
"Hopefully" Zack said.

"Yes hopefully" Tifa said "I'll call Reno, let him know what's happening and to get the transport ready for us. When you've disbanded the crowd, give us a yell. I'll give Reno the signal and we'll come out."

"Right" the young man hung up. While they were waiting, Tifa told them what was found, their sister's untouched state and the effects of mako and what it would do to her and what might happen. How the enhancement of her senses had caused her to yell so loud when they found her.

"Good news is once the mako fully sets in your sister will be faster, stronger and heal twice as fast, these wounds will heal and be gone in minutes or hours depending on the severity. She'll also be younger longer, mako enhanced people age slower or in some cases slow so dramatically they barely seem to age at all. Your father was twenty-five when he was mako enhanced. He looks twenty-seven now even though he's in his seventies.

But he's an extreme case.

The good news is that that means you have an extremely lowered chance of loosing her in battle or on a mission."

This, at least, satisfied them.

Tifa called Reno to explain what was going on. The idea of an underground sex trafficking ring both scared and alarmed him and he insisted that someone called Dr Mizuki, an Wutaize expert in mako and mako poisoning, be called in to help. "Both the Boss and Big Boss will insist on it" he said "your guy brought this to our attention and they'll want everyone's help on stopping it. Dr Mizuki is an expert on mako, THE primary expert on it, he studied under Hojo for Shiva sake. If he can't help your girl, no one can."

"Alright Reno, do it then."

"Right, I'll call the Boss now."

"I'll give you the signal when we're ready to leave, three rings, that way you'll know even if you're still talking to Tseng."

"Yeah" the red head hung up. Just a Tifa had hung up she heard muffled yelling through the shield, some disbelief, some horror and some fury. It only took a few minutes before Zack's voice could be heard through the shield "you guys can come out now, the crowd's gone."

The two males hesitated but Tifa assured them "guys you can trust him like you can me. Personality wise, Zack's a lot like Naruto, he's also painfully honest and heroic." She suddenly snorted in amusement "his old....sensai used to call him 'Puppy'. After you get to know him you see why." With an hesitation the brunette looked at his brother as he stood, their older sister in his arms "do it, but stay alert."

The red head slowly nodded, a layer of the shield re-covering his body, thick enough to be a shield, but not make his skin look the wrong color.

Tifa watched in surprise as another layer moved along the back of his clothes, joining together to solidify into an identical gourd on his back as in the picture, while the rest moved off to join the
identical substance all over town—and Tifa had the sneaking suspicion not only was it security for them, but if the red head ever needed it, it would be there for him and his siblings.

Now that the shield was down, Tifa saw the four of them were not alone, with Zack and the WRO general were two other men, an older distinguished man and his obvious bodyguard. As the shield was fully gone the four slowly approached them, Tifa motioned at the ex-SOLDIER and the WRO. “Guys this is my friend Zachary Fair, or Zack as he is known as and the....teamleader of an trusted organization run by another friend. The other two are Mr Izzaya Fairchild, Mayor of this town and his associate Locke. Guys this is siblings-oldest Temari, Second oldest Kankuro and youngest Gaara No Sabaku.”

Tifa looked at the mayor as she said “Sir, Gaara is the Kazekage of an far land called Suna.” At the same time the brunette asked “What’s a mayor?” the older man asked “What’s an Kazekage?”

“An Kazekage is like an Mayor, except instead of ruling a village of civilians, an Kazekage rules civilians AND highly trained warriors, Shinobi, Mr Mayor. They have almost absolute control over all goings on inside, only seconded by an council of elders.”

She looked at the three siblings “an mayor is like your Kazekage, except they are voted by the people and are chosen to represent them. They are essentially working for the civilians and even though the mayor has authority over them, they CAN be voted out and replaced.” She looked back at the older man “sir Gaara inherited the position from his father, who was the previous Kazekage.” She looked at the three siblings “Sir Issaya is a good man, guys, he probably didn’t know about what was happening here. He didn’t know about ‘THAT MAN’.”

“That’s right” the older man stepped towards the red head, hand extended “I was in an important meeting all day and not made aware of the situation until too late. However I have come here to thank you, sir, for your heroic action. If not for you, undoubtedly many of my own people would be victims of the bastard by now. I know you probably see it as saving family, but here you are now considered a hero. You are welcomed back whenever you wish. When our citizens found out what you saved their daughters and sisters from, they all bid me ask you to stay and consider our home your home.”

“Gaara and the others can’t now, sir” Tifa spoke out, motioning for the red head to shake the mayors hand “they came here because Gaia wanted their help in protecting us from a very powerful future threat. They had no idea they were suppose to inform you of their arrival, let alone anyone else they knew were on Gaia with them. Now, I think they would prefer being reunited with their brothers and other father.”

“Oh” the mayor looked disappointed before his face smoothed over “I suppose you are right, miss Lockheart” he looked back to the red head “I hope you will feel free to come visit us sometime soon.”

“We shall see” the red head said evasively, not quiet saying yes or no. He stopped shaking the older man’s hand and with his brother in tow, moved to Tifas’ side where she stood with Zack and the WRO General, “we wish to see Naruto and the others now.”

“Of course” Tifa nodded, the WRO General leaving them to rejoining his men thoroughly investigating the basement. “Well” Zack remounted ‘Odin’ “if Vincent’s back at the hotel, Cloud’s probably home by now so I’m heading there” he waved as he started the engine then pulled away, leaving Tifa alone with them. After sending Reno the signal, Tifa heard the chopper start up and told them to follow her, explaining about the transport and Reno as she did.
“He is kind of like you all. He LOOKS like he wouldn’t be much of a threat-no insult intended-and acts kind of unprofessional, but he and the other Turks are the ‘ninjas’ to Rufus’ Hokage. They can be anything from assassins to simple delivery boy\girls. However each are also highly trained and enhanced. Unless you threaten him or Shinra though, he won’t threaten you. Just watch him though, he’s sneaky. Before Shinra took him in as an Turk he was what is known as a ‘junkyard dog’, extremely crafty, manipulative and dangerous when cornered.”

“Do you trust him?” the brunette asked.

“Well” Tifa said thoughtfully “it depends on what do you mean by trust! Do I trust him to have my back in a fight or major battle? Yes, without hesitation. Do I trust him to keep my secrets of confidence? No, no way.”

“So” the red head said almost unemotionally “you can trust him as an warrior, but not a person.”

“That sounds about right. He has a sense of honor as an warrior, warped as it may be, but as an Turk of Shinra, he’s unpredictable and un-trustworthy. Just watch what your words around him.”

The two males nodded.

They reached the chopper to find Reno with the piolet-side door open, looking out for them. As soon as they were close enough he handed Tifa an long blanket and slid back inside, closing the door and waiting for them to board. Tifa headed towards the two and gave the red head the blanket and waited for the two males to awkwardly wrap their shivering sister in it before they followed her inside. They secured themselves inside, their sister between them, held in both their arms. After taking off and they were steady, they heard Reno speak “sorry about your girl, yo.”

The red head nodded stiffly.

“If it’s any consolation, man, I would have done the exact same thing, hell, I HAVE.” He began to mutter curse words under his breath “bastards all of them, stupid idiots think women are only there to serve and service them.” The very idea shocked and even terrified Tifa “ You KNEW someone kidnapped, tortured and possibly raped, Reno?!”

“Yeah” he said bluntly “one day asked Fair about a Turk girl he knew called Cissinni before he became involved with Strife.” Tifa wanted to ask more, but the other red heads voice was clipped and hostile, not inviting any more conversation.

Since they were closer to Midgar then The Forgotten City had been it took less time to return to the hotel building.

Tifa frowned when they landed, only the blonde Hokage\healer, Jirayia, and a small willowy Wutian man in his late forties early fifties was there, she also saw the Nara heir by the roof door too, an deep frown of concern and fear on his face even though he stood hidden in the shadows.

She frowned, she had assumed that Vincent and Naruto would be there too. After they had landed Tifa aided the brunette bringing his sister out on the newly replaced cot while the red head made his way to the healer, bowing in respect and after a quick word or two they made their way to his sisters side. “Where’s Vincent and Naruto?” Tifa asked the woman “I thought they’d be here to help.”

“There was some commotion downstairs and Naruto sensed Sasuke’s conflicting emotions, so they
went down to look” Jirayia told them. The red head looked conflicted, he wanted to go to Naruto, but he didn’t want to leave his siblings. His older brother noticed this “go, get Naruto.”

His brother cocked his head at him.

“Go ahead, brother, I think he’ll help bring her out. Besides, you need to see this guy and if he’s really our father.” Hesitantly the red head nodded and followed Tifa to the door to the elevator. They were silent on their way down to the blondes floor, Tifa worried about what was going on. Sasuke was experiencing ‘conflicting’ emotions enough to warrant both Naruto and Vincent’s attention, what could it be?

The only thing she could think of was he had found his brother.

She had better warn the red head since the Uchiha heir was one of those who had been responsible for kidnapping and almost killing him trying to remove the demon, forcing the two to merge or die. “There’s something you should know” she quickly explained about the heir being a spy for their village, his death and resurrection and his current state, including the merging, telling him she didn’t want him to attack when he saw the other.

The red head stated he understood, he wouldn’t do anything to the other except for his or someone else’s defense. When Tifa asked why he was so understanding towards someone almost partly responsible for his near death. His answer was that they were ninja’s, it was part of their job, infiltration was just part of their training. Besides, if anything, he had died, he had therefore made it up to him. Itachi the Akatsuki member had died at Sasuke’s hands, this was Itachi, Sasuke’s brother.

“You’re right, and he’s YOUR brother now too.”

At the red heads look, Tifa explained “well first Sasuke is Naruto’s mate, meaning since Naruto is your brother through Chaos, he’s your brother-in-law as Sasuke’s brother. Secondly Itachi is merging with the three tailed, so he’s your brother there as well.”

The red head nodded.

They reached their floor to a sight familiar to Tifa, only THIS time among the group in the doorway was Denzel, Marlene, Haku and three adult figures she recognized from the photo. The green clad man-Might Gai, the ex-snake Sanin’s disciple Anko and the T & I specialist Ibiki Marino.

Cloud and Vincent must have found them in Cosmo Canyon. Again everyone was crowded in the Uchiha heirs doorway, watching some scene inside and THIS time when Tifa moved to look she found just what she expected. The brothers were facing each other, Naruto standing behind his mate, looking concerned.

She didn’t see Vincent.

Sasuke stood beside the bed, staring down at his brother who sat against the headboard, staring blankly back. There was silence for long seconds, the two staring at each other until the youngest Uchiha choked out his brothers name. Without a word the older slowly raised his hand and everyone held their breath. Slowly the hand rose, heading towards his brothers face, three fingers folded back and then......

He poked Sasuke in the forehead with the two fingers together, just once but not very hard. The effect was instant. The younger’s eyes widened and he threw himself into his brothers arms, sobbing...
brokenly.

“I don’t get it” the one called Anko murmured while Vincent suddenly appeared and came forward, ushering everyone but the brothers and Naruto out of the room, closing the door in their faces-himself still inside. “He used to do that before the massacre” Kakashi appeared walking towards them “it was their thing, Itachi’s way of showing affection and his fondness of Sasuke.”

Tifa got it, it was a gesture Sasuke had come to see as a sign of his brothers love in their youth. A sign that their relationship was strong and true. By the heir choosing to use the gesture now he had not only assured Sasuke he still loved him as such as in their youth, but he had completely forgiven him for killing him. Tifa frowned at Kakashi “we need to see Vincent and Naruto, it was important” she gave him an intense look “about Gaara-san’s sister.” Seeing the hidden message she was trying to send, the cyclops nodded, turning to the crowd. “Haku, take the kids to talk-Sai, go with them and translate his sign.”

The two ninja’s nodded and bundled the two kids away to one of the apartments.

“Sakura, you and Hinata help these three find an apartment they want to use and catch them up on what’s going on.” The two girls nodded and lead the three away. “I will help the girls” Shizune moved after the group while the man-Yamoto-moved after Haku and the others. Once the three were alone Tifa-with the occasional input from the Kage, told the cyclops what had happened.

He frowned in concern “this is serious indeed.” He turned to knock on the door. A few seconds later the door peaked open to one blue eye and blonde hair “what’s up guys?” he whispered “We’re a bit busy here.”

“Naruto” Kakashi moved aside so he could see Tifa and the red head. Instantly the boy threw open the door, eyes shinny and an huge grin on his face, shouting out “GAARA!” and throwing himself into his arms with a joyful cry. The red head tensed in his grip, obviously uncomfortable and unused to physical contact, but then forced himself to relax and hug back. This must have been unusual as it was because the blonde drew back slightly in the others arms with a concerned frown “what’s wrong?”

“Temari” the red head whispered, his voice trembling just very slightly. Concerned and a little frightened the blonde frowned “what’s wrong? What happened to her?!” Tifa frowned “didn’t Vincent tell you?” The blonde frowned deepened as he turned from to look further into the room “father?” Vincent came to his side and saw them “you have returned.”

“You didn’t tell him what happened” Tifa said almost accusingly. “We returned not long before you did” he explained “I was about to bring him there when this...” he motioned behind them “happened.” They understood "then let's go now."

Naruto frowned, torn “I can't leave the teme now, he may need my support after this."

"Go, Naruto" the silver cyclops moved to enter the room past him "I'll stay and tell them where you've gone and why. They'll understand."

Reluctantly the boy nodded and with Vincent in tow they headed for the elevator. Once inside she told the two what Zack had found out, the red head in a soft monotone told what had happened and they pieced it together. Tifa turned to Vincent "it may be better if you let Chaos out. I think he'd want to comfort them himself and he may be familiar to his demon side. Once he's comfortable with HIM, it will be easier for YOU."
The demon vessel nodded, stood away from them and let the demon out. The red head didn't move or blink.

Tifa turned away to give them some pseudo-privacy and stared at the numbers above the door. At first there was complete silence. Then Chaos growled, low and with a lot of base, obviously deep in his chest. Naruto growled next, obviously a question by the infliction, followed by an fox-like yip of obvious concern.

The red head didn't answer.

The two continued, almost soothing and reassuringly for a few seconds, and just when Tifa was going to tell the others two how the red head's memories were locked away so he obviously didn't understand this, there was a soft cautious growl from an completely different source. This started all three off into an obvious conversation and recap of events if the tone of growls were anything to go by. Tifa didn't know if they were 'demon talking' to keep her from listening in, or Chaos thought that talking that way on a 'primitive level' would break through his shell.

Either way, it worked.

When they reached the Sanin's floor she turned to look before the doors opened. Chaos stood at the back of the elevator, both boys clutched in his arms and wings. Both looked vulnerable, the red head with his face buried in the demons chest, body shaking in silent sobs, clutching the demon close to him as he did. To Tifa he looked like a child seeking a parents comfort, only to realize that was EXACTLY what it was. Like Naruto, the others demon had been female, making him more emotional and even vulnerable in a lot of ways, meaning he had to be even more in control of himself and his emotions, even around his siblings.

Naruto however on the other hand, had always been more emotional and open, so it wasn't that much different when he merged with his. Naruto and Chaos had implied that not only was Shukaku the weaker of the once nine-both in power and emotionally-but she was also the youngest of the children of Chaos. That coupled with the fact that he was the youngest of the siblings, he WAS a child seeking a parents comfort.

Thousands of years perhaps of being separated from their ‘father’, all that they had been through and forced to do during that time and then his sisters kidnapping, torture and almost rape, it was too much for him to contain now surrounded by family love and those he trusts. Naruto silently looked up at her, his eyes red, something that resembled a fox in his face and the way he stood, as if he and Chaos were comforting their lost family member as demons, at a primal level, not as humans. As if the more instinctive the level, the more of a result.

Whatever it was, it worked.

The elevator stopped and the doors slid open.

On the other side of the door stood the brunette, who looked at them solemnly, eyes tormented. Slowly the eyes roamed over pregnant blonde silently, then his brother in the demons arms. He must have made a sound Tifa missed because all three males heads snapped up to see him. They looked at each other silently for long minutes before all three without a word held a hand each out to him a silent offer of unconditional love, understanding and comfort. At first Tifa thought he wouldn’t take it, he backed up a bit, but when the red head turned fully in the demons arms to hold his hand out, the other hesitated.
Tifa remembered what he had said earlier about when their sister had been the first to move to become friends and family, he had been still afraid and realised it was almost the same here, only instead of of his brother-or even of Chaos—he was afraid of breaking down. He was the strong big brother here and had to keep it together, to help their sister and keep his brother calm, he didn’t want to loose it here and now or he might never stop.

His brother stood, still and silent, hand never wavering, eyes solemn and unblinking on him, all three still holding out their hands to him. They were showing that they had no hesitation in their offer and it would remain in the face of his uncertainty and doubt. When all three never moved from the offer, the brunette hesitantly took his brothers arm. Immediately he was pulled into the grasp of all three.

Tifa knew THIS was an private moment, so she stepped off the elevator and let the doors close behind her. She headed for the room where the HokageHealer was helping clean and dress the girls more serious wounds while the small man was looking through a microscope on a small portable chemistry table, murmuring in Wutaineze as he did.

“What have you found, Doctor?” another voice spoke and Tifa’s head snapped to a dark corner of the room to find Tseng sitting on an chair there, frowning as he looked through some paperwork.

“Tsunade-hime, come look at this please. See if you see what I do” the man said in an cultured but deeply accented voice. The healer moved to join the smaller man, eye to the microscope as he moved aside for her. She frowned when she saw what was there, agreeing with the smaller man.

A noise alerted Tifa behind her as Vincent and the three boys entered, all moving to the unconscious shivering young womans side, Vincent standing by her head while Naruto clutched one hand and Kankuro at the other, Gaara hesitantly kneeling by his brother to touch her wrist.

Tifa turned back to the Doctor and repeated Tseng's question, knowing the four would want to hear it a well. The healer spoke first "her chakra pathways are almost completely shot. It funtions enough to allow her to live and even remain as active and skilled in battle as before, but she will never use an genjutsu ever again without killing herself."

"No!" Naruto exclaimed helplessly.

The Doctor spoke next "however the mako seems to be taking the place of that energy, moving in to replace the missing parts and healing and adapting her body.” He frowned "the last time I saw something like this was the pet project Hojo had, Sephiroth. " Vincent growled at him in the background. "Her body is steadily becoming adapt at using mako and the energy of the Lifestream as he was. What it will become when this is finished, I am uncertain."

"But how can that be, Doctor?” Tseng had put down the paperwork, looking at the man with disbelieving eyes "It was Jenovah that allowed Sephiroth to...."

"No" the man said, giving the other Wutian an level look "it was mako."

"But then the other SOLDIERS...."

"The mako Hojo used on the SOLDIERS was refined, weakened, allowing noticable differences between SOLDIERS and Troopers, enough to keep President ShinRa satisfied that Hojo was doing his job and worthy of his grants and pay, however he reserved the pure mako, the raw mako for Sephiroth. He never used raw on anyone I have knowledge of. It seems the one who injected this child just found an raw mako vein and used that, without anything to leasen the effects or ease her coming pain."
"What about Zack and Cloud?” Tifa asked with a frown "he had four years to experiment on them with it, and he WAS supposed to be trying to turn Cloud into another one of the General...."

"I saw Hojo's files on them just before meteor fall, while the mako used was stronger than that previously used, it wasn’t pure or raw. It was also mixed in with other agents and chemicals. As of yet I have to examine someone like this girl who has been exposed to raw mako and not only lived but come out of the mako sickness."

"Umm....." Tifa hummed, raising her hand.
Both the Doctor and healer looked at her.

Tseng spoke "weren't you already exposed to mako previously, Tifa? Being injected previously allows your body to adjust to it, even adapt."

"No" she said softly "I wasn't."
"But when Hojo got hold of you before...."

"He was about to, he gloated he was going to, but the guys got me out before he did."

"How were you exposed, what concentration?" the man asked urgently. "Just after we beat Sephiroth, during meteor fall. Cloud fell into an fissure of raw mako that had opened up. I had to jump in to get him. The guys eventually found us and got us out" she motioned at Vincent who nodded confirmation to the Doctor. The man seemed excited "and you both survived it?!"

Tifa nodded "we found eachothers mind through the contact and guided each other back. Since then both of us in one way or another was exposed once more, but except for some minor flu-like symptoms, it doesn't really affect us." The man looked excited "then you could have developed an tolerance for it beyond normal levels!" He looked at the healer who nodded to go ahead.

The man turned full on to Tifa and bowed low to her "Tifa-sama, would you allow us to do a physical and some tests on you? Your biology or even genetics could provide us with the answers we seek for the problem." Tifa looked at Vincent who nodded again in encouragement, eyes telling her it was her decision. She looked back to the two of them "you could use it to help bring their sister out of her unconsciousness?"

"Definitely" the man nodded to her "and if it works even other victims around Gaia also trapped in comas or the sickness." Nodding to herself Tifa stepped forward, holding out her arm to the man, wrist out "go ahead, anything to help." The man nodded and Tifa looked over at the group at the sound of her name.

Gaara stood up and turned to her, head down and eyes lowered in respect and something Tsunade later told her was the way that the Kages each showed respect to each other. The only people Gaara had ever done it to-and meant it-was Naruto and Tsunade herself. "My brother and I are grateful for your aid in saving my sister. From this day forward, you are one of my family. If you have need of us...." From his crouched position next to their sister, the brunette-Kankuro-nodded in serious agreement.

Tifa was stunned, they were serious, they were ‘adopting’ her just as she had the kids. Looking at Vincent with confusion and question he nodded to her, showing he was agreeing with his sons, adding his protection and promise. Tifa couldn't speak, too stunned.
So instead she turned to the Doctor and watched his actions, unable to speak.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

WARNING!!!!
Implications of rape!!

Tifa was just walking past the elevators when one dinged and the doors slid open.

The first thing she saw when the door was wide enough was red and black, frowned and stopped walking. What was Reno doing there? Was he coming to report to Tseng or had he found more of the group? Her answer came when the doors fully opened to reveal three figures with him, an young man in his late thirties and with a face scar, an shaggy young man with a white dog and an black haired young man in green and orange. With a glad cry Tifa ran towards them "you found them Reno! They are gonna be SO happy and grateful to you!"

To her surprise the red head blushed "yo, you think so?"

"Of course!" she laughed "they'll probably all thank you and praise you!"

To her further shocked his blush increased, practically hiding the curved red marks on his face with the depth of the color, stuttering in uncertainty and shyness. What was up with the red head lately? He had gone from an sense of confidence so strong it almost seemed like an over-inflated ego to the shyness of a school boy on his first date. Shaking it off for further examination later she moved to the nearest intercom "wait a minute, I'll call them."

She did so, summoning the two girls, two boys (of course, Sasuke would have come anyway) and one adult. "I'm at the elevators" she said "Reno found something you guys might recognize. I want your opinion" while she smiled secretly at the three with the red head. They confirmed they would be right there, just heading down from the other top floor apartment which had not only became an make-shift hospital ward for the group, but the Sand brothers and Nara heir had taken up residence in to be close to the girl.

It seemed the formerly lazy heir had an soft spot for the blonde young woman, Tifa had seen the expression on his face as he watched the girl when he thought no one was watching, the combination of fear, concern, pain and hope.

The boy DEFINITELY had an major crush.
And it seemed all the more intensified by the young woman's near death\coma state.

Tifa had felt compelled to give him a talk to after she noticed and the doctors were examining her for any change. They had stood outside in the hall, the ninja leaning back against the wall with just his shoulders and one raised foot, eyes lazy, lids drooping. "You know you won't be able to really touch her when she awakens" she had said by way of starting the conversation "even if she knows you and even trusts you at all, until she is able to get back on herself and heal the abuse, chances are that all
males will set her on edge, even her brothers."

"I know" he had answered "every ninja is taught or are aware of the possibility of being captured by enemies and tortured, killed or even raped—even males. However it doesn't lessen the impact of when it happens just because you know about it being an chance. I will help her any way I can. One of my clan, a male, went through that. Just after his rescue and return he committed suicide. So I studied how to help. So I can help her now." For just a second his face hardened "I won't let her reach that point, she WILL survive it and heal from this!"

Tifa accepted this.

Now Tifa could hear them just rounding a corner towards them, Naruto talking loudly, and from the corner of her eyes Tifa saw the older man break out in an wide delighted smile. He started out of the elevator, but Tifa motioned him to stop, giving him a cheeky smile.

The man smiled back, realizing what she was going to do and nodded, staying where he was. The group stopped across the room from her, six instead of five but she wasn't at all surprised. Naruto spoke out to her first, a cheeky smile aimed at her 'hey Tif, what'd you find?' Tifa gave him a mock frown. Ever since she was adopted as their family, ever since Naruto heard Cloud call her by his childhood nickname for her earlier that morning, he had been calling her that.

"I didn't find it, Reno did." She motioned the red head out and he stood next to her with a sheepish grin "yo, hi guys."
"What'd you find, Ren?" Reno motioned the man out "loose someone?" The blonde's eyes widened in shock "sensai? Iruka sensai?!"

"Naruto" the man spoke gently, his tone of voice one of an father to a son. With a glad cry the blonde was in his arms, sobbing desperately and emotionally, blabbering everything that had happened to him since they had last seen each other, the two sinking to the floor together in a heap and Tifa saw tears also in the corners of the mans eyes as they did.

Once they had settled down somewhat Naruto managed to make it to his feet and drag the man over to meet Vincent.

While he did and the three, with Sasuke protectively following his mate of course, moved to a corner, Tifa turned to the other three with a smile. Next she motioned the shaggy young man and dog out who immediately saw the two women and was soon buried in the Hyuuga heir's arms, the girl giggling as the dog excitedly licked her face in welcome, the male calling her "my woman."

But all attention turned back as the last male stepped off the elevator. "Lee?" the girl whispered in hope and barely rained emotions. The man looked at the green clad other and to the woman, as if unsure how to act. Did he act all boisterous and outrageous like he did with his sensai, or the quiet gentle lover he did around the woman he loved? The sensai answered for him asking seriously "do you love her, Lee?"

He looked back and answered just as seriously "yes sensai. I have since the chunin exams." The man grinned widely "then your choice is easy, isn't my student." The young man grinned back "yes sensai" he turned to the woman and smiled at her "my Sakura blossom."

"Lee?" she choked again, eyes full of tears and body trembling in mixed emotions. She seemed unable to believe what she saw. He came to her side and gently lay a hand on her shoulder, repeating
"my Sakura Blossom" as he did, voice gentle and filled with so much love. The pink haired girl's eyes widened and she reached up to take the hand in hers, gripping it desperately tight, making the young man wince slightly at the bone crunching strength of it.

As if empowered by the feel of his warm but calloused skin her disbelief melted away and her expression became dawning joy and relief, pulling the Lethe but muscular young man into her arms, sobbing out how worried she was that she would never see him again and her fear she'd never get to tell him about her secret and he would never have the chance to know HIM.

"Him? Secret? What is wrong my blossom?" he drew back in her arms enough to look her over in concern.

Unable to find the words to explain the teary-eyed woman took the same hand and placed it low on her stomach, so not only could he feel the growing bump there but the slight fluttery movement inside. His eyes widened slightly at the feel "who...when?!"

"Four months ago. I forgot to do the morning-after jutsu, or maybe deep down inside I did it on purpose so I wouldn't have an excuse to hide US anymore. Tsunade-sama scanned it this morning and said he's an healthy size and is growing properly." She smiled beautifully through her happy tears "She also said his chakra pathways are normal, if a little mature for his age. He'll be more powerful than you and I combined."

"But how can that be?" he frowned "I'm not...."

"The Hurano line were known as powerful Hunter-nins, at least on the male side" said a new voice and they all turned to see the Hokage, her assistant and Sage Sanin heading their way. "however it seems that it has a habit of skipping certain generations. Sakura's father was powerful, one of the most powerful of their line despite how he feel in love with an normal citizen. He died during the Kyuubi attack, not by the fox itself but protecting his pregnant wife from an falling building."

"Mom never told me this" the girl whispered, clutching her lover to her "she refused to talk about dad. The only thing she would say was the fox was responsible when she was trying to get me to hate Naruto." The blonde winced visibly at this mention. "I don't blame you, Naruto, or the fox. I wouldn't now if I ever did. YOU weren't even born yet and the fox was being controlled, Sasuke was right, it was all HIS fault." The blonde looked relieved. She looked back at the big-busted woman "you KNEW my father? Why haven't you told me this earlier."

"You never asked" she pointed out "besides, to tell an child that her father was a Hunter-nin...."

The girl drew herself up proudly in the supporting arms of her lover "I would have been proud of him. He did what only a select few could to protect his home, just like he died to protect his family. Besides as you said, only an powerful person can become Hunter-nin."

"Hunter nin?" Tifa questioned them cautiously.

"The most powerful and elite nins of a village" the Hokage started to explain "there are two branches, ANBU, who work inside a village, protecting those inside from threats-mostly concentrated around the kages and councils-and hunter nin who travel OUTSIDE a village, hunting down missing nin and the most dangerous enemy and s-class criminals and not only permanently stopping them but completely destroying the body and any trace so any secrets and bloodlines are destroyed as well."
She understood and nodded, Reno next to her pursing his lips against something he wanted to say. Reno, being tactful?

"Hey!" Naruto suddenly yelped and all eyes turned on the boy in time to see him start scratching furiously at something on his head. Before anyone could speak he managed to catch it, holding an tiny black speck between a suddenly clawed thumb and forefinger "ask permission from an Allie before you do that! What would your master say!"

"Naruto?" Sakura asked in confusion.

Scratching the back of his head in embarrassment with the hand opposite the occupied one, Naruto turned his hand around, allowing them to see the tiny black speck, smaller than a flea, there. "He latched on and decided to use me to re energize. I normally wouldn't have minded except I would have preferred it seek permission first."

"Permission? You can understand it? What is it?"

"Look." The group crowded around to look. A tiny black fleck sat in the young mans hand, legs moving to clean him/herself, barely visible. The Hokage looked and snorted "kiki, what a nuisance."

"Kiki?" Reno asked curiously.
"Kikaichuu, destruction beetles. This one belongs to Shino" Naruto said.
"How do YOU know it's Shino's?" they asked him.

"Three reasons. One, see this little red mark here?" he pointed to an speck of red on the beetles side. When they nodded he answered "only his bugs have that mark."
"The second?"
"Shino is the only Aburame here."
"Third?"

"IT told me." The group looked shocked "you can understand it?!!"
"Well yeah" with a sheepish smile the boy rubbed the back of his head again. "How long? Is it because of your connection to Gaia as an creature of the planet?"
"Actually...." the boy faded of and the groups eyes widened "you've been able to understand them ALL ALONG!!"

"Yeah" he said softly, but there was something in his tone of voice...."Guys" Tifa said softly "he's upset." The group looked at him as his mate surrounded him comfortingly in his arms "what is wrong, dobe?" The boy sighed deeply and looked away "I've been able to understand them long before I could talk. Everything natural, insects, animals, even the very trees."

"Why didn't you tell us?!" they asked, the Sage's eyes wide he added "if I had of known you could commune with nature I would off....."

The boy looked up at him, eyes hard "would have what, ero-sensei? Trained me to be a sage, to manipulate the energies of the planet to protect it and others? I had to use the sexy jutsu just to get any attention from you long enough to learn the Rasengan. Face it you would have found a reason to leave me again like last time." He lowered his head, hiding his face "everyone already thought I was a freak as it was, 'cause of HER, without knowing I could do anything like THAT as well."

"Naruto" the Hokage sighed "there are PLENTY of ninja who can understand or even communicate with nature."
"But none of them are demon vessels, are they" he pointed out. The group was about to move to comfort him and assure him he was not a freak but a gifted ninja and Vincent'Chaos' son when the huge dog barked a couple of times. The boy sighed "yeah, okay."

"You understand Akamaru as well....!?"
"Well yeah, I said ALL animals." Before anyone else could speak, Tifa did "what did it say?"
"It said Shino is with two others from Kohona in a place called Junon. It said it could lead us to them." Sakura frowned "how did it get here?"

"When they found themselves here, Shino sent his beetles out in all directions, tracking charka to find anyone else familiar. This one sensed Gaara's little tantrum yesterday and tracked it here to us. Once finding us it was low in energy because of how long it was traveling and decided to 'borrow' some chakra from me before letting itself be known." They understood and Reno spoke up "if you guys need a ride to Junon to get your guy....."

"Thanks Ren" Naruto grinned at him, the red head giving an simple smile back. An idea struck Tifa and she suddenly grinned at the red head "hey Ren. I don't think they have traveled by Chocobo yet. Perhaps it is time they learn."

"Chocobo?" Naruto perked up, looking extremely interested "what's that?"
"Yo you're right Tifa" the red head grinned "and doesn't blondie and SOLDIER-boy have that farm just outside Midgar? The one where blonde breeds them."
"Yes they do" Tifa grinned back. "Well then maybe we should take them there."

"What are Chocobo?" Naruto called out to them, extremely interested and almost bouncing on the spot. Tifa smiled at the childish behavior "they are a more.....natural form of transport than our cars, trains and helicopters. They can make it across the land to Junon in a shorter time and can even fight back against some of the monsters there, even though they are considered monsters themselves by some, plus their instincts for danger have saved many people from nearby monsters."

"Really??" the young man was more than interested now, he was fascinated "tell me more about them!"

"Well they've been used for various things through the history of Gaia, from pack animals to racing. They are highly intelligent and can understand humans, but communicate in a different way. Some people like Cloud seem to understand them and the way they communicate and so make better farmers and breeders. They come in just about every color known to man, but SOME colors are extremely rare and are valuable to those owning one. Other breeders will pay a fortune to have THEIR Chocobo breed with one of the rare ones. The rarest are Red, Gold-not yellow, white and rarest of the lot is the rainbow chocobo. Cloud has a gold, but the red and rainbow haven't been seen for centuries."

Naruto smiled "what do they look like?"
Tifa smiled secretly "you'll see."

Naruto looked at the Hokage, big blue eyes begging "can we travel by chocobo, granny, please?" The woman sighed at his puppy-dog eyes "I suppose we will have to or you won't let me forget it, will you."

"Yay!!!" the boy cheered, jumping up and down in excitement. "I'm going I suppose" she added, "who else?"
"I will" Sasuke of course said.
"Of course me" Tifa smiled.
"I will" said a new voice from behind the group.

All turned to find the oldest Uchiha standing there, watching them. His eyes locked to Tifa's, ignoring everyone else around them. Something passed between them. When Sasuke protested, worried about his injuries and chakra state he pulled his clothes aside and the bandages to show them healed flesh and only an pink new scar without looking away from Tifa. It seemed the merge was completed, healing the ninja completely.

When the Hokage snorted and asked why he wanted to go with them Tifa saw something flicker in his eyes as he said softly "first Naruto carries the next generation of Uchiha clan, he needs to be protected for that" before the blonde could protest and state he could take care of himself the other Uchiha spoke again "secondly he carries the new generation of Uchiha, his is the birth of a new clan, a new destiny. I will NOT allow the new to follow the downward spiral of the old. Sasuke needs to know what SHOULD be passing on and what should be left in the ashes of the clan ground."

Tifa saw the rest of his thoughts, his brother helped conceive a GIRL, a female child just as he had always secretly wanted for himself, if he had to die to protect that unborn child, he would. As a few mouths opened, he finally looked away from her and looked at the blonde, brunette and Vincent seriously "she's MY NIECE, would you deny me the right to protect something born from my brother, the only thing in this world I ever cared about?"

"Way to show you care" Kiba snorted "slaughtering his family, then convincing him to hate!"

Those black-black eyes swung towards the dog like nin, level and unblinking that same look Tifa had seen days ago on the roof on him. The boy shifted back, unnerved at it. "He needed to be strong, stronger than me so when Madara came out of hiding he would be able to face him and win. I knew I would never be able to do it, I probably wouldn't live long enough I was already sick, but he could do it, even though he never had the confidence, he was always capable of it."

"Anki....!" Sasuke started to protest, even now unwilling to believe he could ever compare to the one he had always looked up to and loved more than anyone. The heir looked at his brother "it was true, Sasuke, and to make sure you knew the truth of our enemy when he finally confronted you, I made sure you had my eyes."

"What do you mean?" The Hokage frowned at the heir. "I ensured both my eyes would allow Sasuke to see the truth, and that he took them after the fight, even when he was so animalistic."

"You mean you only took Naruto to get to Sasuke?!
"You really think if we got ahold of him it would take us THAT LONG to extract the demon?"

"So you were dragging it out so Sasuke could come to rescue him, hopefully in time." He nodded and now that they had the chance, The Hokage asked "why DID Akatsuki want the nine tailed demons anyway?"

"The group was being manipulated by Madara Uchiha. After being cast out of the village he grew more and more insane. He was manipulating the leader Pain to collecting the tailed beasts because he had an grand plan-but it was foolish really-to take complete control of all five nations and place himself as ruler by using them. He kept watch from the inside by masquerading as an idiot called Tobi."
"I KNEW there was more to him then what he seemed!" Naruto exclaimed.
"What do you mean, Naruto?" they questioned.

"Every time I was near him, Kyuubi was either unsettled or even growled." He looked thoughtful
"maybe she sensed who he really was, but couldn't say anything. After all, you gotta remember the
guy who controlled you not once but twice, even just a little bit."

He had a point. "Why did he want the tailed beasts?"

"His plan was to merge them back to the ten tailed, then take control of them like the Sage Of Six
Paths."
"Impossible!" The Hokage snorted "only someone as pure and enlightened as he could even hope to
control it."

"Yes, but his plan was to use the beasts powers so he could use the moon as an reflective surface so
he could project his sharingan on it, simultaneously taking control of everyone around the world and
making him the ruler and every single person into his slaves." Tifa snorted "wouldn't have worked,
at least not the way he wanted." They looked at her "what do you mean?"

She looked at Itachi "in order to hypnotize or control someone you need direct eye contact with
them, true?"
He nodded.
"How many people at that exact time would be outside looking up directly at the moon?"

They saw her point. She went on "even if he could do it so anyone within the 'light' of the moon, it
still doesn't count those people who are blind, those underground, those inside with their windows
and curtains closed, those asleep....." she counted off on her fingers and the others relaxed as they got
her point. Tifa shrugged "it seemed all these so-called mad geniuses miss these points. Hojo,
Hegiger...."

Another point.

"He would have had a little more luck maybe hypnotizing the leaders of each village and telling them
to order their entire village out to look at the moon when it happened but there would still be some
who were busy or on missions....." Naruto suddenly brightened "or he could have spread rumors of
an eclipse or some comet....." Tifa nodded to the young man in agreement. Itachi frowned "at the
time it never occurred to me you could be right. I just knew he had to be stopped...."

"And so you should have" Vincent spoke out "you were always loyal to the village, even when it
did not seem so to others. You were acting as an loyal ninja would in your effort to stop him. You
could do no other than what you did to protect it."

The others agreed, the Sage sannin speaking out "just as you'll be loyal to this new one" he motioned
around them at the building "even though we, in this building, come from all different villages-or at
least will when everyone is found, we are now our own village, one were everyone gets a say in
what we do or how it works, not just pompous old farts who think they are all powerful and can do
whatever the hell they want. Where everyone has equal say and because we all live together in one
building, cannot keep damning secrets from the rest-it won't work this close together."

Naruto smiled at this, adding "there will be no restraints on who can love who, if one 'clan member'
loves a member of another 'clan', they can if they want. Who cares about 'keeping the bloodline
"You mean..." the dog-orientated young man breathed in hope, pulling his girlfriend closer to him, clutching her tightly but still careful of his claws. "Yeap" Naruto nodded and grinned "if you want to mate Hinata fully, you can. With no other Hyuuga here by Neji....."

"And Neji himself has his eyes on someone here too" Sakura smiled at Naruto and he nodded "so he's not likely to protest you both."

"All your bloodline abilities doesn't matter here" Tifa said "no one here knows about them, or is interested in them" she purposely left out the possibility of Shinra "so you don't need to protect them."

"And since Hinata always found ways to delay learning the signs for the Caged Bird Seal....." Sakura said, smiling at her shy friend. The new three's eyes widened "no one can activate it anymore, it's useless!"

"Unless Neji knows them himself which I doubt, yes." Tifa smiled "all it is now is some weird tattoo."
"Where ARE we?!" the scared man asked, looking at them imploringly "WHAT IS GOING ON??!!"
"Take them to explain what's happening" the female sanin said to the Sage. "Tell them EVERYTHING."

The older man nodded and with the two girls and green-clad man in tow, he lead the three males away, leaving only herself, Naruto and the two brothers, Vincent, Reno and Tifa in the hallway. Before anyone could speak the younger Uchiha sighed heavily, clenched his eyes for a few long seconds then rose to follow them. "Sas?" there was something vulnerable in the blonde's words, like he thought his mate was leaving him forever.

He froze, not looking at him but his back was stiff "I'm not going."

"Why not!" the blonde pleaded, tears in his eyes. The younger looked up at the older, locking their black eyes and said seriously "I need to start trusting him again, Naru. I need to start TRYING to trust him again for both our sake. If I keep hanging around you so much because of a constant voice in my head insisting he'll kill you and everyone else when my back is turned, our relationship will never get back anywhere where it used to be. I've got to prove to myself he truly has always been my brother and not the evil man everyone told me he was. If trusting him to protect and watch over you is how I must do it......"

His eyes went hard as he looked at his brother, who nodded slowly in response to a silent question—or was that a demand?

"I understand" Naruto nodded to his mate "I'll be fine, don't worry."
"I will also come" Vincent said, the demon wolf turning to give him a grateful look. But Naruto asked "why?"

Tifa spoke "both Vincent and I have traveled all over Gaia, we have faced all different monsters. I'm an maylay fighter while Vincent is an distance or backup fighter. Between the two of us, we know just about every creatures weakness and strengths. For instance, some are vulnerable to physical attacks, but you can't use magic attacks. Some are weak to certain magic, but they are strong against physical." She looked at the Uchiha heir "Haku said you saved him from one. Is that true?"
He nodded "something huge with tentacles."

"Probably an Malbaro then. You both were lucky."

Vincent suddenly pulled out his mobile and started scanning for numbers. When the others asked what he was doing he murmured "Reeve has files of information on most monsters and their strengths and weaknesses gathered from our experiences and others. I am asking him to get a copy of them sent here so they can read them over and learn" he looked at Sasuke "will you be there to meet him and help study them?" Given something to do other than fret and worry, the wolf demon nodded "of course, and I'll make sure EVERYONE studies them."

An hour and a half later, Tifa was NOT surprised. They had arrived at the farm within 15 minutes and it had taken an mere following fifteen minutes for Naruto to befriend EVERY farm animal there, even the most temperamental ones. The Chocobo especially seemed fond of him. The first after arriving was the two males dog, who Tifa called 'Zackky', part to annoy the ex-SOLDIER, part because it acted like a big puppy-just like one of its masters. After arriving the dog took one looked at the blonde and crouched and growled viciously at him, totally out of character. Naruto grinned and growled back before they could warn him.

The dog snarled and launched at him and before anyone could prevent it the two were rolling around in the dirt and grass of the driveway. Tifa and the others were about to move to help and separate them when they noticed the sounds both were making.

The blonde was laughing loudly and the dog was barking happily.

Looking closely they could see the dogs tail wagging and Naruto being 'licked to death', causing them to relax and breathe a sigh of relief. Naruto was suddenly on his feet, yelled "C'MON!" and tore into the nearby barn, the happily barking dog on his heels. While Tifa told Cloud and Zack about the location of the new figure and what they wanted to do, Naruto dashed in and out of the barn laughing, sometimes followed by the dog, sometimes it and an row of excited hens and their chicks, sometimes some of the more gentler of the Chocobo's.

Just after she had finished explaining they noticed they hadn't seen Naruto come out for at least five minutes, even though they could still hear his occasional giggle. They entered the barn to look.

All the Chocobo's were back in their pens, eating, sleeping, preening themselves, whatever they were usually doing. Except one.

'Princess', named such for her aloof attitude, the two males prized gold chocobo was busy with something in her stall, cooing and making pleased sounds. And the pregnant blonde's giggles were coming from the stalls floor.

They slowly, as not to startle or alert Princess, crept to the stall and looked in. Naruto lay on the floor of the stall, laughing as Princess alternatively preened him and tickled him, obviously enjoying her actions and the boy's laughter. They could understand her fascination with him, Naruto was an bubbly person you just couldn't help liking, and his hair kind of made him look like an gold chocobo as well. They also noticed how occasionally she nuzzled the boy's stomach gently with her beak, cooing and warking to it as if talking to the unborn child.

Which wouldn't surprise them, Naruto HAD said the baby was at the age where it would be listening
to outside noise now, and if she shared her 'mothers' ability to understand or even communicate to planet life, it probably could on some level know what was being saying, maybe on an instinctual level.

Naruto suddenly looked up and by the slight tensing they knew he had seen him. Princess sensed his inattention and also looked up. Immediately the bird warred angrily and started kicking the wall they were looking over violently with one powerful leg. "Shh" Naruto soothed softly, rising and wrapping his arms around the neck under the head. "They are fine, family and friends. They won't hurt you."

Immediately the bird calmed, closing her eyes and nuzzling him with her head, almost like she was treating him like her chick. Cloud spoke "HOW did you make friends with her so quickly?! She tries to attack anyone else who touches her. We have so much trouble just trying to breed her as it is."

"THAT'S why" Naruto said, reaching up to gently scratch the spot just below the eye. The female cooed in appreciation, closing her eyes and pushing further into the boy's hand in pleasure. "You guys keep breeding her, she hates how she has to have chicks but before she can bond with them, you take them away. She IS the only light Chocobo here, she'll lonely for her own breed."

"Light?" they looked at him curiously and the boy scratched the back of his head in embarrassment with the hand not occupied "yeah, it's what the other Chocobo's call her. We may know them as gold, or yellow or so on, but they associate each other by things in nature. Like black are night, white are snow, yellow are sun, light blue are sky, red are blood and so on."

Cloud looked at his partner thoughtfully "I think we may take that guy up on his original offer, if that's the case then."
Zack nodded.
"What offer?" they asked.
We had another, an rich breeder who uses his Chocobo's for racing. We checked him out, he treats them right, like favorite and prized animals, who wanted to breed HIS gold with Princess. We originally refused, but if we tell him we consent if he trains and boards the resulting offspring here....." They understood. The mother chocobo could be with her chicks as they grew.

Zack spoke "Cloud knows how to handle the racing birds. Years ago he used to breed them for such, so he'll be able to control and curb their wild nature." He looked at Naruto "how's that?" The blonde looked at the bird who cooed and nuzzled him "she approves."

"Good" the blonde woman glared at the bird "now come out of there." Seeing the woman looking at her, Princess glared back, the two staring an staring contest. Tifa had the distinct impression of two mothers competing over a child. She was surprised that despite the ferocity of the glare the woman was sending, Princess wasn't backing down. Tifa wasn't surprised really, these simple birds faced monsters in the wild nearly every day, one human woman, despite her power, wasn't really that scary.

The glares were just starting to heat up when Naruto interrupted them, walking between them to interrupt the eye contact as he stepped out of the stall, frowning at Cloud "Princess says you're having trouble with an night? Maybe I can help?" Totally ignoring the two glaring females the two blondes moved out of the barn together, discussing the new female. Tifa and the rest of the group followed. In a fenced off reinforced enclosure outside was an black chocobo female, stalking around, angrily warking and making noises, generally looking pissed off.
"We found her in the wilds just outside our farm a few days ago" Cloud explained "her leg had been torn and obviously damaged from an monster attack. Usually Chocobo have powerful legs that can kill with a single hit in the right spot, or run fast enough to outspeed most of them, but she must have been surprised to be so badly damaged. We healed her leg enough with medicine to then use magic to fully heal everything up, but we had to sedate her just to look at it. I have had a LOT of once wild birds, but even Princess is tame compared to HER."

Naruto nodded and climbed the fence before they could protest. He approached the bird, looking back at them "whatever she does, don't attack or even defend me, she's no threat to me, she feels like she's angry because she's trying not to cry." He looked at them, rather, the blonde woman "she feels like you whenever you think of or mention Dan."

The woman pursed her lips and nodded. "Wait" Cloud said "you think she's lost her mate or chick to the monster? That is why she was injured and is so out of control, she's grieving?"
Naruto nodded and moved forward.

Contrary to popular belief, Chocobo's tended to mate for life in the wild, only taking another partner if the other died. However when domesticated, being bred by humans to multiple partners that instinct was overpowered by the heat of breeding season. Some more....illegal breeders even went out of their way to hunt down and capture wild Chocobo's and use drugs to breed them to their domesticated ones, claiming it gave their tame birds offspring an advantage over other people's racing birds.

Some of Cloud and Zack's birds may have once been wild, but they didn't force them to breed, they didn't go out and capture them and after healing any they find, they released them back into the wild. However SOME decided not to go, or were too badly damaged or scarred to be re released. So Cloud and Zack made sure they were happy where they were and were safe and warm and well fed.

Currently on Gaia there was just about even color of Chocobo in the rainbow and while some colors were rare, like the Gold, none were quiet so rare as the red- or the TRUE white. These birds were legendary in their existence, almost wiped out by a rumor in Rufus' fathers days that the feathers of a pure white could magically reproduce materia. Consequently the only whites seen these days were those normal Chocobo's either artificially bred or ones with the color 'bleached' out of them and the now known 'toy' whites who were about the size of a dog, but were the produce of Shinra Senior trying to make money of the legends.

The dead President of Shinra Electric Company had seen a way to make money off the legends of the whites, AND let people in apartments own their own or have an miniature pet for their kids and had the science department create an 'toy' sized white chocoobo. Only when the public discovered that the new pets were created with an limited lifespan so they would be forced to by more......well that idea didn't last long and the last of the toy Chocobo's now were as rare as the red.

The last time an real wild white chocobo was seen was when Cloud was five, and still living in Nibelheim.

But none were quite so rare as the red. Said to be able to use the attack 'Chocobo Meteor', the true wild breed Red were said to be whipped out, except the rumor of one level 99 who was last seen running around the Osmone Plains. Many had tried to capture him or her, but ALL had failed. Naruto approached the black, cooing something softly to it. The bird spun, warking angrily and charged him.
Tifa held her breath.
At the last second Naruto jumped out of her way, still cooing soothingly.

What followed was the chocobo hen charging, Naruto jumping aside while he spoke soothingly, for at least ten minutes. Weakened by her injuries and body struggling to heal, it didn't take long for the flightless bird to collapse in a heap, panting and wheezing. Naruto approached it slowly, still cooing and speaking soothingly, but on guard for any further action. He slowly wrapped both arms around the birds neck, never hesitating in his soothingly and gentle talk.

Finally he seemed to break through, because the bird began to answer back between gasps for breath, the soft warks and cooes. Naruto seemed to get more and more alarmed the more it spoke, eyes wide in horror and shock.

Suddenly he seemed to reach a decision. He swung himself up onto the birds back and they were off like a shot, heading for the far side of the fence. Before anyone could speak, there was an burst of chakra at the same time the bird jumped. "They're going to hit!" Tifa cried, only to have the bird not only soar over, but the same chakra cushion their landing.

Then they were off to the woman sannin's cry of "NARUTO YOU BRAT!!!!!!!"

Tifa saw a flash of red beside her and looked just in time to see Vincent being wrapped in his cloak and disappearing in a streak of red after the two. "It's alright" Tifa told the woman "Vincent is going with him. He travels faster in that form than even a Chocobo, see, he's already caught up." Sure enough the blonde riding a chocobo was soon side by side with a large streak of red.

"Nothing to do but wait for when they return" Tifa said "Vincent will watch over them and make sure they return safely." She looked at the black haired Uchiha standing still as a statue looking after them "you can't do anything right now, come inside with us." At first it looked like he was about to follow the blonde, but when the woman Hokage spoke his name sternly he turned reluctantly and followed them instead.

However the entire time inside he spent perched on the sill of the window facing the three's direction. For the following half an hour they organized rides, made lunch, leaving some for the blonde when he got back, and discussed in length to trip there and back around a map. At exactly thirty-one minutes since they left there was a slight noise and all eyes turned to find the older Uchiha standing, body at attention, eyes red and swirling.

"Uchiha?" the woman asked, but it was Tifa's soft question of "Itachi?" that received not only an answer or reaction. "They have returned" he said, his eyes turning straight to her, as if answering only to and for her.

Tifa frowned a little when she realized there was something going on here. It seemed ever since the two of them shared that pivotal moment on the roof, he had been deferring to her and her alone, like he was looking to her for encouragement and how to behave. He had done it in the hallway as well, like he looked to her for how he should act and be, and since that moment Tifa had had the feeling that she had taken responsibility for another life, like Denzel and Marlene, only in a more adult capacity.

It suddenly occurred to her that it was partly right. This man had never had a childhood, all his life and years had been as a weapon, his fathers weapon, then as a spy and double agent for his village- his VILLAGES weapon. Which was part of the reason when he got sick he had chosen death, that 'honorable fate' was all he knew could happen. If he was cured, what was there to go back to? To go
back as? He was a born-and-bred weapon, nothing more, he didn't know HOW to be anything other.

Even those short simple youthful memories of Sasuke as brothers were contaminated as such. He probably would have never made it afterwards as a civilian. But Tifa was a warrior, like him, someone he had bonded with in his moment of vulnerability. SHE understood him and was willing to help show him how to live, how to be a brother again, a true son with a real father-not that monster-and when the time came an uncle.

So what else could she do but nod, say "let's go" and the two, side by side, moved out towards the fenced in yard again. Behind them Tifa knew the group were confused, exchanging looks at this before following them out. Something was different this time when the two demon vessels-one astride an chocobo-were returning. Tifa's eyesight-enhanced by mako but not by the the extent of Cloud and Zack-saw something clutched tightly but gently in one of the blondes arms, something about the size of a football and black and fluffy.

It took only seconds for her to figure it out, she gasped and spun to Cloud and Zack, speaking her friends name softly, worried.

The blonde nodded at her unspoken question and turned to his lover "Zack, get the emergency chocobo kit" when the brunette nodded and disappeared into the barn, Cloud followed, but only after saying to Tifa "once he gets here, get him to bring it inside."

She nodded and he followed his lover inside to help set up.

It didn't take long for the bird to skid to a stop in front of them and the boy to slide off, approaching them cradling the limp bundle in his arms "help him!" he implored. Behind him the 'night' chocobo warked in fear and distress, also begging. The rest of the group saw what he held and not only gasped in shock but suddenly knew why he had done what he had. In his arms was the silent still form of an 'night' chocobo chick, barely a few weeks old, struggling to breathe and live.

Tifa turned aside and opened the path "in here" she said, pointing to the barn, "Cloud and Zack are setting up the emergency kit. If they can't do anything, he'll just return to the lifestream. But they'll do everything in their power to save him." Naruto ran inside, followed by the mother bird with a wark of concern. And the Hokage moved to follow.

When Tifa called out a question she stopped "I may be able to help" she said "I don't know anything about their physiology yet, but I may be able to maintain its.....mana until the boys can do some good."

Left alone with the Uchiha heir, Tifa spoke softly "let's prepare then while they're busy." The Uchiha nodded, following her to the group of birds Cloud told them to use. While they saddled and put the special bridles on the birds Tifa told the other all about their new world, the lifestream, the history, the power players, the people and how it all came together.

But most of all she told him about 'The Devil's Trio', Angeal Hewely, Genesis Rhaposis and most of all Sephiroth Valentine, his half brother now.

She told him about the deadly warrior, the caring General and most of all the MAN that Zack and Cloud had known, the man SHE had met before he went mad and Jenovah had possessed. "He was a great soft spoken man who cared for each of his men even if Shinra didn't. It hurt him whenever they got hurt or killed and he was even known to inform families himself even though he didn't have to, it certainly wasn't part of the job description. He wasn't one to open up to many, in fact he had only two friends, three if you count Zack, but he was only just opening to him before all that stuff
happened. When he DID make friends—he made them whole heartily—unfortunately for him” she explained about what had happened between the three and Zack and his mentor.

"I don't blame Sephiroth for what happened in Nibelheim anymore, not even really Jenovah anymore. I mean if YOU were trapped in an frozen body for at least two hundred years, knowing what was going on but unable to move, wouldn't you go nuts? Go nuts and want anyone and everyone around you to pay, not that I'm making excuses for her in the first place. No I blame THAT BASTARD, that bastard who used Sephiroth as an experiment before he could even be born, that bastard who screws with every life he touches, who looked at Cloud, Zack and Vincent and saw only playthings for his sick experiments.

Do you know he killed your father before using his body as an toy for his experiments? That he forced Cloud and Zack to watch as he dug into the others conscious but paralized bodies?” she shuddered in horror "Cloud has blocked most of those memories away in his own head to cope, but Zack can't. Sometimes I see him looking away in his head and I know by his face he's remembering” she shuddered and continued.

"It was all HIS fault, all of it, the sick perverted f...." she stopped herself, flushing, she didn't swear like that, and calmed down. She continued after a steadying breath "If it weren't for him, half the stuff that happened wouldn't have, your father, his love and Sephiroth would have been a family. You see when your father was around your age he was charged with body guarding an young promising scientist named Luecretcia Crescent. She was a little older than him, an apprentice really, but an beautiful woman. Even though Vincent had been an expert marksmen and highly trained TURK-like Reno—he was still an rookie and naive in the way of women. So it wasn't hard for her to seduce him."

The Uchiha frowned "why?"

"Vincent didn't find out until recently that she had actually knew his father, had a major crush on him you see. Vincent's father-Grimore-was an history teacher, he taught her all about the legends of Omega and Chaos, and because she had such a crush on him, she went on to research that. She found Chaos, freed him from his prison in an crystal, and began to experiment with it. However due to an accident and Grimore pushing her out of the way in time, the man was contaminated instead and died."

"I see" the Uchiha heir murmured "so she convinced herself he was her crush, or convinced herself she could remove her guilt by 'falling in love' with her crushes son."

Tifa nodded "Luecretcia was the assistant of an head scientist named Kayane Hojo, even though she also had her own projects. Hojo noticed this infatuation and wanted her for hisself, but he couldn't prove the thing between them had become physical because they were extremely careful" she glanced at the other "Shinra Senior had a rule against employees fraternizing with each other.

However there was one thing that Luecretcia couldn't soon hide, PROOF of their affair."

"Pregnancy" the black haired man nodded in understanding.

"Yes. Hojo got hold of an pregnancy test and proof of paternity that she had had and threatened both her and Vincent with exposure if she didn't do what he wanted. Knowing what would happen to Vincent for being the one to get her pregnant, she agreed. Luecretcia would not tell Vincent it was HIS baby and allow Hojo to use him and her in his experiments. Even though Vincent was hurt by the idea the woman he loved was having another mans baby—or so he thought—he still loved her and
did his job.

The experiments of Jenovah cells and pure mako made Luecretcia very ill and she even apparently
started having visions of what her son would become, and after watching her get sicker every day,
Vincent confronted Hojo.

Only to loose his life.

Hojo kept his body alive with mako and experimented on him even though his soul had fled long
ago to the lifestream, telling Luecretcia he would kill him outright if she didn't marry him." The
Uchiha heir frowned at her "marriage? Why?"

"Simple, to remove any of Luecretcia's rights to the child if she refused him. He forced her to
proclaim himself the father. By now desperate she stole Vincent's body from him and was trying to
bring him back. She had some desperate plan about using Vincent to stop her son when he went mad
like in her visions. She was going mad herself by then.
As soon as the child was born, Hojo had Luecretcia proclaimed unfit to be a mother and took the
child into his full custody. It was Luecretcia who put Chaos inside Vincent and Luecretcia who gave
him the proto-materia to control themselves."

"Proto-materia?" the other asked.

"Yes, you've seen Chaos when he's out" when the other nodded she continued "on here" she
touched her left side of her breast "There is an glowing clear ball with pink, white and silver swirling
around constantly." When he nodded again she ended "THAT is the proto-materia. It is the only one
of its kind and not only allows the lot of them control over themselves, but Vincent's connection and-
if necessary, his control over them. We also found out recently it was more." She told him how it
was used to awaken Omega "obviously the lifestream wanted Vincent and Chaos to safe-guard it so
no one could use it."

"Where is this woman now?" he asked.

"Well, that's hard to explain" Tifa said.

He froze and looked at her, the face and stance of a warrior on guard as he said evenly "what do you
mean?"

"Well" she sighed "it seems that all that mako and Jevovah cells didn't just effect Sephiroth in the
womb, but her as well. She became like Jenovah was, trapped in an body that won't move but in the
center of an mako crystal. But Vincent seems to hear her when she speaks, although I don't know if
that's wishful thinking or maybe he hears her through Chaos since he used to also reside in the same
one."

"Perhaps Tsunade-sama can do something about that" Itachi said "she is our worlds greatest healer,
there may be a way to reverse it with the serum from you that is being created."

"I don't know" Tifa said softly "her time is gone, Vincent has moved on from her and besides, what
if she doesn't want to come back?"

The Uchiha "hnned" and then spoke "we shall see." Tifa nodded "later let's speak to Vincent and her
together, see what they say, if Vincent wants to try and Lady Tsunade agrees she can, we'll see."
The other nodded. Tifa hesitated then reached into a pocket, pulling something out of her purse and handed it over to him "here, don't tell Zack I have this."
The male took it and slowly and carefully unfolded it.

A photo, of three figures, one female and two males. The first male was obviously Zack, wearing an dark blue uniform and with an huge sword strapped to his back.

The female was young, perhaps fifteen, long brown hair and wearing an skimpy cowgirl outfit. Even this young her breasts were large and she was definitely familiar. Innocence shone in her eyes but she still held herself like an warrior, but obviously by her stance she wasn't well trained as of yet.

The other man though, the man was different and reminded the Uchiha heir of himself in a lot of ways, a lot like a ninja, but at the same time he also reminded him of the man they were calling his new father. His body was taller than he had ever seen a ninja, even Kisame. He was muscular but not in an overpowering way, well built and held himself like one of the most superior warriors Itachi had ever seen, yet his eyes were soft and a little sad.

Tifa watched as the others sharingan eyes momentarily spun as he looked, realizing he was memorizing the photo.

The figure had long silver hair all the way down his back, an widows peak of hair on his forehead and his eyes were the most intense green he had ever seen. Itachi could DEFINITELY see his 'father' in this man, from the way he held himself, to the face shape. The nose and mouth were remarkably similar, but apart from that, he assumed the rest came from either the mother or the demonesses cells he was contaminated with at gestation.

"The build, hair color, eye color and height come from Jenovah" Tifa explained to him "however the widows peak and most of his personality came from Luecretcia. He got Vincent's agility, speed, nose, mouth and warrior sense. However Vincent said Lue's eyes were also green, just not that intense" she shrugged "but then again Mako intensifies eye color and Jenovah only had one useable eye, so it could be either one, you've seen Cloud and Zack's eyes and how they seem to glow."

When the other nodded she went on "that's because of the fact their eye color is so light, it makes them stand out. The darker the color, the less noticeable."

"Like yours" he said "I heard Tsunade-sama saying how YOU had been exposed to this...drug as well."

"Well yes, but it wasn't originally a drug. Unlike Cloud and the others I was never exposed like they were, my exposure was natural-sort of" she explained about the lifestream and mako and where it came from. Then about the refined mako like what Hojo had used, taking back the photo to put back in her purse.

Just in time too, cause everyone piled out of the barn and headed towards them. "How did it go? Did it work? Will he....?"

Naruto grinned in relief "he'll make it, thanks to Baa-chan, Cloud and Zack. They're leaving him in the barn hooked up to some nutrition for now with his mother to watch over him. I told her to alert them if anything goes wrong, and them to expect a racket if it does."
"You mean thanks to YOU Naruto" Tifa smiled at him, "if you hadn't gone to get him when you did, he'd be dead now." Naruto blushed shyly at the praise and scratched the back of his head in definite embarrassment "I was only helping an mother out, like I would any other person. I couldn't let an mother loose her child if there was a way I could possibly help. It wouldn't be right otherwise.

Tifa understood. Never having had a family, Naruto felt particularly protective of others.

Gathering their things together, the group prepared to start off. Only Tifa and Vincent had needed to gather overnight camping gear, she had been surprised to learn that it was standard behavior for the ninjas to carry such in one of those storage scrolls they always kept on them, just in case. Before they left, Zack and Cloud approached them with a large bag of feed for their rides when they stopped for the night and some the next day, The blonde woman sealing it inside one of her scrolls while Cloud explained dosage and even distribution.

Then they were off.

For the first day nothing happened much, they encountered no monsters, but it didn't surprise Tifa with three demonhuman hybrids and both Vincent and Itachi unknowingly-it seemed-letting off huge protective auras as they rode on either side of the blonde. It would have to be an truly dumb creature to attack with that.

Tifa rode beside the blonde woman, explaining why the Uchiha heir was seeming to ignore her, what she had realized and what she had told Itachi about Vincent, Lucrecia and Sephiroth, promising to show her the photo when they stopped for the night. When they did so, Tifa waited until Vincent left to hunt them dinner and after feeding the birds she sat and passed her photo to the woman. "Hmmm, I can certainly see what you are saying" she nodded "he is definitely his child."

Naruto immediately wanted to see the photo too, but when Tifa asked didn't he already know what he looked like through his dream, the pregnant male answered "I saw his long hair, body shape and weapon, but his face was always blurry. I want to see, he's my half brother!"

They passed it around to him.

"Wow" he said. Tifa expected his next comment to be something about how much he looked like Vincent, but was surprised when instead he said softly "he looks so sad."

Tifa remembered thinking the same thing when they first met, how the Great General, the Silver Beast, was sadder than she would have expected. She remembered thinking he should be tough and cold and....well...evil, but he wasn't, he was....human.

Then he had gone nuts.

Now she knew that wasn't even him, the poor man had been manipulated at every turn of his life, NOTHING had ever been his choice. It suddenly occurred to her, this is his second chance. If they could free him when he returned this time, he could be whatever he wished, he would be free to be who he wanted to be, it was his second chance of life.

They had to free him from Jenovah, not just for Vincent but for himself, to let him have the life he should have had, the life others took from him.

Something else occurred to her. He was supposed to be dead but had returned many times, why? Was Jenovah really so powerful she had defied the lifestream, had infected it? Or had the lifestream sent him back, trying to enable them to help him and save the man from the woman? Since they had
at the time failed to understand the difference and the truth, they had only gone and killed him again and again, so the very soul of the planet had tried, with all its strength one last time, using the sudden power surge of the battle in the village to pull the huge group here.

Vincent returned and the photo was slipped away, Naruto bouncing up to excitedly to help his new father skin, cut and dress the dinner before placing it over the fire. After everyone had eaten they bedded down for the night, Vincent taking first watch. The next day they took turns bathing at a nearby waterfall, packed and left.

They weren't far from their rest spot when Naruto suddenly halted, face alert. "Naruto?" Tsunade asked softly. Off in the distance Tifa heard something, an weak distressed call, something that made their mounts shift and call back. A chocobo call, a chocobo in distress.

The call came again, helpless and small, obviously a chick, and the pleading and helplessness of it tugged at their hearts, followed by the roar of a monster. Their birds shifted, warning their helplessness to help, but not Naruto, no he had to go. Clucking the bird he rode he spurred it forward at an full run, THIS TIME not only Vincent but Itachi close on his heels. Tifa shrugged at the other female and took off after them, the blonde woman close behind.

The two females were just in time to see Naruto, an red shape clutched tightly to his chest, roll under the swooping claw of an Bandersnatch.

While he was, Itachi was hitting it with the same sort of flame from his mouth that Sasuke had used about a week ago, trying to distract it from the other. Vincent was peppering its head with bullets from Cereberus on the opposite side. They almost had it until it howled, summoning more of its kind, two more. Tifa called out to the group "it's vulnerable to fire attacks and uses physical, but as you've just seen, it can summon more with a call."

The woman nodded "Naruto has the fire element through Kyuubi, as does The Uchiha clan...." Tifa added "and Vincent had a fire materia."

They heard a sudden growled "get everyone out of my way" and turned to find the blonde standing there locked onto the enemy with his eyes-eyes that were going red and slitted-hair gaining red streaks throughout and whiskers darkening and growing thicker.

When he spoke he had fangs and was lisping around them, his fingers were growing clawed as they held onto the little red fluffy bundle in his arms, which shivered and cooed in fright. Both the woman and Tifa called the two men off, the blonde woman turning to the once blonde with a warning of "be careful, gaki, you can't use too much or you endanger the baby."

"I know" he said "I know just how much I can and can't use."

"How?"

"She tells me."

Before anyone else could speak the two men were out of the way and in that split second, the once blonde was flashing in hand signs-with a little difficulty due to the small feathery bundle. With a call of "pheonix fire-great fireball!" he drew in a deep breath and out an huge fireball, which engulfed all three which shrieked and after an brief struggle to escape, collapsed to the ground, dead.

"He is definitely an Uchiha" the heir walked calmly towards them "THAT is an clan attack." Naruto
grinned cheekily at him as he started to change back rapidly, "what, you think only the teme gained from our mating?! It goes both ways you know." Behind them the bodies started to dissolve into green light and back to the lifestream, the blonde yelping at the sight "what the!!!

"It's alright" Tifa soothed, "they're just returning to the lifestream." Naruto frowned "why didn't the one father killed for us to eat last night do the same if they ALL do that?"

"The lifestream chose to let us have the body, while the soul returned to the lifestream. It happens sometimes. You see the lifestream is made up of ALL the dead souls, say your father's father is there, his mother, their parents and theirs and so on. So being the spirit of our planet it is intelligent. She always watches us, but extremely rarely interferes. She allowed us to have the body to eat."

"But isn't that interfering?" Tsunade said as Itachi approached with their mounts.

"Not really," she answered "at least not in the same way. I mean letting us have the meat is entirely different when you look at the rain she sent that healed those struck with the Geostigmata and the healing pool at Aeri's church and the destruction of Meteor. Although both those times were apparently Aeri causing the interference. Without her connection the Gaia we would all surely be dead by now."

"Really?!" Naruto looked excited and eager for more tales of the previous life of his daughter, unoccupied hand touching the lump and smiling "she knows we're talking about her."

"Naruto?" the blonde woman frowned at him. "About that granny...." Tifa suddenly realized something "you haven't told her about that yet, have you" she stared at the young man who looked guilty. "Naruto?" the woman repeated, this time firmer.

The pregnant blonde opened his mouth to explain, but Vincent interrupted "later" he headed towards them "right now we need to figure out what happened here and leave before any other creatures turn up." They nodded and Tifa spoke as she looked around "it looks like someone knew Meteor, they must have used it on the Bandersnatch when it attacked, but was killed. The chick must have been his or hers."

"None of the blood here is human" Vincent said, tapping his nose. "He's right" Naruto nodded "I don't smell human either, only those wolf-things and his mothers." They turned back to the young man "HIS?"

The blonde held out the bundle of shaking red feathers which made a protesting weak wark until he cuddled the bird back to his chest again. The young blonde looked at them with haunted horrified eyes "can you imagine watching your powerful mother being cut down in front of you trying to protect you?! Watching her take her last breath struggling to stay and protect you?!"

The group understood his protectiveness.

"But he told me what happened. He said just that, they were surprised by it. His mother fought back trying to protect him, but she had been badly wounded by it's first attack. We had arrived just like, seconds after she returned to the lifestream and just before it tried to kill him."

Something was getting Tifa, niggling at her just in the back of her head and suddenly it struck her. The chick was red, it's mother would be red. Naruto had just said the mother was powerful. Very few Chocobo out there was able to use 'Chocobo Meteor', one in particular said to be a rumor.....she looked at Vincent who looked startled himself, nodding in agreement, both over the chicks mother
and the decision to keep it quite for now.

It was too early to tell if the chick would inherit its mother's strength and power, but if Naruto raised it to belong to Aeris....wow, the combination!

When one of the chocobo mounts nudged the chick the reaction was shocking. Naruto moved the chick away, hissed "NO MINE!!" in a childish feminine voice and blue eyes went red and with three commas. Shock hit the other two males and females at this and the blaze of chakra not his.

Was that....Aeris?

Just as suddenly Naruto calmed down and was back to normal, blinking a few times blankly as if just awaking from a trance, blue eyes baffled but what just happened. Tifa looked at Vincent again. They had been right about the two's connection.

"I'm sorry" Naruto cooed at the startled and frightened bird, "I didn't mean that" and with a visible effort moved the chick back into their sight, allowing the concerned mounts to nuzzle and check over the baby bird, warbling and cooing their concern to him, comforting him and even preening him, yet not once did he leave Naruto's arms or let the young man release him.

When they were ready to leave they struck on the problem of how Naruto could travel safely carrying a chick.

As long as it was touching Naruto, he seemed fine, but when they tried to put him on one of the saddlebags it warbled in terror and began to panic, and anyone else trying to carry or just hold it sent it into complete hysteria. Tifa looked at the bags on her bird, the young man, the bird and then his mount and had an idea. She looked to the other woman "could you put my gear in one of your storage scrolls? I have an idea."

When the woman nodded, Tifa unpacked it and while she packed everything away inside, Tifa did some fiddling with the straps of the empty bag.

The Uchiha heir seemed to get what she was thinking because he approached with handfuls of soft, sweet-smelling grass, leaves and feathers, helping her line the bottom and sides of the bag before Tifa approached the young man "here, put him in here." Nodding the young man did so, putting the chick in comfortably and before the bird could panic again, Tifa said quickly "turn around."

When he did so both Tifa and the heir put it to his back, just between his shoulder-blades, strapping it in place. "Good idea" the blonde woman praised "an psuedo-egg. That will keep him calm."

"I was thinking more like a nest" Tifa said then shrugged "but whatever, it works."

"Thanks Tif" Naruto said softly.

Despite stopping twice more to rest the birds and feed them and the chick, they made good time and reached the outskirts of Junon earlier than expected.

Towards the end of the trek Tifa noticed the chick felt safe and warm enough to stick its head out of the saddlebag, head resting on the blonde's shoulder, little beady blue eyes watching their path ahead and Tifa was struck by how much the birds eyes mirrored the blondes. It wasn't really noticeable before, but with their heads side by side it was unmistakable.
Naruto had said that Aeris would have his blue eyes, so it wasn't that much of a surprise, considering their current connection.

Just outside Junon the chick warked in alarm, disappearing into the pack to shake while the others also seemed frightened, stamping and turning on their spot, obviously wanting to run. "Monster" Tifa told them "whatever it is is big and probably powerful too." The group prepared for an attack, drawing weapons and preparing jutsu's.

Something huge soon appeared, huge and insectoid, rearing back on hind legs. "GRANALDO!" Tifa screamed, the mounts warking it terror, fighting to get away under their riders. Vincent spoke as he tried to control his mount "they use Sleep, Blind, Confuse, Pain as attacks and Shell to protect themselves from incoming. It is vulnerable only to Wind attacks."

"Wind is Naruto's element, fire is Kyuubi's. Fortunately I also know some wind-based attacks and the Uchiha probably learned some through the sharingan." The silent young man nodded. Tifa spoke "don't have any wind materia on me, but Vincent...." the demon vessel threw her an glowing white ball "it is not leveled up yet, I found it by the blood pool left by the Bandersnatch."

"Thanks" with a quick look, Tifa joined the ball to her adamantium bangle and slid off the Chocobo.

To Tifa's surprise EVERY ONE of the mounts, once free of their riders, ran to hide behind Naruto. She figured since they had seen Naruto risk his life to save the chick, they figured he'd do the same for them as well. "Stay back, Naruto" Tifa said "these creatures are powerful, we can't risk Aeris." The young man snorted "I can take care of myself thank you."

"But what about Aeris" Tifa said, followed by the blonde woman with "you know as well as I how you have a habit of getting into trouble, gaki. YOU may be able to immediately bounce back, but Aeris doesn't have that ability. She's still so small and fragile. Just one strike to your stomach and you could loose her, miscarry in the worse."

A glance behind her and Tifa saw the blondes hands protectively cover the lump, eyes wide, and with the birds they backed slowly away.

Unfortunately it also caught the monsters attention who decided he would be a good place to start. With a cry the blonde took the brunt of the attack on his arm, slashed to the bone. With an grimace he flashed through hand signs and cried "wind jutsu; Dragon blades of the hurricane!" A sudden small tornado of wind sprang up in front of the creature, the winds wipping around them, the twister soon clearing into the form of one of those long serpentine dragons mostly seen in paintings and art in Wutai. The wind dragon reared back it's head, roared and released a gust of incredible force into the insect-like creatures direction.

As Tifa watched the gale-type wind turned into shuriken-type blades, striking the creature with incredible multiple force.

As each 'blade' struck the insectiod monster shrieked in fury and pain, jerking as it did and once the attack ended it rose to full height and let out what sounded surprisingly like a cry for help that sounded almost like an child calling for a parent, and attacked. "Ah hell" Tifa cursed as she and the blonde woman jumped away from an dangerous swipe of front legs "I hope that doesn't mean there are more around. This one is dangerous enough as it is." She risked a look behind her "how is your arm, Naruto?"

The woman looked also looked and frowned in concern at it "why aren't you healing as fast as
normal, gaki?!

"It's to the bone, baachan" the boy rolled his eyes at her "anything deeper than just skin and shallow flesh takes longer to heal, you know that. Remember the wound I got from Sasuke at the Valley Of The End and how that took at least a month to heal? Besides, about half my normal and half my demon chakra is going towards protecting and maintaining Aeris."

"Are you telling me since you've been pregnant you've been doing everything at only half strength?! NARUTO...."

The young man sighed "I knew how you'd react, treat me like an invalid, just like now, that's why I didn't tell you" he finished binding the wound with bandages from his back pouch. Even through the white cloth Tifa saw blood starting to come through, and that's not all, there was also an slight red glow. Vincent landed beside his son long enough to hand him an small blue flask "drink it all" and was attacking again.

"Wha....." Naruto looked at it in confusion so Tifa spoke "it's called a hi-potion. It will boost your healing." The young man shrugged, popped the top and downed the contents in one swallow. Dropping the empty vial he coughed "ewww" he wheezed "yuk." Tifa laughed "yeah, I know, but it works." She saw Naruto was staring at his bandaged arm "it feels weird, kinda hot."

"That's just it working." Naruto nodded, still staring until one of the mounts nudged him and warked. The young man blushed "right" and they turned back to the battle. Before he could even sign a voice spoke out, soft, unemotional but filled with power and authority "stop."

+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
Chapter 12

Every living being froze, eyes turning to the high cliff to the humans left. Standing at the top was a tall figure in an deep white cloak and hood, not a single sight of the figure underneath visible. The monster immediately went from it's guard position to unguarded, chattering excitedly, rushing at the figure. They started to call a warning to the figure when the huge insectiod slowed and with it's huge head gently nuzzled the figures side, like a pet seeking attention. Like it was seeking a reward for its actions.

Tifa could only watch open-mouthed, how....?
The figure reached out, stroking the creatures 'head' and the monster all but purred, obviously pleased and content.

How could a HUMAN gain a monster as a pet?! All but the Chocobo were vicious and killed humans-anything else really-on sight. How could someone have been accepted as a master of one, let alone become a pet to one!? Behind them Naruto choked suddenly and started to crack up, laughing louder and so badly he was bending over first then ended up rolling around on the ground clutching his sides and trying hard not to roll over the chick or his stomach.

An dangerous twitch grew over the blonde womans' eyes as she watched, her temper growing "gaki......." she growled. Painfully fighting his laughs and trying to rise to his feet, Naruto spoke to the figure in white, whipping tears from his eyes "I can't believe YOU got a pet, and an insect one at that, man, Kiba's gonna bust a gut with this!"

Naruto?" the group turned to frown at him, only for the Uchiha heir to answer in his soft almost emotionless voice "Abrahume." Tifa turned to look at him "the guy we came to find?" and the heir nodded. The blonde woman turned back to the figure and frowned "Abrahume?" and the cloth rustled as the figure nodded. The woman frowned deeper "but where'd the new pet come from?!"

"When my Kikaichuu and myself discovered us here, I sent out enough of my Kiki I could spare to locate others and one lot informed me of an town not far from here. During my journey there, I was attacked by this one and another. I beat them but allowed them to live, which seemed to have interested them. Since then they have followed me around like lost puppies, and have even persuaded others of their kind into my service. Once in the village, I met up with two others from Kohona in need of protection and in return for protecting the village from other creatures, the people gave us food and lodgings."

"And why are you out here now?"
"It seems on top of the creatures outside town, there is a band of human criminals terrorizing this village. I heard it call for me and....."
"....Thought it was telling you there were here." Tsunade finished for him "well your 'pet' injured Naruto to the bone at a time he can't risk injury!"

The figure didn't speak or move, however Tifa saw an small black flash from the blonde and the figure raised one arm, allowing an tiny black beetle with a red slash on its side to land onto his first finger on the right hand and raise it to look at closer.

After a while of just looking at it, the figure allowed it to shoot down the sleeve and disappear.

"I was unaware of Naruto's new capabilities, including to breed. It seems I am not the only one
discovering new strengths here" and with a wave of his hand he sent away the monster. He then jumped over the side of the cliff edge and landed lightly, approaching the group.

"You're not wrong, bug boy" Naruto grinned at him "EVERYONE we've discovered so far has had an dramatic increase in chakra and jutsus. Mine is my connection to the planet and all life on it. Obbachan's healing chakra has increased, Sasuke-teme's demon side has increased, so has Gaara niisan, ero-sannin says he can feel the earth more keenly, Haku-san says his kekkai Genkai ice is so overwhelmingly powerful, Itachi told me ever since he merged with the three-tailed, he's felt like he is getting stronger....."

The Uchiha heir nodded.

The hood rustled as the figure cocked his head at him "it seems we have a lot to discuss."

"You could say that, yeah."

"I know of a safe place to rest and talk, come" he turned and began walking towards town.

They followed, leading the Chocobo's with them. Once inside they left the large birds at the nearest stables and continued to follow the figure inside, who pushed the hood back to reveal an pale face, short black hair and, to their surprise, eyes that were mostly black except for a hair-thin line of red circling the pupil. The same black and red as his beetle, Tifa realized, it was like a marker. "So THAT'S what an Abrahume's eyes look like" the blonde woman murmured.

Tifa looked at her in surprise "you've NEVER seen it?"

"Never and not a single one" the woman answered "when I told you they never remove those glasses outside the clan earlier, I meant NEVER."

"But why now?" Tifa asked, only for the figure to answer himself, not once blinking as he looked back at them "it is apparent the villagers here are on edge, when I arrived here the people....disliked not being able to see them. I only remove them inside the town limits."

"That's because they are used to reading your expression by your eyes" Naruto said "YOU may show little, if any, emotion, but they think they can tell."

The male nodded.

They soon reached the outside of an large new restaurant with a large white banner. After looking up at the title Narutos' face broke out into painful hope as he looked at the figure in the white cloak "is it....." When the figure nodded the blonde tore into the restaurant, calling out "old man!!" as he did. The group entered in time to see an middle aged man looking out from the back room-the kitchen- with an open hopeful face "Naruto?"

"Yeah it's me old man!" As soon as the man had stepped out into the outer room, Naruto was on him, crying emotionally and babbling nonsense. "Naruto" the blonde woman said "he's a civilian not a ninja, he doesn't understand your babbling like we can."

Drawing back, whipping his tear-filled eyes and with an embarrassed smile the blonde apologized. The man smiled gently at the boy and rubbed him on the top of the head, mussing his hair "it's alright Naruto, we've known you since you were a child and you always get that way when you're overexcited."
The boy's embarrassed grin widened.

Tifa looked at the other woman curiously, Civilian? Known him since he was a child? ANOTHER father figure?

"Teuchi and his daughter have known Naruto practically since he could walk. They are civilians who owned an Ramen shop in Hidden Leaf. Ever since he was able to pay for his own food Naruto went there to eat because the two never treated him like the other villagers did. In fact Teuchi even was known to lower his prices so Naruto could afford to eat there if he was low on money."

Tifa understood. The boy was so obsessed with Ramen because as a child he had come to associate the food with kindness and acceptance. The fact he had an kindly man and girl welcoming him whenever he came around probably was his only escape sometimes from the cruelty of the rest of the village.

It was his haven and shelter from the cruelty of others. And now finding that same shelter here as well was such an emotional release to him....hence his reaction to the man's presence here. The pregnancy hormones probably didn't help either.

Naruto must have heard their conversation because he suddenly looked concerned "Ayame...." The man smiled and called out over his shoulder towards the kitchen "Aya-darling....!"

"Hai dad?" the face of an beautiful young woman a few years older then Naruto appeared in the doorway, flour staining her hair, face and apron. Still smiling the man moved aside so she could see the group with the grinning boy who called "hey Aya-niisan!" With a wild screech of joy and girly glee and a puff of flour the young woman had thrown herself at the blonde who caught her up and made sure that even when they were hugging and pressing against each other and laughing, she wasn't anywhere near his stomach.

However she must have accidentally whacked the pack because there was an muffled wark of protest and Naruto drew back and slightly more away from the excited young woman, head craning back to say "ah, sorry No'."

To which the birds answering wark sounded surprisingly like 'Yeah, well so you should be' before going quiet. "Naruto?" the young woman asked, curious and interested. Tsunade spoke next "No? You named it already?" To which the pregnant young man looked uncomfortable about something. "Naruto" the other blonde said sternly to which he looked away and mumbled something. The Uchiha heir and Abrahume heir looked stunned and surprised.

"Naruto" the woman growled to which the other blonde looked back sharply and growled back "I said his name is Nowari, alright!?" The blonde woman looked shell-shocked. She finally managed to stutter "you named him after my...."

"Little brother, yeah" the blonde whispered "sorry" he looked ashamed and looked down. "No, Naruto" she grasped his chin and forced him to look at her "you have nothing to be ashamed of. I'm...." she swallowed visibly "....glad. It will just take some getting use to, that's all."

"Really?" he asked hopefully then looked upset "if you're just saying that to....."

"No, Naruto" she said gently but sincerely "I mean it, KEEP the name. At least my brother is alive in more than my memories."

The blonde nodded solemnly "thanks, obbachan" and this time the woman just smiled at it.
As soon as they finished speaking there was a rustle and the little red head stuck out, looking around him.
The young woman squealed in girlish excitement "oh, he's so cute! What is he!"

The boy explained what Tifa had told them while shrugging out of the make-shift backpack so he could open it fully and show the father and daughter
The red feathered blue eyed chick.

"He's so cute" the young woman repeated, giggling as she scratched the spot directly between the eye and beak at Narutos' direction and the bird cooed happily and pushed into her hand insistently.

"Pity about his mother though," the man murmured sadly "no child should be without a parent this young, and if you're right about how big these guys get, he must barely be hatched. Barely out in the world and already an orphan, poor thing." He looked up and locked eyes with Naruto and added softly and seriously "no child should be deprived of an loving parent so young, it is just as well he found an figure willing to fill that hole."

Naruto handed the pack to Tifa as he pulled the chick fully out, showing the silent young man, father and daughter the fluffy red chick. The chick leaned forward, checking the three new figures out critically before it seemed satisfied and nuzzled up to the blondes chest and going back to sleep. Tifa moved aside slightly, just a shift of muscle really on the spot but there was an immediate gasp from behind her. Spinning around Tifa found an white clad blonde sitting on the dark table behind her, noodles in chopsticks halfway to his mouth, staring at the chick.

Ice blue eyes were wide in shocked knowledge, occupied hand trembling.

Naruto frowned at him "Ru'? What are YOU doing here?" He looked around "where are your bodyguards?" His eyes narrowed suspiciously "you didn't ditch them did you?!" The older man frowned at the pregnant blonde "Naruto? You KNOW who this guy is?!"

"Yeah" the blonde nodded "he's the Kage of Midgar, Rufus Shinra. He's SUPPOSED to have these four bodyguards called TURKS protecting him but two are at our apartment block, so the other two, a guy called Rude and a girl called Elena, SHOULD be here with him now" he glared at the young man "did you ditch them, Ru'?!" Calmly placing the chopsticks back in the bowl, the blonde in white drew himself up, straightening his jacket with dignity and said calmly "I assure you I can take care of myself, thank you."

"You DID!!" Naruto exclaimed "you ditched them! Do they even KNOW where you are?!" The young man opened his mouth to protest, but the older man spoke "so THAT was the four you had with you when you first came here!" The group looked at the man "FIRST?! You mean this ISN'T his first time here?!"

The older man shook his head "Ever since we opened he's been eating here every day. The first time he came he had three men and a woman all in black suits, but they didn't seemed happy being there, so he's came alone since then. He once tried to hire me as his own personal chef, but I didn't want to leave my regulars here so he just comes every day and eats nearly as much as you do every time, Naruto" the old man smiled at the pregnant blonde.

Naruto looked excited "you a fan of the food of the gods too, Ru'?"

"It seems so." Tifa was surprised to hear embarrassment in the other blondes voice. It had never
occurred to her that Rufus Shinra had a guilty vice, just like the rest of the world did in one form or another. And something so simple as food.

Tifa herself was partial to lemon cheesecake.
Not even Cloud knew about that one.
Speaking of which, she could really go with a......

Jerked out of her thoughts Tifa blinked as Naruto, followed by Tsunade then Itachi, slid into the padded bench attached to the corner table the other blonde sat in, joining the Shinra heir. Quickly taking her place by Itachi’s other side, the Abrahume heir on her other and the outside, Tifa joined them while the pregnant blonde and others put in their orders, the man’s eyebrows bouncing at the list the blonde gave "that's more than your usual, Naruto, are you alright?"

The blonde grinned "I've missed out on your cooking for more than a week, I have a lot to catch up on. And besides....." he blushed and looked away, mumbling "I'm kinda eating for two now."

"Naruto?" the man was confused. Tifa looked around, noticing the shop was empty now of all but them. "Maybe you should close shop and join us, we have a lot of this we need to tell you." The man nodded, let the Abrahume heir out long enough to inform certain people of where he would be if anything happened and then he and his daughter headed back to their kitchen to dismiss the rest of the staff for the day-after helping them cook the massive order of course.

Two hours later the entire group of two civilian chefs, one company heir, two clan heirs, one Hokage, one pregnant blonde and his sleeping chocobo chick and two ex-AVALANCHE members were seated around the table, picking at various dishes while they talked and filled each other in on what had happened and what it really meant.

Both the man and girl seemed delighted Naruto now had TWO fathers, the girl leaning over to excitedly discuss the pregnancy with the blonde and what she thought the new Aeris would look like, and what clothes and dresses and such they could put her in once she was born. "So" the man surmised "we are here because of our connection to Naruto and the spirit of this world wants you-or rather him-to save this worlds Jinchuuriki? That because of the fact you are unaware of them, despite your companion" he motioned at Vincent "you kept killing him off every time he returned."

"We didn't know it was Jenovah we spoke to, not Sephiroth" Tifa defended "She-he rather-was the same. She moved the same as him, spoke the same as him, said things to make us think she was actually him, just gone mad and, well, evil. And we never saw a seal. Not even Zack who was his friend, ever saw one."

"Of course she did" Tsunade snorted "she had his entire life to learn his mannerisms, movements and ways and figure out to mimic him."

"Well it was flawless" the white-clad blonde snorted "I knew him longer than Fair and Stryfe and even I couldn't tell the difference" he pulled a disc from his inner coat pocket and held it up "I WAS going to give you this later so you could study his movements and fighting skills and figure out how to fight back appropriately, but now that you're here...." he moved out of his seat to slip it into the player beneath the large screen TV in the dinning room across from them.

As the screen flickered into life, the blonde returned to his seat, speaking as he did "these are all the video records of his fighting, before and after Jenovah took possession of him that I could find, including training room records." he handed another in a case to Tsunade "THIS one contains records of all his strategy and military training, including what he did in Wutai for my father to win
The woman nodded, aware of the sensitive information she was being handed, promising "once we have been able to look at it, it will be destroyed-I swear on my honor as an Sanin AND Hokage." Believing her as a fellow leader, the other blonde nodded in acknowledgement of the vow and they all turned back to the video. The first was of three men all perched on the huge gun currently being dismantled in this town. One sat while the other leaned back against the wall beside the other like they were old friends, the third standing tall and proud in front of them, back to them and looking out contemplatively out to sea.

The two figures together were different ages to each other obviously, as was the standing one. The eldest was in his late thirties, wearing an blue-black uniform and they frowned when they recognized the young man-Zack Fairs' weapon on his back, called 'Buster Sword' they were told. He had short black hair slightly spiked at back and the beginning of stubble on his chin and a body built like Asuma had bore, his eyes a glowing purple that Tifa told them signified Mako exposure.

The second, seated, had hair the same shade as Gaaras' and cut to frame the bottom of his face. The youngest of the three he looked only his early twenties, the same as Naruto and his friends. He wore a long red coat over black leather and had his head buried in a book with a white cover so they couldn't see his face.

The sword on HIS back had a winged hilt with an fiery red blade.
His frame, even seated, reminded them of Itachi.

The last figure was like a mix of them both, incredibly tall, but muscular, not thin but more compact. He wore a black jacket and his long white dead-straight hair fell all the way down his back, stopping just to touch the small of his back. Even though they couldn't see his front, they recognized the hair and the coat as being the figure in the photograph Tifa had showed them, Sephiroth, Vincents' son and Narutos' half brother now.

"Who are they?" the young woman, Ayame, asked.

The blonde paused the picture and answered "the three together are known by many names. The Elite Three, The Devil's Trio, The Devils Elite. They had been friends since the seated and leaning one 'enlisted' in SOLDIER and took in Sephiroth as one of their group. They practically did everything together. They were the best of friends and inseparable, or so it seemed."

He then explained about what had happened between the three and their connection as experiments. "The youngest-seated-with red hair is Genesis, he was the first to go mad. The oldest-leaning-is Angeal, he was the mentor of Zack Fair."

"Ah" Narutos' face twisted "Zack told me about him." The group looked at him in surprise "Really? When?"

"On our way to Midgar that day you guys found us. We were talking about our sensais'. He idolized his and in the end the guy was really selfish to him."

"How so?" the other blonde male asked curiously. "Think about it. He CLAIMED by being killed he was protecting others from him becoming just like the other two was being selfless and heroic, but his actions weren't. By FORCING the one person who meant most to him and the other way around to kill him he was being incredibly selfish."
By making the one person in his life who meant anything to kill him to save himself and maybe others, he was increasing the guilt already on Zacks' shoulders. I mean he would have felt like he failed him, that by killing him he was forcing ZACK to bare the burden of the sins he did himself, no absolving him of them, and the guilt that instead of finding help for his sensai, he killed him instead. It's a wonder Zack didn't go mad himself from it. And that's just the surface stuff I got while talking to him. Who-knows what stuff he has festering deep down inside where he hides or represses it."

They understood, none more than Tifa who had grown close to the other 'country boy' after his reunion with Cloud years ago. He acted wild and 'puppy-like', but that covered an fragile and fiercely protective soul, crying out internally against all he had suffered. "The other, as you've probably guessed, is Sephiroth himself" they nodded and he pressed play again.

The red head was reading out loud from the book, something that sounded like poetry. Once done he raised his head to reveal the most beautiful glowing bluegreen eyes they had ever seen, almost fluorescent in color. As they watched the standing figure slowly turned during his reading, striding towards them but only speaking when he looked up "Loveless, act 1." His voice was soft and kind, but also held an steel edge.

When he looked at the two, the experienced ninja's all saw his eyes and face soften and a slight turning up of the corners of his mouth showing them his feelings for the others.
Tifa had been right, when the man gave his heart to those he saw as friends, he gave it fully-sadly for him it was in his eyes and that small but real smile.

The red head snapped the book shut "you remembered" as he turned slightly to place it on the spot he had just sat on a second before.

It was now they noticed the long-haired figure held an incredibly long katana in his left hand. He reached up with his right hand and as they watched tapped his right temple and spoke, amusement and an hint of sarcasm "how can I not when you've beaten it into my head?" ,Then with his sword instantly swapped both hands he made an motion with his left, a motion any swordsman recognized. Kind of an 'come on!' and 'enguard!' A signal to fight they recognized.

The sloucher stood while the red hair raised his strange sword. "Don't take Sephiroth lightly" the older warned the red head. "Humph" the red head scoffed "Noted."

And they both attacked the other.

The older man bowed out quickly but the red head-obviously frustrated by his inability to really compare-went wilder, even turning on the older for trying to be the voice of reason. What followed only an ninja or skilled swordsman or warrior could completely follow. The man was amazing, not even breaking a sweat while the red head obviously had trouble, both with the idea of being beaten and that he couldn't compare.

The battle only ended when the red head was injured accidentally.
The blonde woman frowned at the other blonde in white "the older one obviously gave his weapon to the boy Zack after he died, but why did he use that other, not it?"

Tifa spoke instead "Zack told me once. He said his father had it made for him before he left for SOLDIER, then spent the rest of his short life working and struggling to pay for it. This was his adopted father, not true, a man he loved and admired. Zack told me he said that use means dents, scratches and damage and he wanted to protect it from that to honor his fathers gift. But Zack convinced him that using it would honor it. After all, if he made it for him to use in battle...."
This-the other warriors at least-understood.

The following videos afterwards all was the man, some with the other two, some without, each showing just what Tifa had told them, a gentle soft-spoken man who was fierce but completely in control in battle. Before the next lot came on Rufus paused it and looked vaguely uncomfortable "the next lot are just after he 'went mad'" he looked at Tifa and the uncomfortableness increased "the reactor incident."

Tifa suddenly knew why he was uncomfortable. This was when her father was killed and she was so easily defeated by the long haired man, wait, shouldn't that be the man possessed by a demoness? Rufus was unsure how she would react to the others seeing her, injured and broken. If he had just played it, would she would have flown into a rage at him for embarrassing her and revealing her one moment of weakness?

Tifa thought about it, DID she care if they saw it? She wasn't that naive girl anymore, she had been in countless battles since then and while she may have lost some, she was proud of the fact she had survived this long. She had learned by experience that pride could get you killed if you let it get in your way. So she looked at the blonde and nodded her permission before something struck her "you WATCHED what happened that day?! Why didn't you...."

"Only in the editing process, I assure you" he soothed "I was neither aware or had any knowledge of what happened that day until informed of my 'father's' death, I assure you." "Oh" Tifa was oddly soothed by this before frowning "Then WHERE did you....."

The blonde man smiled gently "Reno. It seems as well as being an expert mechanic, he can get around nearly ANY security or firewall in a computer system with ease, even takes it as an challenge on his pride if he can't. Recently he managed to hack into some files left by Hojo" he shuddered "it seems he had been watching Lieutenant Fair and General Sephiroth and their group from the moment they entered town. It seems to be why he was able to take Stryfe and Fair away from the reactor before my TURKS arrived to help them, after witnessing the incident in the mansion with the library there, he and his forces were moving there."

Satisfied Tifa nodded "doesn't surprise me at all. Go ahead."
Now given permission the man pressed play again.

Tifa watched herself abuse Zack when he came to find her, screaming hate and abuse at him, and winced visibly to see that hurt, broken and guilty look on him, she would have to apologize next time she saw him. They say hindsight is 20-20, and Tifa knew the truth of herself now. Her PRIDE had been hurt, and that was the source of her anger. NOT her father's murder and the slaughter of the entire town, although that was a small part of it.

No she had years ago came to realize that her pride had been damaged. She was SO convinced she was this big skilled warrior from learning to fight in a small town where there were no TRUE warriors to fight against, that when faced with a truly skilled person she reverted to an child having a tantrum.

Since leaving Niblehiem she had grown, both in skill and experience, and in maturity of body and soul. And with that maturity she had been forced to face the truth of herself and her past, and with her forgiveness of Sephirot and acceptance of his madness and the life he had lived and suffered, she came to accept her own flaws and work to better them and deny her pride overpowering her-not to let it get in her way as an fighter and person.
Maybe that's why the Uchiha heir was drawn to her, he had recognized someone else who had long learned to deny the pride burning in you and live for the protection of another, to lock your soul to someone and use it to dictate your actions, her-the children she saw as her own and he the brother he thought he could never have as his own, but determined to make stronger.

The group continued to watch the part Tifa had never seen, Zack fought Sephiroth, holding his own, but Tifa knew he was holding back, whether because Sephiroth had SOME influence still and was fighting the alien woman for control-he wouldn't want to loose the only friend he had left in the world-combined with the massive guilt over the town, or that Jenovah was just amusing herself, she couldn't tell.

Tifa liked to think it was the first one though.

Just as she thought this, after only seconds it seemed, he was being beaten and knocked out of the room into one of the metal containment pods, bending the tough metal like paper. Next was when Cloud found her and she frowned when she realized something else. She had made him promise to be there to save her when she needed him, yet she thought she was such an skilled fighter at the time.

Talk about contradictions.

So he went to fight Sephiroth, while she was carried away. She never got to witness what happened to him as he fought to avenge their village and people and protect her when she was already safe and she watched what happened with horror and fear.

Cloud had only been human and no more than a boy of fourteen or fifteen then, and yet SHE thought herself a warrior! He was barely able to lift Buster Sword as it is, yet he impaled the silver haired general on it! Cloud was just a child, an prepubescent teen, yet he was stabbed THREE times, actually pulled himself further onto the sword so he could use it to hit the general, even the man\alien woman was stunned by his actions, eyes wide and repeating the word "IMPOSSIBLE!" with everything new Cloud did.

Eventually he was able to throw Cloud, bleeding heavily and severely wounded, out of the room where Zack was, then cradling Jenovah's head, jumped into the mako reactor.

"Ah, I see" Tsunade nodded at this.
"What?" they asked her.

"By taking the head with him-or HER in this case-she ensured not only her return through the lifestream, but direct exposure to the strongest cells around the brain ensured WHEN she DID return, due to the exposure to such, her new body would be cemented in her control. In essence she used an power boost of her own original cells to ensure her control over the body, with the mako to boost HER during the harvest."

They kind of understood this.

"So you are sure SHE was the one in control after the bit in the mansion?" Tifa asked hopefully. If it turned out that Sephiroth wasn't in control of himself, if Jenovah....

"Yep!" Naruto grinned at them "as shinobi we are trained to 'look underneath the underneath.' Sometimes it's the only way to survive an battle, let alone a fight. I used to act stupid, but I never was. Think about it, you act stupid and people underestimate you" he giggled silly at this, then grew
"I think all us Shinobi here saw the same thing, right?" He looked around as the three other Leaf Ninja with him who echoed each others serious nods.
"What would that be?" Rufus Shinra asked him.

"There is a reason why shinobi are like us" Naruto motioned at the other three "and not more like Gai-sensei and Asuma-sensei was. From when we start at the academy or earlier in clans-speed, stamina and agility are encouraged more than strength, although that is also part of it. With speed and stamina and agility you can either try to outlast an enemy or escape."

"So" Tifa asked him "all THAT TYPE of training leads to developing an similar body type to everyone else." Naruto nodded "there are some who develop strength along with the others, but usually it means sacrificing one of the other skills completely or to some degree."

"So?" the man-who Tifa had yet to learn his name-asked. "So males and female develop different styles of fighting because of their different body types and strengths. Granny?" he looked at the woman. She nodded, slid out of the seat, motioning the Uchiha heir with her, who looked at Tifa for guidance.

"Go ahead" she encouraged with a nod "just spar though."
He nodded and followed the older woman out.

At first the two stood just in the space in front of their table, trading a blur of blows and kicks, then they slowed, allowing them to see the movements more clearly.

"Do you see?" Naruto asked and when the group shook their heads, Naruto called for them to slow down so they could witness each motion from start to finish "Watch their hips and waists when they start the blow all the way through to end. That's a good start." So they did and Tifa saw it first "Lady Tsunade doesn't have as much flexibility in the hips as Itachi, but she has more flexibility in other ways."

"Right" Naruto said "women have wider hips due to the ability to conceive and give birth, while a male has an more compact one, allowing more flexibility to someone with an more swimmers body-or someone grown up with concentration on that area, to use it to his advantage." Itachi showed this by ducking under a punch, first backwards at the waist and then forwards, then punching out to show how Tsunade had to move the same sort of way to avoid it.

"However even though a woman isn't as narrow, they have other advantages over this and an higher capability for more flexible areas."

Which they showed as well. Then Naruto motioned at the table and the two returned. Once everyone was comfortable they went on with Rufus adding "And what is your point?"

"During the fighting we witnessed a few times when he seemed to be fighting with limit, around the waist but moving like he should be more flexible than he was, like she was forgetting the way she was acting. Do you have more of him, we can show you."

"Sure" Rufus played the disc again.

The four then preceded to point each part out to them so soon they were able to see the same thing they did.
They could watch an entire fight scene-like with Cloud and Kadaj-turned-Sephiroth in Midgar, and pick each bit out.

Tifa also pointed out how the man, before his possession, was hardly an talker, in fact he seemed to be inordinately quiet—except for with his friends and the situation demanded an explanation or giving out commands. Yet now he seemed to talk almost constantly "it's almost like she's trying to convince us she's him."

"You're right" Rufus Shinra nodded as he looked at the blank screen thoughtfully "now we know what to look for, it is obvious." Naruto looked suddenly eager "do you have anything on Aeris? Even a picture? I haven't seen my daughters original appearance yet." Rufus smiled at him "I thought you would ask for something of the sort" he pulled an folder from his inner coat pocket and held it out to him.

Naruto eagerly took it, nearly tearing it open. He past the information over to Tsunade to read while he closely examined the photographs and seemed to be memorizing her image. At one point his eyes went red with the Sharingan again on the largest most detailed picture and once his eyes faded back to blue, Naruto smiled gently and looked down, stroking his stomach gently.

Tifa jolted with the thought that while he had examined and memorized the images, Aeris was curious over her past appearance and had also done so, which Naruto thought was cute. Which lead to another thought. Aeris was only just becoming aware of herself and those outside her environment and by the looks of things starting to interact with it. How much would that change as she continued to change as she further developed? What sort of things would she—or rather NARUTO—become capable of?

What would they expect as time continued?

Tsunade suddenly frowned and shifted the pages in confusion as she continued to read. After an noise of concern and confusion she looked at the blonde male in white "is this true?" and waved the pages. "After some heavy investigation into my father, Ghast and Hojo's workings we confirmed it. Yes, it's true."

"Ooba-chan?" Naruto looked worried "what's wrong?"

"It seemed your daughter's previous incarceration was meant to have a brother, at least HALF brother, but circumstances prevented it—or rather changed it."

"Really?! Who?!" Naruto looked excited. "Sephiroth."

Stunned silence.

"What?!" Tifa gasped at her in disbelief.

"According to these records Aeris' mother was exposed to Jenovah cells as well—just like Lucreticia Cresent was, only since she was already Cetra—or at least half, her body reacted violently to it. Aeris was born almost premature and with the damage from the Jenovah cells and difficult labor, the woman only survived long enough to reach the train station in sector 7 and give the child to an kindly older woman before she died. She would never have survived his conception and birth."

"So, Hojo moved his plans to an more convenient source, Lue and MY child."
"Unfortunately yes. Your little illicit liaison provided him with the perfect replacement at a time they desperately needed one" Rufus said this "meaning if you both had not done what you did at the time you did, controlling yourself and leaving it to an later date, he probably wouldn't have cared-or moved his attention to someone else's pregnancy." Vincent didn't know whether to be mad that they had been chosen out of who-knows who, relieved that someone else, maybe an young innocent family, wasn't torn apart like them, furious over the way Rufus Shinra described their love with such disapproval and contempt or embarrassed about being seen as an teen on a wild 'oat sowing' mission.

"You disapprove of our relationship" he looked threateningly at the younger man, but was stunned out of any other mood as the man laughed at him "well now that would make me worse than you, wouldn't it, since I have been with Tseng Xian since my return after the fall of meteor! Since I am in the same sort of position as you both were." Vincent blinked at him "what do you mean?"

"Well I am in the position of power Lucreticia Crescent was and Tseng is in the same YOU were. However even though Tseng is by no means in love with me, he is by no means FORCED into our kind of relationship. And we are not the only ones. Reno and Rude are partners in more than their jobs." This was news to Tifa and something she had never considered before. And why not? Those two were almost inseparable!

"What about Elena? Has she found anyone yet?" The blonde in white answered "well, first she was dating Kunsel just after she joined-keeping it secret from everyone but her fellow TURKS of course. Then after Sephiroth killed the old man she was visibly dating Adrian......"

"Kunsel? Adrian?" Naruto asked curiously.

"Kunsel was an lower-class SOLDIER friend of Zack Fair" the other blonde man explained. "He was known to be an expert in stealth and gathering information...."
"In other words, he was a pervert" Tifa translated to have Rufus roll his eyes at her, but agree "quiet. And Adrain was also one of my TURKS......."

"Zack's second cousin-also from Gongagga" Tifa supplied. "Yes, he was later killed during Meteor Fall" the blonde in white didn't react this time "however she does not appear to be with anyone at the moment. "Taking a break from relationships for now", I was informed recently." Tifa understood, but in her peripheral vision she saw Itachi eying her thoughtfully. Was HE considering her for an relationship?

Tifa had standards, rules for those she dated or considered dating, Cloud had learned that long ago when they were kids.

Like rule 1-they had to have honor.

Itachi had sacrificed himself for his village and brother, even at the cost of his own soul. Definitely something she respected and understood.

Rule 2-They had to understand her as a warrior.

Some men had assumed since she was a barmaid and owner she was either dumb or drinking her products herself, or by dating her they were entitled to free alcohol, in which case when she showed ANY skill, it scared them off-or when she refused them a bar tab. However Itachi had shared that moment of complete understanding with her, he would not only understand her, but respect her experience.
Rule 3-they had to be able to beat her at a fair fight.

Looking at Itachi she KNEW without a doubt he could do that. The man was raised-from birth probably-to be a weapon, first for his family, then the village and the criminal organization he belonged to. That plus the edition of the three tailed now a part of him, he was no longer just a weapon but an deadly demon. However even that didn't scare her. Quiet the contrary, she shocked herself by feeling both affection and arousal for him. She blinked in surprise at him.

Only to have him blink back, and that wasn't all. She suddenly noticed she had three other sets of eyes on her, Vincent, Naruto and the figure in a white cloak and hood. And all four wore exactly the same expression on them, like they could smell her sudden arousal. Damnit, three demons and an boy in sync with natures insects, they more than likely could.

"What!?" she demanded, starting down the other three while she watched the Uchiha Heir from the corner of her eyes.

Naruto was the first to react. He smiled widely like he knew a secret she didn't and looked away "I didn't say anything" the grin widened cheekily as he tried to pretend to be interested in the wallpaper. Vincent just blinked a few times at her, then his eyes went to Itachi, as if sensing something no one else could from him.

The bug ninja just politely looked away, as if it was no longer his business, or of any interest to him. Itachi, on the other hand, seemed just confused that she could find him of any interest.
Chapter 13

Tifa wanted to assure the ninja of her interest in him as a man as well as a ninja, but was interrupted by a frantic knocking on the restaurant door. Frowning the older man rose to answer, there was hurried urgent whispers and he turned to look at the white cloaked ninja, two words only "they're here." The boy frowned minutely and stood, followed by his fellow ninja's "Shino?"

The older man spoke out "lately this place has been terrorized by a group of thugs. Shino-sama has tried to stop them without killing anyone, but either they're incredibly stupid to screw with a ninja or are more than they seem."

"I'm coming" Naruto slid out of his seat after him, followed by the other two and Tifa. It was then Tifa noticed the boy no longer wore the bandage around his arm. Had he already healed, or did the blonde healer fix it while they were watching the DVD?

The group followed the frantic man through the street until they were headed to the merchant quarter and the sound of raised frightened voices and gruff nasty ones. When they were close enough Tifa was able to understand words. The thugs were shaking the merchants down for 'protection money'.

She shook her head sadly, why did they always call it that? A stupid group in Midgar had even tried it on Tifa and others in their street, one had even tried to feel her up-thinking it was his privilege and she was too weak to do anything about it, that was until she had beaten the entire group single handed IN PUBLIC, ensuring they would be too humiliated to return ever again.

Of course it was nothing compared to ZACK's vengeance when HE found out. Zack was everyone's hero, including hers apparently. The next thing she knew there was an commotion on her street, laughing, jeering and cheering.

Curious she went to investigate.

Five familiar beaten men, more bruised and beaten then when she had done it, were walking down the road, butt naked, each wearing an sign around their necks.

'LOOSER!!' It read 'WE TRY TO BE TOUGH, BUT GET BEATEN UP BY AN COUNTRY GIRL AND BARMAID!!

The men were walking down the street, cringing at the people around them, but they kept looking back at an darkened alleyway entrance. Following their eyes she saw a figure standing there, arms crossed over his broad chest, eyes hard and locked on the men, one foot raised to rest on the wall behind him with his shoulders.

Zack.

Later she had questioned him about it and if he thought she couldn't take care of herself. In a rare moment of seriousness and the truly protective man underneath the 'puppy' he shook his head solemnly "you are family, Tifa, like a sister. NO ONE threatens my family. Besides, it was either me or Cloud or Barrett. How much easier do you think THEY would have gone on them?"

Tifa shivered when she realized he was right. They got off easy. She then shrugged mentally, they
would just do the same here as she had originally. They reached the group of men and one woman hassling an stall vender currently, one man gripping his shirt and yanking him up so he was in the terrified man's face. The Hokage grunted "Uchiha".

With barely and the flick of his wrist, the new demon sent something small sailing through the air to embed into the thugs hand holding the shirt.
A small wooden needle, barely the size of a toothpick.
The thug cried out in surprise and pain, dropping the relieved man. He tried to remove it, but the place the Uchiha heir had chosen would cause maximum pain to remove.

As the group turned to look at them Tifa gasped, "guys, they're ex-SOLDIERS, either that or Mako enhanced."

"Great" the lady Tsunade cracked her knuckles and grinned "a challenge. I was getting bored."
"Hey!" Naruto called out "leave those people alone!"
"Or what!" the lead thug with the needle in his hand said "we're ex-SOLDIER, you can't beat us! None can!"

"Oh really" Tifa grinned at their arrogance "do you remember the Wutai war? What about their elite? These guys...." she motioned at the four "are ninja's, the kind trained since birth to kill. They may not be mako enhanced fighters, but the entire planet blesses their moves. They make those elite fighters look like children playing." The head thug snorted "we won the war against those losers, those guys will fall just as easy!"

Tifa shook her head "YOU didn't win, Sephiroth did, along with Angeal and Genesis. YOU guys were getting slaughtered before then. Besides, THESE guys aren't actually Wutain, they're from another world, a world where only the strongest survive. YOU guys are definitely NOT it, not even in their league." The head thug snorted "we could have beaten Sephiroth" Vincent growled and Tifa laughed out loud "you would have had no chance at all, he would have killed you in seconds. Besides" she motioned at the ninja's "I hear you've been having trouble with one of them anyway" and motioned at the white cloaked figure.

The bully scoffed "he can't stop us."

"There's a reason for that" Tifa said "you see, they are ordered not to harm citizens without permission."

"So?" the thug snorted again.

"So, it just so happens that his leader is here" she motioned at Tsunade who grinned sardonically and creaked her knuckles again "so all bets and hesitation is off" she grinned and made a show of putting on her gloves and cracking her own "I HATE bullies, we can really let loose." She went into an fighters stance and motioned at them "bring it on."

"Bitch!" the head bully ran towards her. Tifa looked at the others as she easily defended against his attacks "don't kill them, the authorities here decides that. Just....rough them up, a LOT."

"Pooh" grunted Naruto "spoil sport."

What followed was an uneven fight, uneven because the ninja's were only using taijutsu, But still the idiotic bullies were no match for the six. Even Vincent decided to fight without his guns, his frame looking nowhere near capable of his feats, yet Tifa knew he wasn't using his demon strength or
enhancements, pure experience, training and skill. Now that he wasn't using his advantages, she certainly saw the similarities to Reno, Rude and Elena's fighting styles. Turk training obviously.

"You're good, for someone without ninja training" the blonde Hokage grunted, catching an fist that flew at her face.
"Thanks" Tifa grinned back. Naruto, on her other side, grinned "wanna spar sometime?"

"Sure" she smiled back, than anticipated the look from the other woman "AFTER Aeris is born."

"Spoil sport" the boy glared at his 'aunt figure' when he said it this time. The woman just grunted at this. Tifa ducked a swing "no wonder SOLDIER didn't last past Sephiroth and the other two if the grunts are THIS BAD. Looks like the Devils Trio, Zack and Cloud were the only ones with any talent for fighting at all."

"I agree" the woman grunted "even Naruto fresh out of the Academy wasn't this bad."
"HEY!" the boy yelled.

"It's true" the woman said "I SAW your scores, by both Iruka and Kakashi, BOTH of Iruka's." The boy cocked his head at her, whether out of curiosity or avoiding a blow was uncertain "BOTH of Iruka's? What do you mean?"

The woman snorted at this "you may have fooled everyone else, but he's a teacher and knows every time you did your tests they were you holding back. So he kept an secret score book. Every time you avoided the ANBU easily, every time you snuck in somewhere undetected, he evaluated you against current scores in the Academic tests and put it down as either homework or extracurricular activities. You may think your actions with Mizuki was what actually what allowed you to pass, but you already had."

Naruto cracked up and bent over at the waist, coincidentally avoiding a blow to the head as he did "crafty bugger! I should have known he would have known! And to put it down as homework!" he shifted to the side as if about to fall sideways with laughter and avoided another shot. He fell, Tifa seeing a flash as one leg went out, striking the Ex-SOLDIER in the side of the head and instantly knocking him out cold as he did.

Naruto stopped laughing, looked at the crumpled man blankly for a second as if he hadn't meant to hit him-with his head sideways like an curious fox-then shrugged and pulled himself to his feet and grinned "NEXT!"

"Baka" the blonde woman smiled fondly at her 'nephew', shook her head and with one blow knocked out his opponent out. On Tifa's other side she noticed Itachi-who was just calmly avoiding each blow his opponent unleashed without actually seeming to move-strike HIS with an flash of movement. The thug dropped without a sound.

Next the white cloaked figure easily knocked out his opponent.
The last two thugs and their female companion looked at them, shock, fear and anxiety, looking like they desperately wanted to run.

"Think about it, seriously" Tifa said to them "I warned the others, they didn't listen. NOW where are they? I'd say the WRO probably know by now and are probably almost here with either some mako enhanced members or binds. If you guys give yourselves up, they'll probably go easier on you than these guys." The woman opened her mouth, looked thoughtful but nothing came out. One of the other males did the same but the final one looked pissed of at the 'threat'.

Tifa sighed, there was always one that either saw itself as the faithful favorite of the gang leader, or thought it was really the tougher one of the group, despite the fact it couldn't beat the leader itself, always waiting it's opportunity to take over.

Before Tifa could warn him he was pulling his gun.
A shot sounded in the air.

Tifa turned to say thanks to Vincent, only to find he hadn't been the one, he looked as startled as her. Tifa turned to see the thug nursing his bleeding hand, an hole blown right through his palm, gun forgotten on the ground. Naruto was the one to answer their questions with an grin of "nice shot, Ru."

There, standing behind lady Tsunade with his smoking gun raised to the sky and flanked by Rude, Elena, and an third TURK unfamiliar to Tifa, was Rufus Shinra. And he looked pissed off, in a major way, he hadn't even looked that way when AVALANCHE had beat him on top of Shinra tower and killed Dark Nation.

Or when the remnants turned up, hurting Reno and Rude and threatening Midgar. Frankly he kinda looked scary this way, (and sexy in an unattainable way) he reminded Tifa of insane Sephiroth.

There was a noise in front of Tifa and she spun back to find the head bully conscious, cringing and stuttering the white-clad blondes name, followed by "S...s...sir." Tifa could only theorize that the blondes identity and relationship to the old president, plus years of 'training' (brainwashing more like) made the ex-SOLDIERS obedient and loyal still to the company, even though it had been disbanded after the old presidents death.

If Rufus played this right, it could work in their favor.

The Shinra heir obviously thought so as well for he turned thunderous blue\grey eyes onto the leader. "I was told by loyal subjects in this town how it was being terrorized by mako enhanced people. I thought there was NO WAY my SOLDIERS could be doing this, disbanded or not my SOLDIERS aren't thugs, they are an glorious representation of my company, only to find I was wrong!" He practically yelled the last part in his fury, causing the man to cringe in shame.

"You are an disgrace to the SOLDIER name and my company, all of you!" The man cringed down deeper, followed by the other members, the ones conscious or otherwise awake. Except the one with an hole in his hand, he sneered "we don't work for you anymore remember Mr President" the title was sarcastic. Rufus glared at the man "you obviously didn't read the contract you signed when you became SOLDIER, did you." When the man looked uncertain and a little panicked the heir went on, waving an piece of paper in his hand around "look familiar?"

The panic increased.

"This is a copy of the standard SOLDIER contract father got each of you to sign before you started mako injections, just after you were promoted to SOLDIER from TROOPER. It says that for the rest of your lives you belong to him-therefore as his heir-ME. While allowed to retire or leave, you would be required to come back if and when you may be needed and all acts are to be honorable as this reflects on Shinra. You're actions against civilians let alone fellow Shinra employees is definitely unhonorable, so we reserve the right to punish you for them how we see fit. Humm, I think those you wronged should choose."
"Or" Tifa called out "you could give yourselves up willingly to the WRO and accept Reeve's punishment." Looking around at the sea of hateful and pissed off citizens around them, the men held their hands out to the TURKS, "we'll surrender to the WRO, peacefully."

An hour later they were back at the restaurant, preparing to leave. The older man and his daughter wanted to come, but couldn't bare to leave their regulars, but fortunately had a young apprentice they had trained who was extremely reliable and honest and his family were hard workers looking for an business, so they decided to give them a try of running it, Rufus promising to tell them immediately it anything happened there.

He also offered them a business in Midgar to convert, obviously eager to have them nearby to him, but the two politely declined-for now-they just wanted to relax for a while and maybe only cook for the ninjas. The blonde looked disappointed-crushed really but too polite to express such-but managed to subliminally angle some dinner invitations out of Naruto under the pretense of checking on Temari's condition and talking to Tseng and the doctor about the progress of the serum made from Tifa's blood and tissue.

Before he left, Tifa pulled him aside "about those contracts, is that the truth?"
The blonde nodded.
She frowned "the why haven't you used them to get Zack and Cloud back into you control?"

He shook his head "here they were convenient to use, but I don't count them legal anymore. Besides, Zack Fair officially died eight years ago in the mako reactor in Nibelheim, meaning his contract was null and void when father issued his death certificate to allow Hojo to use him as an experiment. As for Stryfe, he was never a SOLDIER in other than his own head. TROOPERS only had an standard five year contract, which COULD be renewed, but wasn't, so has since expired. Legally, they are free and I have no claim to them."

"Oh" Tifa nodded in understanding.

"If you wish I can give the two citizens an lift back to Midgar with myself and my TURKS, Mr Tuechi doesn't look the type to be able to ride an Choocobo comfortably for any amount of time." Tifa saw his point "I don't know, let's ask."

After a bit of trouble they finally decided that lady Tsunade and the older man would travel back to Midgar with Rufus and his TURKS via Reno and his chopper while his daughter-at her fathers insistence-the white cloaked ninja and the rest would return by the large birds, returning them back to Cloud and his farm. This would be necessary, as Naruto needed advice and tutoring on how to care for an chick safely and properly.

Once done then the group would return with Tifa to the apartment building where they would reunite with the two and the rest of the shinobi and the children.

They made it back to the farm in half their previous time, mainly because Naruto's emotions were going haywire. He kept riding ahead of them, peeling with laughter, the girl riding after him, causing the Uchiha heir and Vincent to have to speed up to catch up and then THEY had to follow faster. At the farm Naruto was given instructions on the chicks care, names and location of people in Midgar for everything he needed and they piled into the car to head back.
They discovered at the apartment block that not only had the man and woman beat them back but there was three new figures.

There was a woman a little younger than the restaurant owner and her son, who seemed fascinated with the older man's daughter, causing her to blush at his attention and a figure from the photo, the man in the black bandanna and glasses, the three boys teacher, Ebisu. The woman and boy, she soon learned, was two old friends of Naruto, also civilians, the family of the bridge-builder from the groups first mission, the same one that Haku was killed on.

It seemed the chick liked the kids, it didn't take long for the two to end up seated on the floor, the chick walking back and forth unsteadily between their legs, pulling their hair playfully and playing with them. Almost as soon as he saw Naruto was unoccupied Sasuke came forward and without a word seized his mates arm and tried to drag him away. Naruto protested, calling him "TEME!!" as he did. The Uchiha just 'hnne'd and continued to drag him towards the bedroom.

Tifa blushed when she realized what he was going to do.

"Wait!" the blonde pulled free and moved to the kids and chick, who looked up at his approach. He smiled at the two children and knelt down beside them "can I ask you guys a favor?"

"Of course Naru" Marlene looked serious. "Can you take care of No' for me for a while? He's only a baby so even if he's smart, he's too little to be by himself." Marlene caught the chick up and hugged it close to her chest protectively, nodding solemnly. "Don't worry, Naruto, he's due for a feeding so I'll get the kids to do so. Besides, they help Zack and Cloud sometimes at the farm, they know what to do."

"Thanks Tif" and this time he allowed Sasuke to drag him away, blushing and muttering under his breath about "horny Teme's."
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tifa smiled gently as she watched and listened to both the girl-Ayame-and teen Inari regale Marlene and Denzel with stories about the ninja world and Naruto and Sasuke in particular.

The two were seated in the lounge of the floor directly below the two three-bedroom ones, where they held the rooms the two civilian families had chosen—one across from the other, Tifa smiling when she remembered the shy flirting going on between the two single parents, AS WELL AS the boy and girl.

When asked why they didn't choose the one with more room and had three bedrooms, both 'families' stated they had left it for either Naruto and Sasuke or Lee and Sakura.

When asked what they meant they explained. "Lee and Sakura aren't exactly at the living together and staying both in the same room together seven days a week stage yet, so that's two rooms, plus a third for the nursery. Or same with Naruto and Sasuke, except when they fight—and boy do they fight—one can take the spare room."

Sasuke growled at the idea of not being in the same room with Naruto and the pregnant blonde flashed his mate an cheeky smile before looking to the group "Sakura and Lee should have it. I mean they have to get used to being together more often than whenever they could sneak it, and they need to do it before the baby is born so by then the changes it will make won't seem so much to handle. This way Lee will be with her to keep an eye on her condition and Sakura can show Lee that just 'cause she's pregnant she's suddenly not fragile."

The last part was said with a pointed look to his mate, who just crossed his arms over his chest and looked stubborn.

When the wolf demon didn't say anything the two locked eyes and started to stare each other down.

A few hours later the intercom buzzed and Tifa answered. Tseng's voice came through, asking for her to aid him in some new equipment for the doctor he had with him at the front door. Tifa wasn't even aware he had left the building at some point.

So she headed downstairs.

The TURK leader was standing just inside the outer doors, arms full of something heavy-looking, two vaguely familiar teens with him, also carrying various items. One was an boy with large rounded glasses, the other a girl in pigtails. Tifa frowned, trying to place the teens while she let them in. Tseng politely thanked her before nudging the boy with his shoulder who also thanked her and the three moved inside.

Tseng directed the two to the elevator to wait for him while he turned back to her and said politely "I would appreciate it if you were able to persuade their companion to also come in" he nodded to the sleek dark car parked outside "while these two were willing to believe I knew and could take them to their 'boss', he was more mistrusting."

Before Tifa could answer he and the teens were in the elevator and gone.
Curious Tifa went outside and approached the car, peering through tinted windows to try and see who was still seated in there. At first she thought it was an female by the long hair hiding the face and clothes covering and hiding the body.

But Tseng had said 'he' and when she opened the door nearest to him she recognized the figures appearance. The white cloth wrapped around the forehead like Vincent's, the pale skin and most of all the trademark white eyes.

Gaara Sabaku's lover and Hinata's cousin, Neji Hyuuga.

Relief flooded her at the sight of him, Naruto and the others had began worrying about the red heads mental state lately, how he seemed to be taking on all the worry and concern for their sister for himself, getting more and more tense.

And it seemed as though he wasn't the only one taking on so much worry and negative emotions for himself if the brown haired young man in front of her was anything to go by, his entire body in the seat was stiff as a board.

She spoke his name softly, gently, remembering what Naruto had told her about the fact HIS side of the family were treated as nothing more than slaves and knew he would be wary of strangers. He blinked, but didn't move except an minuet tensing in the shoulders. She repeated his name and then introduced herself, telling him that the others were inside and waiting for him.

She told him she didn't know what Tseng had told him about the situation exactly but there was important things he needed to know.

He still didn't move.

Tifa had an idea. She pulled out her PHS and dialed the stubborn young man's lover. She told him to flare his chakra. The reaction was immediate. The white eyes widened and he spun in his seat to look at the building. Before he could move further the red head was strolling through the door towards the car.

The brunette seemed almost desperate to get out of the car to him.

Once out Tifa locked up the car and left the two to their reunion, remembering what the violet eyed girl had said about the two only expressing themselves to each other alone.

Instead she went back inside to find the others.

Naruto and Sasuke were telling the two new teens what was happening and what had happened while their sensei Ebizu hovered nearby, his face a mix between relief and worry, relief two of his students had been found, worried about his remaining missing student, the grandson of the Third, his main responsibility.

A few hours later Tifa found both in the make-shift hospital room they had, the red head frowning minutely as his lover examined his sister with his bloodline.

Apparently the male Hyuuga's eyes were better trained and slightly stronger than his cousins, he was watching her diminished chakra flow and helping by opening up some blocked areas and aiding the flow in some areas, lessening her pain and symptoms, even if it wasn't an permanent solution.

Every little bit helped his lover and boyfriends sister.

A few hours later he approached her personally, bowing low in respect and gratitude, thanking her
for her help in bringing Gaara and his siblings to safety and her contribution to helping the blonde young woman.

He then apologized for his rude behavior in the car earlier.

Tifa smiled at him and accepted it, telling him she had understood his behavior then and she had and was helping the family because not only was it the right thing to do, but as children of Chaos and her friends family—whether adopted or not—they were also important to her.

The brunette looked stunned by the mere idea.

Tifa smiled at him gently "I know that the world you come from is violent, full of constant fighting and death and trying to outdo and outlive each other but this world is different. Yes there are times we fight for not just our own lives but others, but this world is mostly peaceful. There may be times you all are needed to defend it, but here you can have a peaceful life with family and children or the one you want. You don't have to worry about your place in the clan, only yourself and Hinata are left here, meaning you're free, no longer a slave, that mark on your forehead is now nothing more than an strange tattoo."

He shook his head "Hinata......"

"......Tell me, has she ever used it against you in the entire time you've known her? Even once?" He thought about it, saying slowly "no, not that I can recall."

Tifa touched him gently on the shoulder "why don't you ask her why? I'm sure she had plenty of times she easily could have."

He nodded and moved off to do so.

After a few minutes discussion his eyes widened nearly the entire way and he looked shocked and stunned. He blurred his words as he spoke a low question, but the violet eyed girl shook her head and answered. He didn't seemed able to believe it, shaking his head in numbed disbelief. Tifa joined them "you see" she said softly to him "the only one here who could use that against you now is YOU."

The young man's mouth opened but nothing came out. He closed it, opened and tried again but he seemed totally lost for words, as if the idea of no longer being cannon fodder and slave to the rest of his cousins side of the clan was an impossible thought.

Tifa smiled again and squeezed his shoulder gently "don't worry, you will still find a way. All I can say is think of Hinata now as your sister instead of cousin and I'm sure you'll find a way out of the confusion." Hinata smiled as well, took his hand and nodded her agreement and consent to it.

He shut his mouth and nodded solemnly.

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Tifa was shocked over the next couple of days. She would pick the kids up from school, bring them to the Apartment Building and leave them with Haku while she joined the others to find out what happened for the day.

A couple of times when she checked on the two kids and the ninja, she found Yuffie there as well, seated with the kids and leaning forward excitedly, full attention on the young man and hanging on his every word.
She seemed desperate to soak up his every word, his every gesture, totally and utterly fascinated not just on what he was teaching the kids, but the young man himself.

Tifa had never known her to sit still for five minutes let alone an entire hour.

Yet if she got restless or loud the young man would either look at her pointedly or gently chastise her and she would settle down eagerly again.

Tifa asked him about it later.

"She seems desperate to learn" he explained "her chakra is strong, perhaps not as strong as the children or most here, but enough too make her an competent ninja, yet she lacks even some of the basic knowledge or skills, things most knew before their first year of the Academy-according to Tsunade-hime."

Tifa thought about it before speaking slowly "her father is Lord Godo of Wutai, that essentially makes her royalty of a sort. Zack said she used to call herself 'The White Rose Of Wutai'. She used to be obsessed with finding and stealing Materia in order to "restore Wutai to its glory". I have a feeling she was cutting class. She used to whine about the 'boring old farts' who her father hired to teach her."

The young man nodded "despite the fact she's an teen, she's still mentally a child. It's entirely possible either her previous teachers were just catering to her father and not really teaching her anything past what was needed to make it seem they were earning their pay, or they had no idea how to really teach a child."

"Or she was just a spoiled brat" Tifa grinned.

"Perhaps" He shook his head sadly "but I don't think so. Any teacher worth his title knows how to handle such a child. As long as she returns with the children, I will teach her as well. I will also talk to Iruka-san. He was an teacher at the Academy and had a hand in teaching Naruto and most of his other friends. He has great experience in handling children both disruptive and hyperactive. After all, he taught Naruto."

Tifa chuckled "you may be right about that. Good idea, Haku."

The boy seemed both flattered and confused "why? It's my job."

"Yes, but Yuffie is NOT, only Marlene and Denzel. Yet you want too help her too."

"She is....interesting" he said softly "like a mix between Naruto and myself with a dash of the children's innocence. Such an combination would prove interesting in an ninja like us. I look forward to seeing what she becomes." He smiled tentatively at her "for the first time since waking in this world I am excited over something but my new mission. Thank you for your encouragement and bringing me here."

Tifa saw the beginning of Haku the man showing through the ninja and smiled back "you're totally welcome" she said gently.

It was two days later that Iruka approached her. He asked her to describe the young ninja's abilities and what she had displayed over the time she had known her, stating it would make it easier for him to figure out what to teach her if he already knew what she COULD do.
Tifa did her best, describing as much as she could and her various annoying thefts. "You would be better off asking her father though."

"How easy would that be though? And how would he react to people he doesn't know teaching his daughter to kill?"

"Well I assume since he was the one to get her trained in it in the first place....." An idea struck Tifa, "I know, Tseng!"

The man turned his head to look at the Wutain TURK "what about him?"

"Tseng wasn't always a TURK you know. He was an great Bushian warrior in Wutai. When Lord Godo-Yuffie's father-and old man Shinra signed the peace treaty Tseng became Godo's......gift to the original President, someone and thing to protect his "heir". Rufus grew up alongside Tseng."

"So?" the man frowned.

"Tseng would probably know what sort of training Godo gave Yuffie. If not he is still in contact with him and could probably ask him."

The teacher looked thoughtful "you may be right there. I shall ask him, thank you" and moved off to do so.

From then on both Iruka and Haku participated in teaching the three, although Yuffie seemed to prefer the quieter young man.

Then it occurred to her.

Yuffie had a crush, a MAJOR crush on the soft-spoken ice user.

In the past it was suspected that the young ninja had a crush on Zack, she followed him around during the SOLDIERS trip to Wutai, then Cloud. But THIS seemed different. While she had sometimes been seen looking at either male in child-like awe, she never hung on their every word, she never watched them as though every movement was the most fascinating thing she had ever seen, she was never so eager to impress them.

Did the daughter of Lord Godo of Wutai finally find someone who caught her interest? Did her attraction come from what he could teach her to do to 'restore Wutain glory' or what he could simply do?

Or did she see someone who she could show 'daddy' and prove him worthy of her and she was going to find her own husband worthy of Wutai.

Or was it HIM who interested her? His soft-spoken way, his firm but gentle way he handled her? Maybe no one outside her own father treated her like this, like Yuffie the girl, not Yuffie-Lord Godo's daughter and disruptive student.

Even the kids seemed to be reacting differently to her, like an fellow child who needed firm but gentle instruction.

And Yuffie seemed to thrive on this, becoming an playmate to the two children, even keeping them occupied when everyone else was busy, the three practicing with each other and the Wutain ninja even teaching the two an trick or two her father and former teachers taught her.
When the girl's father found out about the new training and his daughters affections and the occupation of the new group he sent an 'formal invitation' to the entire group, to his home in Wutai.

Yuffie seemed over the moon with excitement about it, persuading them it was in there best interest to go, that her father was the Lord of Wutai and to be allied to her homeland would give them more of a standing on the new world. She said if her father gave them permission to move to her homeland, they would have more space than an mere Apartment Building and wouldn't be indebted to Shinra for it. They would be with people like them in nearly every way and have a place to stretch out and maybe even spar.

Iruka could even teach again like he did on their own world, she was sure that other Wutain families would want their children to grow up with such skill and knowledge.

Tifa realized just what the girl and her father were thinking. Get in the ninja's good graces then convince them to train them in the ways of an Kohona Shinobi. This-they secretly hoped-would make Wutai strong like they once were so they could become an individual power again like before The Devils' Trio and SOLDIER.

Tifa frowned, she'd have to talk to Tsunade about the situation after Yuffie left for the night. They could go to Wutai and meet with the girl's father, but there was NO WAY they could train their young people without some kind of agreement. If Wutai sent ninja's trained by the group against Shinra it would not only be an massacre but they risked the lives of innocent citizens being caught in the crossfire.

There had been enough of that between Shinra Senior, Sephiroth, AVALANCHE and Deep Ground as it was.

Once she was able to do so, Tifa stated her worries and what she suspected would happen to the blonde ex-Hokage.

"I have no intention of signing my ninja up for some foolish territorial war" the woman said "for now, until this....warriors return, they deserve a rest."

The woman went on to assure her that she would not sign anything without careful consideration and discussion among the entire group. If the entire group agreed or disagree to moving there they would tell the man they had no intention of training armies for any retaliation or such.

Comforted, at least for now, Tifa left the subject alone.

With Shinra's help (and their assurances to Rufus they had no intention of becoming the 'Champions Of Wutai) they organized to visit the Lord Of Wutai at the start of the next week.

However something weird started to happen around this time, something shocking that put the group on edge and alert.

Tifa came to see the others after dropping the kids with Haku, Yuffie and an worried looking Iruka. Tifa had asked the scared man what was wrong, but he just slowly shook his head then motioned to the elevator.

When Tifa reached the apartment where everyone else was gathered, the worry and concern was n early palpable.

At first she thought that something had happened to the Kazakage's sister, but then she noticed the looks everyone was sending the two laying together on the couch.
Sasuke lay long-wise with his back against the rest, his body curled protectively around his mate who lay pulled up tightly against him from the front, asleep. The younger Uchiha's arms were wrapped around his mate's stomach, both hands laying flat on the now-obvious bulge, gently stroking it and soothing the boy as he moaned thinly in his sleep.

Those moans were in no way pleasant or pleased, no they sounded upset and disturbed, like trying to awaken from a nightmare but unable.

 Whenever he moaned that way the Uchiha would either clutch him closer or attempt to soothe him gently and some of the others would look at them in concern and helplessness.

Tifa frowned in worry as she approached the group "what's going on?"

Kakashi spoke "Naruto's been having intense nightmares and refusing to sleep."

"I was forced to use an sleep Materia on him" Vincent frowned at his sons on the couch together "it was the only way, he hasn't slept for three days."

"THREE days?!" Tifa looked at each of them "since you agreed to go to Wutai!" The others frowned at this.

"You're right" Tsunade spoke "it IS too much of an coincidence. It appears perhaps that this agreement will cause problems in the time-line of future events."

"What do you mean? What IS Naruto having a nightmare about?"

"All he will tell Sasuke is someone kidnaps him and ties him down while they take Aeris from him."

Tifa swallowed the bile rising in her throat with difficulty "you mean they tie him down and CUT him open to take her out of him. No wonder he's having nightmares."

The others nodded, face just as sickened.

Tifa went on "and the fact that his nightmares lately have become prophetic......."

The others nodded again.

"Are you going to call off the trip to Wutai? It might not be a good idea if the dream's timing is right."

"What can I really do?!" the woman started pacing in an tight tense line "I have no proof of it-anyone can easily say that it is just a coincidence-his dreams, and we already agreed. Naruto is close to actually the time to 'give birth', he could do it any day-or within the next month or so. They could just say it's Naruto being worried about the birth and his dreams are making those feelings worse, hell I would say that myself if I didn't know any better."

"Assign an guard, Hokage" Shizune suggested "someone other than Sasuke-san who will constantly watch and tail him wherever he goes." The others nodded and Kakashi spoke out as well "or just you and some guards go to this lord. You can tell them that you are going there as our leader for negotiations of our safety and to find out what they expect first before we all follow as well."

"You both have an good idea" she stopped, looking thoughtful.

"Whatever you decide, Hokage, we will stand by" Sakura said.

"No one will take the kid from us while we live" the female snake nin said fiercely, eyes burning
protectively as she raised her snake-wrapped arms by her side.

"I can have one of my Kiki hide in his hair constantly" the bug nin spoke softly "that way if someone WAS to get through us, I can track my beetle back straight to him before anything can be done."

"As my child, no one would DARE harm him" Vincent growled in Chaos' voice "the very planet would not allow it. They would forfeit their life to try."

Tifa, who had been thinking while they spoke, suddenly spoke out "guys what if it was simpler than that."

"What do you mean, Tifa?" Vincent questioned.

"I mean does Naruto have a....." she blushed a little ".....Birth canal to actually give birth through?"

The male sannin rubbed his chin thoughtfully "I just assumed he could through the Oiroke no jutsu. "Nade?" he looked to the female sanin by his side who also looked thoughtful.

"There usually is an jutsu used in situations when an woman isn't able to give birth naturally" she said "a group of skilled doctors will preform it to remove the baby safely from the mother in cases of emergency due to injury or deformity. I WAS planning on having this used to birth the child, but it takes a hell of a lot of skilled doctors and healers who know what they're doing and how much chakra and where to put it to do so, and we don't have that here. I could have probably taught Shizune and Sakura it, even Jiraiya and perhaps Kakashi, but with Sakura pregnant herself and banned from using her own chakra....." she glared at the girl as she opened her mouth to protest, shutting down any protests "that still leaves us short. So I had assumed, like you, he could just use the jutsu."

Tifa spoke out again "there is this procedure here WE use if any woman is unable to give birth naturally. His nightmare reminds me of it."

Vincent's eyes widened "Caesarean Section."

"What?" they looked at them.

"Also called a C-Section" Tifa started  and Vincent continued "a surgical procedure in which one or more incisions are made through the mothers abdomen and uterus to deliver one or more babies, or rarely, to remove a dead fetus. It is usually preformed when a vaginal delivery would put the mother or baby's life or health at risk."

Tifa looked up at him "you know a lot about it, Vincent."

The demon vessel nodded "when I found out it was how Sephiroth was to be delivered, I researched it before my death" he looked at the woman "it is perfectly safe and is done with the upmost care and caution."

Tifa added "Rufus has the best doctors on Gaia, he could ensure his comfort and safety. They even numb the area first with drugs so he...." she noticed their looks "....what?"

"Naruto is immune to drugs and poisons."

"But not Materia" Vincent motioned at the boy. "All we have to do is use sleep and do it during."

"You have a point." The woman nodded "however I would want to know everything about the procedure and be there to witness-in case anything goes wrong."
"You'll also have to contend with his increased healing though" she added "he heals almost instantly, no sooner they cut in, the wound would heal."

"They can see about that by talking to you" Tifa said.

After an hesitant pause the woman sighed "I suppose you could be right about the dream. It explains things."

"No" they turned to look to find the black haired wolf demon heading for them "it is not that, it is exactly as it seems an prophecy."

They frowned at the boy, but when they looked at the couch, he was still there, soothing his sleeping mate. The blonde woman raised an eyebrow at him "shadow clone?"

"Not important right now" he said, but at the woman's stubborn look he sighed "yes, Naruto told you we gained more than just each other's chakra and knowledge."

"You mean Naruto could use the Chodori and you the Rasengan?"

"Among others" the wolf demon said "it wasn't just a part sharing, you know. The only thing I didn't gain was his ability to see forwards and backwards through time. But he can't control it. Only asleep is his mind open to that ability."

"What makes you so sure about it being prophetic?"

"Because I know the truth about the Kyuubi, ALL of it."

Stunned silence. Then Tsunade ventured with a cautious "what is it you THINK you know, Uchiha and why haven't you told us before now."

"Because if Naruto hasn't told you before now it's not my place to do so" he pointed out.

Tsunade sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose in a decidedly Iruka-type gesture and managed to speak evenly and calmly "then YOU tell us."

After a few silent seconds the woman glared at him "Uchiha" she growled dangerously. However it wasn't until Vincent spoke out, gently asking him to tell them that he obliged. He looked at the group of Shinobi "you are all aware of the legend of Kurama, Inari's favorite?"

"You mean the golden ten tailed fox who was an great celestial power and fought the malevolent spirit that tried to destroy our world long before the first human was ever born?"

"The same" he looked to Vincent and Tifa and explained "Inari is the god of fertility and crops. He is sometimes seen as either an wise old man or beautiful young woman. Inari's messengers are foxes, golden or white and with anywhere between 1, 5 or 10 tails. The 10 tails are the most powerful and said to be celestial beings able to manipulate the cosmic energies" he looked pointedly at the blonde woman "including the flow of time-forwards AND backwards."

"Are you saying" she breathed unsteadily in disbelief "that Kyuubi is really Kurama."

"It can't be!" Shizune protested "Kyuubi was not only orange\red not gold but had NINE tails, not ten!"

"Wait" Tifa looked at the wolf demon "you said it fought an malevolent spirit?" when he nodded solemnly she asked "it didn't happen to be Kyuubi, did it."
Again he nodded.

"But the fox won that fight!" Shizune protested "I mean we are here, aren't we!?"

"Legends start out as word-of-mouth, remember" Tifa started "and when stories are passed from one mouth to another, changes and embellishments often happen." She looked at Sasuke "what happened really?"

"During the battle the gold fox lost a tail, therefore loosing his celestial power. They merged. Kyuubi had lost" he shrugged "Kurama was an powerful being, even without his cosmic strength" he went on "Kyuubi's last act of desperation was to attack the 10 tailed and possess his body. After the merging he/she no longer bore such strength and power, the ability to manipulate time was lost among others. However she could still on occasion SEE the events of the time line, just not manipulate it." He looked at them "the human mind could not rightly handle such an ability, so Naruto's mind blocks it out. However there are certain times when the body is relaxed and the mind is open...."

"Sleep" the blonde woman breathed "or rather REM sleep."

"Exactly" the demon wolf nodded.

"How did you find out the Kyuubi's past?"

"Ever since Naruto merged us when we first mated I've picked up the occasional image from him. It's only when we are both asleep and usually only his own memories, but every now and then something else comes through. I had to piece it together myself, but it was there. Funnily enough I have NEVER got one of his prophetic ones, but perhaps that's because only HE can."

"Did the others chose their forms or was that the Sage Of Six Paths?"

"I have no idea, you'd have to ask THEM."

All eyes turned to the Kazakage and Uchiha heir.

"The Sage" Gaara answered.

"Choice" the Uchiha answered.

Eyes turned to Vincent for his answer and after a few long seconds of inner searching the demon vessel answered "the Sage."

"Naruto told me once that the 8 tails was both" Sai said.

"What do you mean?" they asked curiously.

"He already chose an octopus, but when the Sage separated them into individuals he chose ox. Since he already liked octopus he fought the change. That's how it became both."

"Makes sense in an weird sort of way, perhaps that explains a few of the others."

Tifa looked to the Sasuke clone "you heard what we were talking about? What is your thoughts on the matter?"

"The dream isn't Naruto freaking over some medical procedure, someone truly tries to take Aeris from us. I don't know why and when but Naruto says it's soon. He senses she's almost ready to be born and I feel it too. It's like we're just waiting for it to happen any second now."
"I've felt that" The Uchiha heir said, followed by a nod from the Sand Kazakage and then Vincent "it feels like waiting for something heavy to fall" Vincent described "I was uncertain whether it was the return of Sephiroth and Jenovah I was feeling, or the lifestream trying to warn Chaos of something" he cocked his head and looked inwards for a few seconds before coming back "Chaos agrees that he is sensing Aeris' impending birth. It is close, probably within the next week or two, the month at the most though he doubts that."

Tsunade frowned "but Naruto isn't ready, he still has a couple of months...."

"But that's by human standards, isn't it" Tifa said "don't forget he isn't human anymore, really he never fully was. A fox only is pregnant a week or two, no idea for demons and have you ever heard of an celestial being getting pregnant?"

Kakashi added "plus Naruto's accelerated and tough constitution would affect it, not including Uchiha genes."

"And Cetra" Tifa added "no one knows much about them, even after traveling with Aeris before we knew very little of her. Her connection to the planet and lifestream could mean she develops quicker and easier. Anyone who could listen to the souls of the dead and learn from them has GOT to know things no one else could know."

She had a point there.

They turned back to the subject of the dream and trip to Wutai and after much discussion decided that only Tsunade would go for this first meeting, but would take Kakashi, Jiriaya and Anko as bodyguards. Meanwhile when Sasuke and Naruto weren't....doing their their thing, he would be with Sakura and Lee-under the pretense of both preparing for the births. One of the kiki would constantly be hidden among the boy's hair and once reaching his office that night Tseng would contact an OBGYN called Dr Gray Harker-apparently the very one who had delivered Rufus and highly trusted-about meeting Tsunade for a discussion about the C Section.

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Chapter End Notes

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Kyuubi legend-my story

Inari foxes-research.
The next day Tifa arrived at the building in time to meet Rufus and an older man outside. The other man was protesting 'why the expecting mother can't meet me at my office' and 'this is highly unusual, I don't do home visits', but she heard the white clad blonde mutter under his breath "you have no idea how unusual" as she approached.

He looked at her as he sensed her approach and his face and body smoothed over to the calm controlled businessman at her presence "ah, Miss Lockhart, perhaps you can let us in. It appears as though no one deems it important to answer the intercom even though we are expected today" knowing full well since she was constantly coming and going with or without the kids the group had given her a key to the front door.

As she unlocked it and headed inside followed by the two men Tifa explained "today is the day they give Temari the serum for the mako poisoning. Everyone is probably in her room, waiting to see if it works."

"Arh, an important occasion then indeed" Tifa looked at him in surprise at his manner of speaking but decided not to call him out on it. He was with the man who delivered him as a baby, perhaps he was a little uncomfortable around him because of that.

"Mako poisoning?!" the man seemed alarmed as he looked at the white clad ash-blonde beside him "you didn't tell me that..."

"...Temari isn't your patient" Tifa interrupted as they moved to the elevator before looking at Rufus "you didn't tell him?"

The young man looked embarrassed "what could I say? Without X-Rays or ultrasounds or any proof it would just seem like an story or joke. I HAD thought bringing him straight here that not only would he see for himself but after speaking to Lady Tsunade herself....."

Tifa understood and nodded. She had to admit, if she wasn't in this situation and had been from the minute they arrived and had known Vincent to rarely lie, she wouldn't have believed it either.

Wait, what about Hojo? If the OBGYN didn't believe them about Naruto merging with an female demon to conceive, they could say it was the product of Hojo's experiments.

She looked at the man "there is TWO pregnant people here. Sakura is only a few months into it and I'm sure she might want to talk about a C-section as an alternative to natural childbirth, but the other is why you're here. The baby is due any day now and Lady Tsunade-their leader and also an expert healer-says without her trained doctors and others trained in their methods, the baby will have trouble being born. That's why you're here.

You see this group comes from a far away land similar to Wutai and have developed their own ways separate from ours, including healing and fighting. Now they are stuck here since their home is destroyed away from their medical equipment and so on. Their place of birth treasured those born different and whole family lines-or clans-inherited abilities or traits, often marrying inside the clan to 'keep the bloodline pure.' The father of the baby told me once he and his older brother's parents were cousins."

Before the Doctor could comment the doors slid open and they were just in time to see a figure start to pass them. Tifa called out to him "Itachi!"
The figure turned and for just a second Tifa saw the eyes alight on her in joy and warmth before they looked her quickly up and down in barely hidden desire, making her force back the blush. Stepping out of the elevator with both men she approached him "how's Naruto?"

"Better" he said in his smooth voice "but the Hokage is still worried about his state of mind. He seems more hyperactive than usual and even reckless and Sasuke says it's because he's trying not to think."

"That's not good" Tifa agreed "if he's not careful he could do some damage, either to himself or Aeris. Where is everyone?"

"The Kazekage and his brother are with Sasuke and Naruto, Tsunade-hime, Shizune-san,.....father and the Doctor in the room of the sister of the Kazekage and everyone else is asleep in their rooms....." he raised his head and sniffed the air "except Sasuke and Naruto's teammate and her lover, who seem to be having sex right now."

Tifa DID blush this time at that and swore she saw amusement in his eyes.

He suddenly noticed the two men behind her and she SWORE she saw a look of jealousy flash through his eyes. So Tifa quickly explained "you remember Midgar's Kage and Tseng's lover, Rufus Shinra, Itachi. This other man is Dr Gray Harker the OBGYN that Tseng contacted through Rufus about Naruto and a C-Section. He's come to do an examination and talk to Lady Tsunade.

Dr Harker, this is the current heir to the Uchiha clan, Itachi. He also so happens to be your patients brother- in-law."

"Ah!" the man's eyes lit up at the presence of an family member and source of information and moved to the younger man's side, pulling him towards the room while he fired off questions about the level and state of pregnancy, ignoring the heir's baffled look and constant "I don't know."

Ahead came Tsunade, obviously wondering where the heir had gotten too and Tifa took the opportunity to interrupt the Doctor with "here's the person you SHOULD ask, Dr Gray. She's their healer and been monitoring the pregnancy since the conception. Lady Tsunade is their leader and healer and she is also your patients......aunt."

Tsunade gave her a funny look but was soon fully engulfed with her discussion with the Doctor.

While she was so, Tifa, Itachi and Rufus entered the room, looking around. Seeing an exhausted Sasuke in a corner by himself for once, Itachi joined him to converse, Rufus joining an harried-looking Tseng and Tifa looked around for everyone else.

The Kazekage and his older brother were again by their big sisters bedside, light green and brown eyes searching her face constantly for any sign of change, gripping one of her hands each and Tifa noticed the red head didn't even seem aware that he was stroking her visible veins in her wrist with his thumb in a calming loving gesture.

Tifa wondered if that was where she had been injected with the serum and it was his demon 'reclaiming' the spot.

In another corner she saw Naruto and Vincent having a low conversation, the pregnant blonde obviously frustrated with something by his face and body language, either motioning wildly in the air or pointing to his lower stomach. Whatever he was saying, Vincent was denying and it was making the blonde even more frustrated and upset.

Finally the demon vessel consented and the blonde relaxed with relief. To Tifa's surprise Vincent
activated his scan Materia and began a slow and detailed scan of the area the boy wanted.

He murmured something as he did, suddenly looking startled and shocked as he nodded confirmation to the pregnant blonde as he withdrew his gauntlet-covered hand from his stomach area. Naruto looked shocked his suspicion (whatever it was) was correct, but swiftly recovered, spurring another frustrated and tense conversation between them, worrying Tifa.

She was just starting across the room and ask what was going on when there came a loud feminine moan of pain and confusion.

Looking towards the bed she found both males tensely straight, intensely watching their sisters face, but by their boy posture and expression Tifa knew she hadn't imagined it and the girl HAD stirred.

Everyone else was watching as well, even the OBGYN.

She moaned again, tossing her head a little as if trying to awaken from an nightmare, then she reached out with her chakra as if seeing who was there, gasping in pain as what she had left burned out and seemed to fight to control herself.

As if to answer her seeking, both her brothers flared their own, letting her know she was safe between them, followed by every other ninja in the room, as if to comfort her and let her know she was guarded and safe with friends.

This seemed to encourage her, causing eyelids to flutter in her attempt to open them and Tifa saw her hands squeeze the other twos.

Naruto moved to his two brothers side and spoke encouragements to her "c'mon 'Mari, you can do it. Come back to us."

"Don't call me 'Mari" she snarled grumpily, causing Naruto to grin widely and her two brothers to relax, leading Tifa to think this was normal between the two.

The girl's eyes finally opened fully, revealing two glowing blue-green orbs, the blue her natural color while the green of the lifestream moving through her in the form of the mako. They slowly moved around their surroundings, taking in the unfamiliar room and those in it, frowning at the sight of the Hokage and three strange men, but locking on Vincent with recognition "you."

Her brothers frowned "'you KNOW him, Temari?"

"Not by sight but HE told me about him and who he was to us" she said, eyes softening slightly "our father now. HE told me he would be more of a father than our biological one ever was."

"He who?" the three males all frowned, confused.

"The voice I heard while I was asleep. He was male, deep voice, and talked to me the entire time, telling me everything that was happening while I was out and what was going on and why we are here and who everyone around me was" her eyes moved to Tifa "you're Tifa Lockhart. It was your team that found Naruto and is responsible for bringing us all back together again."

She suddenly smiled widely "You're my sister now, my only one" and motioned Tifa towards her, which she did and leaned over so the girl could whisper in her ear "he loves you too. When the time comes don't hold anything back and make sure he doesn't either, HE said the very lifestream will bless it."

Tifa looked stunned as she drew back at this and the woman went on calmly as she looked at
Vincent again "HE said you were to train me, how to use summons and Materia because I can't use my chakra like I used too and something about limit breaks?"

Vincent nodded.

"Wait?!" Kankuro interrupted anything else "what voice?! You heard a male voice in your head talking to you while you slept?!"

Before he could stuff up and say anything about her going mad, Tifa explained "I told you how when Cloud and I brought each other back when we fell into the raw mako stream. That's because we could actually talk to each other through it. Mako is essentially liquidized lifestream, the lifestream is the soul of the planet and all those people who have died, good or bad....."

Vincent explained "she was communicating with one particular soul in the lifestream through the mako inside her, someone who chose to help her stay lucid and had something to do personally with us in the past."

"He said his name was long gone now he's at peace, but to tell you he was a friend of the man you are preparing to return, something about a Devil's Trio."

Tifa's eyes widened and from the corner of her eyes she saw Rufus looked a little shocked and panicked. "Did he tell you anything else to help?"

"Yeah, he was one of your group's sensei, and gave him his sword."

"Angeal Hewely" Vincent said smoothly out loud.

"By Gaia!" Rufus cried in reaction.

"Whatever you say" the young woman yawned. Tsunade and the Wutain doctor came forward to quickly examine her before the woman proclaimed her healed completely and physically fit.

The doctor added that if she continued to improve through the week, he would no longer be needed after that. Although he added that Rufus had his number in case anything else happened, all though he doubted it would.

"You need some proper sleep though, not that coma you were in. I suggest you do so and when you awake you may get up and move around for a while" the doctor said gently "we don't want you to put strain on muscles and such who's signals were messed up by the mako as well as your time unconscious."

Temari just hummed and nodded off quickly. The doctor turned to the two young men gripping her hands next "I suggest you both also do so. I can tell you neither have been sleeping since this entire thing has started."

"I'm fine" they both said in union.

"Gaara hardly ever sleeps anyway" Naruto said from behind him "ever since he was born."

"Well if he has trouble I'm sure I have something that could help him, or even Vincent-san there can use his Sleep Materia again."

"Again?" Naruto frowned, obviously confused by this reference, leading Tifa to believe he hadn't known that Vincent had used it on HIM.
Tsunade glared at the doctor beside her who visibly winced when he realized the boy hadn't known. Trying to distract their 'brother' both boys stood and made a production of heading off to their own rooms, insisting they are called the minute their sister awoke or anything changed and while the rest of the room agreed, Naruto continued to frown thoughtfully, trying to think of when he saw his new father using Materia on someone.

Once gone Tsunade spoke up and out "Naruto come here, we need to examine Aeris."

The boy didn't move.

"GAKI!" she snapped in a loud voice.

The boy blinked at her before snapping back "what baachan!!"

"Don't ignore me, Gaki, I said come here so we can check on Aeris!"

Mumbling about old bitties but suitably distracted the young man dragged his feet over to her, to be cuff ed over the back of the head by the woman and retaliating with an curse of "baachan! Bloody old bittie! Women! And they wonder why I'm with the Teme!"

This caused every female in the room to glare at him and his mate to growl as he looked at him furiously.

At the realization he was outnumbered by women and his angry mate, Naruto shrunk on his spot and grinned sheepishly "um, just forget I said that" as he rubbed the back of his neck in embarrassment.

The younger Uchiha's glare told the boy where he'd be sleeping tonight, and it WASN'T the bed with him.

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"But this is truly impossible! It's genetically and biologically improbable! Males can NOT reproduce by actual conception and birth, they don't have the right biological equipment!!!"

"As you can see for yourself he most certainly can" Tsunade said "I thought the same thing when I first examined him as well. I knew the merging of the Uzumaki line and Namikaze would create something powerful in itself but the ability to conceive....."

Tifa spoke to the man before anyone else could "I told you about the fact their clans are nearly all interbred, look at Sasuke and Itachi" she motioned at the two and added to them "no insult intended."

"None taken" Itachi said followed by Sasuke's careless shrug "it's essentially true."

"That would usually lead to physical and mental deformities, however SOME clans instead developed genetic mutations they can actually use as weapons or to their advantage" she again motioned at the two males who displayed the basic sharingan, causing the OBGYN's eyes to widen nearly all the way at the sight of the red eyes, then suddenly blinked at Vincent when he turned Chaos' eyes on him, obviously trying to make himself look like one of the Shinobi.

As Tifa watched Naruto turned his own eyes on his mate and 'brother'brother-in-law, the sharingan they had seen a couple of times a few days earlier in them.

Sasuke looked stunned, Itachi calm. The younger saw this and turned confused eyes on his brother. The heir made a few hand motions and the other obviously understood it "Aeris?" he asked the
blonde softly as he turned his own still red eyes to that of the blondes.

A childish giggle came from the pregnant blonde with a cheeky innocent smile before he suddenly blinked, his eyes changed back and he looked baffled.

Before anyone could speak Naruto looked down at his stomach and exclaimed "stop doing that!" blinked blankly then stroked his pregnancy bulge in apology.

Tifa frowned, now Aeris was not only interacting with the outside environment but actually 'possessing' her 'mother' for momentary moments, she was definitely getting stronger in such a short time.

Clearing her throat Tifa went on "Naruto not only has one of those clans in him, but two...."

"She would have five" Shizune said.

All eyes turned to her, "five?"

"Uchiha through Sasuke, Cetra through rebirth, Uzumaki and Namikaze from Naruto and another." Itachi spoke "Senju" to which Shizune nodded "exactly."

"You mean like Lady Tsunade?" Tifa asked to which the apprentice nodded "Maito Uzumaki was the wife of Tsunade-sans' grandfather, the First Hokage, she was also the first to hold the Kyuubi inside her. That means not only is there Uzumaki blood in lady Tsunade, but Senju in Naruto. You see Maito lived to ripe old age to pass the Kyuubi on to the next Uzumaki, an clansman of hers. Do you know or can guess who that was?"

When no one answered Itachi did "Kushina Uzumaki."

"Naruto's mother" Shizune answered their confusion.

"I told you about her before, remember? That day we first met." Tifa thought back for a couple of seconds and then nodded.

This was obviously news to Naruto as well as he blinked at them "my MOTHER was an Jinchuuriki to the nine tailed as well?"

The Shinobi looked at him "you didn't know?"

The blonde rolled his eyes at them "I wouldn't be asking if I did, would I."

The Hokage looked at the OBGYN then spoke again "ask again later. I didn't really know her that well. Gai and Anko could tell you more."

"Them two, why?"

"Gai had a little.....crush on your mother when they were younger and she and Anko were best friends, at least until Orochimaru corrupted her and broke them apart. In fact I think Anko's been wanting to tell you about her, she's just afraid of how you'll react to her betraying her."

Naruto frowned "that wasn't really her fault, she's come so far since then. She may still be a pervert and creepy as hell, but she's a good ninja and person." He looked at his mate before continuing "besides, Anko has a curse mark like the teme. The bastard controlled them through it in ways only they themselves know. Anything they did under his control was him making them."
Sasuke's face twisted "what makes you so sure, Naruto? What makes you think we didn't WANT it? That he just give us what we wanted."

Naruto surrounded his mate in his arms and held him close "two things. You would never hurt us-your teammates-willingly, I'm positive of that. Do you remember the absolute agony when you got it and later on?" when the younger Uchiha nodded against his neck, not protesting the comfort in any way, Naruto went on "it was attacking your mind, turning you against us. You were a kid, Sas, you had no idea how to fight THAT."

"I think you're right" he murmured against his partner's neck "I remember the pain and anguish, guilt because I hadn't killed Itachi yet and a voice promising me power,

The strength to kill him" he suddenly reached back, seizing his brother's hand and pulling closer so the pregnant blonde and new demon vessel could squeeze him between them.

Itachi blinked a few times then began stroking his brother's hair with his free hand, a low comforting purr leaving him.

This caused the younger Uchiha to sigh in pleasure and relax between the two.

Naruto went on softly "tell me, Sas, before the curse mark, before you encountered the Akatsuki Itachi again, how did you feel about it? Were you in a hurry to avenge your clan? Willing to pay any price to gain the power to kill him or were you willing to learn from Kakashi and your teammates? Willing to grow with a team and learn from them before you knew you were ready to face him properly with your own skill and strength that you had built yourself with experience? If you never had the curse mark and someone offered what Orochimaru did, would you have taken it?"

"No" Sasuke said firmly "I wanted to face him with MY skill, MY experience, MY knowledge. I wanted to rub it in his face that I had become better than him on my own two feet, I would never have accepted the curse mark. It would have felt like cheating."

"Exactly" Naruto nodded in confirmation to this as if he had already known the answer "Imagine the truly skilled ninja you would have become with all us to teach you. I always had this one dream of us standing back to back in battle as the men we would have become together...." he faded off wistfully then blinked and cleared his throat "even if you didn't want to admit it, your teammates and sensei would have been right by your side. We weren't just a team you know, we're a family. Why do you think I fought like hell to get you back before I was old enough to even realize my true feelings for you?"

"A family....." the young man hesitated at the thought, Tifa could almost see the picture behind his eyes of he and his mate standing together against everything and as the true shinobi they would have been together if not for the rogue nin's interference.

In fact she COULD see it and the strong noble men they would have been and looking around showed so was everyone else—even Itachi.

This was the SECOND time this had happened, first when Naruto described Aeris to her and Vincent and now this. How was it happening? Was Naruto projecting the image with Kyuubis' power, or had Aeris picked it up from his head and was doing the projecting.

Sasuke's hand went down to cup the bulge of the pregnancy, as if trying to include the baby in their comfort and conversation, even Tifa could sense the comfort and love coming from the three.

When she looked up into Itachi's eyes, the red was locked to her, as if trying to include her in it and
the such open warmth and caring in them that she had seen him give no one else made her realize the truth of Temari's words. Despite barely knowing each other, despite everything coming from only that one moment, despite being raised as a weapon and forced to repress or destroy any emotions he had, somewhere along the line over the last few days Itachi Uchiha, last heir to the Uchiha clan and current leader of the new one had fallen in love with her, and-dare she admit it—her to him. Hell, she had felt that way since that moment on the roof when she looked into his eyes after knowing all she had about him, she had just been denying herself.

They really needed to talk about it later. So she sent him the message with her eyes, an 'we need to talk' but with the warmth of her feelings so he wouldn't interpret it as an break-up kind of conversation.

A small smile barely there turned up the corners of his mouth and he nodded minutely to show he understood.

Someone cleared their throat firmly nearby and the three broke apart guiltily, Naruto grinning sheepishly and rubbing the back of his head in embarrassment at this, however even though Sasuke pulled away from his brother he didn't let go of his hand, obviously still needing his comfort and strong presence to steady him.

"Okay so....ahem!...yeah, I'll talk to them later" the pregnant blonde stuttered.

Vincent looked to the OBGYN "do you know how to use an Materia, more specifically, Scan, on and pregnant patient?"

"Of course I do" the man sniffed in dignity "when Materia was more prevalent on Gaia we all used it. Why?"

Vincent detached the Scan from the slot in his gauntlet and held it out to the doctor "Naruto is Tsunade himes' patient, he's not confident enough in hospitals to go to one yet. You will need this to examine him and the state of Aeris."

The OBGYN hesitated a second before accepting it and activating it. There was a flash of light and the man was thrown across the room, to be caught easily halfway by the other blonde. She turned to look at the boy as she gently set the man on his feet again "NARUTO!"

"It wasn't me!" he protested "Aeris don't trust him! She doesn't trust anyone outside us and AVALANCHE. She was just protecting herself!"

Tifa frowned "if Aeris won't let anyone else touch Naruto to examine him or her, how will the OBGYN examine them?"

Naruto looked thoughtful for a second then looked at his mate "touch me, Sas." The wolf demon blinked at him "now is not the time....."

".....No" he interrupted him "I mean just touch my arm, shoulder or something" he looked at the other Shinobi "I think if I was surrounded by you guys and she could sense it, Aeris would take it as safety, protection and comfort and allow him to scan her."

Without hesitation Sasuke moved to hug his mate from behind, hands below and above the lump. The rest of the group hesitated though so Naruto rolled his eyes and seized Vincent's gauntlet-free hand, pulled him to his side and continued to hold it firmly while Sasuke firmly took his brothers and placed it on the boy's wrist above Vincent's.

This encouraged the rest, Tsunade taking her place at his other hand, Shizune the wrist while Jiriaya
smiled and touched the young man's head in a decidedly fatherly gesture. Itachi reached around and after pulling Tifa to the spot of the inner elbow above him, also touched his younger brother's shoulder.

Naruto looked around to The Shinra heir and his lover/Guardian TURK "you guys waiting for a signed invitation?" Both blinked in shock and surprise at the blonde "we are also included in who you both trust?!"

"Well yeah, of course" the blonde answered as if that should have been obvious "she knows you're trying to make up for what you and your dad did." The two rose and turned to bow low to the young man. "We are honored by your trust and belief in us" Tseng said solemnly "and will continue to try and prove it is not misguided."

Rufus Shinra nodded in agreement to his companion "you're trust and belief in me and my spirit means a lot to me" he seemed to have abandoned the 'businessman' and Shinra heir and gone with just himself "after my past, not many trust in me or want to, I can count on one hand how many" he glanced at Tseng and Tifa realized he was talking about the TURKS "if you believe in me as well, I think I can struggle on until others are willing."

"Of course I trust you both" Naruto suddenly grinned "anyone else who loves the food of the Gods as much as I do can't be that bad, can they."

The rest of the room groaned in exasperation. Tifa knew though that Naruto was just trying to lighten the mood with his 'joke'. The two males solemnly came forward and with Tseng on Vincent's side and Rufus on Tsunade's, they both touched a shoulder each. "Try it now" Naruto told the man who frowned but didn't move "are you sure? I have no interest in flying across the room again."

"No, but won't know unless we try. If she tries it again I'm sure the guys can sense it and block her" the group around him nodded in answer.

Cautiously the OBGYN approached them and under her hand Tifa could feel the struggle of muscle as the young man started to tense, but tried to fight in down and relax.

Something must have clued the rest of the group in to his struggle because Vincent held his gauntleted hand up to the doctor and spoke "wait there for just a moment" and when the man did so he turned to his adopted son "Naruto?"

"I...." he was visibly fighting now, unable to speak any further. Before Vincent could say it might not be a good idea if it panics him this much, Sasuke acted. At his mate's back, the Uchiha flared his chakra. Not some storm or oppressive strength but soft and gentle like the waves at the beach.

Peaceful.

Immediately the rest of the group followed his lead, Vincent with his demon energy.

The blonde sighed, his body going limp in his mate's grip and eyes almost completely closing as if falling asleep.

After a few seconds his eyes opened halfway and he managed to say, "keep it up, you're putting her to sleep." While they did so Naruto looked at the OBGYN again "here's your chance. If she sleeps she won't hurt you or even notice what you're doing." Striding forward again faster the man reached them and had Sasuke move his hands wider apart so he could scan the entire stomach area.

"This isn't natural" the man murmured thoughtfully as he slowly did so.
"We know that males aren't supposed to be able to conceive let alone give birth...."

"I don't mean that" the man said "by what I see here, he wasn't born this way. His organs were forced to reshape in order too allow room not only for the reproductive organs but the possibility of an pregnancy. I'm seeing some only recently healing scar-tissue on his lower organs like kidney, bladder and liver. His small and large intestines have become more powerful and faster to compensate for becoming smaller and shorter due to allowing room for the two usable separate reproductive organs, the pregnancy is pulling things from his body an normal female wouldn't and I'm shocked he hasn't been confined to a bed for the duration of the pregnancy...." he looked at the blonde healer reproachfully "he SHOULD have been."

She snorted "YOU try keeping the Gaki still for five minutes, let alone in an hospital bed or his own. No one knows how to do stealth quiet like him. You could stand there and watch him constantly but the minute you blink he's gone."

Sasuke frowned "I always find him.""That's because he either LET'S you find him or he wants to be found, like with Iruka. Believe me even my ANBU could never find him unless he wanted to."

"She's right" the voice from the doorway was Iruka, watching them "do you know how many times I COULDN'T find him no matter how I tried?!" While Naruto grinned cheekily at him, Tsunade went on "I let him go as long as he was careful and reported directly to me every three days for a check-up and he agreed." The group felt Naruto vibrate slightly, but relaxed after Sasuke gasped in surprise and his hands moved, realizing Aeris had just kicked, whether out at the doctor or at her 'fathers' hands, they didn't know.

"He'll definitely need a C-Section" the doctor said as he continued "and sooner rather than later, he has a few days, maybe a week left at the most before time, and natural birth here is not an option." He stood and smiled gently at the young man, already taken in by the love he shared with all here, his sense of humor and the ability-like with Rufus-to see past a person's reputation.

He didn’t want to leave, he wanted to stay here and get to know the young man better, he was an contradiction to his self. He was open and honest, yet obviously guarded as well. He was sweet and innocent, yet jaded at the same time, he had a sense of right or wrong that seemed to have carried from his childhood, the same sense often mutated from growing up with all of the influences during those times. He saw good in people even when they didn’t see it in themselves and even though he must have killed as an warrior, he still had a sense of youthful innocence not seen in many.

If this small sign was what he was himself, what would his offspring be like?

He had to discuss this with some of his fellow OBGYN, maybe they would have some insight into this pregnancy situation and how to handle it properly.
Chapter 16

Tifa and Itachi had their talk later after the OBGYN left and the group broke up for the day to do their own things. They sat in Itachis' chosen apartment next door to his brothers, talking about their experiences and what they wanted from the relationship. Tifa was surprised to find Itachi had NO experience with relationships with women past his mother, his only experience with females were either as enemy ninja, female Shinobi growing up or the one female Akatsuki, who was with the groups leader Pain.

He had been raised as a weapon, not to produce heirs, the only real relationship he had was to Sasuke. The nearest thing he had to anything like it was to his partner in Akatsuki, Kisame.

When Tifa asked what he meant by that he explained how the man had been one of Orochimaru's experiments into crossing animal and human DNA and trying to create an pseudo-tailed beast had only survived due to his water affiliation chakra. But the man was forever changed. From the moment he was 'brought in' to the group and paired up with the sharkman, he had warned him he was not human-a monster, and as a shark wouldn't hesitate to kill him, yet in their time as partners, he had tried to encourage the man into believing that, that he was human just like the rest of them.

He had developed something of a crush on Itachi for this, though neither spoke of it or drew attention to it.

To Tifa claiming he wasn't human but a monster meant he sounded like Sephiroth just before he went mad, trying to convince everyone-including himself. So she asked what happened to him. "After Sasuke killed me I heard from Kabuto he encountered the eight tailed vessel and his brother. He didn't survive" and when Tifa looked sad he added "he died well, as a human, how he wanted." Tifa found out also that when Itachi killed his clan that night, another life had been spared other than Sasuke. When she asked him who he answered with simply "Naruto" and went on to explain how the boy-then five years old-was to be the first victim. He would be assassinated as the signal for the rest of the betrayal to start.

"I knew about Sasuke and Narutos' childhood friendship. Unfortunately so did father. He didn't want Sasuke to have any....loyalty to anyone outside the clan, plus he thought the village would find a way to use the Kyuubi's power to beat them back-or even wipe out the clan."

"So they figured, kill Naruto and it would also cripple any chance of beating them." Itachi nodded to this.

After a bit more talk about themselves, Tifa gave him an lesson on women "growing up men are taught to hide their feelings, to be tough and strong. However women are the opposite, but circumstances and experience growing up teach us otherwise, like not getting hurt in relationships gone or going wrong. You are an ninja, taught to look at truth hidden beneath the surface, you can use it to learn a woman's mood or true feelings, just watch them carefully. It's really no different to anticipating an enemy in battle, only it takes more refinement and lots of little clues to pick up, then learning the appropriate response."

She tried to think of an example "Naruto may act stupid but I have seen numerous occasions where he can anticipate the moods and actions of those around him and act to either encourage or discourage it before they even know they're feeling it. Probably comes from his childhood and trying to anticipate the possible threats around him, but mostly with Sasuke and you can watch him for a few examples."
Or Yuffie's behavior when she is around us as opposed to when Haku is there. Yuffie unconsciously starts flirting with him and if you watch you can see the difference between her unconscious and conscious flirting.

Then there's Lady Tsunade and Jiraiya. If I didn't know their story already I would have noticed their unconscious reactions to each other. They obviously desire each other, but can't get past their past to take action about it."

THAT Itachi had obviously noticed as well, he nodded in agreement.

Tifa smiled at him and continued "for now I'll give you something to use to start. Have you ever noticed couples in public tend to nearly always hold hands?"

When he nodded she explained "to a woman it's a way to signal her partner without speech. There are hundreds of little signals she can do with or to him just by using her hand so she doesn't have to tell him how she feels around everyone and still be close to him, but we'll talk about basics."

This interested Itachi, women had some sort of secret signaling system to their partners just by holding a or both hands? Having been ANBU when he was much younger and learned ninja sign as well as the elite version he was interested in how normal human women could develop their own, instinctively understood and shared by every other woman around them but not taught.

Reaching out she took one of his hands "now just normal holding has two purposes, it shows every other person around them you are together and since women are more touch orientated it comforts a woman over her partners presence with her. It is also a way for her to...stake her claim over the man, essentially saying to every other woman around them 'he's MINE, you can look, but he's mine to touch.'"

This fascinated Itachi, woman were certainly interesting to get all that from just holding hands.

"Now we all know that kids can hold hands and while it seems innocent, this sort of behavior is in a woman from the moment they are born, I think. Somewhere along our ancestry it became instinctual behavior. Even when we're children it's like 'he's MY brother, stay away' or 'MY boyfriend'. Although it is more innocent in those years, the instincts are there, just not as vindictive.

Now if a woman does this..." she quickly but firmly squeezed his hand "it means she wants his attention on her for some reason. If the man ignores it a lot of the time a woman will squeeze harder and longer until he does, but if he doesn't and she let's go..." she shook her head "have you ever seen a woman abruptly let a man's hand go just before she starts yelling at him or crying? There's your answer. You do NOT want a woman to let go, it means you are in the shit-house for something and better fix it before she blows her top at you there in public.

If she does this..." she gently squeezed his hand and leaned slightly towards him sideways "it means something has upset her and she wants comfort. Usually you only need to squeeze back to let her know you are there and care, but sometimes she is more than a little upset, in which case put your arm around her waist and pull her closer to your side." She motioned to Itachi to do so and after he did she went on "if she doesn't relax against you, it means it's something serious-at least to her, so find out what it is. If she sighs she wants you to ask, if not just try and soothe her."

She found herself relaxing against his side, eyelids drooping in contentment and sighing in happiness. Against her the older Uchiha obviously felt the same for a low purr started in his throat and resonated through his body and into her where they touched.

Tifa found herself drifting between sleep and reality, she had never felt so relaxed and peaceful
before and it wasn't until she heard a door slam somewhere in the building that she jerked fully awake and sighed in disappointment "We should continue" she said reluctantly as she moved away from his side and the purring stopped. However she didn't release his hand.

"If she does this" she squeezed his hand for longer than the first time and blushed a little "it means she's a little....frisky. If she does this as well" the blush deepened as she followed up by running her thumb back and forth on the back of his hand "it means 'I want you'" and then her voice went husky "If she adds this" she leaned forward so her breasts touched his arm pleased by the hitch in his breathing "in any similar way, it means 'find us an hotel, now.'"

Unable to help herself, pleased by his reaction to her she leaned over to press her lips to his. When he leaned forward against her and started to mimic her movements, a thrill went through her body.

For a few minutes they just kissed with closed lips, but when she opened hers instinctively she felt him shudder against her and follow, his body becoming more aggressive in its desire, she could feel the purr again rising, the sound between their lips more of an aroused cat then purr.

It wasn't until one of the older Uchiha's new longer incisors signifying the cat in him nicked her bottom lip that they actually separated.

He frowned as he tasted her blood in his mouth, eyes searching her face until he saw the nick and the frown deepened. Before Tifa could tell him it didn't matter and assure him he didn't hurt her he had reached out and gently pulled her lip out so he could examine it more closely. A warmth and comfort filled her from the spot as he slowly ran a thumb over it, making Tifa realize he was healing the nick with his chakra.

It just made her desire him more, the fact he cared for her comfort and worried about her silly cut. He respected her as a warrior enough not to sit there and freak out or start apologizing for a simple nick, but he cared for her comfort and physical well-being.

Clearing her throat huskily she managed to say "of course a guy can use those signals too if he wants" telling the male he was free to comfort and even kiss her if it was his desire to.

She had a sudden idea and rose from the chair, not letting go of his hand as she gently tugged him with her "come on, I'll show you something."

She first found Tsunade, telling her calmly Itachi was going to help her with some supplies and to contact her if they were needed. The Hokage just grinned at their entwined hands and motioned them off with "have fun."

Tifa took him to a favorite restaurant not far from 'Seventh Heaven'. There she ordered two green tea's and smirked when the waitress-a girl called Ellina-looked Itachi up and down, her eyes sparking in definite sexual interest and then frowned when she saw their clasped hands.

Itachi, obviously remembering what she said about claiming their partner in another woman's eyes, gently touched her arm in an possessive gesture that made Tifa want to smile in triumph, but she wouldn't give the girl the satisfaction of her reaction.

Instead she squeezed his hand gently and lead him to an table in a dark corner where they could observe the entire open restaurant dining area.

Before she could begin the lesson she had planned there came a shocked male cry from the kitchen of
"Tifa's here and has a boyfriend! This I gotta see!!" and she grinned as an tall middle aged black man covered in muscles wearing an stained apron over outrageously bright clothing came out and began to look around for her. With a sheepish look at Itachi she waved to get his attention.

Spying her the man cried her name loudly and moved to their table with "where have you been lately, you bitch!"

Tifa immediately took on a more girly attitude and took his hands in hers when he reached the table "around, you know, saving the planet, watching over Cloud and Zack and keeping them in line, kicking butt that sort of thing."

The man laughed "I'll just bet you are, those two are always in trouble and you kick it so well, look at you" he held her arms away from her body and looked her up and down and growled "still as fine as ever" with an emphasis on fine.

Tifa laughed at this "what about you" she looked him up and down and growled "look at all that muscle. I bet Danny doesn't know what to do with you like that."

The man laughed loudly back then winked at her "he knows just fine" and when Tifa blushed he laughed again, then calmed a little "what about you, what's this I hear about you with a new bou? He must be something to catch your attention after mooning after Cloud for so long."

Tifa protested "I wasn't mooning after Cloud!" and after the man looked at her sternly she relented "well maybe when we were younger, but not for a while now. No one else has just caught my eye or interest before now."

The man snorted "your three rules again" when she started to stutter with protests she could just sense Itachi's sudden interest behind her.

Changing the subject she quickly decided to introduce then and hopefully distract both "Itachi, this is an old friend from Niblheim, Edwin. He was one of the few other survivors and the one who carried me from the reactor when Cloud was fighting Sephiroth and got me to safety. A couple of years ago he moved here and opened this restaurant, which has become extremely popular due to his laid back attitude due to a persons sexual orientation." She motioned around her at the other couples seated around the room.

The man looked put-out "and here I thought it was my cooking that drew people here." Tifa laughed "that too, stop acting offended" and playfully slapped his arm.

The man laughed as well as Tifa continued the introductions "Ed this is Itachi Uchiha, eldest and heir of the last two of the Uchiha clan. He's the brother-in-law of that guy I was telling you about last time I was here, Naruto. He's the one who pretend to be part of that organization to spy for his village."

"Ah" the middle aged man, Edwin, looked Itachi up and down as much as he could since the man was sitting down. Something glinted in his eyes, humor, before he said "doesn't look like much. How did he beat your rules?"

Instead of rising to the obvious bait Itachi let Tifa talk-he was interested as well. "Um, well" she started and at her uncertainty the man looked at her sharply "Tifa?!"

"Well" she started "I fought beside him so I know how skilled he is at hand to hand...." The man looked shocked and completely stunned "you discarded your rules, for HIM, for one guy?! You have NEVER done that before as long as I've known you! How long have you known him for?"
"A little more than a month and there's a reason for that, Edwin. Either I had no interest in those guys and needed a reason to reject them or I wanted to make it difficult for them to even try. Itachi is different. I know for a fact because of his past he won't use me or take me for granted, he respects me as an fighter as I do him, and I think he'd definitely win three, hands down. More than that though I don't WANT to do that, I've never been interested in anyone like this before in my life, I both respect and admire the sacrifices he made in his past for the safety and lives of others. I respect him as a person and I respect him as a fighter."

Itachi didn't react, but Tifa felt the surprise in his body when she took his hand. She had already told him all this, but to hear her tell someone else-least of all an childhood friend....That just made it all the more real.

The man was about to speak again when someone yelled his name from the kitchen and he turned his head to yell back "coming!" before turning back "those idiots can't do anything right without me, I'll talk to you later, 'kay Tifa?"

She nodded and watched the man leave. Once gone Itachi frowned "he wants you."

Tifa laughed "not in the way you mean, but as a sister. I'm not his type. YOU'D be more his type then me."

"What do you mean?"

"Edwin is gay, always has been since we were kids. Sure when we were children he acted like he wanted me, but he said it never felt right. It was all an act. Now we're even greater friends than before."

Gay?" Itachi questioned and Tifa explained "there is two types of sexual orientation here, Heterosexuals and homosexuals. Heterosexuals are an male and female like us, or them" she motioned at an teenage couple nearby holding hands "or say Sakura and Lee. Homosexuals are those who prefer the same sex, like Naruto and Sasuke, Gaara and Neji, male and male, or......" this time she motioned at two woman in a dark corner opposite necking.

"Two females" Itachi nodded his understanding, then asked "but gay?"

"In the male section of homosexuals there are subcultures. The normal homosexual is just a normal guy, he can be just like every other man, the only difference is he just happens to like sleeping with guys, like Naruto and the others." Itachi understood her point. She went on "one of the most famous sub sections are called gays. These men are...well...like you saw. They act outrageous, overact and....well....excited. Think of them as an more exaggerated version of Gai." Itachi shuddered at this causing Tifa to grin at him "They're like half children, half man, with an woman crossed in. They are the best friend a girl can have, simply because there is no sexual interest between either whatsoever. SOME gays don't like women, they see us as unnatural, but most gays are great fun to be around and be with."

"Is that what you meant about he's laid back by a person's sexual orientation?"

"Yes, he's so popular here because none of the staff judge couples who come in by who they choose to be with and he treats them equally. While Edwin believes that a person's sexual orientation doesn't matter since in the lifestream as souls we're sexless, there are still a few places out there that at least frown upon same sex couples. Which is why he's so popular."

Itachi nodded.
Their drinks arrived, but so did a meal each. Caesar salad for Tifa and a large steak with steaming vegetables for Itachi. "Wait!" Tifa called to the waitress "we didn't order anything!"

The young woman smiled at them "Edwin did, on the house. He said your boyfriend needs a little more meat on his bones if he hopes to keep up with you."

Tifa laughed a little in embarrassment as she hid her face in her hands, muttering "he's such an nuisance" as the waitress laughed at her and left the table.

When she looked up, Itachi was watching her. She smiled and motioned at the food "it's alright, he just likes embarrassing me, go ahead."

Itachi picked up his utensils and cut off a bit of the steak. To his surprise it was actually very good. His sensitive sense of taste (due to both his cat side and having learnt in Akatsuki to identify drugs someone might have tried to slip him) could pick out various herbs and spices, some he didn't know but could guess were native to this world, and his demon side could identify each and that it was safe.

The vegetables even were each lightly sprinkled with certain one's that brought out the true flavor of the veges.

He was even shocked to find one that seemed to-what Itachi could only describe as-sedate his cat. It wasn't catnip or anything of the sort but it brought up memories and feelings of the earth and comfort and happiness. He had the feeling it wouldn't just affect him but anyone with demon chakra. If it affected Naruto like it did him then maybe with more they could use it on him for the C-Section.

"Itachi, what's wrong?" Itachi realized he must have been frowning or something of the like when he turned his head to see Tifa looking at him in concern.

"This food, the herbs....."

"What's wrong with it?" she started to get alarmed "are you allergic!?"

A motion of his hand stopped her words though "one of them affects my.....other side. I was just thinking it must be native to your world. If this existed on ours, Madara wouldn't have needed the Akatsuki, he could have just used it to lure the nine of us straight to him."

Tifa nodded "HOW exactly is it affecting you?" when he described it feelings she frowned and turned, calling the waitress over "can you ask Edwin to come out for a minute? One of the herbs he used is having a strange affect on Itachi and we need to know what he used."

Aware of the fact that a customer having an allergic reaction to something in the food could mean trouble for the restaurant, the girl nodded and immediately moved away to do so.

"What's wrong!?!" the man came nearly flying out of the back "you aren't allergic..."

Tifa cut him off "he's having an weird reaction to a herb you used, Edwin. It's nothing bad, he just needs to know what you used so he can avoid it from now on. If you could list what you used with an brief description...."

"Of course" he started to rattle off a list of herbs and their appearance and use. Tifa nodded at a few, obviously knowing them herself and Itachi filed the names of certain ones here he knew with their matches in his memory.

It wasn't until near the end, when the man mentioned the name of one and before he could describe it
a flash of memory in his mind not his own plus that comfort filled him again that Itachi stopped him "THAT one."

Tifa frowned "How in Gaia did you get THAT herb in Midgar, and so fresh, not dried?!" She looked at Itachi and explained "it only grows in our home town and wild at that, nowhere else in the entire planet."

"I brought some seeds with me when I moved here, so I could have fresh herbs at the restaurant. At first everything else grew, but they refused. Then about nine months ago they suddenly sprouted and have been growing all over the place like weeds. I have to pick them constantly just to allow everything else a chance. Fortunately they are useful in cooking."

Tifa was aware of the almost catastrophic event nine months ago that almost destroyed the planet, but instead gave the lifestream a boost "The Omega Incident" she breathed, looking to Itachi who nodded his acknowledgment of it and memory of her telling him.

She looked at the other man "can we have a sample of the herb? If it affects Itachi we need to give it to Lady Tsunade so she can see if it'll affect his brothers. With Naruto like this, we can't afford finding sudden weaknesses that may endanger him or Aeris."

He nodded "just give me a yell before you leave and I'll have a sample for you. I'll even make sure it's sealed so it can't do anything to him."

"Thanks Edwin." The man nodded and left so they could continue their meal.

Once the meals were finished and dishes taken away they sat back to drink their tea. Once they were comfortable Tifa turned to the real reason they were there. "This was a good place for you to see some of what I was telling you in practice. Look around, tell me what you see."

Itachi did so, looking around the large room at the various couples.

Tifa spoke as she looked around at the room "now remember I said that a lot of couples have different signals and behaviors important just to them, but you can usually tell by watching their body language." She decided to start easy and pointed to the teenage couple nearby "what are they thinking?"

Itachi watched them carefully for a full minute before he spoke "they are afraid of being caught, probably by their parents, but believe they are madly in love. They perhaps are together because their parents disapprove."

"And what makes you think that?"

"Every time an adult enters the door, they try to hide from it's line of sight, either by shrinking down in the seats or hunching over. They are also unsure around each other suggesting they want to be together, but aren't too comfortable."

"Good" Tifa nodded "they are also supposed to be at school" she stood and called out "you two are in so much trouble when your parents find out!"

"Tifa!" the two noticed them, looking alarmed, the girl crying "what are YOU doing here!?" looking around in panic while the boy said "don't tell our parents!" at the same time.

"I won't tell your parents, but don't you think they'll find out when A: the school calls and says you both didn't come and B: some of their friends who eat here tell them you were seen here?"
The two looked on the verge of a panic attack.

"However" Tifa interrupted their building panic "if you go home now and confess, it would give you an advantage."

Both stopped and looked at her "what do you mean?"

"If you both go home now and confess and apologize before it can get back to them from another source, it will make you look better in their eyes. You may get in trouble, but your punishment will be lesser because they will see you as being honest and open to them, even next time it might not be as bad because they expected it and if you explain your feelings, they may even understand a little."

The two teens eyes lit up at this, the boy threw some gil on the table and taking his girlfriend's hand they rushed out the door.

Itachi was even more interested in Tifa for this. She had not only got the two to confess to their parents happily and excitedly, but instead of their parents searching for them, they would go straight home. Itachi knew she had two children she cared for not her own, now he knew she would make the perfect parent for their children and his interest in her as a potential mate and as a person itself just went up.

Tifa smiled at him and they continued, this time Itachi more interested in anything she had to teach him.

At least two hours later they were headed back to the apartments, hand in hand, and Itachi didn't mind. As an ANBU you learn that learning to read a persons body language can not only mean life or death but predicting an enemies next move, but he had no idea there was so many little nuances of behavior out there he COULD learn. Even walking back with Tifa now, he could read those around him a lot better then ever before. And it was thanks to this woman.

Even his demon side purred in her presence now, leaving him with the sense that not only was she an powerful mate, but one that could easily protect and guide any potential young they had. He knew how she felt about him, but as of yet didn't know if it was as an mate for life. Besides, something inside him, a sense of peace and gentleness-like a mother's presence-said now was not the time to mate with her, that he would know when the time came, and so would she.

So he just held her hand and walked back with her to the apartments, watching those they passed with interest as to what they were thinking.

Once they were inside Tifa lead him straight back to the healer. She explained about the herb and gave her the sealed bag Edwin had given her before they left. Tsunade frowned in concern as she took it from her, getting Itachi to explain in detail everything he had felt or experienced from it, followed by Tifa telling her where it was from and what it was normally used for, then the idea of it could be used on Naruto for the C-Section if it affected everyone of demon blood the same.

"I don't know if it affects Vincent. I've never seen him eat and when we were in Neibhliem I didn't see him react. But maybe it doesn't affect Chaos as strong since he's more powerful than his children or Vincent himself is immune to it...."

Tsunade was about to agree when a voice answered them "I am immune. Hojo discovered it when he was experimenting on us and I was forced to build an immunity or suffer his using it against us. However Chaos is not. It was why I was using the trees to move around, not the ground."
Vincent faded out of the shadows as he continued "it was all around us when we were seeking Sasuke and Naruto. It was also the reason Naruto was unconscious so long. When we moved to that clearing the wind changed direction, pushing the smell away from us and that area was clear of any of it. It was also the reason all three of us seemed more... emotional than normal."

Tifa remembered the 'breakdown' Chaos had had and realized that was why. But how could Vincent be immune to it but not Chaos, they were in the same body and should share all immunities and weaknesses, shouldn't they?

Vincent answered this "my body... alters when Chaos is in control. It becomes denser, more elemental and therefore different to my own and would be more susceptible to it's influence." This made sense, when Vincent changed it was more than his mind that changed, his body did as well. It would make sense his biology did as well.

"Naruto, Sasuke and Gaara will be as open to it as Chaos and Itachi are."

"Why didn't you mention this drug to us? It could endanger them, or Aeris."

"I have never gone to this restaurant Tifa mentioned. As Tifa said, the drug grows wild in Neibhlhiem and nowhere else on Gaia, If we had of returned to there, I would tell you before hand. Besides, letting even allies know of our weakness is something Chaos would not allow."

Satisfied the healer nodded, looking down at the packet "I'll destroy this after I've finished with it. Just make sure the others don't enter while the packet is open, don't want either of the other three freaking out at it. If you loose track of Naruto for any reason at any time, warn me."

"Right" Kakashi nodded "I'll tell Iruka, he should be able to keep him busy for a while."

The healer nodded her acknowledgement and looked at the two "you two better leave. Itachi, Sasuke just went with two of her companions to investigate an possible sighting in some place called Gongaga, Naruto is alone in his room."

Translation-Naruto's alone, go babysit him before he gets bored and starts pissing people off by pranking them.

Vincent disappeared back into the shadows as the two left the room and headed down an level towards the two demons room.

They exchanged looks when the elevator doors opened and all they could hear was laughter. Naruto must have pranked someone already.

They approached the room and entered to find Naruto rolling around the floor of the lounge room in front of the switched on TV, laughter so loud and absolutely uproarious he was gasping for air, little Nowari seated in his nest nearby giving the boy a look that said he thought the other was completely out of his mind.

Whatever Naruto found so funny he was nearly wetting himself with how hard he was laughing.

Tifa spoke his name loudly to get his attention, then asked him what was so funny. If he kept up like this he could cause himself to go into labor early. Naruto, with a shaking hand, pointed to the TV, and at first she thought it was the actual device, then she realized he actually knew it, it just was what was ON it when he gasped out "octo-pops."

Itachi moved around to Naruto's point of view and looked. Softly he spoke "the eight tailed."
"The last of the Jinchuuriki? The only one left not merged?" she moved around to his side to look. On the TV was an dark skinned man like Barrett or Rude, wearing white with white hair and short facial hair and two blue symbols-one on his cheek and one on his arm. He wore an head band with the same metal plate as theirs-only a different symbol and at least three swords crossed over his back. He also wore one large one with an skull pommel.

He was, of all things, rapping and Tifa recognized the background as the Golden Saucer concert grounds.

Something in Itachi's posture clued her in he was upset and she placed a gentle hand on his arm "hey, what's wrong?"

At first he didn't seem to want to answer, then he did, softly and void of emotion, showing he was trying to hide his upset, even if his body did "the sword, that's Samehada, Kisame's weapon."

Tifa realized he was upset that the man bore his old partners unique weapon.

Naruto spoke, looking at his brother\brother-in-law in a calm voice "that weapon was fickle, it would only fight when it wanted to and went through owners like bad underwear."

"It liked the eight tailed's chakra, I wouldn't be surprised if it betrayed him during the fight when he most needed it."

"Umm" Naruto looked uncomfortable. Itachi's eyes narrowed "you were there."

"Not there!" Naruto protested and then calmed "but octo-pops told me what happened afterwards."

"Tell us" Tifa said gently, squeezing Itachi's arm to let him know he wasn't alone. After an hesitant pause Itachi visibly forced himself to relax.

When his story was over Tifa pulled out her PHS and touched an speed dial number. She waited until it was answered then spoke "Reeve, it's Tifa, are you near an TV? Find one and turn to GSL (Golden Saucer Live)." She waited for about a minute then spoke again "you see it too? Well according to Naruto and Itachi that guy is the last of Chaos' children, the only Jinchuuriki left not merged, the eight-tailed......" she looked at them ".....what was his name?"

"Killer Bee" Naruto said, followed by Itachi with "Gyuki." Tifa repeated it to him and added "can you find out about this guy's actions the time he's been here and get us in to see him? He needs to know what's going on and he's not alone. He may want to stay here when he finds out about Chaos and the others, but he should know what's going to happen-both with Naruto and Aeris and Sephiroth's return and at least be able to prepare."

Reeve agreed on his end and asked if they would go with him to see the man once he had organized it. Tifa agreed that she, Naruto and Itachi would go with him, but Itachi spoke out "perhaps it would be better I don't go with you. Last time we met I was with the Akatsuki."

"You might be right" Naruto said before she could protest "he would probably attack first, thinking to defend himself and Gyuki against you."

Itachi nodded "And with Samehada he could cause some serious damage before you calm him down. You may be better taking father with you. He could relax both of them long enough to explain what is going on."

Tifa wanted to protest this, Itachi shouldn't have to still hide from the effects of his past, not HERE, but then recognized their point so nodded "but I don't know if Vincent will be able to come."
"When he finds out that this is the last of our brothers, he'll come" Naruto said "Chaos will want to make sure the last of his fragments is well and happy where he is. Killer Bee was the first who made friends with his demon, the first to see it as an intelligent and sentient entity instead of a weapon, the first with an PARTNERSHIP with it. He was the one who taught me to control and manipulate the Kyuubi's chakra without letting it control me, he was the one who was there, guiding and watching over me when I merged fully with her."

"Why hasn't he merged with his own yet?"

"Being an Jinchuuriki is not easy. You grow up lonely, feared and isolated-different from everyone else. Even if the village supposedly reveres or accepts you for being a vessel you are still different. Some of us find ways to lash out or gain attention-my pranks and Killer Bee's rapping.

Killer Bee has-or should I say HAD a brother-now but it's not the same. Can you imagine having this presence inside you, someone else who goes through the same things as you do, does the same thing but sticks with you through thick and thin? Sure you both don't have a choice, but that's beside the point. Here's someone who is with you all your life and if their like Gyuki, he comforts you when you're upset, talks to you and tells you stories when you're lonely, protects you by giving you his chakra when you're in danger-so on."

"I see" Tifa nodded "so he hasn't merged with his demon because he doesn't want to loose someone he cares about. A friend and separate soul."

Naruto nodded "now you know why Gaara was so obsessed with HIS."

Tifa nodded and turned back to the PHS "you heard all that?"

"I did indeed and will contact yourself, Vincent or Naruto the minute I have confirmation of when we can go see him."

"Thanks Reeve."

She heard him speak briefly to someone and turn back to her on the other end "I thought you would wish to know Zack, Cloud and Sasuke have confirmed that there was three more found in Gongaga. They are named as Kohonamaru Sarutobi, Choji Akimichi and an female calling herself Tenten."

Naruto obviously heard because he looked overjoyed. "Eibsu's gonna be ecstatic, he's been so worried about Kohonamaru and Shika may not admit it but he'll be happy to see Choji."

"They are returning, last report had them just reaching the outskirts of Midgar. They should be there within the next hour or so."

"Thanks Reeve" Tifa said before signing off.

An hour later Tifa watched the three reunite with their friends and teammates. Gai and Lee cried "manly tears of joy" at their third members safe return while Neji filled her in on everything, Choji, chip packet out and chomping away, listened to Shikamaru do the same for him while Eibzu continually tried to get the attention of "most honored grandson" who ignored him. After the three teenagers were reunited, Kohonamaru moved to talk to Naruto who grinned at him when he called him 'boss' and Tifa remembered what Tsunade had told them at the meeting that month or so ago about the boy idolizing the blonde and calling him that, as well as how the blonde himself had taught the boy most of his own original jutsu's.

The blonde was telling him about Aeris, laughing at the stupefied look he gave him when Naruto told him he was going to be an uncle.
"Me?" he squeaked.

"Of course!" Naruto laughed "you're like my little brother, aren't you?!" The boy took a few long seconds to gain control and when he did he looked serious and pleased, drawing himself up to full height "yeah I am."

Naruto continued "and as her uncle it would be your responsibility to help teach her" he reached out and took his hand, guiding it to lay flat on the top of his stomach. The teen opened his mouth to protest, but quickly shut it again when Tifa saw it jerk and his eyes widened nearly all the way.

"You see" Naruto grinned "she knows her uncle and is letting you know she loves you as such already."

The teen drew his hand back, slowly closing his fist and clutching it close to his heart with the other hand, eyes locked to the blonde's stomach in awe and shock and didn't seem to be able to look away.

When Eibzu came forward and steered his student away THIS TIME he went willingly, head turned to keep Naruto in sight as they did and silent.

For the next few days the teen was often seen around the young man, watching him thoughtfully, sometimes with his hand on the lump, watching it closely for movement or as if he expected it to talk to him. He seemed to be taking the position of uncle seriously and watched EVERYONE around Naruto very carefully, even those they both trusted.

They gained four more of the group unexpectedly within that week, they hadn't known were there but no less welcomed. Tifa was walking home early that night after picking up Denzel and Marlene to hearing murmurs in the street.

Curious but knowing she'd probably hear about it later, she sent them up to do their homework while she cooked the two a quick dinner. After they had finished they entertained themselves while Tifa opened the bar and began to run it.

Not long afterwards three men walking in wearing jeans and plain work shirts. One had brown hair but scars that looked like he had been thrown into acid or burnt or some such thing. Another was dark haired with a bandage over his nose and an light colored mark on his chin. The third was kind of plain and normal looking, except the bandanna holding his hair down over one side of his face, but like the other two walked like the shinobi with the tight controlled strength and power of an highly trained and skilled being.

Tifa frowned at this mentally as she served them, recognizing the clothes as an miner just outside Midgar. If they were Leaf shinobi they weren't wearing the hitiates like the others, but Tsunade had told her the only time they weren't worn was undercover and at home. Being an miner wasn't undercover and she doubted they would leave off their village symbol here of all places.

However she would keep an eye on them for the night, just in case.

Some time later she looked back at them to find the scarred man sitting back in his chair, laughing at something the other men had said, his shirt at the chest partly unbuttoned. Underneath something shone on his chest, a chain with something in black and green.

Tifa frowned and called over Raven, her barmaid she was training on the side. The barmaid listened for a few seconds to her instructions, intrigued, and nodded eagerly. A few seconds later there was a clang followed by desperate apologies as the girl tried to wipe up the spilet drink from the scarred man's shirt, furiously trying, despite his protests, to ineffectively pat the skin and material dry.
When he finally got rid of her she returned to the bar and while Tifa pretended to admonish her about it the barmaid whispered her description of the necklace, back to them to hide her mouth moving.

Tifa wasn't surprised by what she told her and when the young woman went back to serving, Tifa approached the man "I'm sorry sir but it was an accident, my employees aren't normally this clumsy, she insisted someone tripped her. If you'd like to follow me into the back room briefly I can wash and dry that for you."

The man looked at her critically for a few seconds then looked at his companions before following her.

Once in the laundry room he removed his shirt for her, revealing his body and the charm hanging from the thick chain, the symbol of the Leaf Village. Handing it over to her Tifa immediately threw it in the wash and he spoke "so what's the REAL reason you got your employee to drench me and you got me back here?"

Tifa was about to speak when there came the sound of running and Marlene appeared, crying out "Tifa! Denzel said we aren't seeing Iruka tomorrow! He's lying isn't he?!" she sounded on the verge of tears.

She stopped dead when she saw the man, shocked out of her upset, mouth wide as she slowly looked up at him. The man frowned down at her, but jerked in surprise when Marlene pointed to his chain and blurted "that's Naruto's village symbol! Why are YOU wearing it?"

The man looked shocked "did you say NARUTO!!!"

Marlene opened her mouth to speak but Tifa caught her up "it's time for bed, Mar. You tell Denzel to go too if you want to go see them tomorrow after school."

"But we ARE going, aren't we?"

"Yes we are, now scoot." The girl grinned and obeyed.

When she was gone the man looked at her "Naruto AND Iruka are here as well?!"

Tifa nodded "it would take too long to explain but can you remain here until I close? I promise I'll answer all the questions I can."

The man hesitated and nodded.

"Are you're friends from Kohona as well? If so, what are your names?"

"I'm Raidō Namiashi. The guy with his hair over his face is Izumo Kamizuki, the one with the bandage over his nose is his partner Kotetsu Hagane. There is another, Genma Shiranui, but he didn't want to come with us."

"So there is FOUR of you?"

"Yes, why?"

"Everyone else has been found in groups of three. It's unusual is all."

"Everyone else?!"

"I'll explain later, do you want to get your other friend down here or will you tell him when you return? I can't take you to them right now, I have an bar to run and kids to take care of, but we can
go tomorrow."

"We had an appointment tomorrow. Genma got into a fight with an miner after a couple of drinks-which is why he isn't with us-but one of the other guys saw us and suggested we would find better work as skilled fighters with some guy and his Organization. We were going to an interview tomorrow."

Tifa looked at him funny "he wouldn't happen to be called Reeve Tuesti, would he?" The man blinked at her "'yes he was, why?"

As she put the shirt in the dryer Tifa smiled at him "he's an close friend. I'll call and let him know who you are and why you won't be there tomorrow. He'll understand. Chances are he would have known the minute you walked in anyway and contacted US immediately."

"And why would he contact you?"

Tifa briefly recapped the history of the events on Gaia, Shinra Senior, AVALANCHE, Sephiroth and Jenovah and Deep Ground.

"I see. So if we were any threat it would be your group to fight us."

"Exactly" she nodded, handing the shirt back "I'll explain in more detail later."

The man nodded, slipped on his shirt and the two moved back to the bar.

The next time Tifa checked out their table the three were sitting with their heads together, whispering in low voices together-probably about what Tifa had told him-and occasionally an eye moved to look at her critically from one of the other two.

Finally about two am Tifa removed the last drunk from her bar and locked up, inviting the three men into her kitchen to sit around the table nursing a coffee each while she explained in more detail everything that had and was going on, what they had figured out and what was GOING to happen.

Then she-at their insistence-named everyone found and who else they thought they had yet to find.

The men seemed vastly relieved that Tsunade was safe and surrounded by allies and fellow Leaf ninja and after a while they admitted to Tifa why. It seemed Raidô was an personal bodyguard to the Hokage while the other two were her assistants as well as normal Shinobi.

Tifa was glad and told them why, about Naruto's nightmare of loosing Aeris and the meeting with the Lords in Wutai.

This alarmed them. "She can't go alone" Raidô said "she may be able to handle herself easily, but it's potentially dangerous. Also if the Lords are anything like on our world, Lady Tsunade going alone will insult them."

"How so?" She questioned.

"It implies that Tsunade is more powerful then them and no man, let alone a Lord, wants a woman to flaunt her strength in their face. On the other hand not only would they EXPECT a bodyguard, but if there was any actual threat, they would underestimate her BECAUSE she has a guard."

Tifa understood this.

They continued to talk for another hour or so until it was time for them to separate for the night.
Escorting them to the door Tifa looked at her watch "if you could meet me here at...ten-thirty with your other friend, It'll give me a chance to get the kids ready and to school and some other things taken care off before I take you directly to the others. And bring anything personal or such with you you want to keep, they'll probably want you all to move into the apartment building with them."

The three men nodded and moved away, passing an alley entrance as they did. It wasn't until Tifa glanced inside the entrance that she stopped, frozen.

A figure was in the shadows there, watching them-HER more likely. She saw only blonde hair cut around the face, vaguely familiar features and glasses before Tifa headed towards it, only to have it duck back inside and disappear.

Inside she found no one, no traces of any human life. Sighing she left, never noticing the large plain white feather caught in the spiders web directly above the spot she had seen him.
Chapter 17

Tifa lead the four men later to the apartment building, fully intending to tell the group about the figure who had been watching her. With Naruto's nightmare about the kidnapping and Aeris being taken, they couldn't be too careful the closer to the birth they got. Someone watching and following her could mean bad news for them and the fact she SWORE she still felt eyes on her made it worse.

However unlike last night when she had seen the mystery figure, these eyes made her skin crawl instead of just making her think whoever it was was more curious than anything. Was it because she now knew he was there? Or was it something altogether different?

She entered first after unlocking the front door, making sure to relock it behind the last man, Genma, and take advantage of the one-way glass to briefly search for anyone suspicious outside.

Nothing.

Sighing internally she turned and was about to lead them to the elevator when a brief flash of red and black on the rooftop directly across the street caught the corner of her eye.

Spinning back she tried to catch sight of it again but it was gone. "What is it?" the man, Raidō asked.

"Someone's been watching me. I just saw something on the roof across the street."

"You mean that guy in black and red who followed us from your place?" Genma asked casually, the thin senbon needle he had casually in his mouth moving from the left to right side corner.

All eyes turned to him "you SAW it and didn't tell us!"

He shrugged "I didn't know if he was enemy or allie. I didn't want to point him out if he was some sort of guard."

"No he's not and if you see him again, feel free to pound him into the street or whatever." She frowned "the thing was it's not the same as the one I saw earlier this morning."

"How so?" Raidō asked as they moved to the elevator and entered.

"The one I saw this morning was wearing white and had blonde hair. This one is red and black."

The males exchanged looks "they could be working for the same client, only doing different shifts."

"I don't think so" Tifa said "The first guy didn't alert or alarm me, he just felt.....curious. THIS one feels like a threat, he sets my instinct to fight or defend myself off. I want to get hold of him and..." she stopped, took a deep breath and continued "it's like the second guy feels like a threat while the first is someone watching over me-like an allie."

They understood and Tifa looked thoughtful "I'll have to see Vincent and the others, see if they've seen either of them and if not as a TURK Vincent may notice and be able to get him."

"Vincent?"

"Myself" and a figure in red and black faded out of the shadows of the hallway ahead of them.

When the four tensed to attack, Tifa spoke quickly to them "it's alright, he's one of us, and allie and member of AVALANCHE!" when the men slowly relaxed she grinned at the demon vessel but
spoke again to them "he has a habit of doing that, don't let it disturb you. You can trust him like you trust Naruto, he IS his family."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you about Chaos, the ten-tailed's source. Vincent contains him, that means Chaos is Kyuubi's father and since Naruto merged with her and Vincent merging with him, it makes Vincent his father. So unless you threaten Naruto....."

She spoke this time to the crimson gunman "someone has been following me Vincent, well, two someone's. I thought we better do something about it with the threat to Naruto. One of them may be the threat to Naruto and Aeris, or even working for them" she described what she had seen of both and what she was feeling from them.

The gunman nodded and faded back into the shadows.

Tifa turned to the men "if either men left a single trace of themselves behind, Vincent will find it."

Raidō frowned "how skilled is he?"

"He's the most skilled of all of us, not just because he's the eldest and therefore most experienced. It is how he was trained. I'd say the TURKS are trained more like you ninja's."

"How so?"

Well SOLDIERS like Zack and Cloud are more like bruisers, trained for direct combat. They are essentially pointed towards an enemy and told 'go fight and kill them'. They have other skills but they are not a lot compared to the emphasis on just being the strongest fighters, hence the need for mako enhancements.

TURKS on the other hand....." she motioned at the shadows where Vincent appeared and disappeared "are the shadow force of Shinra. They deal with all things behind the scenes. They deal with tracking, investigation, stealth and even stealing. TURKS are anything from bodyguards to assassins. They are skilled at hand-to-hand combat or killing from a distance. While they ARE enhanced by mako like SOLDIERS, it isn't as much and only to enhance skills they already have and to make them more resistant to injury or exhaustion. They are skilled with Materia and mana-what you call chakra-use and are dedicated to protection of the Shinra family. Vincent is an ex-TURK and doesn't work for Shinra anymore, but that's because they allowed him to be used as an experiment and drove the woman he loved and his son mad."

She explained about Luecretcia and Sephiroth, then Hojo killing him and forcing the woman to marry him. Then the young scientist trapping Chaos inside Vincent in a desperate attempt to keep him alive.

All four men nodded in understanding.

They reached the top floor area deemed an make-shift hospital to the group and Tifa knocked on the door "lady Tsunade?" she didn't want to walk in, just in case she was experimenting with the herb.

The door was answered by Jiriaya. Both the men and the toad sage's eyes widened at the sight of each other and Jiriaya flung open the door to allow them entrance with a cry to Tifa of "where did you find them!"

Tifa grinned "I didn't, they found me" and explained what had happened as they followed him inside.
"I'm glad you are here" Jiraiya told the men "we may no longer be in the Five Nations, but there is still danger out there and Tsunade seems to think she no longer needs guards, especially at this meeting with these guys. Perhaps you can persuade her that as our leader she is still a target."

The four men nodded and moved off to do so, Jiraiya stopping her from following. "What is it?" she asked, seeing the look on his face.

"You're two SOLDIER friends are here. Apparently it somehow got back to one of them that the Kazekage's sister spoke to his sensei and he's been bugging her ever since. It's starting to piss off her brothers and if he doesn't back off very soon, the red heads gonna flip. We don't need our only home here being blown to bits because someone ticked the Kazekage off."

Tifa frowned "isn't Cloud doing anything about it?"

"He's tried but he's ignoring even him. He said as soon as you arrive to see if you can do anything."

Tifa sighed "I don't know what he thinks I can do, he's CLOUD'S lover, but I'll try."

She followed the Sage further into the room, past the men arguing with their leader, to where Temari was being helped to walk around the room by her oldest younger brother and Gaara stood glaring at an persistent Zack while Cloud protested his lovers annoyance loudly, trying to pull him away from the room and leave.

Tifa frowned at this picture. She knew how stubborn Zack could be when he set his mind to it, but the fact that someone like him who spent the entire time she had known him desperate to be liked by every person he met was IGNORING both Gaara and his own lover in face of finding out about his dead teachers spirit, showed how helpless and emotional he was.

Tifa understood his feelings, but he was going about it the wrong way, pissing off the wrong people. She had to stop him.

So stepping forward and in her best 'stern mother' voice she snapped his name. He reacted instantly, spinning around and stuttering her name. Tifa put her hands on her hips and continued firmly "what do you think you're doing!?" When the ex-SOLDIER opened his mouth to protest, she interrupted him sternly "you're causing trouble" she motioned at Gaara, then said softer "I understand you're feelings Zack, but you're going about it the wrong way."

"I told him I'd talk to him about it" Temari spoke out "but the others...." Tifa understood, her younger brothers had refused, overprotective of their weakened sister.

Before any other talk or protest could happen the entire building shook with an explosion. Tifa and Cloud exchanged looks, The blonde saying "Vincent" and Tifa nodded.

Without another word the three AVALANCHE members took off to the roof in aid of a fellow member. They didn't even stop or pause to see what the ninja's were doing.

Once on the roof Zack took Cloud's hands, spun him around to pick up speed and then flung him at the building where they could see plumes of smoke rising from the roof as well as the tell-tale signs of Ifrit having been summoned.

Without missing a beat Zack had flung Tifa as well who was caught by Cloud who clung the the side of the building like a spider just under the ledge.
A quick glance down told Tifa some of the ninja were catching up, jumping from one window ledge to the other below them, making their way up after them.

Kicking off from the wall Tifa flipped around to land directly on the roof safely while Cloud caught Zack from his run\jump over the edge to him.

It took seconds for the two ex-SOLDIERS to catch up to her on the roof, a flood of ninja's appearing from all four sides seconds behind, each with various type weapons.

Vincent stood in the center of the roof, surrounded by smoke and rubble, eyes glowing and by the tension in his body Tifa could tell he was close to a limit break.

Across from him, slumped and curled in on itself was an figure wearing dirty white, bloody clumps of blonde hair framing the vaguely familiar face and head, glowing blue eyes so like Cloud's behind broken glasses.

From one shoulder, hanging limply around him was an LONG white single WING.

The figure from the alley, the same one Tifa had felt nothing but curiosity from!

She was about to speak when Zack did, seeing Vincent raise his fire materia to finish the figure off he cried loudly "NO! DON'T HURT HIM! HE'S NOT AN ENEMY!" and ran forward. At the same second Tifa kicked Vincent's arm into the air to make the attack go wild, Zack grabbed the winged man, wrapped himself protectively around his body and rolled him out of the way.

"VINCENT!" Tifa snapped in his face, "calm down! He's not an enemy! Remember, I said the blonde in white was just watching! It was the black and red one that was a threat!"

"He attacked me first' he said thickly, Chaos strong in his voice.

"He has mako sickness!" Zack defended, his body protectively between the two "maybe even worse then Temari! He probably thought YOU were attacking HIM!"

Tifa saw Itachi suddenly disappear in a swirl of leaves, only to reappear with Naruto.

Naruto took one look at the situation and approached Vincent, talking softly and soothingly. This let Tifa, Itachi, Tsunade and Cloud to approach Zack, who was fussing over the man who lay still and limp in his spot.

"Is he alright?" Tifa asked.

"Thank god. He's in the final stages."

Who IS he, Zack?"

Zack moved aside slightly "recognize him, Cloud?" The other ex-SOLDIER moved closer to look "he's familiar...."

"Think Shinra before all that shit went down. Board member." Cloud's blue eyes with green flecks searched the man's face critically before realization hit him and they widened nearly all the way, looking at his partner "but he was dead! Isn't that what you told me?!"

Zack nodded solemnly "he was supposed to, I saw him die, but he's here now. I can't explain it. Maybe the lifestream brought him back to help us. After all, no one knew the Devil's Trio quiet like him. He knew them a lot longer than me and could probably help us get through to Sephiroth."
"Who is he?" Tifa asked curiously but the two were going on while Tsunade tried to heal the man. "But wait! What about that rumor about his relationship to Rufus, and the things Tseng confirmed to you?! And him betraying Shinra to Genesis in order to bring it down!"

Zack shook his head "knowing who he is to Shinra Senior, can you blame him for trying to bring them down? It's what AVALANCHE did at one point, remember? And if it wasn't for him, none of us would be here today anyway."

Everyone froze, even the ninja. "What do you mean?"

"It was because of him that Cloud and I escaped Hojo. It was because of him I had the strength to free myself and then Cloud. He injected himself with Angeal's cells and used his image to jerk me out and encourage me to break free. If we hadn't of escaped then Cloud wouldn't have woke Vincent, been around to stop Sephiroth both times and meteor would have fallen, this world would be either destroyed or Jenovah's little plaything."

They knew he was right, he may not know it or have been intending it, but the man was indirectly responsible for saving all life on the planet. Any sins he may have had by betraying Shinra was lost by that one massive good deed.

Zack was going on "he said just before he died that he had taken on Angeal's desire to help me, to be an hero. He has his own life back now, but he might feel the same." He looked at Tsunade "his legal and battle knowledge could help you guys. He knows all about how Sephiroth thinks and his smarts would help you guys legally. He knows how this world works, he could help you there, protect you there. All he'd need was a place to live and stay. He would be able to help you with anything that went wrong with your alliance with Shinra."

Tsunade nodded as she sat back "he is healed and will be conscious soon" she motioned to Kakashi and Itachi who picked the man up between them and disappeared with him in a swirl of leaves, promoting Tifa to look around, seeing they were alone now.

As they moved to the stairwell leading down from the roof, Cloud pulled out his PHS to call Reeve about the roof's repair and the return of the man. While he did, Tsunade spoke to Zack "who IS this man and what was this confirmed rumor about his relationship with Rufus Shinra?"

"His name is Lazard Deusericus and he was the ex-director of SOLDIER, that's how he knew the Devil's Trio and later me." At Tsunade's look Tifa explained "an director is like the head of an department inside an company. Think of it like an council with each member in charge of a certain section of a company, Soldier, weapons, science, etc. That sought of thing. He was in charge of SOLDIER."

Tsunade nodded and Zack went on "when I joined there was a rumor going around that Lazard was somehow related to Shinra Senior, but it was unconfirmed. Anyone heard speaking it was punished and if asked directly, he would just give you this really nasty stare. He seemed to hate Shinra, obviously he was working inside to bring it down."

"Was the rumor correct?"

Zack nodded "I asked Tseng when he was hiding me from the company. He said apparently Shinra Senior liked to 'seed his wild oats', he slept with any woman he could get his hands on" he looked at Cloud "even Scarlet at one point" the blonde, finished with his call, shuddered "I wouldn't be surprised if there were like other little blonde illegitimate Shinra's running around somewhere, probably with parents paid off." He took a deep breath and went on "annnyyyyywwaaayyy. It turned out just before Rufus was born an young woman in the slums was one of his conquests, only she got
pregnant to him. Later on she got sick so Lazard went to Shinra for money for medicine and he refused. After she died Lazard returned, with his grudge against his father well hidden and to keep him quiet about his origin, the fat bastard gave him a job.

"Sounds about right for Shinra at the time" Tifa scoffed "so he wanted to bring Shinra down as revenge for not saving his mother?"

Zack nodded "partly, I think the other part was jealousy for Rufus becoming the acknowledged heir when he was older."

"So this guy is Rufus Shinra's half brother" Tsunade said and Zack nodded.

"Did Rufus ever find out he was his older brother?" Tifa asked.

"Not until after meteor fall apparently, it was kept quiet and Lazard wasn't allowed to tell ANYONE" Zack said "after the fall of the Shinra tower he was taken somewhere else to heal, Tseng never told me where. There he went through his father's records and found both the birth certificate with the father's name on it and the contract of his appointment as director in exchange for his silence. Don't get me wrong, he more than earned the position, he was definitely skilled, but the higher position so early in his life," he shook his head "never heard of."

They entered the groups apartment building "how do you think Rufus will react to the man he never knew as brother's return? Any idea?"

"I don't know" Tifa said "but for now, while he's recovering, I suggest keeping it from him. If Rufus acts angrily, Lazard is in no state to explain, let alone defend himself."

"Agreed" Tsunade nodded.

Kakashi appeared next to them "Shizune cleaned and patched him up, then Naruto INSISTED that he be put in their apartment." Translation-he was put in their apartment despite Sasuke's protests or arguments.

Sure enough they found both young men standing outside the closed door, Naruto insisting the man was 'no threat' while Sasuke argued with "he attacked father, you think that's no threat!?"

"No" this came from Vincent as they approached, stepping out of the shadows "I only PERCEIVED him as a threat. Tifa mentioned she was being followed, your dream, I was being overprotective, Chaos egging me on and the fact I hadn't had an limit-break for a while now and he matched Tifa's description, when he lunged I assumed it was an attack. His back was to the wall, he could have just been trying to get passed me to escape."

"Limit break?"

Tifa explained "in battle when emotions run high, it can be used to boost your power and abilities. I'd say both Vincent and Chaos have been definitely high in emotion for the last few months. Those emotions on and off the field built up and almost broke when he thought the other threatened you."

"Oh" Naruto said, Sasuke speaking out "and that's why he should be put under guard, Naruto. I'm not risking you or Aeris."

Naruto opened his mouth to speak, but Zack interrupted "he won't hurt him!" Sasuke glared at him "how would YOU know?"

"I know him, he was my b......he's my friend!" Sasuke frowned suspiciously at Zack's change of
words "what were you going to say?"

Tifa spoke out, looking at Naruto "his name is Lazard Deusericus and he's Rufus' older brother."

Naruto looked excited, clapping his hands together, face breaking out in an huge grin "Ru's big brother!"

Sasuke frowned suspiciously at her "if that's true not only would HE be the heir, not Rufus, but if he was sick he wouldn't be out running around, they'd have him in hospital somewhere, safe and cared for."

"Not if he was illegitimate and only HALF and Rufus doesn't know he's alive, thinks he's dead like everyone else."

As they moved inside the apartment, Naruto leading them to an figure curled up on the couch, Naruto frowned "Dead? How?"

Zack told them what had happened, the man's history and how he had died, adding how his actions that day had actually saved not just Zack and Cloud, but countless other lives as well the very life of the planet.

"Rufus doesn't know he's back, Naruto, and we can't tell until he's fully healed and able to make that decision for himself."

"Why?" the pregnant blonde frowned in confusion "I would think Rufus would be overjoyed his brother's back."

Zack spoke "Rufus grew up around his brother, without knowing who or what he was to him. Lazard wasn't allowed to tell him the truth and when Rufus was appointed the heir and CEO, Lazard was jealous. He betrayed Shinra and so in Rufus's eyes betrayed HIM. Then he disappears as if dead, leaving Rufus to find out the truth too late. Even though he KNOWS Lazard couldn't tell him, he still feels betrayed even more by him.

If Rufus was to find out Lazard was alive and didn't come to him for help, he'd feel both hurt and betrayed that Lazard didn't come to him and angry by it."

Tifa spoke "it would be similar to the anger Sasuke had for Itachi when HE learned the truth of their clan. You know, 'why didn't he tell me?', 'Why didn't he take me with him, if I knew the truth I would have gone with him!?', 'didn't he trust me?', 'he didn't have to do it alone', 'if we were together we could have done things differently', that sort of thing."

Naruto looked at Sasuke who nodded wordlessly. So he nodded to them "I won't tell Ru', but you'll have to tell SOMEONE, dad made an awful mess next door."

"We'll tell Reeve" Tifa said, "he knew Lazard as a fellow board member and he needs to know what's going on."

"And Tseng" Zack added "he can ensure that Rufus doesn't find out. Since all information goes through Tseng as the head of the TURKS first, he needs to know so he can anticipate anything and get rid of it, or at least delay it. Once Lazard is better and knows if he wants to deal with his brother or not, Tseng can make it seem like it's information he only just got."

This they understood and while Cloud moved off to call both men and ask them to come around ASAP, they approached the figure on the couch.
Curled slightly on himself and freshly washed, the man lay between a couple of layers of blankets, his head with the damp hair padded by a folded towel while another peaked out from against his side, under the wing whose bright white feathers were also damp.

His face in sleep was peaceful and gentle, like an large child. Only every now and then it would screw up, like in a nightmare or maybe pain, Tifa couldn't tell.

Reeve was the first to arrive about an hour later. He had been next door supervising the repair work when Cloud had called the second time and this was his first opportunity to get free and arrive. Tifa blinked in surprise when the minute he did she saw an unconscious reaction to him from one of the female ninja.

Could she......did Shizune have an crush on Reeve? No, the more she watched the more she realized their attraction was mutual. She had never seen Reeve so interested in any one woman before and Shizune seemed flattered by his attention on her and Tifa realized as Tsunade's assistant and student, people probably just looked over her for her mistress or thought she was plain.

But after arriving and being asked to wait for Tseng to also arrive, after an brief chat to the healer and blonde Hokage the blue-clothed man approached her assistant and spent the rest of the time waiting chatting with her, and Shizune seemed extremely pleased and flattered.

"They are interested in each other" Itachi came to her side and reached out cautiously for her hand, Tifa smiling a welcome and letting him take it, even squeezing it to show her approval.

"They are more than just interested" she didn't look away "watch their behavior closely, they are both flirting. See how she touches his arm when he's talking and let's it linger? How she leans slightly closer when he talks to her? How his eyes never leave her face even when she's not talking? How his hand is close to hers, but she's not moving hers away."

"She is inviting him to take her hand" Itachi guessed "he wants to. If she was refusing, she would draw it away."

"Exactly" Tifa beamed, he was learning fast. "Tsunade" Itachi said softly and Tifa frowned at him "What do you mean by Tsunade?"

"It is the only reason they haven't gone any further, why she is not taking his hand yet. Look." He nodded slightly in the female Hokage's direction. Tifa looked and saw what he meant. The woman was also watching the two, her eyes one step away from striding forward and tearing them apart and Tifa had no doubt the minute the two touched hands, she would.

"Come on" Tifa pulled Itachi with her as she approached the woman. She had to stop her before the woman did something she would soon regret. In many ways the blonde woman was like Naruto, often acting on feelings instead of thinking and, for an society oriented around being in control and unemotional, Tifa found these ninja's surprisingly emotion filled.

"Stop" she said when she was close enough "if you do what you're thinking, you'll loose her." The blonde turned angry eyes on her "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes you do" Tifa contradicted "you don't like the idea of Shizune finding someone. You may want to think you see her as an younger sister, or daughter, but the fact of the matter is you've become the center of her world and are used to her attention on you nearly constantly. You've become dependent on her and see her as yours, YOUR property. Now she is looking at another you're jealous."
When the woman's glare became furious, Tifa felt Itachi next to her twitch, whether in fear of her wraith or trying to repress the urge to shield her, she didn't know, she was going on.

"But now she's interested in another you feel threatened. You're no longer the center of her world. Another is entering that space. But if you try to interfere you will loose her."

"What do you mean?" the woman's eyes narrowed on her, but the fury seemed banked.

"It will either go one of three ways. First she will become depressed, feeling like she has no rights outside what you allow her, that her entire existence is what YOU let her. She will become distant to EVERYONE, even you. Essentially she will think herself your slave-just like Neji thought he was."

The woman shook her head and opened her mouth to deny this but Tifa added quickly "it doesn't matter if it's true or not, it's how she feels."

The mouth shut again and Tifa went on "two is she'll begin to resent or even hate you, thinking she's your slave and just like Neji. Do you want to turn her into him and all his hate hers?" The blonde shook her head, horrified by the thought.

"Or three, she'll accept it, but from then on she'll NEVER try again for any sort of relationship. She would only marry if and WHO you approve, but she'll never get emotionally involved. It would be an loveless marriage she never feels anything for."

This seemed to alarm her even more "but...how do I know I can trust him not to hurt her?"

"If it was anyone else I would say talk to them, get to know them. I'll say the same here, except I'll also add that I know Reeve, I've known him even before he started the WRO. He's the sort of man who would NEVER use a woman for self-gratification, he would never use one and if he's not sure she has any interest in him for him, he doesn't try. This is the first time I've seen him interested in anyone. Reeve is an gentle quiet man who would give his whole heart in someone. He'll treat Shizune like an woman, not some weapon or SOLDIER and he'll respect her in more ways than one. It's the same as his members, he knows every one of them by name and treats them like his family, not employees and if anything happens-like dying in battle-feels guilty and even contacts their family in person. It's why so many people respect and admire him, he treats you like you, not an nameless faceless number. Just look at him with her."

The Hokage watched them for about a minute or so before closing her eyes and sighing heavily "I suppose you're right. I'll try and control myself and let them go. I have a lot about myself I have to face."

"Maybe you should concentrate on your own relationship" Tifa suggested. The woman's eyes snapped open and looked at her sharply "what do you mean?"

"You knew what I mean" When the woman glared at her she met it without blinking or looking away. Finally her mouth opened "that pervert...."

Tifa interrupted "tell me, in the time you've been here has he once..." when she went to open her mouth, Tifa quickly added "...since you found out about your home being destroyed has he?" The woman's mouth opened, closed, opened again but nothing came out and she looked thoughtful "no, he hasn't."

"In fact" Tifa said to her "he's been surprisingly protective and attentive, hasn't he." Again the opening and closing mouth followed by an nod. "He's realized this place is the chance to be the true man he is, not that mask he wears."
"Mask?" she looked confused and Tifa looked at her in surprise "you don't know, do you!"

"Know what?!" the woman looked frustrated. "When did the pervert act start?"

"ACT?" she said the word like she thought she was kidding, like she truly believed it was how the other Sanin was in reality. Tifa sighed but Itachi spoke one word "Orochimaru."

The female Sannin's eyes narrowed on him dangerously "What?"

Tifa quickly spoke before she could blame Itachi for her mistake "did it ever occur to you that YOU weren't the only one hurt by him? That YOU weren't the only one betrayed by you're teammates actions? That when you left the village you not only hurt him more, but caused further damage? That by distancing yourself from not only the only other person who felt exactly how you felt and leaving him to his own trauma without your presence for comfort, you were teaching him that nobody cared for him, that he has to guard himself to prevent ever being hurt again. And who wants to get close to an pervert."

Tsunade looked horrified. Tifa went on "he hasn't done it here because there is only your group, people he knows, trusts, or knows he can trust. This would be the perfect time to repair it, to repair the damage and get to know the REAL Jiriaya, not the mask."

You're right" she looked deeply thoughtful. Tifa added "hold your temper with him, if he thinks you're getting too close to him, he will try to push you away, probably with whatever behavior he uses to tick you off with him normally. If you get ticked off, he wins, so watch him, REALLY watch him."

The blonde woman nodded and left, her face deep with thought and concentration.

Itachi squeezed her hand and when she looked at him he looked at the new couple. Tifa smiled and put her head on his shoulder as she watched them lean closer and Shizune finally take his hand in hers.

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Tseng arrived half an hour after Reeve and both men were lead upstairs while Tifa recapped being followed, the two figures and Vincent going to investigate. Then the explosion and the fight.

"Explains the damage" Reeve said "but why do you need us?"

"You both know, or at least knew him."

"Who?" Tifa didn't speak.

Naruto answered the door and solemnly lead them to the couch where the man now sat, cocooned in blankets, head in hands, blonde hair loose around his face and hands, the head, hands and wrists the only thing visible from out of the cocoon. At their approach the man looked up, eyes still bright with mako fever and shaking, but way more lucid then hours ago.

Reeve seemed to blink hard then his eyes widened, Tseng didn't move, suddenly as still as a cat about to pounce. The man looked them both over and spoke, his voice raspy from an throat not used to speech for so long and soft with weariness beyond his physical age "ah, greeting again Reeve. It has been a while." He glanced at Tseng, something flickered through the eyes and then was gone "I assure you, Tseng, I have NOT returned to take Shinra from Rufus-even if it IS rightly mine by age." His face twisted "I have no interest in it whatsoever and will never return there, even if by choice."

"Why DID you return?"

"It was not my choice. I was forced."

Reeve spoke "you were reported as dead, by Zack and as an Angeal clone. How is it you are alive now and have not only your own body again, but no sign of Angeal cells or their degeneration?"

"I wouldn't say that" he shrugged one side of the blankets down to show him the white wing encasing him, shivering slightly with his slowly receding mako fever before pulling it back up around him to warm himself from the cold he was suffering, then accepted a cup of warm tea from Naruto with a nod and soft thanks, wrapping his hands around it and just holding it to soak in its warmth for a few seconds before slowly sipping.

"I WAS dead, my return from the lifestream was not by choice. I was sent here and Mother Gaia gave me this body to use. All traces of Jenovah cells are gone, The wing never came from her. It was something of a gift from Mother Gaia to her chosen. However those she chose on birth were taken in some way by Jenovah before she could awaken that part of them."

"You mean" Tifa breathed in awe "that Angeal, Genesis and Sephiroth were chosen by Gaia to be her champions AGAINST Jenovah in the lifestream before their births, but somehow Jenovah manipulated both Hollander and Hojo into choosing THEM to contaminate with her cells. That it turned the three into HER champions instead?"

"Sort of."

"Sort of?" Tifa repeated.
"She tried first with Genesis. But Genesis was always sensitive and could hear Mother Gaia's voice to an extent, only mistook it for something or someone else" he glanced at her "Genesis was never raised with knowledge of Mother Gaia, only the lifestream. He didn't know about her being the voice and will of the planet. So by the time he could hear her, Jenovah was already using her will on him."

Zack gasped "so that summon he used that time in the cavern! That was Mother Gaia's form and Jenovah's will!"

"Essentially yes. So she tried again with Angeal. Angeal had the knowledge to separate both voices, to know which to listen to, unfortunately he was too weak to stand strong emotionally against Jenovah, so instead of trying he, well you know what he did."

"Got Zack to kill him" Tifa looked at her friends face, twisted in grief and anguish.

"By the time she tried with Sephiroth it was too late. He was so contaminated, his body so full of Jenovah cells he could not even hear her. Then having that bitch in his head since the day he was born.... well, Hojo had only to tell him that Jenovah was his mother and she had no chance. So in order to stop him she choose Cloud as her warrior when he proved himself in the reactor against Jenovah."

Clouds twisted face showed it was a job he would have been glad not to have.

They understood "so YOU are now Gaia's chosen."

He nodded "not that I wanted the job. After I died I was happy in the lifestream" his face twisted "with my mother, my family. There was others she could have chosen, but because of my connection to those three and Zack, plus my knowledge of your group and Reeve and Tseng I was chosen. However I was never an fighter and I require training. Mother Gaia gave me information about this forms abilities and skills, but it doesn't give me any skill yet with which to use it and there are some things only experience can give you."

Tifa suddenly realized something "it was why you were following me, only I could lead you to Zack and Cloud and with you being in the midst of an mako fever, you couldn't find them yourself!"

After an brief shudder from the mako he nodded.

"What about the other one following me? The one in black and red. Do you know or have seen him?"

"No, but Mother Gaia knows it. She gave me a sense of danger and grief. Who or whatever it is, it is a threat, but someone she wants us to save."

"Could it be the one who will be responsible for Sephiroth's return? Maybe if we save him, it will prevent the future in Naruto's dream."

Lazard slowly shook his head "she says that will happen, the events have already started-even before she summoned these people-but he is important to the future, he has a major pivotal part in the way it goes."

"Who is he?"

She won't tell me, only he is also someone we knew and thought dead. However he never died, only came close. We have to find out for ourselves."

This made a few of them unhappy, but Naruto looked like he was taking it as a personal challenge to
save this man. And one look at Sasuke who was watching him and he had seen it and wasn't pleased.

Tifa turned to Tseng "I know all information from the TURKS and such goes through you before going to Rufus, but you can't let him know about this. He can't know about Lazard being back. No matter what way you look at it, he'll react badly. Their situation, while not exactly the same is like Sasuke and Itachi's and it will probably end out the same way. Until Lazard is fully recovered and can handle him, Rufus can't know."

Vincent nodded "there are more important things right now for Rufus Shinra to worry about other than why and how his older brother has returned."

Tseng looked torn between telling his boss and lover his only family left that actually meant anything was still alive and healthy or keeping it from him for his own sake.

However in the end it may be better he didn't know, Vincent was right, he had more important things to worry about now, like Sephiroth's return and finding the rest of the ninja's before that happened. He nodded silently and spoke "if he was to find out through other means beyond my control however....."

"We understand" they agreed.

Tifa turned back to Reeve "did you find out about Killer Bee and how he ended up on GSL?"

The man nodded "apparently some record company discovered him there and thought his rapping would inspire an new craze in music, so enlisted him. He was smart enough not to sign an contract, so we can pick him up. I have an meeting with him tomorrow at nine so you can meet my car downstairs then."

Tifa nodded and Naruto copied, turning to Vincent "you coming father?" When Vincent cocked his head at him in curiosity Tsunade spoke "that nuisance has been located already?" Naruto grinned widely and explained what had happened. The healer rolled her eyes and sighed.

Tifa looked back at Vincent and explained in an brief sentence "the Jinchuuriki of the eight-tailed."

The demon vessels eyes widened marginally and he nodded his confirmation to the boy's question.

The next day Tifa, Vincent and Naruto met Reeve outside the building. He let them into the back of his limo with him. Tifa looked around her in awe "I've never seen you in a limousine before, Reeve."

The man looked embarrassed "unlike Rufus I don't make a habit of using one. However it seems the man's manager is an ass and so I felt it better to make an impression when we arrive."

Tifa frowned "are we going to have trouble getting in to see him?"

Reeve sighed "I told the man that I have his clients family and friends here who want to see him, that they were separated by events beyond their control and he would want to see them, but the fool refused. I suspect he thinks if he keeps him away from familial influence, he'll be able to control or manipulate him."

Naruto just shrugged "if he makes an ass of himself and refuses, I'll just flare Kyuubi's chakra. Octopops will feel it and come a running."
Sounds like an idea" Tifa smiled. "If this guy thinks refusing to let us in to see him will protect his
gil source, keeping us away will make it worse."

Sure enough when they arrived first the security guard then the actual manager refused them
entrance, the manager making excuses, changing the subject and even denying Reeve ever contacted
him to buy time and hopefully make them loose interest.

Finally Reeve sighed "you were warned" and turned to Naruto "go ahead."

Naruto nodded and immediately there was a flair of heat and power around him. He held it for at
least a full minute before it was gone. "What did you do?" the man frowned, only for Reeve to speak
"you will see."

The next thing they knew there was the sound of soft shoes running on the floor and just the man
they wanted rounded the corner, took one look at Naruto and exclaimed "kid!" before pulling him
into his arms for an bear hug. When he pulled back he was off "yo, yo, yo, bro what timing, where
have you been hiding?" Naruto grinned at him "it's a long story, Octo-pops and we've trying to get in
to tell you but this guy wouldn't let us" he thumbed at the manager.

Immediately the dark man's eyes narrowed dangerously at the weaselly little man "Bad move fool, I
told you I ain't nobodies tool. Once my crew and I are together, your job is gone forever."

"But....." the man protested. Tifa just glared at him "I'd get out of here if I was you. If he didn't sign
contract you don't have a leg to stand on. You blew it when you tried to keep Naruto away. If you
hadn't you COULD have make yourself look good, but you did the opposite."

"But he's famous because of me! He owes his popularity to ME!"

"I don't care about that fool!" the ninja snorted "the kid's my brudda, I'd accept nothing other! All
that stuffs just for fun!" he glared angrily at the man "If you were smart, you would run." The man
opened and closed his mouth a few times, so Reeve turned to the security guard "you heard the man,
he's officially fired. Do your job and remove the ruffian before you lose yours."

The security guard complied, bodily carrying out the man who was protesting the entire way. While
he was gone the black ninja lead them back to his dressing room to talk. Once everyone was seated
he told them about how he got there, Naruto returning the favor by informing him about his groups
own events.

The rapping ninja didn't seemed at all surprised about Aeris, only grinning when he commented
about how Naruto finally "got dat ass back the way he wanted" and Naruto looked incredibly
pleased with himself as he confirmed, leading Tifa to believe that the other ninja knew what he was
going to try and do when he helped him safely merge with the demon fox.

Then the blonde introduced Vincent, telling the man exactly who he was to them. When Vincent
proved it by bringing out Chaos, the man's reaction was priceless to Tifa. He caught the winged
demon up in an fierce bear hug, calling the creature "daddy" in an happy childish voice. Even more
priceless was the demon's completely baffled look.

When, Naruto, barely able to control his laughter, calmed the black ninja down and got them to sit
again, he proceeded to explain the coming events and what they were going to attempt. Then he
asked him for his opinion and what he could think of doing, if he would come back with them to the
Apartment building and move in with them, with fellow ninja.
"Well that all seems like such an daunting task. I don't know, maybe I should ask" he raised his voice and looked towards a door in the back of the room "do you think we should go, or should the answer be no." Out of the door walked two women. Both were familiar, one a pale blonde young woman with strange green eyes, the other black wild hair with red eyes similar to Vincent, but looked layered in circles.

And on the older woman's hip was an child of four or five, a pretty little girl with wild black hair but red eyes. When they entered the room the girls eyes shyly wondered the room, to lock on Naruto. With an joyful cry of his name she wiggled free of her mother and into his open arms and smile, the pregnant blonde calling her "Heiwa-neesan!" as she did.

The girl seemed to know about the pregnancy and carefully climbed onto the arm of his chair and hugged him around the chest fiercely, murmuring his name in joy and relief, eyes full of tears. When she was hugged out on him, she moved downward, surprising Tifa as she hugged his stomach and said Aeris' name as well. The child KNEW about her?

Naruto murmured something to her and she looked up at him in joy "really?" when Naruto nodded and said something else serious she looked even more excited, hugging slightly tighter and speaking softly to it, about all the fun they would have.

Both women were looking at him open mouthed "Naruto? Are you.... pregnant?!"

"Yep" Naruto grinned at them "to the teme." Tifa smiled at the other women "her name is Aeris and she's reincarnated from an women we once knew and he's due to give birth soon."

When they looked at her curiously Tifa introduced herself, Reeve and Vincent, explaining what had happened and who they were to him.

The group looked relieved, the wild-haired woman looked to the blonde "so my team...

Safe" he smiled. The woman looked relieved and asked "and Shika?" Naruto nodded "he's been worried about you and Heiwa, and Ino, but trying to hide it. But I know him better than that."

They looked happier at this and that's when Tifa recognized them from the photo. Ino Yamanaka and Kunerai Yuhi. The blonde was Shikamaru and Choji's teammate and the wild haired woman was the team captain and sensei for Hinata, Kiba and Shino, which also made her the woman who had been dating the son of the Third, making the little girl their daughter.

It explained why the woman was concerned about Shikamaru, the Nara heir had been protective about them since his mentor's death. Naruto looked at the rapper "I know you're like the latest thing here, but are you gonna stay, or come to be with us? There is people I want you to meet, allies to make, other brother's through father."

"And Naruto to protect from the threat of some outside source that is going to try kidnap him and take Aeris from us" Tifa added, ignoring the pregnant blonde's glare.

The three all looked at her "what do you mean?" Tifa told them about the prophetic dreams Naruto had, especially the one about the baby being taken from him and the figure in red and black following them. Then she told them about the blonde also following her, who he was and what he had told them.

By this time the two women were also seated, the child curled up in her mothers lap, thumb in mouth, drifting off to sleep.

"So SOMEONE'S gonna kidnap the kid and take him from us" the black rapper said "and take the
Uchiha\Uzumaki\Namikaze heir from us." Tifa noticed with his seriousness he was no longer rapping "the kid's kid is gonna be my niece, NO fool will touch him."

"We all vowed the same thing" Tifa said "we won't let him out of our sight." Vincent nodded seriously in full agreement, causing Naruto to sigh "guys, I can defend myself."

"Not in your current state you can't" Tifa said firmly. "At this point in your pregnancy with you due any day now you have to be extremely careful. Any overuse in the balance of your chakra or physical exhaustion or more than the basic physical activity could either cause you to go into early labor, damage the fragile balance in your body of the pregnancy or damage HER." Kunerai answered "why else do you think all pregnant Kunoichi are not allowed to go on missions for the duration?"

Naruto looked stubborn and reluctant to do so. But he also nodded at them. He wanted to continue the way he was, but also wanted to protect Aeris.

After a bit more conversation the three adults joined them in the limo so Reeve could drive them to their hotel rooms, pack their belongings and check out. They rejoined them in the limo after the driver had packed their belongings in the boot. Inside they chatted and got to know each other, Tifa telling the girl Heiwa about Marlene and Denzel, the little girl pleased she would have friends to play with, friends to learn with.

However any easy conversation came to an end when they reached an set of traffic lights. A shot ran out, a muffled cry from the front and the sound of a horn as the driver slumped over the steering wheel.

Before anyone could move the rear window shattered as two cylinders entered the back with them, exploding with a hiss as two clouds of gas filled the car.

"Knock out gas!" Tifa exclaimed between coughs and, scenting the other with an sickly familiar smell she gasped "the herb!!"

Immediately Reeve, who sat by the door, fought to open it, Tifa on the other side. The door only moved a couple of inches before Tifa saw an tell-tale shimmer around the vehicle "they have an barrier materia! They're going to trap us in here until the gas gets us!" Tifa heard Naruto yell something, Vincent growl furiously, and Killer Bee mention something about taking his demon form and breaking the barrier open.

"You can't!" Naruto coughed, "if you do you could hurt us if it still traps you! You could hurt Aeris or Heiwo!"

"We can't just sit here and let the gas get us!" Tifa said between coughs "Naruto you're dream! This is it!"

"I know!" he wheezed helplessly "I know!" When Kunerai called her daughters name helplessly, leading Tifa to think the girl was unconscious, an furious growl came from the blonde and an huge flare of power came from him. "NARUTO!" Ino called "what are you doing!?"

"What Gaara did!"

Tifa realized instantly "he's signalling the others! They're not far!"

The power suddenly stopped as if an electric current cut off and when Tifa called his name there was no answer.
"Naruto's out!" she cried helplessly, only for Ino to add "so's everyone else! We're the only ones...." the words stopped.

Tifa realized she was the only one left conscious and even then her vision was going grey and her body swaying. Weakness and lethargy filled her limbs and thinking was becoming difficult. Somewhere a little voice in her head said it was because of the raw mako in her system that she hadn't been knocked out so quickly, but that was unimportant and she pushed it aside. She needed to do something and she needed to do it NOW before she blacked out.

Before she could think of an answer however, everything went black.

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Chapter End Notes

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Heiwo-Peace
Tifa left the side of her fellow gathered AVALANCHE members-who had ALL come to help-to find Vincent who was not among them in their talks for an rescue plan. She knew Vincent cared deeply for Naruto like his own genetic son and would only not be there if something was wrong. Either he was trying to distant himself from them because of being hurt by being unable to save his own son, even with all his strength and power, or he was trying to slide away unnoticed so he could go find him himself.

Both Tifa couldn't let him do.

She eventually found him on the roof, halfway between Chaos and Vincent, wings limp behind him while he gripped the ledge of the roof in both clawed hands, one gloved, one gold. His body was ram-rod stiff and looked like he was trying to hold himself back, or was that hold Chaos back? Cautiously Tifa spoke his name, moving slowly forward, ready in case he decided to lash out. She had always seen Vincent as kind of unemotional before all this happened and Chaos as pure emotion, but she was learning differently the more she got to know them.

Since his experience with Lue and Hojo, Vincent had learned to HIDE his emotions, that in order to protect himself and his heart he had to stay cool and detached. Chaos was an demon, an creation of Gaia, practically pure emotion.

When the two had become one in the same body.....yikes, even Vincent couldn't stay detached no matter how much he wanted to. Then along came Naruto, with his open heart, genuine smiles and pranks. His love had allowed Vincent and Chaos to not only openly be at peace with each other, but their own feelings. Now with their only link taken from them and unable to find him, they were fretting and it was causing their emotions to go haywire again. She never realized just how much Naruto had done for them.

Tifa had to distract them. So she spoke both their names and cautiously came to their side, looking into the males face. Chaos eyes and fanged teeth in Vincent's face. "Vincent? Why don't you join us downstairs? We're organizing what we'll do when we find them."

Nothing.

"Rufus has the TURKS out looking, even Tseng."

Still nothing.

"Rufus thinks it was because of the OBGYN. Apparently he spoke to others in his field for advice and someone figured out if Naruto could carry children, they could examine him for anything different and if they possibly could reproduce it, they could make other males pregnant."

This time Vincent's hands tightened on the ledge, the cement groaning with the pressure.

"Vincent they won't hurt him and Aeris, they can't or they won't be able to learn anything from him. Besides, Shino hive senses his beetle is still moving, they would wait until they stop, you can't safely do an C-section on the move, even in the back of a truck or airship or whatever they're using, they would know that. Once they stop then Shino can lead us straight to him. You'll get them back safely."

Nothing, he didn't even seem able to hear her. Except for his hands tightening on the ledge he didn't react to her. Was he listening or was something else going on? Could he feel or sense Naruto? Was
the fact the nine tailed was once part of Chaos allowing some sort of communication between them?

Her answer came when Vincent spoke, voice thick with fear and Chaos' influence "I feel them, I feel his pain. The effects of the gas and what had happened when we were first attacked has pushed him into labor. He has only an limited time left and I can not track him yet!!"

Tifa controlled her shock, fear and concern in an effort to comfort Vincent "then they'll have to stop to sedate him and do the C-Section, and the minute they do, we're gone. Shino says some of his Kiki have gone with his new pets to see if they can follow their movements and maybe encounter them. He said if they can find them, they'll be careful and attack and try and get Naruto away. They like and respect him apparently and will protect and help him." She put a hand on his shoulder as she marveled over the fact that Naruto could win the love or respect of even monsters "we'll find him."

Vincent suddenly froze completely and Chaos wings opened then snapped closed.

"What is it?" Tifa asked in concern.

It took a few minutes before Vincent seemed able to speak, but when he did the news wasn't good "it's gone."

"What's gone?" she asked carefully.

"His pain, his fear, his concern, I can't sense him anymore. It could only mean he's unconscious-or sedated."

Which meant they were going to do an C-section, panic filled her. She pulled out her PHS, calling Cloud who was downstairs with the others and telling him what was happening.

"This is serious" Cloud said "however they can't have gotten far in the time limit. Everyone has their own PHS and is leaving to spread out and search. Lady Tsunade said she has told Sasuke to remain here in case Naruto is able to return and I think you should stay with Vincent as well. Vincent has the only scan and cure materia of our group and if Naruto makes it back he'll be needed to check him over and cure any damage. I'm going with Reeve and Shizune and each of the other groups will have someone with at least basic healing abilities-just in case. And Tifa?"

"Yes?"

"Make sure Vincent stays there, we can't have him speeding off somewhere and loosing control of Chaos because he's pissed, concerned and they're both highly emotional. This isn't the time for feelings, it's time for an clear head and clear thinking."

"I understand" Tifa nodded.

Cloud hung up and Tifa told Vincent what they were doing, soothing the demon and vessel and explaining that they would only get in the way by speeding off somewhere. Someone had the stay and control Sasuke and watch over the three children and an still fever-wrecked Lazard. Even the noodle-maker and his daughter, plus the woman from Wave and her son was looking.

It took a while to persuade him, at least an hour or two, especially after Vincent and Chaos felt him awake and the terror and overwhelming concern, desperation and demonic anger, but he eventually and reluctantly remained. It was just after the three hour mark of Naruto's kidnapping that it happened. There was a sound behind them and both turned, Vincent instantly moving to attack when he saw the figure. But when it moved Tifa cried out "Vincent stop! Look what he's holding!!" and the demon vessel immediately skidded to a halt.
Behind them was a figure in black and red, black hair cut around the bottom of the head and white eyes, so like the two Hyuuga's. A single extremely long wing of black with spots of white was bent forward in front of him when he landed, blocking his body from sight but the second Vincent went into motion the wing swept back behind him and revealed the figures front to them and the fact both his arms were occupied with wrapped cloth bundles.

The figure looked at the frozen demon vessel like he knew him "you are Vincent Valentine, the TURK with the highest score on and off the shooting range. When HE told me your name I never thought it was you." Vincent didn't speak.

"You disappeared, where...."

"Hojo" Vincent said.

"Ah" the figure nodded, suddenly looking old "he screwed up a lot of lives, didn't he." He shook his head at Vincent's nod, but not in disagreement "he turned a lot of us into monsters and a lot of us turned ourselves into them." Before either Tifa or Vincent could speak he was going on as he stepped forward "my soul, corrupted by vengeance, hath endured torment, to find the end of the journey, in my own salvation" and carefully and gently eased one of the bundles into Vincent's human hand.

He then turned and placed the second into Tifa's.

Looking down as she slowly pushed the cloth aside. A pair of solemn blue eyes looked to hers, framed in a pale face. On the top of the head tufts of black hair just starting to show stuck out here and there. Tifa gasped, her head snapping up to find the figure with wing stretched and perched on the ledge, about to jump off and leave "wait!" He froze but didn't turn. "Stay with us!"

"There is no hate, only joy, for HE is beloved by the goddess, Hero of the dawn, Healer of worlds." Tifa realized what he was saying, he was going to get Naruto and bring him back "you can't go alone! It's dangerous! Let us call the others and they can go with you!"

"To end this tragedy, one must die" and was gone before Tifa could protest again. He was going to save Naruto, but didn't expect to survive the encounter. Helpless Tifa turned to Vincent to find him looking down into the bundle he held himself "Vincent?" Before the demon vessel could react there came a strange noise and Tifa spun to find the stairway door open and an little bundle of red feathers came tumbling out. It recovered itself enough to stumble over to her, sitting at her feet and warking in question.

Tifa found herself slowly kneeling in front of it and gently lowering the bundle to the birds height, moving the cloth away a little, allowing the little thing to look inside and nuzzle the baby, warking softly in something that sounded a lot like love. The babies tiny fist moved, waving back and forth, almost like she was seeking something, and it wasn't until the Chocobo nuzzled under her arm that the tiny fingers convulsed and gripped the feathers of it's head, refusing to let go.

Again Tifa found herself moving, laying the baby on the surface of the roof and stepping back away from them.

Before Vincent could question her, power ripped through the air, coming from the two, the baby girls chakra and the chocobo chicks mana, both powers winding around each other almost in a dance for dominance. It grew and grew to oppressive force before suddenly both shut of and Tifa was able to approach and pick the baby up again "what was that about?"

"Dominance, Aeris was establishing control over Nowari. He's hers now, body and soul."
Just as he finished speaking the door to the stairway slammed open again and there stood an harried looking Sasuke "what is going o....." he faded off when he noticed the bundle Tifa held, his eyes widening.

Tifa smiled and stepped forward, gently placing the baby in her father's arms "Sasuke, meet your daughter, Aeris."

The stunned Uchiha looked down into his daughter's eyes, holding her little body close to his chest. As Tifa watched his eyes went from black to red, activating the sharingan. As the three tomes spun the babies blue eyes suddenly changed to her tiny mirror-image and both sets of eyes locked, both staying absolutely motionless as their eyes spun and Tifa had the distinct impression of silent communication between the newborn and her father.

Finally Sasuke blinked and both their eyes went back to normal, looking up at them. "Father?" That's when Tifa remembered Vincent and the second bundle. Vincent turned and when Sasuke handed Aeris gently back to her, Vincent placed the second bundle in his arms. When he moved the clothe aside Tifa gasped at what she saw.

While Aeris was an little Uchiha, an female Sasuke with Naruto's eyes, the new baby was a little Naruto, even down to the whisker marks on the face. The only difference was he had Sasuke's black eyes and his hair wasn't just blonde but two toned, blonde with fiery red. "How did...." Tifa asked to which Vincent answered "somehow, probably due to the closeness of the lifestream, Aeris began to develop a twin in the last couple of months. Both Naruto and I think it was an combination of things, the power surge in both our worlds, the shadow clone ability, the close connection to the lifestream excetra.

Essentially what happened was with the incredible power surge going through his body, the damage to his seal and Aeris and Kyuubi reconnecting with the lifestream was too much for his body, so Aeris forced it into a form that could contain it. It was why he was unconscious so long after you first arrived here, his body was forced to adapt to house and nourish TWO babies."

"So he's the power of the lifestream and Kyuubi given form?"

"He started that way, yes, but both Aeris and Mother Gaia herself have ensured that he is real, his soul is one of the spirits of the dead from the lifestream and he is an normal baby."

"His name is Grimoire" Sasuke didn't look up from his son as he locked eyes with him, so he didn't see both's stunned expression "Aeris told me. She saw what happened to Naruto after she was born and that Naruto named him and someone taking them from men, men who wanted to hurt them and bringing them here to safety." Sasuke looked up at them "he left, didn't he. He left to get Naruto and bring him back to us."

Tifa nodded "we tried to stop him, to tell him we'd help, but I think he feels responsible-if he's the one who was following us-and left. We had the babies so we couldn't follow."

"It was Genesis" Vincent said, now nursing Aeris, using the scan materia to check his 'granddaughter' over "only it was different. His hair and eyes were a different color, his outfit was slightly different on the left side and he FELT different in a few ways. I only know Genesis from what I have been told by Zack, Cloud and others-he joined Shinra while I was Hojo's plaything and was gone by the time I returned, but there was something familiar about him, his mana and body."

He looked at Tifa "I am positive it has to do with DeepGround and one of their elite I fought." Tifa was alarmed "you think DeepGround is still around?! I mean you took out their elite AND their leader, Weiss and we haven't heard or seen any of them since!"
"It doesn't mean they are gone, just disbanded, for now. If they found someone to lead them again with just as a strong hate for Shinra or all normal humans...."

Tifa realized he was right.

Two hours later the others returned, a little concerned and worried about the fact they were called back so soon on the search.

Without a word Tifa reached out to take Itachi's hand while Marlene took Shizune and Heiwo took Lady Tsunade and the three females, with the rest of the group in tow, lead the healer, her assistant and the other demon to Sasuke and Naruto's apartment.

In the spare room, set up as an nursery after Sakura decided to move in with her love after all, was the babies cot and various items Tifa and Vincent had been bringing lately.

Tifa secretly reasoned that if she was to be an important part of Itachi's life, then as an 'aunt' of sorts it was her right to buy things for the twins and since Vincent lived in his leathers, didn't really live anywhere anymore and only ate when he needed to, he had plenty of gil to spoil his grandchildren.

Vincent stood in a dark corner, almost invisible, trying to calm an fussy and upset Grimoire while Sasuke sat on the rocking chair by the cot, nursing Aeris who, sensing her brothers upset, was starting to sniff and whine too. It was obvious both babies were getting hungry and restless without their mother's presence and the two men had no idea how to help the newborns.

Tifa lead Itachi over to Sasuke who stood at the sight of his brother and while Tifa went to prepare some formula for the babies (even though she would rather the babies first meal come not from a bottle, there was no other way) the entire group got to hold or see the two newborns—of course after Vincent repeated what was said about the boy's creation and how Aeris had hidden her twin from Tsunade and even Naruto for a while.

In the background Tifa could hear Gai and Lee loudly proclaiming about the babies "youthful spirit!" and Naruto "carrying on the Will Of Fire!" before Sakura snapped at them to shut up, that their loud voices were upsetting the twins and Lee should know better since he was soon-to-be a father as well.

The next sound—Lee trying to soothe his girlfriend while Gai just wept 'manly tears' of joy at the reminder-made her smile.

When she entered the room again she found Itachi nursing Aeris, a slight-barely there-smile on his lips as he gently rocked the baby, trying also to soothe her growing upset. Tsunade meanwhile held Grimoire in one arm while she scanned the baby—who was just starting to wail—with the other.

Suddenly, in complete union, both babies' head snapped in the direction of the door, little hands reaching and whining in need.

Before they could speak there was an muffled explosion downstairs and the sound of breaking glass.

Instantly Itachi pushed Aeris into Sakura's arms, grabbed Tifa and swung her onto his back as he speed off towards the staircase. Sasuke caught up halfway down, yelling "I sense Naruto, so does father!" Another explosion came and Itachi sped up more.

Vaulting over the railing and landing on the ground floor Itachi burst through the door in time to see two figures land on the floor, skidding along to land in an awkward heap a few feet from them.
All Tifa saw was red and black, black feathers wrapped protectively around two limp figures, and five figures stalking towards them.

"DeepGround!" Tifa called, then looked at the two on the floor "Tsunade, they're both hurt-and unconscious!"

There was an moan from the bottom of the pile and Naruto struggled out from underneath the other, one bloody hand pressed to his stomach, pale and trembling. But more concerned for the other "Genesis?" when he got no reply his eyes widened in concern and fear, shaking the other roughly with his spare hand "Gen, wake up!!"

"Naruto!" Tsunade approached the young man. The look the blonde gave her had all the pleading and desperation in the world in it "please, baachan, he risked his life to save me, he even took the sword meant for me. You have to save him!"

"After you..."

"NO!" he shouted, voice going shrill as he stepped back away from her in panic "SAVE HIM!!"

"I'll take care of Naruto" Shizune moved to soothe and calm the blonde "YOU take care of the other, Tsunade-hime."

After watching this, the pale bloody blonde so much more concerned for the other than himself, Tifa felt anger fill her. Dropping from Itachi's back she was running into the group, kicking and punching like she never had before. Not only had the bastards kidnapped the blonde and tried to take his babies from him, tried to force one of their own members to kill the helpless little innocents, but when he refused and tried to free the 'mother' they ran him through with a sword trying to protect him.

She was barely aware others joining her to fight as more enemy flooded inside, leaving Jiraiya and Gai to carefully lifted both badly wounded figures and head back inside. Tifa watched them going and glanced at Sasuke "go, your mate needs you." The young man looked grim but didn't move.

"Sasuke, GO, we can handle this, your mate and children need you." When Itachi added an firm "GO" he reluctantly turned to go.

Only to almost run into Gaara heading towards him.

He stopped and looked slightly annoyed, his sand reaching out to snatch up each DeepGround member and he spoke to them "you are not only interfering with my time with my nephew and niece, you threatened my brother, almost killed him" there was various muffled screams as Gaara not only covered them in sand but completely crushed them. One however he released, after crushing his arms and a leg.

"You" he said, power leaking from him as he caught up the badly wounded enemy soldier "will take a message to your allies. I control the very earth this world is made of. Come near ANY friend or allie again and I shall bury you all and use your blood to feed my sand. I shall not spare a single one next time, you're brother is ours now" he casually threw the man out the door, then turned to ascend the staircase again.

The rest of the group exchanged looks, shrugged, and started back upstairs, all except Kankuro, Yamato and Reeve, the older Ninja doing something to temporarily repair the lobby, Kankuro cleaning the mess while Reeve called for some repair men, Tifa and Itachi heading upstairs side by side.
The rest of the group dispersed to their rooms after checking the babies and two young men, Iruka and Haku leading the two girls and boy away, and after an concerned look Yuffie shrugged then followed her "crush".

Tifa and Itachi could now enter the room to check for themselves. Vincent and Sakura were bottle feeding the twins while Sasuke sat beside Naruto's bed, gripping his hand and watching the blonde carefully in concern and fear. The young man was pale as the sheets under him, unconscious, breathing heavily as if forcing breath. To Tifa's surprise Lazard was there as well, watching over the strange new Genesis, frowning down at him.

"He should have healed by now" Sasuke was saying "he usually would have healed by now. Why hasn't he?" he asked Tsunade.

"It seems they injected him with a liquid form of the herb to sedate him too soon after the gaseous one. The double dose is hampering his body systems, including his increased healing. All we can do now is wait for his system to work it out before his healing will catch up. Until then, he'll have to heal like an human."

"Have you tried an cure materia, or an hi-potion?" Tifa asked "the cure could clear the herb out and the hi-potion will heal him."

"We've tried" a voice came behind Tifa and she turned to find the willowy Doctor who had helped with Temari there "it was one of the first things we tried, but it doesn't seem to register on his body, like it's rejecting it." Shizune spoke next "it's as if Kyuubi's chakra is en-casing him for protection, rejecting ANYTHING as if taking it as an attack." Tsunade muttered "a bit late to be protecting him now. It should have been done that earlier."

"What are we going to do then?!" Sasuke sounded both helpless and angry, like he wanted to go outside and destroy something or someone for harming his mate.

Before anyone could answer Tifa's body tingled and she felt something urge her to do something. At the same time Lazard's head snapped up from Genesis and he looked thoughtful for a second, as if listening to a voice. Almost in sync with each other Tifa and Lazard moved forward, Tifa gently taking Aeris while Lazard took Grimoire and together the two moved to the blonde's bedside with them.

With Tifa on the left side next to Sasuke and Lazard on the other they gently and carefully lay both babies on the pillow beside the blonde's head, pressed up against him skin to skin. Before anyone could speak there was a flare of chakra, both babies eyes snapping open in union, Aeris with the sharingan and Grimoire with a strange white like the Hyuuga's, except his had strange circles inside it.

Itachi breathed in sharply at the sight, obviously recognizing them.

As if prodded Tifa and Lazard reached down and took some of the blonde's longer hair, gently placing it into the babies fists and backing off away from the bed, leaving the twins with both their father's together.

Almost instantly the chakra blazing around their little bodies flared even more but that wasn't all that was happening. Everywhere they were in contact with Naruto, including the hair bunched in little fists, was moving, the chakra flowing over him to meet up with each other and merge, flowing down his body, healing everything it touched. His skin color changed, darkened to more normal, the lines of pain and unrest on his face disappeared and he breathed easier.
Sasuke yelped as if burnt when it reached him, but he didn't let go and after the power hesitated at
him, seeking him and his chakra out almost curiously it surrounded him too and he relaxed and after
flaring his own chakra to join his two babies it continued on its way down Naruto's body, this time
towing Sasuke's with it, presumably to help heal their precious person.

It continued down his entire body, feet and all-even his toenails included, but then flowing back up
to the slash across his lower stomach.

Tifa found out later on that while the person who had done the C-Section HAD stitched the wound
closed and had done it all with the upmost care, the fight to escape and the slide across the lobby
floor had torn the stitches open, leaving him to bleed profusely and strain already damaged muscles
and tissue.

It was unclear at that point if Naruto would ever conceive again.

The chakra stopped at the gash, located on it, almost as if unsure of what to do. Sasuke closed his
eyes, sat up straight in his seat and seemed to concentrate on it. His chakra moved forward, covering
the gash and started to work on it.

As if shown the way-or remembering-past life or memory in the womb of her 'mothers' system,
Aeris' light chakra moved forward to take over, dragging her brother with her and guiding her
fathers.

Finally the glow in the wound faded and the chakra surrounding him flared incredibly bright for a
few long seconds, they heard a moan and rustle of cloth, and when it cleared they saw Sasuke staring
at an completely different picture.
Naruto sat up in bed, eyes clear and no signs of pain, his top pulled up to hang down around his neck and HIDE the fact he was obviously breast-feeding both very hungry twins, an blush of embarrassment on his face "can you guys not stare at me like that, please?"

Instead the group OGLED him.

Tsunade was the first to move or speak, she yelled "Stupid baka!", cuffed him over the back of the head-although not really anywhere near hard, careful of his condition and what he was holding in both arms-and continued, voice taunt with mixed emotions "we thought we were going to loose you!"

"You should know by now it's not that easy, baachan" he tried to look around "where's Gen?"

"Here" Lazard moved aside to show him the unconscious other on the bed, face as pale as his had been but still as handsome and young as the man they saw on the discs all that time ago, despite the changes "How did you meet him, let alone persuade him to help you escape?"

"His brother is the leader of the group who grabbed me. Apparently one of Dr Harker's colleges found out about me and how Aeris was this worlds reincarnation and was actually working for this group. When he told them Gens' brother took it as danger to their plans to resurrect Sephiroth and that was why they grabbed me." he clutched Aeris closer and his head and shoulders hunched over the twins, Sasuke moved closer instantly, body sheltering them, both his demon and animal as well as his human instincts demanding he comfort his mate and young, protect them from any conceivable threat-real or otherwise.

"When Gen found out he argued with him, telling him that Aeris had nothing to do with Sephiroth, that she was just an newborn and couldn't threaten their plans. When his brother left I told Genesis everything I knew, about the nightmare, about father and what happened, about how Seph was my half-older brother through both our fathers, about everyone here and my family and my life. I told him how he wasn't alone, that we were ALL Gaia's chosen and not monsters, we were meant to protect her, not hurt her and how Hojo had lied and spread all those files and fake information to manipulate everyone to do what he wanted. I told him about what Lazard told us about mother Gaia and he asked if I meant someone called Minerva and I told him yes. I listened when he read Loveless to me..." he smiled shyly down at Grimoire "the little brat here loved it. Every time he read, Gri here would listen and lay still and if he stopped he started kicking, hard, and I told him so."

The smile was soon gone. "When they came to take the twins from me, I pleaded him to stop them, to not let them take my children, but it wasn't until I awoke, in so much pain and so weak, that I heard he had betrayed them. He had continued to act like he was one of them until they gave him the babies to take to another room where they would kill them" his head dropped into the croak of Sasuke's neck with a chocked sob "only Genesis was missing, he had taken the babies and gone and I could only hope he was taking them home, to my family."

"He did that" Tifa said "he brought them straight to us and before we could stop him and help, had gone to free you."

Naruto smiled weakly at the unconscious other "that doesn't surprise me about him. He seemed very loyal and loved his brother" he shifted the twins and grabbed Vincent's arm desperately "father you have to protect him, they'll come for him and try to kill him for what he did. But he did it to save my life!"
"What do you mean?" they asked and Naruto looked at them "he killed his brother. He confronted him when he came back to save me and they fought. He didn't want to fight his brother, he kept trying to talk to him and tell him they were supposed to protect this world, but he wouldn't listen! He knocked him down and was moving to kill me, I was in too much pain to concentrate to use a jutsu, I was helpless, but in one move Gen got between me and him and stabbed him on his sword as well as taking his!" He trembled against Sasuke and Tifa saw the twins react to his upset, their little fists tightening convulsively around his hair.

"Then he's allowed to stay" Jiriaya said "he's proven he is one of us by trying to protect one." The smile Naruto gave his godfather made it all worthwhile. Tifa turned to Itachi "you're reaction to Grimoire's eyes before, what was it? Why did it alarm you?"

"It is a sign of his Uchiha, Senju and Uzumaki blood being dominant" he looked around at the group "none of you recognize it?" While the others shrugged, Naruto looked thoughtful "I saw them briefly when I first awoke, they kinda looked like that guy Pain's eyes, why?"

"Exactly Naruto. It's called the Rinnegan and it comes from the Uchiha mixed with the Senju\Uzumaki blood. Madara had it and gave it to Pain because his Uzumaki blood would allow him access to it."

"What do you mean?"

"You remember the story of the final battle between Madara and the First Hokage using the Kyuubi, the one that supposedly Madara died in?"

When they nodded Tifa made a sound of confusion, so the group told the others the story of the founding of their village and the legendary fight between the Uchiha-using his sharingan to control Kyuubi, and the First ever Hokage, Tsunade's grandfather.

They then looked at the Uchiha heir "so?"

"Madara survived that fight, though barely. To heal himself he took blood and tissue samples of the First left at the battle site and used his cells to help heal himself. However the Senju and Uzumaki clans have been interbreeding long before Tsunade's generation, even before Naruto's parents so eventually those cells had an...interesting effect on Madara's body. Not only could he use the First's Wood Techniques, but the cells mutated the sharingan, creating the Rinnegan. Madara gave his eyes eventually to Pain while he used his brothers, allowing him to use the Eternal Sharingan."

While Tsunade cursed about her grandfather's signature attack in the hands of other than family-let alone an enemy, Shizune spoke "And Kabuto gave you Madara's eyes when Sasuke took yours."

He nodded, the black changing, first to the basic style, then they merged to become something completely different to what they had seen on Sasuke that first day.

"So because of his Uchiha blood from Sasuke, the Senju inherited from Minato through Naruto and the Uzumaki from Kushina, he has the Rinnegan."

Itachi nodded again "at one point I thought that I could use Sasuke to be the one to stop Pain and Madara, but in the end he continued to be manipulated by those around him" he glared at his brother "Orochimaru, what were you thinking-or not thinking-little brother. I leave so the snake couldn't get his slimy hands on either of us, and YOU walk right into his open arms."

"I could handle him, I knew I was positive I could" he said, followed by angrily glaring back "all I wanted was revenge. If YOU had of just told me the truth in the first place..."
"You would have betrayed our home, and lead an personal crusade against an entire village for revenge for what you think I was forced to do, just to get at THEM."

Sasuke shifted, uncomfortable at the truth "do you think you would have what you do now, if that had of happened?" he motioned at Naruto and the twins, Naruto using his attention to hand Grimoire over to his father, putting Aeris to his shoulder and gently burping her while Sasuke mimicked him.

"When I realized you had gone beyond that point, I had to change my plans. If I....gifted Naruto with a portion of my chakra I thought it would awaken the same ability in him, but it seemed his Uzumaki was too strong to allow the existence of any Senju blood to surface. Both Shisui and I WERE...."

"Shisui, the Uchiha's most powerful Genjutsu user?! Shisui The Teleporter!? The man YOU killed to activate the Mangekyo Sharingan?"

Itachi hesitated then spoke "I didn't kill him, we faked his death. He faked his death and I helped so he could leave." He looked at Naruto "do you remember the crows I sent through your body during the genjutsu?"

He nodded, looking uncomfortable, then suddenly seemed to realize "that's how you implanted me with some of your chakra!"

"I suppose it's not necessary anymore. With your connection to my brother, you have gained Uchiha blood through him. Besides, it seems your children are to become what I had hoped of Sasuke" his eyes locked to Naruto and before anyone could speak, the blonde was gripping his stomach, coughing violently.

Before anyone could react, something black and feathered was pushing out of his mouth, flying around the room a few times to land on Itachi's shoulder.

A crow, a crow with one black, one Sharingan eye. Naruto coughed a few more times then spoke, "that's gross!"

"Itachi" Tsunade spoke, her voice deadly calm, "I think I understand your actions but next time you do something like that...." she left the rest of the threat unfinished.

"Wait" Jiriaya said "why and how does it have an sharingan eye?"

"It's Shisui's eye, isn't it" Tsunade said and Itachi nodded "I programmed an genjutsu into it to protect Leaf and put it into the crow, then gave that crow to Naruto. It was an fail safe, I had hoped to use it on Sasuke.

The mark of an true shinobi is self-sacrifice, they don't seek glory, they protect from the shadows, Shisui taught me that. He anticipated a battle would ensure for his eyes, so he faked his death and had me make it so it seemed his eyes were destroyed.

When I last saw Shisui, Danzo had taken his right eye. He left his remaining left eye to me and told me to use it to protect the village, then disappeared. I gave that eye to Naruto because he shared Shisui's feelings. If Sasuke ever became a threat to the village then I would have violated all that Shisui entrusted me to do. The only one who could put it right was Naruto.

When Naruto said he saw Sasuke as a brother I could see even more from that in him, even if he was unaware at the time, he was the only one who could stop him.

In his quest for the Eternal Sharingan Sasuke planned on transferring my eyes into himself. If that ever happened the crow was supposed to emerge from Naruto in response to him coming in contact
with the transplanted eyes and cast the Koto Amatsukami to protect Leaf onto Sasuke. That was my plan."

"Why didn't you cast that jutsu on Sasuke from the start, using Shisui's eye?"

"It's not that I didn't, I couldn't, not at that time. Shisui's Mangekyo would take decades to reactivate, unless you had Hashirama Senju's chakra. Also there were many things Sasuke wanted to use my death for."

"Wait!" Sasuke said "that's why you kept pushing me to kill Naruto! Once it came to that fight, the crow would emerge and the genjutsu would take affect! The only reason it didn't at The Valley At The End was it wasn't ready to activate yet!"

Itachi nodded, looked thoughtfully at the crow then black flames suddenly engulfed it.

"Itachi! Why did you...?!

"You found your way back. Naruto may have forced you back, but YOU decided to return to him yourself. Without an way back there IS no Leaf to protect anymore. It's purpose is over."

"You said Danzo had Shisui's right eye. Why would my sensei's rival want an Sharingan eye?" Itachi's look said it all 'you have to ask when you know the answer to that?'

"THAT BASTARD!" she cursed. Itachi spoke "he was Madara's co-conspirator in Hidden Leaf. There was a reason he was the first to order me to kill our clan when The Third was out of the village. It wasn't just Shisui's eye he wanted. Once our clan was dead he had one of his ROOT members..."

"NO!" Sasuke stood up quickly, screaming his denial. Grimoire on his shoulder jerked and started to cry, disturbed out of his light doze, confused by his father's anger and anguish.

"Teme!" Naruto snapped "you're upsetting your son!" Sasuke visibly fought to relax, slowly sitting back down and moving the baby back to lay down in his arms properly, giving the tiny hand a finger to clutch and drag to his mouth to suck on while he rocked him back to sleep with gentle assurances and calming noises.

Tifa changed the subject, it was obviously getting too serious for Sasuke "I didn't think you guys would be experienced with children-babies really-at your age." Naruto grinned at her cheekily, one letter and two words "D rank missions."

"Huh?" she said. Tsunade spoke "part of an graduated ninja's training include D-rank missions around the village. They can be anywhere from weeding a villagers garden to fixing fences."

"And babysitting" Naruto grinned. Tsunade nodded "each D rank has an hidden meaning, weeding a garden teaches what herbs are usable if needed in the outside during a mission, fixing fences can help with building physical defenses-say barriers from enemies."

"And babysitting?" Tifa asked, although she was starting to suspect something of this. "Say you're on a mission to protect an rich man and his family from enemies" Naruto started "they are attacked and you hide with the family. How long will you stay hidden with an screaming child or crying infant?" Tifa understood "so you do babysitting to gain experience in dealing with babies and children."

Naruto nodded.
"Naruto was always good with kids" Shizune said "even before the missions, his friendship with Kohonamaru is proof of that." Naruto choked on a laugh at this, Aeris gurgling at her 'mother' as he did. Naruto smiled down at her before speaking "I'd hardly call the relationship between Kohonamaru and I healthy. He wanted to be Hokage like his grandfather for recognition of WHO he was, not what, and I, well, you know why I wanted it. We were more like rivals."

"Yes but the sort of rivalry you had with Kohonamaru was different than the one with Sasuke. With Kohonamaru you had a friendly rivalry between two people who understand each other. You're rivalry with him pushed him to be the shinobi he is today. With Sasuke it was different. He was your brother, your competition for attention, your competition in battle, YOUR reason to excel. Later he became your love, your reason to fight, your reason to exist past proving everyone else wrong."

Before anyone else could speak there was an knock on the door and Reeve stuck his head in "just informing you that you ninja's are finished and some of my men are repairing things downstairs, so if you hear some loud noises, don't worry. Also...." he looked at Lazard "Rufus is downstairs. He found out about Genesis being here and how he saved Naruto and despite Tseng's continued protests insisted on coming."

Lazard closed his eyes and sighed, visibly struggling with himself "I can not run from him any longer, I SHOULDN'T run any longer. If Sasuke and Itachi can work out their differences after what happened between them, so can I."

"But this is different to us" Sasuke pointed out. "You should go, wait in the bathroom or something" Naruto said to him softly. The look Lazard gave him was pained "Naruto, you want me to HIDE?"

"No, but the situation with Genesis is going to be complicated enough without worrying about anything else. We're gonna have to convince Rufus not only is Gen one of us now, but to let him go despite what he's done-like you. Sorry, La'" Lazard looked at him seriously for long seconds, Naruto returning his look before he sighed again, moving towards the bathroom "I think I need a long soak, and this wing is a so hard to keep clean and groomed, dirt and dust gets in the most inconvenient of places."

"Thanks La'" Naruto grinned as he went past, grunting and firmly closing the door behind him. Reeve glanced behind him and when Tsunade motioned to him he joined them inside, Naruto calling the man to his side to introduce him to his children before the blue-clad WRO leader moved to join Shizune and the blonde Hokage to talk in low tones.

When the knock came on the door they could hear Tseng still protesting in a low voice, insisting they should wait a while longer, Naruto and Genesis were badly wounded and properly still unconscious, he would get no answers until the two awoke and until then they may as well wait back at the Shinra Tower. "It's alright Tseng" Naruto called out, telling him that Lazard wasn't there without words, adding so Rufus wouldn't suspect anything "I'm awake and healed, but Gen's still severely wounded."

Both men entered the room, Tseng slightly behind and to the side of Rufus (to protect his weaker side) and after a quick look around appeared relieved at the absence of the other blonde man. He looked at Vincent who inclined his head very slightly towards the bathroom door, signaling him from one TURK to another where the other man was. Tseng's nod wasn't even what it appeared to be if you didn't know what was going on and to look for it.

However as trained shinobi and with the help of Tifa's guide into barely-there signals even Itachi saw the signals for what they were. The only ones in the dark were Rufus and Reeve, Rufus because he couldn't see what was going on and Reeve because he was busy with the Hokage and her assistant.
After looking around at who was in the room, Rufus looked at Naruto and Sasuke and his eyes widened at the two bundles they held. "TWO?" he questioned, so Naruto motioned them to his side "yeah, apparently every time Baachan scanned me, and even when father used the materia this little brat" he handed Aeris over to Tseng, aware by now of the previous connection between the two "would hide him from them. She wanted to protect him" he handed Grimoire to Rufus "towards the end I could sense him, but I think he needed the connection to mother Gaia to actually really come into his own being. Aeris told me his name is Grimoire, so did Angeal through Temari, so I think he only came into existence here when his soul could be placed into his proper body." He frowned in concern "I hate to think what would have happened had we never ended up here, would he have died without a soul before he could be born?"

While the two men nursed the babies, Tifa spoke out "I don't think so Naruto. I mean Aeris came from here and her body was there, but she still was fine. Chances are Grimoire would have been so as well." Naruto didn't speak while both men held the babies before swapping to get their hold of the other. The minute Grimoire was in Tseng's arms, Aeris in Rufus', both babies yawned and dropped off into an deep sleep, the two men letting Sasuke and Vincent take them carefully from them and place them into the crib together.

"You can't take Gen from us, Ru'" Naruto opened up the serious conversation "he's seriously injured and he got that way not only saving the twins but my own life."

"He saved my family, my mate and my children" Sasuke said, the look he gave the blonde Shinra was firm and dark "without him I would have succumb to the darkness I felt and become an monster our world would never have recovered from." The look he gave the other blonde was just creasing the edge of sanity.

"If the Uchiha was to loose it, we'd ALL be doomed" Jiriaya said "we almost lost him to Orochimaru, if not for Naruto. If we loose the kid he'll turn so fast this world will be destroyed in days. Believe me, the only one who ever had a chance against him was Naru, he'd make your Sephiroth look like an fly. The only only ones who would ever stand even a remote chance against him would be Itachi and maybe Chaos, but that's slim as it is."

"He saved my gaki and niece and nephew" Tsunade said firmly, cracking her knuckles threateningly "unless you are prepared to go to war with our people you won't even consider it. He is officially under the protection of our group." Everyone else nodded, Vincent and Tifa included, the female fighter adding "and AVALANCHE. You know despite what happened in their past, that Zack and Cloud will defend him."

"What happened wasn't his fault" Naruto defended "what he did in the end wasn't his fault." They looked at him "what do you mean?"

"Well think about it. First there's the Jenovah cells inside him, influencing him. No one taught him about Mother Gaia or the difference between the two. Second he's an war veteran whose spent so long struggling to live, to survive, now he's deteriorating. Of course every instinct is telling him to do what he has to to survive, now include Jenovah. Third, not only is his body deteriorating, but now his mind. All that is left is Loveless and the thought that Sephiroth can save him, cure him."

"And now? What's to stop him deteriorating again, or becoming another Sephiroth?"

Tsunade spoke "I examined him when Naruto and he first returned. His body has stabilized, the introduction of another's DNA and genetics into his body-probably through actual physical absorption-has not only stabilized his entire system but allowed both to co-exist despite traces of grievous wounds. Our theory is that the other was so severely wounded he merged with him to survive. It's rather like an Jinchuuriki and how they work, only he used the wounded others body to
boost his own while their minds co-exist. They will share chakra, abilities, strength and so on, but only one mind will dominate, by what Naruto said this Genesis. However I am uncertain if the other will have any sort of control. We'll have to wait and see."

"It is Neo" said a pain-filled voice and all eyes turned to the now conscious figure laying still and weak in the opposite bed. "Gen!" Naruto lunged with a wince to go to his friends side, but both Sasuke and Tsunade prevented him, holding him down to the mattress and telling him not to move he was still too weak and hurt. When he started to protest he was fine, fully healed, Sasuke cut him off with an meaningful glance at Rufus.

Naruto subsided, for some reason they wanted him to continue in his presence as if still badly injured and even though he wanted to ask why-Rufus was an allie and had NOTHING to do with DeepGround-he subsided and let Sasuke maneuver him back into bed and into a position to put less strain on his stomach, while Tsunade clucked on about opening the wound again and 'pretended' to examine him.

Once Sasuke moved aside and re-took his seat, Naruto's blue eyes went to the figure on the bed, to find the white eyes looking at him. "I'm glad you're alive, Gen. You saved my life, AND the twins, I was so scared...." tears started down his cheeks "if you hadn't helped he would have got me, I was too weak to fight back, and you got hurt in my place" he reached out a hand to the other "I'm sorry you had to betray your brother and the others for me, but I'll always be greatful to you and for you for doing so."

The man's clear eyes blinked a few times at him before slowly reaching out to slide his own ungloved fingers and palm into his, slowly closing his fingers around his as Naruto did also. Next to the cot, Tifa saw Vincent, who was looking thoughtful since the mention of the name, suddenly frown, looking alarmed by something. "Vincent?" she questioned and all eyes turned to him "what is it?"

"The name of the other, Neo" he looked at Genesis "the brother.... YOUR brother, it is Weiss, is it not." The white-eyed man slowly nodded. "Damn!" Naruto looked confused and alarmed "THAT was Weiss?" Vincent described the man and Naruto nodded "yep, that was him."

"Are you sure he's dead? I mean Vincent thought he died from what happened with Omega, is it possible he survived THIS as well?"

"I don't think so" Naruto grinned, "Gen's sword was aflame, it set him on fire. He was dust before we left." Genesis made a slight noise and Naruto immediately looked at him, eyes wide "I'm sorry Gen, I didn't mean to make it look like your brother deserved to die, but it was kill or be killed. You're one of us now and we'll protect you and take care you."

"How do I know you've been telling me the truth, that it wasn't lies to help you and your offspring to escape?" Tsunade spoke out "one thing you should know about Naruto is he has an almost in-ordinary sense of disclosure, to the point of being dangerous. His mouth runs away from him a lot of missions were spent with giving him minimal information."

Jiraiya added despite the glare the young man was sending everyone "he also is child-like in his honesty, he doesn't seem able to lie. He can skillfully evade if your smart enough to catch it, but if you ask him an direct question he doesn't seem able to lie. It almost seems an genetic trait, his father was the same way."

"Guys!" Naruto protested "I'm not like that! At least not that bad!"
"Oh really" Tsunade snorted "who hid Kohonamaru's kunai the other day, Gaki? It was YOU wasn't it." Naruto blushed and looked away, mumbling something under his breath. "What was that, kid?" Jiraiya added. "I said" he took a deep breath and repeated out loud "he was pissing me off. I was hormonal, hungry and my back hurt, he's lucky I didn't stick it where the sun doesn't shine."

"Point and point" Jiraiya said smugly.

Tifa remembered when she had brought Denzel and Marlene to the building for the first time and asking Naruto who he had played a prank on, Naruto's then comment about Sasuke being an "horny Teme". She realized for the first time, of course Naruto had made such a comment, the only real adult influence he had growing up was the Third and he probably thought his behavior was 'cute', like an grandfather would. He had no adult influence in his life to teach him how to...edit his behavior or mannerisms, no one to teach him how to control what he said or even lie skillfully. By the time Iruka came along it was too late.

She expressed her thoughts out loud. "You have a point" Tsunade said, Jiraiya looking thoughtful, stroking his chin before nodding in agreement.

"So this is all real?" Genesis asked "everything he said about Mev...Mother Gaia, Aeris and us three, Sephiroth being your son" he looked at Vincent who nodded sadly "about DeepGround and brother, about our original purpose in life." When they nodded again he looked depressed "not only were WE supposed to be the gift of the goddess to the people, we tried to harm her. It's MY fault Sephiroth almost killed her with meteor, if I hadn't convinced him he was a monster..."

"You didn't convince him, Gen, he wouldn't have believed you if he didn't already have doubts, and that was all Hojo's fault. You just...echoed what that bastard had been telling him all his life. If not for him, Seph would have had a loving father and mother, an proper life and childhood, an REAL life. That bastard just manipulated and used people like they were disposal toys to play with and throw away."

Rufus frowned "I've been investigating a lot of Hojo's past dealings and discovered he had his hand in some way in nearly EVERY single thing we investigated, whether it was just funding, supplying chemicals, victims to use or even genetic material" he looked at the severely wounded man "that included Hollander's experiments and even Ghast to an extent."

"But weren't they enemies competing for funding?"

"To all those outside, yes, they were bitter rivals, but in reality they were in each others pockets."

"It explains the fact that Genesis, Angeal and Sephiroth were put together in SOLDIER instead of different departments. At that time it was said that SOLDIER and TURK were competing and enemies of sorts. If that was true and Hollander would have put Genesis and Angeal in TURK when Sephiroth was put in SOLDIER."

"First" Tseng started "that was just a rumor to keep Shinra from questioning our loyalty, TURK and SOLDIER were NOT enemies. In fact we often did favors for each other."

"Really?" Naruto looked curiously at Vincent who nodded "like what?"

"Well once Sephiroth wanted an item of his stolen found and returned without anyone else's knowledge. I had Reno investigate the people able to steal such and then break in and steal it back. In return Sephiroth allowed us to 'borrow' two SOLDIER'S for a case that would require some muscle backup more than Rude." Tifa took the opportunity to ask "why IS Rude in TURK? I mean he seems to me more the sort of person suited to SOLDIER. No offense but all but the TURKS I've
seen are suited for agility and/or speed. Then you've go Rude."

Rufus grinned "I once asked the Old Man that. He told me to mind my own business."

Tseng answered however "despite Rudes' appearance he was more suited for TURK work. He has been in our department as long as I have been the head. His patience and quite way not only counterbalance Renos' wildness, but even on occasion controls it. Both are complete opposites, but as you've seen that makes them an deadly duo together." Tifa nodded "I saw some of them fighting Yazoo and Loz, they not only held their own against two mako and Jenovah enhanced Sephiroth clones, they were actually able to rescue some of the kids while doing so."

"It would have made good business sense to have someone like Rude among the TURKS. I mean the TURKS have a certain reputation as it is as more crafty and dangerous than SOLDIER. I mean I know SOLDIER are just as dangerous, but they're more of an army, are seen more threatening as an army then individuals, even with mako enhancements. However people KNOW just to be on guard with TURKS around, even just one by itself. Couple that with Rudes' overall intimidating appearance....."

The other agreed, Rufus frowning at the change of subject before getting it back on track, insisting Genesis be returned with them. The others continued to disagree, Tifa pointing out since Genesis officially died while helping Zack and Cloud, his death meant-like Zack-he was no longer SOLDIER, and by killing Weiss he was also no longer DeepGround. Since the Leaf Ninja had taken him in, that meant they had to go through Tsunade's authority to arrest or capture him.

"He killed his parents" Rufus began with Naruto interrupting "so did Itachi" then apologized to his brother-in-law who nodded in understanding "besides, they weren't his real parents" when Rufus opened his mouth to say something Naruto quickly added "don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that's any excuse, you're just grasping at straws if you think that that will suddenly make me change my mind. All of us" he motioned around him "have done things in our life we regret" he looked intently at the other blonde "even YOU, Ru'. That regret is what makes us human."

Every person in the room, even Tifa, nodded in agreement.

"That's the difference between being human and a monster" he looked at Genesis, seemed to struggle with something internally, and spoke to him "you tried to convince everyone you three elite were monsters because you were experiments when you were conceived, but tell me Gen, even if you didn't know me or the truth, if you hadn't spoken to me, would you have killed the twins? Would you have allowed them to slaughter them just because of who my daughter is supposed to be?"

"No" Genesis instantly said "never."

"As an SOLDIER, if Shinra ordered you to kill a child, would you have obeyed? Say if during the war with Wutai if they said "we want you to go in and slaughter this entire village, every man, woman, child and baby". Would you have done it?"

"No. They are innocent, no matter who or what they are. We would never harm a child or baby, especially Angeal. If someone attacked us, we would fight, but NEVER that."

"DeepGround did" Rufus said to which Tifa interrupted "that's why Genesis isn't one of them anymore. He's SOLDIER and has an SOLDIERS' code just like Zack and Cloud. He may have forgotten that for a while, but in the end he stayed strong, even when it cost him someone he saw as a brother." Rufus was loosing the fight and he knew it, he opened his mouth to speak when there came a sound from the closed bathroom door across from him and an vaguely familiar voice came as the door opened slightly "you are loosing the argument, Rufus Shinra, but you always were a
stubborn ass."

Rufus opened his mouth wider and his eyebrows lowered in anger, about to yell at whoever it was, when they stepped out into the light of the room.

The words died in his throat.

The first he saw was an large white wing hanging limply from the figures back-the right side. The only person who had had a white wing was Angeal, but HE had blonde hair an different build and had one, not two. He was towel drying his blonde hair-an shade darker than his own and cut around his chin and base of his head-steel blue eyes locked to his.

He wore clothes that looked like a mix of the ninja's, black ANBU pants, ninja sandle, and white shirt and an white coat over one arm similar to the one Naruto had worn when they first found him, only decorated in what looked like feathers on the back. Reeve had got him glasses to replace the broken ones and except for that he looked surprisingly like one of the ninja's themselves, especially with the muscles showing through the clothes.

Naruto grinned and handed him an comb, the blonde nodding his head to him in thanks and starting to comb his locks out, finishing by shaking them out gently to fall into place before tossing it back and turning the full force of his attention and eyes on the other blonde "I thought Shinra Inc was left in better hands than that, isn't that what you used to tell me? That Old Man Shinra wasn't ruthless enough, that YOU would take it in new angles of conquest."

Rufus' eyes widened nearly all the way at this. He moved closer and looked closer at him. His voice was soft-an almost squeak-when he managed to force it out "Lazard?" then louder as he realized his eyes weren't seeing wrong "brother?!!"

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Tifa had never seen Rufus Shinra so completely rattled before, not when they fought and killed Dark Nation, not when he thought Tseng and Elena had been killed by the remnants, not during his battle with Kadaj for Jenovah's head.

But here he was, faced with the man he never thought he'd see again, an older brother discovered too late, resurrected from the dead.

It was too much for his mind too take, obviously overloaded with his out-of-control emotions so he could only stand there, mouth flapping opened and closed like an stunned mullet.

Tseng looked at him in concern, speaking his name gently, trying to jerk him out, but nothing existed but Rufus, his brother, and his shock.

Naruto murmured something to Sasuke who moved from the chair to the bed with his mate and motioned the chair at Rufus with his head to Tseng.

Getting the idea Tseng took the chair from it's spot beside the bed and to behind his boss and lover. Speaking gently but firmly he guided the blonde into it, seating him slowly but firmly by an hand on one shoulder.

Once seated the blonde let out an breath and blinked, as if suddenly coming too from somewhere else and cried out "but you're dead!"

"I was" the man answered gently to him "but Mother Gaia brought me back to aid with the fight to come with Sephiroth."

"Oh" the blonde deflated "so you're only alive to stop Sephiroth, then you'll return to the lifestream."

"No" the other blonde stepped forward, gently taking his younger brothers face in one hand and guiding it up so blue eyes locked with steel blue "I am not just here for Sephiroth. I came back for you. If we all survive this fight, if I survive this, I'll still be your big brother" Rufus opened and closed his mouth soundlessly again so Lazard quickly added "if you'll have me."

Rufus nodded then suddenly looked alarmed, so Lazard assured him "I have NO interest in the company, it is Shinra, YOU, not me. However that doesn't mean I'm not going to help if it's needed. HELP, I won't come back."

Rufus looked relieved and disappointed at the same time and managed to question "how did you end up here, and without me knowing about it? HOW LONG have you been here?"

"I have been here only three days. They could not alert you to who I was because Naruto and the others had no idea who I was or our relationship."

"What do you mean? Didn't you tell them?"

"When we found him, he had mako sickness" Tifa took his story and ran with it, after all, it was true-if only partly "the only one of us who ever knew him was Zack, and he didn't know with Lazard being bedridden trying to shake the final stages off."

Rufus looked alarmed at him "you had mako poisoning!" he stood abruptly and tried to examine him, insisting he check him over-or have a doctor see to him.
"I have examined him already" the willowy doctor stepped out into his line of sight "he has recovered enough to be fully functional, just as the girl Temari will soon be. His version of mako poisoning was not as severe as the girls." This was news to Tifa. She had been unaware that the doctor had also examined Lazard.

Before anyone else could speak there was an knock on the door and Naruto called to them to come in. Anko opened the door, face a mix of worry and desperation. Tifa hadn't seen her among the returned group and realized she must had been still looking when the others returned. Her eyes went immediately to Naruto, the expression becoming vast relief at his return and obviously alive state, before looking around, her eyes locking to the crib. Naruto smiled at her "go ahead, just don't wake them up."

Now given permission the ex-snake sannin's pupil eagerly entered the room, headed for the two children.

Gently Tifa helped lay Aeris in one arm and Grimiore in the other, the nin smiling softly as she gently rocked both, looking them over closely before blinking in surprise, "he looks like Kushina."

Naruto's face lit up "really?! You think he looks like my mom?"

"Definitely. You look like Minato, practically a little clone of him, except your eye shape and mouth, that's Kushina's. HE has Kushina's face but Minato's eyes and nose." Naruto seemed vastly pleased by this. "The blonde looks like Minato's, but the red...."

"Mom's" Naruto grinned and she nodded. Naruto relaxed into the bed under him, content and happy by this. There was a slight rustle and a snake slid out from the womans' long sleeve, head slightly sideways as it checked out the newborns. Before anyone could speak, IT had "yessss, he doessss. The kid issss herrrr clone." Rufus looked startled "a talking snake!?"

"It's a summons" Naruto explained "summons are intelligent, well, most of them are. Anko and a few others don't just use them whenever they're needed, they actually socialize with them. It helps strengthen relations with them as well as loyalty."

"Our summons are different" Tifa said "we call them through materia, so they are only called during battle. They don't talk to us, only sticking around to do whatever they are needed for before going back to their plane." Naruto shrugged "ours are nature based, like animal or insect, and can hang around and make decisions for themselves. They obey, but often during a fight they can give you another point of view, or idea for how to do things. Some contracts are even passed down through families or teacher to student."

"I have my father's contract" Kakashi said.

"Sasuke and I both share our clan's crow and cat contracts."

"I have the slug like Tsunade-san" Sakura said.

"I have both the fox through Kyuubi and the toads. My father had the toads, but we both got it through ero-san" Naruto motioned at Jiraiya "and Sasuke also has the wolf and snake."

"Mine was through my father" Jiraiya said. Naruto looked at him curiously "you never told me that before. If you let me and the Forth sign an family contract...."

"It doesn't matter" the man said quickly, uncomfortable with the subject and the attention he was getting from it "Minato and you are the only thing close to sons I was going to have anyway." Tifa gave Tsunade an "See?" look, the ex-Fifth frowning thoughtfully when she saw and heard it.
From the corner of his eye the other sannin obviously saw it, because he started going on about his
two most powerful students not following in his footsteps to become proud super-perverts, where did
he go wrong and he had hoped they would follow in the proud tradition, but it was too late, Tsunade
had seen the truth under the mask and now she knew, she was not going to let him go that easily.

Rufus turned the subject back, "you can have more than one of these summons?" He looked at
Naruto "you said your.....mate had four and most of the others had at least two."

Tsunade spoke "we could have more than that if we wished, provided we have the strength or
chakra to summon or control some of the most powerful. Manda, the boss snake summons, could
only be summoned through human sacrifice, for instance. The only one to summon him was our ex-
teammate, however he HATED him."

"Why?" they asked.

"Snakes are creatures of nature and have their own code and sense of honor. A lot of bad elements
and stories in the past made them look like evil creatures. Snakes only attack to protect their nest
and/or young or they feel threatened-or food. Have you ever heard of a snake attacking for the fun of
it?" they thought about it, then shook their heads.

To their surprise the snake itself answered the previous question "theee humannnn had no sssenssse
of honor. The bossss made it difficult to ssssummon him sssooo he wouldn't. He ussseedd children
asss toyssss and disssposable weaponsss, took other hummmaannsss bodiesss to prolong hisss own
life. Bosss ssaid he wasss ssso pleasssed when the fox ssslayed him."

Naruto looked halfway between pleased that his actions that day had a positive effect on other than
Anko and Sasuke, and upset by the reminder of how violent and vicious he had been. "When
someone has an family summons, we discovered they can ALSO have a general summons, hence
Sasuke's four."

"I see" Rufus nodded "since he has the two family summons, he was also able to gain two general
summons. What is the difference between the two?" They repeated what Kakashi had told Tifa
months ago. "I see" Rufus repeated, Tifa seeing something spark in his eyes "so, can ANYONE
gain your type of summons?"

"You need Chakra first of all" they told him "and a connection to nature. Also you need the approval
of the boss summons, even though there are stories of ways to get around that. The contract has to be
signed-by you-in your own blood."

"Boss summons?"

"The head summons. In cases like the toad, the summons can be an entire clan of animals, the 'father'
or 'grandfather' as the boss, although in a lot of cases it's just the most powerful who dominates the
others, like Manda and the snakes."

"The only person here I think who would be totally capable of gaining a summons would be father" Naru
grinned at him "his energy is SIMILAR to chakra. But I don't know if it would really work
though." Which turned the subject somehow to what SORT of summons would suit Vincent. Tifa
knew Naruto was trying to get the subject off Genesis, to distract Rufus from taking the young man
in for crimes against Shinra Electric, that now Lazard was here, he was hoping BOTH would keep
him occupied.

She could also see that Tseng was unsure of what to do. As an TURK, it was his job to follow his
lovers orders in business wise, and his job was to take Genesis in, by force if necessary, but if he did-
despite his skill—he knew he'd be way outnumbered by people so skilled they could kill him in
seconds and not just that but to do so risked starting a war with the ninjas.

Tifa had no doubt if it came to a war with Shinra, Wutai would gladly house and feed the ninjas, let
alone an complete alliance with them, and then it would be the Great Wutain War all over again,
only this time without SOLDIER and the three Generals, Shinra wouldn't stand a chance.

No, this time Wutai would have one of those Generals on THEIR side.

Which lead Tifa to an sudden idea and as it grew, so did a slow smile on her face. "Tifa?" she
blinked at Itachi, surprised at this being the first time he had actually said her name out loud. Tsunade
seemed to know what she was thinking and smiled back at her "what are you thinking?"

"A way to weed the rest of DeepGround out."

"Do tell" the woman smiled wider and Tifa had no doubt she suspected it. "Well we had that
invitation from Wutai, maybe Naruto and Genesis should go there to heal and recover. After all,
Midgar is hardly the place to rest and relax." Naruto opened his mouth to protest, stopped and
cocked his head, looking thoughtful. Tsunades' slow shit-eating grin reminded Tifa so much of
Naruto it shocked her. Was this the senju blood, or Uzumaki, or did they learn it from each other?
Knowing the woman’s past, Tifa couldn't imagine her ever smiling that often, let alone a full-out
grin. It must have been since Naruto she could do this, Naruto to allow her to freely let loose.

"I think you're right" she said to Tifa, turning to glare at the blonde Shinra "and I'm sure you could
organize it with the girls father."

"I'll organize it right away" Tseng said quickly. When Rufus narrowed his eyes at him in anger and
opened his mouth to protest, the TURK leader quickly added to him "it will give you a chance to be
in a relaxed environment with your brother, sir. You can finally REALLY get to know him, the real
him behind the 'Director Of SOLDIER'."

Rufus' mouth snapped shut and he looked both thoughtful and eager. "I want to save THEM first"
came a weak call from the bed beside Naruto's "they don't deserve their fate, they are just as much
prisoners as Naruto was." Eyes snapped to the bed to find for some reason Genesis's eyes had
slightly changed color, gone from white to a very pale green. "Prisoners!? DeepGround has others!?
Why didn't you tell us this before!?"

"They are not truly prisoners in the sense Naruto was, they can walk around and go wherever they
please in the base, but they are closely watched and guarded and can never leave. My brothe....." he
took a deep breath, steeled himself, and started again "DeepGround keep them close and allow no
one or anything near. I only met them once, but I often saw them walking around."

"WHO are they?"

Their names are Tenshi and Jundo, but DeepGround calls them Gomi and Haiki."

"Angel and Purity as apposed to Trash and Waste" Shizune said followed by Naruto, frowning in
anger at someone having been treated like him in his youth "why?" "Jundo was found in one of
Hojo's old abandoned labs, still locked in an mako tube for who knows how long, along with his
three...brothers. They were failed clones, remnants of Sephiroth. The other three were judged by
DeepGround as suitable and released, but Jundo was too fragile, too pure."

Tifa frowned "let me guess, his brothers were Kadaj, Loz and Yazoo." Genesis nodded and Rufus
and Tseng's eyes widened "there is ANOTHER clone!?"
Again Genesis nodded but quickly spoke "you don't need to fear him. Jundo knows the truth, he has no interest in bringing Sephiroth or Jenovah back whatsoever, he just wants to live his life like every other being in this world, to be loved and have a family of his own. When DeepGround discovered his fragility and purity, they judged him as not only too weak to use, but too untrustworthy. It is said he is all things good and right in Sephiroth, his and Jenovahs' feminine side."

Vincent frowned in concern at this, Tifa thinking if it was true, if the clone was all things pure from both Sephiroth and Jenovah, he definitely would not only useless to the group but closely guarded. If someone else got hold of him and was able to control him, DeepGround had no chance resurrecting Jenovah or Sephiroth "so that's why they call him waste, because they see his feminine side as useless?"

Genesis nodded. "And the other?" Vincent asked "the one called Tenshi. Is HE interested in restoring either?"

"Well no, all little Tenshi does is eat, sleep and try to talk to Jundo, cry if anyone else tries to hold him."

"LITTLE?" there was something dangerous in Naruto's question.

Genesis nodded "Little Tenshi is only a few weeks old." The sense of danger to Naruto increased, his chakra charging the air, the feel of an mother when her young is threatened and Tifa realized because of giving birth to the twins coupled with the female fox inside him as well as Naruto's own urge and need to have a family was causing the nurturing hormones in him to go haywire. "How did DeepGround get hold of an clone of Sephiroth only a few weeks old?" she asked the injured young man.

"He isn't" he said. "He isn't?" she echoed "isn't what, a clone of Sephiroth?" He nodded and his eyes went straight to Vincent and stayed there. Tifa sucked in a sharp breath "he's a clone of VINCENT?!"

"Not exactly a clone, but yes."

"Explain it to us" Reeve said softly.

"When the three other clones failed, DeepGround tried to find out why. Kadaj was perfect, he and any of his brothers should have been successful, but all three, KADAJ failed, he was too weak. They soon discovered that the four had a fatal flaw, they were TOO close to Jenovah." He looked to Vincent again for confirmation who nodded.

"What do you mean?"

"Despite her power, Jenovah was never very strong. By creating pure Jenovah clones of Sephiroth, Hojo removed all that physical strength and prowess, physical strength and prowess he inherited from his true parents, his GENETIC parents" again Genesis looked at Vincent. "Hojo was a weakling, the others soon realized his true genetics could NOT come from crossing Hojo and Jenovah-as he CLAIMED it was, so they began investigating it. They soon discovered the woman-Luecretica-and the rumors of her affair with her younger TURK bodyguard." He looked to Vincent again for confirmation who nodded.

"So they realized they could never truly bring back Sephiroth or Jenovah without Vincent and Luecreticas' genetics and DNA" Reeve said "so this clone child is a crossing of them both-the TRUE Sephiroth, what he could have been without Hojo's interference or Jenovah. How did they find the things they needed to create and grow the child?"
"Samples of the mother were found in the lab the clones were found in, kept in cold storage by Hojo, taken before her exposure to Jenovah cells. He must have wanted to keep it in reserve, in case the.....source became too contaminated. Almost a year ago they created a trap at the Shinra Mansion for the father, to gain all they needed."

Tifa gasped and looked at Vincent "Rosso The Crimson! Vincent that must be why she tore your chest so severely! Not only was she trying to get the Protomateria, but with such damage you wouldn't have noticed if she took blood and tissue as well!" He nodded in agreement before turning to Genesis "without Hojo's knowledge of how to artificially speed the aging process of a clone, they were stuck with a baby. How is the child and the clone supposed to bring Sephiroth back?"

"Rather the same way I healed."

"You mean Juno would absorb the baby and use it's genetics to fully become him?" Tifa asked and Genesis confirmed it "but he doesn't want too. He sees Tenshi as his little brother and doesn't want to loose him, he wants to stay who he is-a separate being." Naruto meanwhile was looking thoughtful "guys we know this, we should have realized."

"Naruto?" they asked. "My dream, remember? I saw a child who looked like father-Tenshi-and an gentle Sephiroth playing with Aeris-it has to be Jundo-he was acting like an woman caring for a child!"

"And Sephiroth running away with Aeris was warning of the kidnapping!" Tifa realized. "And the part where Vincent and Luecretica are pleading with Sephiroth is their genetics affecting Juno!"

"And where Naruto uses some jutsu to separate them into two is the two separating again, only Jenovah wins over Jundo!" Naruto looked alarmed "this means Jenovah takes control of Jundo and uses his body, that when Aeris and Tenshi destroy her, they destroy him as well!"

"Somethings can't be helped, Naruto" Tifa said gently, "sometimes things happen, things set in stone...."

"NO!" Naruto snapped, startling everyone "he doesn't deserve it! He deserves a life, a future! He is not a monster like Jenovah! I....." he suddenly stopped, blinking, face going blank and Tifa could almost see the cogs in his head moving rapidly, as if trying to find a solution.

The others saw it too for Tsunade frowned at him "gaki...."

"It's nothing, baachan."

"Naruto...."

"I said it's nothing!" he snapped, then apologized "I'm sorry, baachan."

"Just tell us what you were thinking" she sighed. "Nothing right now, nothing solid yet anyway, I'm just trying to remember the hand signs I used in the dream. If it is able to separate Tenshi from Jundo, maybe with some refinement..."

"What, it can separate Jenovah and Jundo? He's pure Jenovah, sure he's maybe the GOOD Jenovah, but that's all he is really."

"NO!" Naruto yelled "what he contains doesn't make him it! He's NOT a monster! Just because he....." he suddenly snapped his jaw shut. "Like YOU, Naruto?" they asked. The boy turned his head away and refused to speak, refused to answer, jaw clenched tight.
Chapter 22

Tifa smiled gently as the couple past her in the hallway. Ever since arriving in Wutai three days ago she had seen Reeve and Shizune getting closer. She saw them walking the grounds together hand in hand like two lovers and even kissing occasionally, though when they thought they were alone or in private. It gave her hope, Reeve needed someone intelligent like him, but stubborn enough to boss him around when he needed it, like when he was in his work room working on something new-he tended to get fixated on his engineering and forget the world outside his mind. And Shizune needed someone who would understand her, that she was an ninja but also treat her as what she was A WOMAN.

Even Iruka seemed to have found someone who interested him, an servant here at the lords vast land and home, Tifa many times saw him watching her quietly and just an hour ago she saw them walking in the garden together side by side, not talking a word but both seemed more than comfortable just being in each others presence.

Kakashi and Genesis were getting along extremely well. Even though Kakashi was on guard duty with the still gravelly wounded red head, they seemed to have swapped books and Zack had once told her Genesis threatened to kill ANYONE going anywhere near the white bound book, but he felt comfortable enough with the cyclops to let him read it.

She didn't know if Kakashi was straight or homosexual, the way he had reacted to Chaos' mock attention months ago had made her think he was straight, but now that she had thought about it, it could have been because of who or what the demon was.

He could also be bi.

Tifa understood the reason. During war, surrounded by destruction and death, it was human nature to reaffirm life in the most....instinctual way possible. It was why a lot people are conceived during war, in their case both the Wutain war and during Meteor Fall. Nothing like and life-and-death situation to get the blood pumping and adrenalin flowing.

Even Tifa had to admit she had experienced that rush herself a couple of times, after a good hard battle, the urge to go out and just find some big tough guy, knock him to the ground and.....

But she had better control over herself and dragging her head out of the gutter, Tifa continued her previous train of thought.

Now with the shinobi facing death and destruction nearly every single mission, with every one they went on giving the possibility of death, capture, torture, mutilation or worse-rape, as Shizune said that day things like modesty were only things that hampered you.

When males were there with you, experiencing the same things in battle you were, the same rush, the same fear, the same trauma, well it was no wonder a lot of men hooked up afterwards or during war. You felt like no one else could possibly understand you like them.

So though the younger generation of shinobi may say "I'm straight" or I'm homosexual", after experiencing what they did, they learn it wasn't as easy as what was or wasn't between the legs.

It was who understood you, who could feel you and what you had been through.

When you were a guy and had sexual relations with another guy, you also didn't have to worry about suddenly becoming a father for some one time thing, well, except for Naruto. It explained team 7, or
rather Sakura and how she ended up with Lee.

All her life Sakura is told she's the next lady Uchiha, that she was supposed to be Sasuke's wife and grant her mother the privilege of being raised in the higher society of rich bastards of Leaf.

Being drilled into her head all her life, she was convinced the Uchiha heir loved her and would do so the first day they met, so when he DIDN'T, merely meant 'try harder'. When time went on in the team and she began to realize how powerful her two teammates and teacher was compared to her, she began to really notice how perfectly the two boys were together, how they fed each other and fed off each other's past and determination she began to feel left out, especially in face of who and what their teacher was.

When the team broke up and Tsunade took her on as a student, she was granted an reprieve, however it was Lee getting hurt for her that truly made her think. Here was someone like her who knew what it felt like to feel different, like you were weaker to those around you, however when he spoke to her in the woods after her outburst and gave her acceptance of who she was, not could do, she found another like her, but with the strength to use his limitations to his advantage.

At first she was just interested, he was someone with no chakra to use, but who could stand up to even Gaara without fear. And not just that, he wasn't all he seemed. Getting to know the REAL him she saw a young man who was sweet, gentle and caring. Who was incredibly attentive to her and her needs, even if they WERE selfish at times, everything she imagined Sasuke growing up before they met, of course she'd fall for him.

When any day could be your last, who cared about something like gender in an relationship.

Tifa grimaced and suddenly changed direction, headed back the way she'd come. They were at it again! Jeeze, those two were almost as bad as Naruto and Sasuke!

She never knew Reno was such an horndog, let alone loud enough to empty out an entire wing of the building with his....enthusiasm, but she should have known, Reno did everything loudly, typical red head.

It had gotten that way that either Kakashi or Jiriaya tended to use an silence jutsu-the same they used on Naruto and Sasuke-to block off their section of the building whenever they started up, it became an permanent thing, so any of the ninja's could activate it with their chakra.

Not that the two demons were any worse.

It had started with Naruto and Sasuke after all, some times Tifa thought the two TURKS were trying to compete with the demons.

The day after landing and settling in to their guests quarters, Tifa had seen an disguised Anko and Haku outside in the garden playing with the twins, the two babies giggling and making noise while they had pulled faces and spoke to them.

She had wondered where their parents were and went looking, only to hear an familiar fighting and then...OTHER sounds coming from their room.

It happened again and again, Tifa thinking that maybe Naruto was trying to make up for what he missed out on in the last month of his pregnancy plus his near-death experience with DeepGround pushing him to 'reaffirm' he was alive....

Then Reno started up and it soon became almost an competition between them, Tifa could just imagine Reno getting offended by Naruto's constant sex life and deciding he would show Naruto
that no one was louder then him at sex, dragging an unenthusiastic but not exactly reluctant Rude with him.

It was surprising how much they shared similar personalities, Reno and Naruto and Rude and Sasuke.

Rounding a corner Tifa almost ran into Sai and Elena walking together, deep in conversation.

That was another couple Tifa found weird. Why was the only TURK woman hanging around the former assassin and spy? Sai was barely learning to show emotion let alone experience it after most his life being taught not to experience them, why were they hanging around together?

When they stopped their hushed conversation at her appearance and looked at her, Tifa raised an eyebrow at the pale young man and motioned behind her.

Hearing the noise, the ex assassin nodded and moved off to activate the seal.

This gave Tifa a chance to ask Elena "why are you paying attention to him. I know he's not your type and you can't be interested."

Elena looked stubborn "what makes you think I'm not."

"Come on, Elena, it's me. In case you've forgot you come to Seventh Heaven regularly. When you get drunk you talk, LOUD about your love-life or lack thereof and the kind of guy you want. Sai is nothing like it."

The other woman looked stubborn "well maybe I'm sick of my type. Maybe I thought that someone more dangerous and deadly than me would be a rush. Maybe I'm sick of people weaker than me, who can't understand the horrors or danger of the job."

Tifa looked her dead-set in the eyes and said "I don't believe you."

"I don't care what you believe" the blonde walked the few steps to Sai's side as he returned and steered him away "let's go" and left with him.

Frowning after them Tifa was worried. She doubted for a second the blonde was really interested in the near-emotionless ex-assassin, which could only mean one thing, Rufus was trying to work his way into the shinobi, trying to recruit some of them.

This was dangerous and could cause strife among them, especially if Lord Godo decided to do so as well, Tifa had to warn Tsunade. The shinobi were loyal to her, if she warned them that both sides would try to win their affections andor trick them away, they would be on the look out for such behavior.

To her surprise the healer had already known "we know, Kikyo told us about it."

"Kikyo?"

The blonde woman told her about how one of the Lords own servants had came to Iruka in secret and told him of a conversation she had heard between Rufus and Lord Godo, how Rufus warned the Wutain against trying to recruit any more of the shinobi after an certain incident because he had every intention of doing so himself.

Godo had challenged his 'right' to do so, stating he had a lot more to gain as well as offer that the group could actually use and essentially told him 'may the best man win'. 
The servant had been there since Yuffie was a child and despite her obvious flaws loved the young girl like a little sister and when she saw how happy Yuffie was with Haku and Iruka, how attentive she was during the lessons as opposed to the ones she had previously had with those SUPPOSED to teach her, she couldn't keep her mouth shut, especially when she saw how upset the previous incident had made the girl, how mad at her father.

Well, there had been TWO incidents really, both Yuffie was mad with, but the second pissed her off.

The first one was between Vincent and Godo, an meeting in the Lords chambers which consisted of low voices and some muffled hash words. Tifa had just caught the end of the muffled conversation—something about 'disappointments' and 'half-breeds' and at first thought it was about Naruto or maybe Sasuke by the way Vincent stormed out and flowed past her—and for a few hours afterwards Tifa could sense an pissed off Chaos outside in the wilds trashing anything he could— but soon learned the truth from the blonde boy himself.

"Father's half Wutain" Naruto explained as he breast-feed the twins during her shift in guard duty "his dad was a researcher from Modeiheim and his mom was from here. His dad was staying as a guest here while looking for information on Chaos and Omega when they met. His mom was an young lady also staying here with her husband and they met and fell in love.

But because she was already married he was conceived and born illegitimate and there was this big thing when he was growing up. Father hates coming here, they treat him like an half-breed" Naruto's face twisted and Tifa had the feeling than if anyone had the nerve to say anything about Vincent in front of him, he would show them what an illegitimate half-breed could do.

Somehow it got back to Yuffie and Tifa had the sneaking suspicion that Naruto had told her, because every time someone looked wrong at Vincent, before he could do his customary glare, the young Wutain Ninja would glare at them "do you have a PROBLEM with an fellow Wutain?!!"

Baffled they would stutter their denial and look away, leaving the ninja to grab Vincent's arm and excitedly steer the confused man away with "let's spar, Vincent!"

"I wanna spar too!" Naruto protested, trying to stand before he was pushed back into his seat with "not now you're not."

"But I'm bored!" he protested. So began Naruto's lessons on materia and it's use and manipulation.

Later Tifa heard Yuffie yelling at her father about it. She sounded almost in tears as she said that he was her friend and she cared about him, how people were being SO MEAN to him now and she hated that and wanted them to stop, that as far as she was concerned Vincent was fully Wutain and had more honor than a thousand of those 'guys' out there who were, that how were they supposed to rebuild and restore Wutai to its former glory when they treated each other like that?

She sounded so forlorn that for the first time since knowing her, Tifa realized the girl was doubting her entire purpose in life in the face of the cruelty of her own people. "No wonder he never stays anywhere very long" she sniffed "how can he when his own homeland rejects him?" Tifa kept going when the next sounds was of Godo comforting his daughter.

She talked to Vincent about it later. Now she knew why Vincent had been so uncomfortable when they were in Wutai last while looking for Sephiroth. It wasn't the reaction of a man freshly awoken from an roughly fifty year sleep and uncomfortable around crowds and other people, it was a man in his homeland, afraid of being recognized and mocked. It explained the joining TURK so young, he probably wanted to get out of there as fast as he could so he could become something and someone in control of his life instead of an victim, only to encounter Luecetcia and Hojo on his first case.
Vincent told her he was used to their attitude and hate by now.

The second incident involved Godo trying to persuade Iruka and Haku to stay in Wutai to teach other local children WITHOUT going through Tsunade first.

Iruka just stiffly told him he would go nowhere without his 'little brother' and do wherever his Hokage commanded of him. Haku was horrified at the thought of leaving Denzel and Marlene. When Godo told him he'd be teaching OTHER children, he flatly refused, stating it was his purpose to teach the two children and then Grimoire and Aeris when they were old enough, refusing to listen too another word.

When Yuffie found out she again confronted her father who explained how he thought that they could teach her in Wutai as well as other children. Seeing it as it as her father trying to get her to stay in her homeland so he could marry her off, Yuffie turned on the waterworks, telling him how "the guys need me in Midgar in case other bad guys turn up" and how important she was to them. When that didn't work she tried the "I'm restoring Wutai by spying on Midgar from the inside" angle.

Finally she admitted it, she was falling for Haku. This didn't seem much of a surprise to Godo and Tifa was shocked to learn Godo thought the young man WAS from their land! Did Yuffie tell him that or did he assume? She had to admit, the other looked remarkably like he was from here, but surely Godo wouldn't...He would, telling his daughter he would consent to the marriage and talk to Tsunade, but Tifa had the feeling that that was also an trick, after all, Yuffie marrying Haku would not only give Godo powerful grandchildren with an kekkai genkai, but an excuse to have the young male hang around to teach Wutain children to be shinobi for their land.

Tifa was just glad Haku's loyalty to Denzel and Marlene would mean he'd refuse, and any act towards forcing him would be met with the combined might of every single one of the shinobi, AND AVALANCHE, not to mention Shinra when Rufus realized what the Lord was trying to do.

She just hoped that Yuffie didn't take Haku's rejection negatively.

Any further thought was cut off by a scream up ahead and a crash, Naruto's voice calling his female teammates name in panic.

Tifa ran towards the sounds.

She found Naruto out of bed, supporting the pink haired young woman who was on her feet but bent over, holding her stomach. At first Tifa thought they were attacked and the girl injured, but then she saw and heard the way she was breathing, clutching herself and the growing puddle under her "arh hell" she muttered.

The young woman had gone into early labor.

Her voice alerted them of her presence and Naruto looked relieved "Tifa! She's too early and I don't know where baachan is! Teme went looking for her, but he can't find her anywhere!" Meaning she'd been in labor a while, but her water only just broke. Tifa moved to take his place and eased the girl into a chair "call Sasuke and tell him to get an doctor. Have you tried to find Shizune?"

"She's not answering either!" he said helplessly.

Tifa had an idea, chances were, the woman was still with Reeve. Tapping an code into her PHS and hitting send she had only seconds before it rang, the engineer/director of the WRO's voice urgent as
he asked "what is it, Tifa? Who is harmed!!"

"Sakura is in labor. The baby is early and we can't find Tsunade. Sasuke's searching for her but it's just me, Naruto and her here right now."

"This IS important. I will search for Lee and get some servants to help, Shizune is here" he handed the mobile over and the woman told her what to do to make the young woman comfortable meanwhile. Then she asked "have you tried calling Jiriaya? I saw the two of them setting out to the wilderness outside the compound together early this morning. I don't know what they were planning on doing, but it wouldn't surprise me if they were looking for threats and laying traps around the land."

"Ok, we'll try him" Tifa added, nodding to Naruto as she headed to the bathroom to get some things, the blonde pulling out his own to call the toad sage from his teammates side, talking soothingly to her. Shizune and some servants arrived just as he hung up, Sasuke following to move to his mates side as the blonde frowned at their teammates obvious pain, asking "will she be alright? She still has two months left before she's supposed to give birth. It's too early."

"It doesn't matter, Naruto, she's in labor now. Once her water broke the baby's coming no matter what we say. We can just make it easier and hope the baby is fine."

"what do you mean by that!?" Naruto looked like he was about to panic, clutching his mates shoulders. "She hid him from us, from everyone. No one's had a chance to examine her before a month ago and then the OBGYN did. We don't know what sort of state he's in." Before Naruto could speak they were interrupted by an green flash and familiar cry of her name as Lee entered the room, running to his girlfriend's side who panted his name and grabbed his arm "Lee, he's coming, he doesn't want to wait."

"It's alright my Blossom, Shizune-san and Tsunade-hime will make sure he's safe and well, that our little Ryõshi will be born healthy."

"Huntsman? You named your child Huntsman?" Tsunade appeared in the doorway, taking everything in in a glance "Uchiha, take your mate to another room then everyone else but the father, Shizune and those helping the birthing process clear out NOW!"

But...." Naruto protested as his mate picked him up and, maintaining the masquerade of his badly injured state, he started to carry him away with "come on, dobe, let's visit with Genesis. I'm sure he's lonely and when he's lonely he gets himself depressed."

They swept from the room, everyone else not necessary following.

Knowing that the birth of a baby could be a long process, Tifa decided to blow off some steam, moving to the large open ground area that the ninja's had adopted as a place to practice and spar. She found Vincent already there in a far corner, practicing some kata's with Cerberus, his movements slow and graceful as he concentrated on his movements.

To her surprise not far from him was Rufus mimicking him. She had no idea that Rufus Shinra knew any, but Tseng probably taught him and he seemed interested in watching Vincent do it and mimicking some of the more complicated steps. She supposed it was because Vincent was an expert sharp-shooter, still the unbeaten champion of any TURK competition since the FOUNDING of the company and the chance of Vincent willingly teaching him.....IF the amount of shots he had used trying to hit Kadaj or the container during the time of the revenants was anything to go by.....he
REALLY needed help.

Reno and Rude were sparring not far away, close enough should Rufus need them but with enough distance to allow freedom of movement, Reno egging his partner on with jibes and teasing. On the far opposite side, Gai was training with his two free students. Neji and Tenten were fighting hand-to-hand, movements so fast that anyone looking would have trouble keeping up. However Lord Godo, laying in the shade of an nearby sakura tree, was watching with vast interest and obviously following every move.

Tifa headed towards them.

The two stopped, not even puffing yet and the female asked her what was happening with Lee.

"Sakura's in labor, the baby's two months early" she said simply. The girl's eyes widened in horror and realization. Neji turned to Gai and bowed "I'd like to go and help in any way I can, sensai." The man in green nodded his permission "go aid your teammate in bringing a new flame into our world!" and struck a good-guy pose. Neji ignored this, said goodbye to his teammate and apologized for cutting training short, then left.

Tenten sighed "what am I going too do now?" Before the green-clad man could speak, Tifa smiled "I actually came out to blow off some steam, want to spar?" Tenten grinned widely "sure!" and they got into starting positions. What followed was Tifa able to fully let loose against a sparring partner more her equal in size and shape, someone who didn't pull punches on her.

A couple of hours later they both rested under a tree together, panting, laughing about nothing. "That was great!" Tenten laughed when she had recovered enough "if you ever want to let off steam again, I'd be glad to help!" Tifa laughed as well "sure."

They became aware of the sounds of clapping and cheering and looked around to find a large group of people had been watching them. Yuffie was jumping up and down excitedly, Lord Godo-eyes wide with awe and fascination-some of the ninja, including Iruka and Haku, were watching in interest, the other people on the field who had been doing their own thing with various emotions. Now he had their attention, Godo motioned at some servants who came forward, handing the two brunettes an cold bottle of water each.

Both women took it and drained the contents quickly.

Godo spoke "may I say, ladies, I have never seen such an interesting display of fighting skill and speed in two women who were just sparring in all my life." Tenten blushed but Tifa spoke "I usually spar with Zack or Cloud, but the two hold back most of the time because their afraid of hurting me with their enhancements. Tenten is like me, pure talent and experience, she has her chakra, I have mako. That makes us even and both of us able to let loose."

"I see" Godo nodded and Iruka spoke to her with a smile "Tenten was always an great fighter, I think you as one of my students would have been an interesting time, especially with the two of you together." Tifa blushed this time, pleased, although she didn't really know why. Maybe it was being told she was worthy of being or even being compared to, a shinobi like the black haired girl beside her.

"You were great!" Naruto called, leading her head to snap around and see the young man, looking pale, bundled up and laid out on one of the lawn chairs, Sasuke by his side with Itachi beside HIM and watching her, heat and interest in his eyes. It seemed working off some steam to let herself wind down her arousal had just aroused HIM. Genesis was on Naruto's other side, eyes on her and he nodded at her look, one warrior to another.
The two brunettes helped each other up and headed towards the group "how's Sakura?" Naruto smiled "her and the baby's fine. He's strong and baachan says as long as they're careful around him for a while until he's able to get stronger, he'll continue to be fine. You should go see him, he's so cute considering who his parents are" and laughed when he was swatted over the head for being impolite.

Tifa decided to do so and looked at Itachi "are you going to come see him?" Itachi shook his head "I think Sasuke and I shall also spar for a while. We haven't had a chance to properly do so since he was a child." Realizing Itachi wanted to bond with his brother some more by testing his skills, she nodded and with Tenten in tow, left to visit the bun-haired girls teammate and his new son.

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"He's so kawaii!" she squealed at least fifteen minutes later as Lee gently handed the baby into her arms "what's his name?"

"My Sakura blossom wanted to name him Ryōshi and I thought it was an youthful name. Her father was an powerful hunter-nin and a good strong name to match his chakra."

"Hi Ryōshi" Tenten smiled down at the sleeping baby boy "I'm your aunt Tenten. When you're old enough, I'll tell you all these stories about your silly daddy."

The baby stirred, opening wide green eyes to look up at her solemnly.

Naruto was right, the child was beautiful. He had his mother's green eyes, a little wider than normal but nothing like Lees'. He had his father's nose and mouth, his ears, but for some reason his hair was neither pink or black, not that Tifa thought the pink could ever be her natural color. No, it was an fascinating pale red, not quiet pink but not actually red, however there was an interesting affect to is as in certain light for some reason it looked BLACK.

How that could possibly happen, she had NO IDEA, but it did, almost as if it was shifting color.

And in lower light the green eyes virtually GLOWED! How was that even possible? Sakura and Lee weren't enhanced except by chakra and neither had been exposed to mako or Jenovah at any time. Could it be an effect of his chakra level, or was it something else? A bloodline maybe?

Lady Tsunade had said the true power of the Haruno line tended to skip certain generations, could she mean a bloodline ability? If so what could it do? She told them of her thoughts and worries "it might be dangerous" she concluded "I mean your father could have become an hunter-nin because of it. How will it affect HIS life?" Sakura frowned as she was gently handed the baby back as he began to fuss, wanting a feed "I don't know. Mom never mentioned any bloodline ability dad had or used."

"She was a civilian wasn't she?" when the pink haired girl nodded she went on "wouldn't that sort of information be confidential since he was an hunter nin? Something only the Hokage then and maybe the commander of the hunters would know."

"But surely he would have told Sakura-chans mother, in case she inherited it" Lee reasoned from where he sat beside her on the bed, stroking his son's short tuft of light red hair.

"Not unless he KNEW it would skip her, like Tsunade said it would. Maybe he entrusted that information to someone else, expecting them to be around to warn her if SHE had any kids, but they either died in Kyuubi's invasion or some time afterwards, maybe on a mission. They never told anyone else because at the time she was too young to know and they never expected themselves to be killed."

"How can we find out now?" Sakura asked helplessly "I mean even if the Third or Forth kept records of it, we're here and Kohona is destroyed!"

"Ask around, see if any of the adults knew him or maybe his family outside you or your mother, I'd see Jiraiya and Lady Tsunade especially. She knew about the chakra skipping certain generations, it means either she knew about it personally, or could have possibly read something of it."

"She could have read the Thirds records of it!" Sakura sounded excited "she just hasn't told us because it's not dangerous!"
"Or" Tifa added "it's the sort of thing that doesn't surface until puberty, in which case she-or you-have at least twelve or thirteen years in front of you to prepare before you start to worry."

"You're right" Sakura nodded to her "Thanks Tifa."

"Sure."

Tifa headed back outside, leaving the two new parents and their teammate to talk. Now that she thought about it, she wanted to watch Sasuke and Itachi spar. What would it be like, watching the two last pure Uchiha's spar? She knew it would probably get violent, you not only had two children of Chaos and the planet, but all those unresolved feelings between them.

Sasuke spent more than ten years of his life hating and hunting his brother, people around him building that feeling. He may had learned the truth and decided to forgive and love his brother again, had been reunited AS BROTHERS, but that still left a hell of a lot of unresolved pain, anger and betrayal behind. This spar was the perfect time to let it all come out and Tifa knew it was probably Itachi's idea to allow that.

And she was right. Outside the ground heaved as the two clashed, something like lightning sparking in Sasuke's hand while Itachi used some sort of black flame. It didn't take long into the fight for something drastic to happen though. Sasuke suddenly froze, along with Itachi and both sets of sharingan eyes turned to one source, Naruto. All other eyes followed.

On the lounger Naruto was crouched like an animal on alert, eyes an glowing red with cats-eye pupils, head slightly raised as he seemed to be senting the air. His whisker marks were thicker and more pronounced and an red aura, thick around him, showed one fox-like tail waving behind him, so much like a cat’s tail Tifa knew something was pissing him off.

She heard a growl and looked to Vincent in the same direction and before she could speak Naruto was suddenly moving, launching himself at the main house, Sasuke and Vincent hot on his heels. The instant he was headed there there was an huge explosion and smoke rose from the direction the two males were going followed by screams of terror and pain.

"Lord Godo!" an servant came tearing out of the main house "Lord Godo, we’re under attack!"

While the Wutain lord issued orders to his samurai and ninja, Itachi and Tifa-side by side-chased after the demon and his mate. Tifa knew where they were headed, there would only be one place Naruto would head when the building was under attack, the nursery with the twins and their new companion. However halfway there they came across Anko who reported the three children, babies and an recovering Sakura were safe in an sheltered location with Iruka, Kikyo, Shizune, Reeve, Rufus and Lazard protecting them.

Anko told them she would help, and had only came out to tell him.

They came out into the side of damaged building, not surprised to find the attackers were DeepGround soldiers. Naruto’s back arched like an hissing cat and he was immediately in the middle of them, slashing and attacking like an wild animal while the others used their training on the huge amount of men and women flooding inside the building.

Suddenly they heard a noise none of them had heard before and Naruto took off after a figure in the rear of the crowd, a man wearing white pants and armed with two gun blades. “SHIT!” Tifa swore, looking to Itachi “it’s Weiss!” Itachi frowned and eyes went to Genesis, thinking for a minute that the whole death was a set up to get the man into the group. But the stunned look on the red head was undeniably real. Tifa frowned at Vincent “clone?”
“Possible” he nodded “it is possible that when Hojo possessed Weiss body he cloned it, just in case anything happened to the original” he frowned “in which case, how many of them are out there? Is the one Genesis destroyed really Weiss revived, or just another clone?” Tifa nodded “and is GENESIS a clone also? He DID clone himself A LOT during the whole thing with Sephiroth. It would explain the entire slightly different looks.” Itachi shook his head, his katana parring a blow from the soldier behind him “Tsunade would know.”

"Are you sure she would know the difference?" Itachi nodded. Tifa trusted and believed him and frowned at Vincent suddenly "why didn't you go after Naruto?"

"Gaara and Killer Bee have" Kakashi answered from her other side "they'll watch his back and calm him if he gets too out of control."

"And I think Gaara wants a go at this guy" Kankurō added "he ordered Aeris and Grimoire's deaths even before their first breath. Gaara is REALLY protective of family and they're family" by the sudden twist of his face, the brunette felt exactly the same and wanted to go too.

A sudden flood of samurai and ninja flooded out from the buildings, surrounding the group and wading in to help the AVALANCHE and Shinobi. By sheer numbers they overwhelmed the enemy, Itachi catching up the last soldier as he tried to flee. "Sasuke" the cat demon threw the man to him and motioned at his eyes. Sasuke nodded, caught him up and locked eyes with him, Mangekyō surfacing and spinning wildly.

A few seconds later he blinked and dropped the man in disgust. The DeepGround soldier looked blank for a few seconds, blinked and looked at the wolf demon.

And screamed-in terror.

Sasuke growled wolf-like at him and the man cried out again, crab walking backwards away from him. His head turned almost helplessly towards Itachi who hissed at him. Instantly he was on his feet and one last growl of "go" from Sasuke and he was gone. Tsunade stopped anyone from chasing or shooting him down and turned to the cyclops beside Tifa "Kakashi you and Ibiki track, locate and destroy."

After a quick glance at Genesis though she said "amend that, track, locate, rescue if at all possible and destroy." The scarred and masked men nodded and took off after the fleeing soldier, knowing Sasuke had placed the idea of the base being safety into the man he had trapped in the genjutsu.

Kakashi sighed as he dodged the utterly destroyed area. He had hoped that the Sand and Rock demons could control Naruto in Kyuubi form, but either they couldn't or weren't trying, because the area looked like none other than the site of an Tailed Beast Bomb. And by the sounds they were still at it.

He could even feel the familiar pull of Samehada.

And sand particles littered the entire area of destruction.

Kakashi hoped they would either calm down or the others gained control of them, it looked like all three weren't holding back. He sighed again, it wasn't his problem right now, he picked up speed, but disguised his chakra, far enough behind the target not to be seen, but close enough to maintain sight of him.

While they ran, Kakashi signed to Ibiki orders and an description of the baby and clone Genesis had
given them that day he told them about the two, plus-just in case-a description of Sephiroth. The scarred man nodded and turned back to look ahead.

In time to see the soldier disappear inside an faintly visible cavern entrance.

Both men nodded to each other.

Two hours later he was searching the underground base, assassinating any guards he passed soundlessly, searching each room and hallway carefully. They had already found three of Lord Godo’s servants locked up inside, captured and replaced with spies. Ibiki had taken them to an nearby safe and sheltered area and Kakashi was continuing his search.

He had searched most of the base by now and found nothing to suggest the clone and baby were here, no nursery, no baby items, just a lab, dormitories, training room, everything to suggest an armies headquarters. Wait! He skidded to a halt, had he just imagined that? He looked to Ibiki by his side who nodded seriously, he had heard it too. The sound came again and his fists clenched at his side in recognition. The weak hungry cry of a baby, a baby who hadn't been feed in a while and couldn't cry any louder for thirst and weakness. A baby shouldn't be that quiet, they were loud and demanding and noisy, not this soft almost unheard sound.

Someone was going to pay, the baby may have been a clone to bring about the being this world called 'The Nightmare', but that wasn't his fault, he was just a baby. If the boy died.....Kakashi swallowed and steeled himself, looking to Ibiki when he heard an distressed feminine voice. By the words they could just hear, someone in the room was using the baby to threaten the owner of the older voice.

There could only be one person here THAT concerned about the boy, it appeared as if their two targets were actually here after all. And by the sound of the older boy's violent coughs and weak voice, he wasn’t in a much better state. After all, why would DeepGround continue to feed what was nothing more than trash to them? When there was a sound of flesh hitting flesh and pain from the older voice, the baby trying to cry louder and terrified, Kakashi motioned at his companion desperately. They had to get in there before the enemy killed their targets, or worse.

Bursting literally through the door, Kakashi took the sight in in a glance.

A DeepGround soldier held the helpless baby upside down by the legs in the air like a piece of meat, an dagger by the helpless naked infants throat. Another had his clenched hand wrapped in the older figures hair, forcing his head back, showing the ashen pale throat ready for slicing with his own blade.

The two Shinobi’s entrance provided just enough distraction for Ibiki to shushinn behind the man holding the baby, his muscular arm seizing the blade hand and before the man could move in shock forcing it up to slit the soldiers own throat, catching the baby as it dropped safely in his arms.

Kakashi moved to save the clone, but suddenly froze.

Beautiful, the clone was the most beautiful thing Kakashi had ever seen. Even though he was male and had no chest he was so feminine if the cyclops didn't know any better he'd swear it was a female. The body was delicate, even in his kneeling position he was obviously tall and just muscular enough to be defined, but still look delicate. His skin was pale-obviously from lack of sunlight and food-but made him look all the more lovely.
The eyes were wide in horror but oh so green and the facial structure fine with high cheek bones. Eye lashes were long and silver, making it look like he had none at all from a distance. Long thick silver hair clenched in the soldiers fist tumbled down his back, so long it swept the ground.

Standing it would reach the back of his knees.

He wore not black armor like the other clones had or the black leather of Sephiroth but the thick dark green of an battle kimono, the color highlighted his pale skin and beauty as well as made his eyes seem lighter in color so they were pale and seemed to glow. However that could be because of the mako from the source highlighting the Jenovah inside him. He had the signs of once wearing weapons on either hip, but they were gone now, obviously taken to ensure he couldn't fight back.

Kakashi found himself wanting to run his fingers through that hair and the overwhelming urge to hold him close to him ran through him.

He had NEVER been this attracted to someone in his entire life, and a clone? An mere fragment of another being? He had seen the young woman-Tifa's-photo of the man this part came from plus Tsunade-hime had shown them all the disc of the man's fighting and training, but nothing attracted him to him. Sure he thought he was handsome and appreciated his warrior side, but THIS man....

Genesis had been right, he was obviously everything feminine and beautiful in the man.

Even the green eyes, locked to the baby in Ibiki's gentle soothing arms, was that of an protective mother. Eyes ONLY for the baby, nothing else mattered-least of all the knife to his throat. He didn't know them, he didn't know if they were friend or foe, but Ibiki had killed the man threatening to kill the baby and now held him oh-so tenderly for such an big scary man, but his eyes on the T&I Specialist begged him to take the baby away to safety.

Ibiki turned to look at Kakashi, raising an eyebrow at his stunned adoring look towards the kneeling clone.

However it was when the younger man suddenly went into violent coughing, the blade at his throat cutting a thin line due to his rocking body, the sight of that blood welling in the wound that snapped the cyclops out of it and made him furious.

How dare that bastard mar the perfection of that skin!

Kakashi moved faster than he ever thought himself capable, shushining forward to grasp the weapon arm just below the elbow and, eye blazing in fury, growled "don't even think about it."Before the soldier could even react, Kakashi had twisted it sharply away, breaking it with a loud crack and when the man screamed in agony, released his hair in shock and dropped the blade, Kakashi shoved him back just far enough away from the clone to chadori him, leaving a smoking crater in his chest. Satisfied he returned to the young silver haired man and gently took his shoulders in hand, helping him up as he almost fell over coughing.

"Jundo? Are you alright?"

"Who....." he managed through chest wracking coughs "who...are.....you? How....do you....know my...name?"

"Genesis sent us. He wanted us to free you. He's been worried sick about you both." The clone managed to breathe in heavily and even though it rattled in his throat, he was able to suppress his coughs enough to look up at Ibiki, eyes imploring as he reached for the baby "please, give him to me?!?" With only an second hesitation the man gently lay the infant in the kneeling man's arms.
Joy broke out on the figures face as he took him back, clutching him tightly to his chest, voice a soothing drone as he rocked the fussing but week baby, the smile he bore only for the one he looked at, but made him look even more beautiful-and feminine. For just a second Kakashi had to blink away the sudden image behind his eyes of the young man doing this with their own children, little girls with their 'mothers' long silver hair, but his grey eyes. He frowned as he blinked it away. What was it with this all of a sudden? Why was he craving children, heirs? Was it his craving for heirs to carry on his name and clan? Or was it merely a product of all three of his students now having families, the baby in the clones arms AND the three children?

He was surrounded by children, was his own 'maternal' instincts kicking in at the sight of someone he found attractive and so obviously a good 'mother' or was it something else? Tifa had said this world was safer than theirs, there was no constant fighting, no need for trained shinobi past the occasional conflict, could he be ready to finally settle down and live the life of an civilian?

"Jundo?" he quired softly, the young man seemed to have blocked out everything around him except his need to comfort the sobbing baby.

"Thank you for saving him, he doesn't deserve to be treated like that, he can't help his heritage or the reason he was born. They all treated him so bad, like an thing, an experiment...." Kakashi had to quickly take up the baby from him as his body bucked and he started to cough violently again. Handing the black haired boy back to Ibiki, Kakashi grabbed the boy as his body convulsed forward "You're really ill, Jundo, this isn't normal. What's wrong with you?"

"DeepGround" he managed to wheeze "force me to merge with Tenshi.....scientist.....virus....." Kakashi got the jist of it. DeepGround had gotten sick of threatening him to merge with the baby and had instead turned to science, injecting him with a virus that would slowly and painfully kill him. Without an infusion of the joint DNA of both the mother and father, in others words if he didn't merge with the baby, it would slowly kill him.

And still he refused to do so, Kakashi had to admire that in him.

They had to get him to Lady Tsunade, NOW, if she couldn't help him, they may be able to at least stabilize him and help his obvious pain and coughing. "Come on, Jundo, let's get you both where you both belong, to safety." He coughed "we belong nowhere, nowhere is safe for us. No one wants us."

"Not true" Kakashi said as he gently picked up the young man, one arm under his legs and the other the small of his back, that long thick hair brushing his arm gently before the clone pulled it to gather in his lap. The cyclops bit back his "I want you" and nodded to Ibiki who placed the baby in the silver haired young man's lap before moving off to destroy the rest of the base with time-release explosive tags.

As he moved off with his burdens, Kakashi spoke to the clone gently "you ARE wanted, Jundo, you and Tenshi have a family here, people who will love you and want you in their lives."

"I am a clone" he contradicted "a clone of the one being this world didn't and DOESN'T want."

"Not true" Kakashi argued "he just never had a chance to know the truth, and by then it was too late." "What truth?" the clone asked dully. "That his mother and father were taken from him by Hojo and Jenovah, that he had an loving family before he was born and if things had of been done differently he could have STILL had them. YOU have that chance, Jundo, YOU can have the real father Sephiroth never had, the man who loves you and will protect and care for you."
"But he's Tenshi's, not mine."

"And yours as well. You may be made of Jenovah, but you are his as well. You are a part of Sephiroth, his beauty, feminine side, his purity and Sephiroth was his, that means you are Tenshi's big brother and his son also."

"But...how can we be? They are both dead."

Kakashi smiled behind his mask "no, they're not. The woman-Lue is what Vincent calls her-is apparently trapped inside some sort of crystal, alive and partly aware, but frozen as if in time. Your father on the other hand is alive and well and helped bring MY family together. And not just that, the two of you have brothers and a sister" he quickly recapped the relationship between Vincent, Chaos, Naruto and the others.

"Chaos? You mean the Squire Of Omega? The one who betrayed his master?"

"He did what he did too save not only human and animal lives, but that of the very planet" and again having to explain, suddenly bending his body over the young man's protectively as an explosion rocked the sky, the base going up in flames and smoke. Ibiki joined him, one of the servants under each arm and another riding his back, but the large Interrogator not even looking like he was touched by sweat.

The subject changed as the property came into veiw. Kakashi told Ibiki to hold back, he would go ahead and warn Lord Godo of his spies before they could flee.

While Ibiki hung back, Kakashi sped forward to be met by Itachi who looked them up and down and reached for the baby.

Jundo eyed him suspiciously, clutching the still naked boy to him.

"It's alright, Jundo" Kakashi assured him "this is Itachi, your brother, He's the cat-demon I told you about. He'll take Tenshi to the nursery, clothe and feed him then put him to bed with the twins and Ryōshi." Reluctantly the clone let the other take the baby from him, knowing he had made the right decision when the baby reached out immediately and grabbed one of the man's ear-tails, tugging on the hair and managing a weak giggle.

Tenshi trust NO ONE but him.

Itachi nodded to both, said "The Hokage's in the infirmary" and turned on his heel and left.

On the way Kakashi met up with Yuffie, whispering in her ear a few seconds, then kept going. The young ninja ran off to find her father.

In the infirmary they found Tsunade and Shizune walking between beds, healing samurai and fellow ninja, Kakashi noticing with relief none of theirs were among those hurt, only the Lord's. As he entered Naruto appeared around a corner from where he had been binding a wounded samurai's leg, looking none the worse for wear and wiping his hands on a cloth. He saw them, cried "sensei!" and raced forwards towards him, concern in his eyes for both him and the figure he held.

Seeing his teacher unharmed but the figure in his arms looking so pale, he immediately switched his attention to him, trying to examine him while shooting off question after question "what's wrong with him? Is he okay? Why does he look so weak? So pale? Did they injure him? Is it blood lose? Why are you carrying him? Can't he walk? Where's the baby? Is Tenshi ok? Does father know? Does HE know who we are?"
"Slow down, Naruto, Tenshi is with Itachi. He's weak but fine, he just needs to be feed and nursed back to full health. I don't think Vincent-san knows yet but he probably will soon. No Jundo isn't injured except a little cut on the neck, but he is also starved and weak, but he's worse than that, Naruto, he's really sick. He needs to be examined by Lady Tsunade immediately. He's dying."

The blonde froze "he's DYING?"

Kakashi nodded "yes Naruto and unless Lady Tsunade can stop it...."

The blonde froze for all of ten seconds before spinning on his spot and bellowing "BAACHAN!" across the room.

"Naruto, I'm busy!" she yelled back.

"But he's DYING!" he yelled back. At that moment Jundo went into another coughing fit, this one so severe Kakashi was having trouble just holding him as it forced the weak clones body into convulsions in his arms. This time blood speckled his lips from his insides. "Baachan!" Naruto screamed in panic and fear. The healer looked up and saw what was going on, moving forward with a frown "put him here" motioning to the nearby empty bed. Tenderly Kakashi lay the clone down, but was surprised when he found the delicate fingers clutching his flak jacket tightly, whether not to let him go-or as a result of his convulsing body, he wasn't sure.

The woman frowned at this but didn't comment, assuming it was merely the reaction of someone abused reluctant to be parted from his Savior.

As she examined the clone she asked what had happened and Kakashi explained everything that had happened (minus his embarrassing reaction to the clones beauty) and what had been said. At the mention of the virus, she frowned "they told you the only cure was the merge with the baby?" Jundo managed to nod, Kakashi holding an cloth to his lips to catch the blood. "There has to be a way around it, baachan!" Naruto said helplessly "something you can do!" he gripped the clones free hand "he's my brother now!"

The clone looked at Naruto, shocked by his statement and the passion at which he said it, like they had ALWAYS been brothers. His eyes moved to Kakashi whose eye-smile said "I told you so." The eyes checked out Naruto closely, as if checking he was being truthful and really meant it, and when he found nothing but honestly, he relaxed into the soft cot, closing his eyes, realizing that for the first time in his and Tenchi’s short existences, they were safe.

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Tifa giggled as Itachi pulled her into his lap. Ever since a few days ago when he saw her spar with Tenten and the fight with DeepGround, he had become more affectionate, touching her a lot-somewhat hesitantly at first-then with more confidence and even a little aggression, often including small noises he didn't seem to know he was making, leading Tifa to guess his demon side was seriously aroused by her and being affectionate as well.

He would often, for no particular reason, pull her into his lap and just nuzzle her with his face, mostly his cheek, purring as he did. Tifa knew that cats often nuzzled their owners and or humans around them to scent-mark them, essentially telling other cats 'this is MY human' and she figured that both his arousal at seeing her in battle and his concern for her safety during that time was leading his cat to tell him to claim her, to mark her as his before something happened, but she really didn't mind.

There was a sudden sound from the doorway and she looked up in time to see Jundo walk past slowly, his steps slow and painful looking as he clutched the blanket from his bed around him tightly with one hand, the other used to hold him up against the wall.

She called his name in concern, jumping up, stroking Itachi's cheek briefly in reassurance before she headed to the clones side.

It had been three days since they had rescued the clone and baby and Tsunade and Dr Mizuki had found an way to temporarily hold off the effects of the poison\virus. Using tissue and blood samples from Vincent they were able to prolong his life, yet assure that since it didn't contain any of Lue's that he wouldn't turn into Sephiroth-or Jenovah. However while he was no longer dying, he not only needed regular injections but was still weak from neglect, having not eaten anything other than what he could steal from DeepGround for both of them, but only enough water to keep them alive.

"Jundo you shouldn't be up, you're still recovering!" she cried out in concern, trying to guide him back to his room.

"I want to see Tenshi" he tried to stubbornly shrug her hands off, but only made himself dizzy with the fast action.

"He's fine, he's asleep in the nursery with the other three. You'll probably wake him" she tried to take his shoulders again but again he stubbornly shrugged her off and almost fainted this time "I WANT to see him. No one has let me since we arrived here."

"Because you are both sick, Jundo, you both need special care. It would just cause you stress you both don't need. We'll bring him to you once you both are well enough."

He looked at her, his expression meaning he would listen to no arguments "I want to see him. I
Tifa sighed and put an arm around him, bracing him against her "alright, we'll take you to see him. But if he's still asleep you won't disturb him. He, like you, needs all the sleep and food you can get to make you healthy again."

The silverette hesitantly nodded and with Itachi in tow (incidentally watching her backside) Tifa aided the weak clone towards the nursery.

As they approached the door they heard low talking and realized someone from the group was already there, probably checking on the newborn and three of the weeks old's.

Opening the door they found Vincent and Sasuke inside talking, Sasuke nursing Grimoire while Vincent was bottle feeding Tenshi, eyes never leaving the babies face.

"Vincent?" Tifa asked softly.

The black haired demon vessel looked up at them, blinking at the clone who blinked back.

With the three together Tifa saw the definite resemblance. Vincent looked like his father, but while his build and shape was his, Vincent was more feminine and his face was softened by it. Meaning while he resembled his father, he had inherited his mother's beauty.

His red eyes was another feature from his father, a sign of Cetra blood in the line, his family once a race of Cetra warriors.

Just after first joining AVALANCHE when they found him in the mansions basement, Tifa had been determined to bring him out of his shell and befriend him. She had sat with him for hours, talking or just sitting with him in silence and eventually he had started talking back.

At first it was just things like his father and being a TURK, then as he began to trust her more he told her about Lucretcia and their relationship and her being Sephiroth's real mother and what had happened to them both with Hojo.

Years later he told her his family history through his father, how he had researched their line all the way back to when Jenovah had first arrived on Gaia. Apparently a group of Cetra were the warriors of the race and had been the ones to first fight the planet-destroying alien before Gaia herself had to trap the 'woman'.

ALL of the warriors had one distinguishing feature, red eyes.

Vincent himself being half through his father, the first to have the red eyes in generations, had been his father's pride and joy, taking as meaning despite his Wutai blood he was the first of them to be born in centuries, possibly an reincarnation.

To Tifa it had made sense, it explained his skill and the reason he joined TURK. It also explained Sephiroth's skill in battle, it wasn't just the mako enhancing him, he was the son of the first reincarnated Cetra in generations. It also explained why both had survived Hojo. While Vincent may not have been an Cetra himself, any skill and experience he had had was only strengthened through his connection with Chaos.

The planets weapon inside the body of an reincarnated Cetra, wow, the demon could have just strengthened that connection to the planet.

As Tifa watched the clone drew himself up straight, shrugged off her arms and approached Vincent
with the baby, stopping in front of him, looking at him proudly and his expression both stubborn and solemn. Vincent looked back, face unreadable, still feeding the boy who Tifa saw was his spitting image except the green eyes and tiny widows peak to his hair. Vincent's oddly slightly feminine looks were drastically emphasized by the clone, yet his masculinity was in the baby. It was true, both the clone and the baby were half of Vincent-or rather equal halves of Sephiroth.

Vincent and the feminine clone of his son eyed each other for long moments, no one moving or speaking until finally the gunman did, placing the baby gently, bottle and all, into the others arms. Jundo took him gently and held the bottle upright so the hungry child could continue to drink, looking down into the face for a while before he looked up and spoke gently "I am told that you are our father-Sephiroth's true father."

Vincent just nodded.

"I was also told you were killed by that bastard Hojo and turned into a weapon."

"I did" he said "your mother-REAL mother brought me back."

"YOUR mother. Sephiroth's genetics came from myself and Lue, YOU came from Sephiroth, so as you are part of him, you are part of me. My son just as Tenshi is." The clone frowned and turned to look at Itachi "and you are my brother as well-through Chaos."

The oldest Uchiha nodded.

He then looked back at Sasuke "and you are as well?" When Sasuke nodded his frown deepened "how?" Tifa spoke out "Sasuke's mate is one of Chaos' children-just like Itachi is as well as being Sasuke's biological brother."

"But....." the clone frowned thoughtfully, Tifa could practically see the wheels turning in his head. "I know" she said "It's complicated. I'll explain later." He hesitated then nodded to her, looking at Sasuke and Grimoire still asleep in his arms "so he is my....nephew?" when the wolf demon nodded the green eyes moved to the cot beside him "and she is my....niece?"

Again the nod.

"What about the other one?" Tifa answered "that's Ryōshi, he's the son of Naruto and Sasuke's teammate and her mate."

"So not related to me-US?"

"Not in any way you mean, no. But Naruto, Sasuke and Sakura grew up together though, so in a way that makes them family." The clone didn't speak, just turned back to the baby in his arms as he finished the bottle. With the expertise of an mother-or someone just used to handling babies-he had the baby on one shoulder, gently rubbing his back to get him to burp out any gas before hesitantly and reluctantly handing him back.

Vincent didn't move to take him. The clone frowned "don't you want him...." Tifa spoke "you have taken care of him all this time, Jundo, I think Vincent wants you to keep hold of him until YOU feel it safe to hand him back. You need to trust us, trust HIM and you won't fully do so unless you're ready."

After a brief hesitation the clone nodded, seating himself down on the chair beside the second cot, the baby in his arms. Tifa frowned when she saw Vincent's reaction, one eye yellow and the other red as he moved back into the shadows, as if trying to disappear.
Was he...jealous of the clone?

Before he could fully disappear Tifa heard an snuffle and protesting whine from the twins cot, heading over to find Aeris was waking up and, as if sensing Vincent's attempt to disappear, was reaching for her grandfather, small fists reaching for him, opening and closing in her protest for him leaving. Knowing what she wanted Tifa gently picked the baby up and brought her over to him, holding the week old towards him.

When Vincent didn't move, his two different eyes just looking at her unblinking, Aeris started to snuffle in upset. Unable to take his granddaughter being anything but content Vincent reached out hesitantly and took her into his arms. Aeris' first action was to grab a Locke of Vincent's hair as it fell over his shoulder with his movement, gripping it tightly in her fist and looking up at him in what Tifa swore was an stubborn expression, as if telling her grandfather 'you are going nowhere'. Itachi snorted from behind her "she obviously gets that stubborn streak from you, otuto."

"And since when has that been something bad?" Itachi was about to tell him when Aeris reached out and took his hair as well. Tifa suppressed a laugh at this and touched the tiny fist clutching her uncles hair "good idea Aeris." The baby looked up at her and gurgled, a big smile on her face at the other females words, as if agreeing. Naruto came in, spoke to Sasuke for a few minutes, checked on the twins and them all and then left with his mate and son, letting Tifa and Vincent nurse the girl-for now.

After watching them go for long minutes Jundo said softly "tell me about my brothers, ALL of them."

So together Tifa and the the two males told him everything, from the day Jenovah landed, the Ten Tailed beast and the Sage Of Six Paths, the origins of the hidden villages, the legend of Chaos and Omega, everything up until this minute, leaving nothing out even though it took most the day and night and they had people come in and out to check on, change and feed the babies, (Tsunade once briefly as she checked over and gave Jundo his next injection, Shizune with food for them all obviously sent by the blonde healer) and Naruto with Sasuke joining in during feeding the twins, they soon finished the stories.

For a while the clone just sat there, nursing the sleeping baby and trying to digest all the information. Finally he looked up at them "where do I fit in in all this? What's my place?"

"You're part of Vincent's son and so Chaos' son as well, that makes you their brother-at least half."

"And as so, what is expected of me?" he asked quietly. "Nothing."

"Nothing but be yourself, Jundo. I know you're used to people using you and expecting you to do or obey whatever you say, but part of being a family is being who you are, not what others expect of you. I know a lot of families don't do this, they see families or children as a chance to be what they couldn't or a weapon..." she looked pointedly at Itachi "but YOU'RE family wants you to be you, they want to get to know who and what exactly you are, who and what Jundo Valentine is."

"Jundo Valentine?" the clone looked stunned, looking at the crimson gunner. He nodded seriously in answer to receive an slow but stunning smile back, one of dawning joy. He had a family, Tenshi had a family, and a name, a PROPER name, just like everyone else.

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Tifa laughed as Itachi pulled her into his lap again. They had just had dinner and briefly visited the children after checking on a sleeping Jundo, curled protectively around Tenshi.
The children seemed to realize the relationship between her and Itachi because Marlene looked at him solemnly and said "you'll protect her, make sure she is okay?" When the Uchiha heir nodded she searched his face for a few long seconds then slowly smiled "okay, she needs someone to take care of her. She's always worried about us and then forgets to take care of herself."

Later as they were walking Tifa blushed and apologized about it. "They are protective of you-as much as you are of them." Itachi said "it is understandable they worry. They know they're like us, they have the power to protect themselves, just not the training, and know you don't in the same way they can, so they worry about you in much the same way you do about them-and did before you knew about their chakra."

"I understand about all that, it's just that I've spent many years of my life dedicating myself to my fighting skills so I don't need to rely on anyone else. I vowed to always rely on my own skills to protect myself and others."

"And it shows" he spoke "however I noticed a few flaws in your taijutsu. I can help you with it" he hesitated, as if afraid of her reaction as he continued "that's if you want." Tifa's face lit up "yes!" The two ended up outside in the training field-the same area as before-while Itachi guided her through various moves and when they sparred he showed her where she was open or needed help and where she could improve.

When they finally relaxed an servant came to tell them dinner was served, if they were hungry.

The dinning room was full, with Rufus, Tseng and the other two TURKS, Rufus deep in conversation with his older brother, all the ninja who had come, Naruto and Sasuke talking with Vincent while Anko and Iruka nursed and bottle-feed the twins, smiling down at them and occasionally taking bites of their own meals. The servant girl that had been getting close to the scarred teacher was watching, smiling at the picture the male she obviously admired made with an nursing baby in his arms.

Tifa could just see her picturing him nursing THEIR own children the same way. Reeve and Shizune were smiling at each other as they talked softly and if it wasn't for the food in front of them, Tifa seriously thought that they would be holding hands right now.

Kakashi and Genesis were in a dark corner together, books out and seemed to be...well....having a competition of some sort, but since knowing him, Tifa had never seen Genesis so happy. Having someone there like Kakashi, so close to his own personality and so intelligent must be providing the red head with all the mental stimulation he needed and craved.

Tsunade and Jiriaya were deep in conversation with Godo, Rufus occasionally frowning in their direction, only to have Lazard catch his attention again. Gaara and Killer Bee were discussing their demons, occasionally joined by a comment here and there by Naruto or Sasuke. Tifa and Itachi sat down, gaining multiple calls of hello from others, the servants placing plates of food down in front of them and a glass of drink with it. Tifa frowned at Naruto's dinner and leaned over to whisper to Sai next to her "why does everyone have wine except Naruto?"

He leaned back and said in his soft voice "let us just say he can't hold his liquor."

"Surely one glass won't hurt?"

"It does, just like Rock Lee. When Gai-san found out what happens when Lee touches alcohol he told him he wasn't to ever touch it. Lee is still an expert fighter when drunk, but totally unpredictable so Gai gave him these lollies with alcohol in then and told them they were 'medicine' and only use them when it's life and death." Tifa raised an eyebrow at him "really?" and looked around them,
worried "where is...."

"Tenten is with Sakura and Ryoshi, Neji is meditating and Gai has Lee out doing laps of the compound. He thought it best. They'll probably wander in later tonight for an late dinner, probably around midnight."

"What are Godo and Tsunade talking about so seriously?"

"Apparently Kasuragi-dono wants to hire us for a mission while we are here."

"What sort of mission?" Tifa frowned in concern. "A small village just off Kasuragi-dono's land have rejected all Wutuian ways and fallen to cannibals, believing it makes them stronger eating human and monster flesh. Because of your world's dead returning to the lifestream as soon as the heart stops they've had to develop other means to get the flesh of their victims."

Tifa's face twisted "you mean they..." The ex-assassin and spy nodded seriously "they have been kidnapping Kasuragi-dono's own warriors and shinobi and any attempt at rescue is met with deadly force. He wants to send some of us in to rescue any victims and wipe them out. The Wutain Lords have all agreed the village is to fanatic in their beliefs to allow to exist any longer." Tifa frowned at the blonde demon fox "does Naruto know? If so why isn't he up trying to 'save' their souls?"

"We thought he'd do the same too, but when Tsunade spoke to him he said he wasn't going to." Tifa frowned "that doesn't sound like him."

Sai nodded "so Sasuke spoke to him. He told him, and I quite "I can understand maybe doing it religiously to your dead in order to honor them, or if your absolutely starving and have no other choice, but they are people they are kidnapping and torturing, people who have nothing to do with them, INNOCENT people. No, they are beyond redemption."

"That's cold, especially for Naruto." Sai nodded "Sasuke says he later figured out it was Naruto's maternal instincts."

"How so?"

"He found out one of the previous victims was one of Kasuragi dono's warriors, a father with a wife and two year old son." Tifa understood. Naruto was putting himself in the mother's shoes. "Tsunade-hime is just finalizing the details of payment and getting details of the layout of the village. He says they don't have to worry, the women are as fanatical as the men and anyone under their teens doesn't exist, apparently they kill any children as soon as they are born, believing it weakens the strength of the village."

Tifa looked sick but nodded and turned back to her dinner.

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In the pitch blackness two figures moved silently and fast, deadly in the darkness. They moved from hut to hut, silent assassins in the night, leaving not a single life spared behind them, not a single body left from the wave of noiseless sand crawling after them, disposing of every body and drop of blood, leaving nothing but empty huts in its wake.

One hut in particular was reached, grander than the others, half-dozing guards dispatched without sound without even enough time to realize they were dead.

The hut was quickly emptied of life in the same way as the others.
The two silent figures signed to each other, approaching the secured building in the center, surrounded by guards in armor and armed.

With an single sign to the other, the first signaled to him.

The second nodded and in the exact same moment an column of sand rose behind every single guard and opened, pulling them inside so fast they had no time to call out.

Once done the sand returned to the second figure. The first figure sat, pulling a scroll from his pack and opening it.

Seconds later an tiny mouse of ink scurried inside. It searched each floor, looking for guards or threats before returning to its creator and returning to the scroll.

The first rerolled the paper and returned it to its place, signing the information to his companion who nodded. They moved in, leaving a third unseen but older figure outside as guard. The first level only had one guard-easily dispatched-and they were using the keys to free the prisoners with motions to be quiet. The first handed a note to one of the prisoners who read it quickly, nodding to them before motioning at some of his fellow prisoners in their own sign.

The group looked determined and motioned their fellow prisoners, surrounding the civilians as they guided them out the way the two had come to be lead to a place of safety by their third. The next two levels were just as quick and easy until the forth level one of the prisoners grabbed the seconds arm and whispered "you've got to save him."

"Him who?" the first whispered back.

"HIM. We don't know who he is but they keep him locked up in an heavily guarded room with thick walls and door. They've been taking chunks off him for days, but he's still alive, I don't know why he should have died by now. He's their prize, he is incredibly stronger than them, stronger then even us." The man pointed down the hallway "at the end of the hall."

The two nodded and the prisoner ran off to join the others.

Once gone the two exchanged looks, stronger than Lord Godo's own ninja, that could only describe one type of person, an ninja from THEIR world.

Someone they definitely couldn't allow to fall into enemy hands.

If this person could live despite having pieces of himself carved off, he must have at least basic healing knowledge, but what ninja in his right mind would allow a weak civilian village to capture him and take chunks off him? Was he THAT weak? The prisoner said he was incredibly strong, so how could that be? He should have used his chakra to bust out of here by now, but why hadn't he? There was only two explanations, either they were keeping him drugged and bound, or they had something to hold over his head, like a loved one or teammate.

The two couldn't allow this to happen and once the prisoners were safely with their temporary teammate they moved to the room down the hall. The heavily armed guards were simple to dispatch and they moved to the door cautiously, ready for any traps or alarms. Logic said even though this village spurned technology in all it's forms, the leader would do ANYTHING to contain and protect his prize.

The second sent his sand out to cover the door, seeking cracks to flow into, searching for wires or materia that would signal protection, finding some thin ones around the door and tearing it out. It then returned to him, a globe of orange materia with it that had once been embedded into the wall at
the back of the room, between the wall of the building and cell.

Pocketing the materia the second nodded to the first, they now knew why the ninja hadn't escaped before being tortured. Tifa Lockheart and the red heads new...father had been teaching them about materia, it's uses and how to identify them and they knew this one was a barrier materia, the same sort DeepGround had used when they had taken Naruto weeks ago. Slowly the first opened the door and both tensed, an injured caged ninja was unpredictable.

Nothing, nothing but breathing, one quick and pained the other slow and deep.

The two exchanged looks, TWO people, the other ninja only mentioned one.

"Perhaps it is our prisoner and the one he is protecting" the first signed "It is always possible they put them both in the room together only on opposite sides so they could force the other to watch their torture."

"And use the other to threaten the ninja" the red added, the first nodded. They cautiously entered the room, ready for anything. Their left was where the pained breathing came from, the occasional clink of chains signalling how he or she was bound. However they could see nothing of the figure but a large bundle under an mass of blankets. The right had another figure bound to an cot by an chain around the delicate ankle.

A woman lay there, in her late twenties. Long dark hair framed the sleeping face and classic Wutuian features.

She wore the clothes of the village, meaning either she was one, or something had happened to mean she needed new ones.

But if she was a villager, why was she there?

The first motioned the second to the woman's stomach.

There was the unmistakable start of an bulge, she was pregnant and not far along. Remembering their information about how the village killed any children after they were born believing they made the village weak they realized either she had refused them to kill her child and was trying to protect it or they were keeping her captive in order to ensure they could control her until the time came.

It explained the ninja. They were raised believing that children were a villages future and were the most precious commodity. After all powerful children grew into powerful ninja to protect a village and bring money in.

Whoever he was, he was allowing his own mutilation in return for her and her child's safety.

Her face and body was sexy, delicate and breathtakingly beautiful despite the pregnancy and it wasn't hard to see why the ninja was protecting her.

That was of course unless the child was actually his. If she was pregnant to him, it would explain his desire to protect her and his willingness to be mutilated to protect both. He probably believed he was all alone here, to have a child, someone he could raise and teach everything, could pass on everything he had and was and who would be here, waiting, should his people find them after he died.

Any other thought was cut off as the woman stirred, moaning as she moved her bound leg as if in pain, beautiful face twisting at it as she slowly awoke. The first moved forward, kneeling beside the cot and so he would be the first thing she saw on opening her eyes and summoned a smile. The only
trouble was while he looked friendly the smile never reached his eyes, those black depths empty of emotion.

The woman stirred again as she sensed a presence by her side, awakening abruptly and opening her eyes, throwing herself back against the wall and away before she had even registered who he was. "Shh, it is okay. We are not here to hurt you. We have freed the other prisoners and are here to help you both."

The woman froze for long seconds before slowly and cautiously moving. She slowly reached out, touching his hitate, tracing the engraved symbol with one finger before her lips parted and she spoke. "Leaf. The Village Hidden In The Leaves. You're from Kohona aren't you" her voice was lilting, sweet, beautiful, totally innocent and pure.

"You know of Kohona?"

"Some. He told me you were allies with his home" she suddenly seemed to remember, or awake just enough to remember, she cried out in panic, trying to see around him to make sure he was still there. As she did, her hands went protectively to the lump on her stomach "Please, you have to free him! Free me! He needs me, I must go to him!" She looked from one to the other, the second standing back in the shadows of the room "I can help him, please help me!"

She looked up at the first, all pleading innocent eyes. He had never seen such guilious eyes before, such pure trust and begging and it reminded them oddly of Naruto, but purer, more innocent. Sand covered the binding, the chain AND metal bind around her ankle. She didn't even flinch as there was the sound of metal groaning and protesting before the bang of it exploding under the huge pressure, another wave of sand protecting the young woman from flying pieces of metal.

Once the sand receded she didn't even look at them, only climbed off, running to the man's side. She reached out to touch the unconscious bundle, tears flowing down her cheeks as she sobbed "my love, please wake up. Please open your eyes, I need you, Jinjitsu needs you" she took a limp hand and placed it on the lump "see, she needs her daddy to comfort her, she's scared for you, like I am."

The two shinobi exchanged looks, the child was his, it explained his actions. It also explained the fact she was allowed to live with the baby, the villagers probably thought if they let the baby live they could eat it when it was older and the child would inherit it's father strength and power, its chakra-or mana in this world-giving them another source. There was nothing at first, then a slight moan of pain and exhaustion as the figure fought to awake.

"That's it my love, open your eyes. You have visitors. Your people came for you, just like I told you they would." The male voice weakly murmured something, Muzai, why was he calling her innocence? It must have been her name though because she laughed through her tears "Yes my love, it is me, wake up, I need you to wake up." He murmured it again and moved in her cradling arms, his head and face blocked from their sight by her body. He must have opened his eyes because she relaxed slightly and they could hear her sigh in relief "thank the gods, my love, I thought you would never awaken."

"Muzai" he rasped "how did you get free?"

"You're people came for you, my love, just like I told you they would, look" she moved slightly to the side, helping the man sit partly against her and see around her. The first stepped into the light of the fire torch, allowing him to see his black half shirt and pants, black gloves with three fingers cut away, sword sheathed on his back, pale skin and black hair and eyes. The man on the bed frowned at him "Leaf ninja. Who are you?"
"My name is Sai."

"I don't know you."

"I am or was Naruto Uzumaki's teammate during Sasuke's..... rebellious period. He is here. If you are Leaf ninja, you will wish to know that Lady Tsunade is here also." The man managed to shake his head "I wasn't Leaf. I came from an allied village."

"Which one?"

"Suna, The Village Hidden In The Sands." This caught the second's attention and he stepped forward "who were you??" The figures head snapped up at him and he stuttered "Kazekage? GAARA??!!" The voice was familiar but that wasn't what caught the red heads attention, no it was that when his head snapped around not only did it fall into the light but despite the bandages around the temple and over one side of the face, he was definitely someone the red head knew and one of the few he trusted, a Suna Ninja, one of his loyal people.

His black-lined eyes widened and his mouth parted on the name.

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Tifa and Vincent met Naruto and Sasuke at the edge of the property where the gunslinger had been patrolling the edge of the grounds and the two mates were waiting with the medical team, controlling and caring for the influx of injured people coming in from the village. They were just about done when they felt an huge surge of mana\chakra and Naruto frowned in the direction of the village.

"What's wrong?" Tifa asked him.

"That's Gaara, I've never felt such fury and uncontrollable rage from him before, even during the Leaf Invasion. Something serious must have happened to make him loose control." There was a sudden huge explosion and the ground under them shook. "DAMN!" Naruto swore out loud, trying to keep his balance. "Naruto!" behind them came Kankurô with Temari on his back. Once at their sides she slid off onto her feet "we sensed a huge spike in Gaara's chakra! What's going on?"

"We don't know" he frowned, turning to look at his mate "go get Sakura, teme, I've got a feeling she'll be needed."

Sasuke nodded and ran off.

The next thing they knew two dark figures were running towards them, a figure on each back. Sai had a woman of Wutai, beautiful but sitting back slightly as not to press her stomach to his back. Itachi had an blanket covered figure on his, limp and either asleep or unconscious. The same time the two ninja arrived, so did Sasuke with Sakura.

As the young woman was sliding from Sasuke's back and approaching them, the woman was carefully moving from Sai, joining Itachi with the man, gripping him and trying to help lay him down. Sai spoke to them "he is Suna ninja, he was being kept as a food source. The woman is his....mate and pregnant to him. When the Kazekage found out he...." he looked at Naruto "....flipped out." Vincent frowned, "I will go."

"Me too" Naruto moved to the crimson gunman's side "Killer Bee is on his way." Both moved to go, Naruto nodding to his mate, lips pursed and face serious. "Lay him down so I can look" Sakura said, moving to the cat-demon's side. Obediently he did so after giving the two Sand Siblings an intense look. With the woman's help Itachi gently lay the man out on the grass. Sakura, all business, knelt down carefully and began to unwrap the figure.
Both siblings leaned forward over her shoulder to look.

Slowly the face was revealed.

Tifa saw bandages swabbing the top of the head and down over the left side of the face, completely covering that side. On the right two distinct red marks graced the face, from the right ear and across the cheek, curving upwards to just under the eye.

As Tifa watched both siblings eyes widened. While Kankurō just whispered "sensei?" Temari acted more emotionally, lunging forward with a desperate scream of "BAKI-SAMA!!!!"
Chapter 25

Tifa watched the siblings in concern. Ever since three days ago when the man was rescued they had been acting lost. Temari barely moved from his bedside, Kankurô was acting like a bodyguard and refused to move from his room and Gaara, after Naruto and Vincent had gained control of him and 'calmed' him, was even more withdrawn than normal.

Naruto was actively talking to him, essentially forcing him to interact, trying to keep him from monotonous one word answers.

One time when he wasn't, Tifa questioned him on the man.

"His name is Baki and he was their 'team leader' and sensai during their attempted invasion of Hidden Leaf" he explained. "Like Kakashi sensei was ours. He's a good man when you get to know him. To enemies he's ruthless and strong, but those he cares about he's firm but caring. After Gaara became the Kazekage he took up position on the Suna Council."

"So he's an retired ninja?"

Naruto nodded "retired but still as skilled as the day he used to lead the three" he glanced behind him, concerned, at the silent red head "Gaara's not used to caring for others. He conditioned himself to only care for himself. I shook his ideals and beliefs, made him care again."

"And you're afraid how this will affect him" Tifa continued "that he might withdraw from you all-go back to how he used to be." The blonde nodded seriously and Tifa smiled at him "don't worry Naruto, we won't let that happen."

Later on she wondered the hallway of the main building, looking for the red head. To her surprise she found him in the nursery, Aeris laying in his arms and nursing from a bottle. The baby was gripping one of his fingers with her little fist tightly, eyes locked to his green ones. They seemed to be sharing something she couldn't understand, some sort of silent communication-probably between shared demon chakra/mana-but whatever it was, it seemed to be helping the red head because that night the red head was alone in his sensei's room, seated beside his bed and watching him silently.

Apparently the man had been lucky to not loose any limbs or appendages, instead the village had chosen to take chunks of flesh from his sides, thighs and forearms.

With much discussion and consolidation between Tsunade, Dr Mizuki, Lord Godo's personal doctor, Sakura and Rufus, they had organized an plan. They were hopeful that using chakra, cure and heal materia, very low level mako, samples from Naruto and general medical knowledge they could stimulate the man's own body to heal and replace that flesh, muscle and tissue. If it worked they could use it to help the other victims. While they would never grow back limbs or fingers as such, they COULD heal over bones and cause skin to cover raw wounds and areas were limbs were taken.

While an Heal materia could close cuts or wounds and Cure could help with serious injuries, Phoenix Down could bring back recent dead NOTHING could regenerate severed limbs, especially not-she swallowed in disgust and horror-EATEN limbs. She WAS glad though that those of Godo's warriors or ninja missing them would be given enough gil to retire comfortably with their families-or even easier jobs-for those wanting to continue working.

And with the state of their technology these days, there was also artificial limbs-similar to Barrett's metal hand. With both Reeve and Cid and other well-known people in that field any of Godo's
people willing to be fitted for one would be able to hopefully return to work soon.

She didn't know if it was possible to replace just fingers, but it was worth finding out. Tifa suddenly came to a halt as she heard talking up ahead. The two Uchiha's. "But are you sure about this, aniki?" This was Sasuke voice "how do you know you are not being taken advantage of, you've never done this sort of thing before, you have no experience in this....field."

Tifa frowned, who was taking advantage of Itachi?

"I am aware of when someone is trying to use me, otouto. I grew up our father's weapon then the villagers, then Nagato's. I learned fast in my youth to identify when someone is attempting so. It is not so now."

"But....what makes you so sure" the youngest pleaded with him.

"Her motives are pure, her soul selfless. I sense all she wants from me is to help me, nothing else. No one in our world has ever affected me like this, no one has ever both aroused my body and soul at the same time. I wish to get to know her more and more every day. I crave the things she teaches me like a child craves candy-but at the same time she soothes that torment that has always resided inside me, the knowledge of what I have done and been forced to do to or by others. She knows of everything I have done in my life, but she still sees something inside I was once no longer able to see. Through HER eyes I sometimes see in myself something more, something worthy."

Silence for a few long seconds then Sasuke spoke softly, stunned "I had no idea you felt this way, about yourself and in general" he paused then spoke again "and I can't help feeling that's partly MY fault." The next she could hear was Itachi's low voice soothing his brother. She kept going, frowning thoughtfully at what she heard. There was no mistaking it, they were talking about her and it surprised her just how much he felt for her, while it worried her how much he needed her.

That’s when she heard it. Up ahead she heard the loud angry crying of a baby, getting louder and more frustrated as the seconds ticked by. Frowning she headed towards the nursery and the sound, to find someone standing over the twins crib, lifting Aeris into his arms.

“Naruto?” she questioned at his back, worried about the girl’s obvious distress. At the sound of her voice the shape tensed minutely and without turning he said flatly “oh hi Tifa.” She frowned, concerned by the flat tone of voice, tense shoulders and the baby screaming. What was wrong with Aeris? Why wasn’t Naruto fussing over her as usual? And why was he calling her Tifa now instead of Tif as he had since that day they adopted her as family?

She stepped closer, frowning deeper when he tensed even more “what’s wrong with Aeris, Naruto? Why is she crying so loudly?”

“She’s just fussing” he waved it off, but Tifa noticed how the baby screamed louder as the blonde touched her and picked her up. How the other two babies awoke with the girls cries and also began to scream. Tifa was shocked, it wasn’t like Naruto shrug off his daughters upset so uncaringly, let alone his son and teammate’s son’s.

What was going on?

Suddenly Aeris’ eyes changed, going fiery red with cat-eye pupils and before she could react, red chakra\mana surrounded her, attacking the blonde who yelped in agony at the shot. Before Tifa could react, mouth open at the action, the blonde looked furious, snarling “you little shit!” Tifa reacted purely by instinct as the blonde raised the baby, looking fully intent on throwing her to the floor. She ran forward, lashing out to round-house kick the blonde into the nearest wall, catching the
baby as she started to fall, wrapping herself protectively around the baby as she rolled her out of harms way.

Once on her feet she quickly checked her, placed her back in the crib with her brother and concentrated on the adamantium bangle around her wrist. An barrier materia glowed, surrounding the two cribs. Standing in front of the cribs protectively in an defensive stance she watched the blonde figure pull himself from the wall and stand up, brushing the pieces from his torn clothes, revealing another difference to the one he looked like.

"You're going to regret that" he growled at her.

"I don't know who or what you are, but you are NOT Naruto" Tifa said firmly "Naruto would NEVER treat Aeris like that and she would NEVER act so negatively towards him. Besides....." she nodded at the fresh scar across the stomach "...Naruto healed from that weeks ago without a mark due to his demon chakra. Of course DEEPGROUND didn't know that, did they." Her eyes narrowed on the figure "making YOU one of them, aren't you. Where's the REAL Naruto?! What have you done to him?!"

"I don't know what you're talking about Tifa....."

"....Number one" she interrupted "Naruto hasn't called me that since the first week we met. He calls me by my nickname now. Number two, Narutos' demon was an vixen-that's a FEMALE FOX in case you don't know, and as an female fox he's VERY protective of his children, his litter. He would NEVER EVER even considered what you did. His maternal instinct is three times an humans due to the vixen. Number three, demons are very possessive and protective of what they see as their own that type of behavior would never happen. Number four, Naruto is and was an orphan until Vincent claimed him. His biological parents were killed the day he was born and he grew up with little to no love-just abuse. Do you REALLY think someone who has yearned love and acceptance, family, all his life is going to treat his offspring that way? You may have his LOOKS, but you are definitely NOT him. I know Naruto, I know how he acts, how he moves, and you are  NOT him."

"But Tifa....."

"Quit the act" she snapped "I don't believe it for a second, no matter what you say!" The figure drew itself up straight and the face went hard “well then if I’m going to complete my mission I’ll just have to get rid of you, won’t I” and in a flash of movement he was moving to attack. Although he was obviously enhanced by mako, so was Tifa and they seemed evenly matched until a sound from the doorway distracted the other. Taking advantage of his momentary lack of attention Tifa kicked him with her entire strength through a wall.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" someone yelled and she spun to find Sasuke and Itachi in the doorway. While Sasuke moved a step towards the figure hanging out of the wall. Itachi’s eyes went intense and his head raised slightly and Tifa swore he was scenting the air. His eyes sparked from black to an red cat-like eyes for a second in what Tifa swore was anger and he spoke out one word softly “Sasuke.” The soft voice seemed to stop the younger when any other way wouldn’t, he froze and looked towards his big brother, confused "‘Tachi?"

“You are using your heart, not your mind outoto. Think for a minute.” When he frowned at his brother deeper and more confused he spoke again “You know Naruto better than anyone.” Sasuke didn’t seem to know what his brother meant so Tifa spoke “it’s not Naruto, he was trying to hurt or kidnap Aeris. She was screaming when I coped him and lashed out when he touched her.”

“But....” Sasuke started when the figure spoke as he pulled himself out of the wall “I don’t know what she’s talking about Sasuke. I was just going to change Aeris when she attacked me.” When
Sasuke frowned at him, Itachi spoke again in the same tone of voice “genjitsu. Use your senses, you know Naruto better than any of us.” Sasuke looked at the other and Tifa could FEEL his chakra flair just very slightly, as if looking for something, maybe an answer, but didn’t get one. He then did the same as Itachi had upon entering. His nostrils flared and his eyes narrowed at the other “tell me Naruto, why didn’t you call me by my nickname?”

“What?” the ‘blonde’ frowned at this. “Why didn’t you call me by my nickname, dobe?”

“I.....” before the figure could speak, Sasuke had spun into action. With two kicks he had forced the figure into the hallway and away from the cribs “Itachi, Tifa, get the babies out of here.”

Tifa opened her mouth to speak but Itachi placed a hand on her shoulder and shook his head. Cancelling the barrier she picked up Ryoshi while Itachi took the twins and they started past. When the figure moved to attack, Sasuke stopped him by flashing forward with one of their blades—an kunai—towards the figure to distract it from the two. Tifa just lashed out with a leg, forcing him to move away and directly into Sasuke’s path.

The two then moved away from the room as fast as they could move.

They soon came across the Sand Siblings, moving towards the sounds of fighting. Itachi handed the twins over to their ‘uncles’ while Tifa handed Ryoshi to Temari. Itachi exchanged looks with Gaara and the red head told his brother and sister to follow and they left in a blur of speed.

There came the sound of an alarm and the two returned to the two fighting to provide what aid they could. It wasn’t that they doubted Sasuke could win, they just wanted to be there if needed. They rounded the corner in time to watch Sasuke’s next chakra-laced blow strike the figure through the last wall out into the open of outside. As they did, the rest of the ninja’s came out approaching the site of the battle. When Tifa saw Tsunade frown and move to stop it, Itachi and herself moved forward to block them "no! It's not what it looks like!"

"It is an illusion" Itachi said smoothly "an genjutsu."

"Do any of you know where Naruto is? We don't know if he's a captive right now or merely off somewhere else and they took advantage of his absence." Tsunade frowned "I haven't seen him for a few hours. I've been attending to Jundo" she turned to look at the others, raising an eyebrow at them. "I saw him about forty minutes ago" Sai said "with Kakashi-san." Tsunade frowned "Where IS Kakashi?"

Jiraiya spoke out "I heard him say Naruto needed to do some training to help his body recover from the pregnancy. The last time I saw them they were headed off to spar."

"How long ago?"

"Forty-five minutes ago, they were headed out towards the land outside the property."

"So as far as we know they could be out there now, still training and completely unaware of what's happening here."

"I don't think so" Tifa said "if he didn't sense Aeris' fury and panic and her flair of chakra, he would have sensed Sasukes. His immediate instinct would have been to come and protect her. If he's free he'd be coming here now, if he's a captive he's trying to escape, the only way he'd miss it would be to be unconscious or worse." Among the group Sai was the first one to truly think. He pulled out his PHS and used the speed dial before raising it to his ear.

At first there was nothing, then he suddenly spoke "Naruto......where are you located?......hai it
is.......the babies are safe, The Kazekage and his siblings are watching over them.....hai it did.......hai...." he listened a few more seconds then nodded "hai" and hung up. "Well?! What did he say!?!"

"Jiraiya sama was right, he and Kakashi-san went out to spar. They were attacked by an large group of monsters. They were still fighting when Naruto felt Aeris' panic and fury. He wanted to go to her, but he couldn't leave Kakashi and they were surrounded. He said he had a..." the ex-assassin and spy hesitated, looking for the right word.

"Sai?" Tifa prompted in concern.

"He remembers having an attack, similar to when Kyuubi used to control him and he completely destroyed all of them. The next thing he knew he was chasing some figure to a base and completely destroying it. He's back in control and met back up with Kakashi san and they are headed back here." He looked at Tifa "he said to tell you 'the fake is Weiss'."

Tifa blinked then turned to the youngest Uchiha, calling out over the battle "It's Weiss, Sasuke! He's your fathers enemy and the leader of DeepGround. He's the one who kidnapped Naruto and ordered your children's death! We know where Naruto is, you don't need to get any information out of him."

"Eliminate the target, Uchiha" Tsunade called. Sasukes' grin was decidedly dark "With pleasure, Hokage" and he activated the curse mark. The other figure grinned "well since I've been exposed....." his entire body shuddered and as the watched the disguise dissolved, revealing the tall muscular white haired man from before with two large gunblades.

What followed was a battle between second stage curse-marked Sasuke and Weiss.

There came a sudden voice from opposite them, a cry of “baachan!” The group turned to find Naruto racing towards them, Kakashi casually walking on his heels. “Naruto!” Tsunade dashed forward, catching the young man up into her arms, pulling him into her bosom as she held him close.

“Baachan” he choked “too tight.” The woman reluctantly let him go, frowning when she saw the blood and torn clothes, immediately releasing him to start examining him, hands glowing as she ran them over him. The blonde tried to wiggle out of her grip, protesting “I’m fine baachan! I don’t need healing! I healed already!”

Tifa frowned at Kakashi who had stopped a distance from them and was watching “Kakashi?! What’s wrong!?" she then noticed the torn clothes on him and fresh blood as well as open obvious wounds still oozing “Tsunade san, Kakashi’s injured!” The woman’s head snapped up towards the man, eying him up and down, concerned at what she saw “come here, Hatake.”

“I’m fine here, Lady Hokage” he said stiffly, not moving from his spot. The woman’s eyes narrowed on him “come here Kakashi Hatake.” He didn’t move and when the woman’s eyes narrowed and her anger built Tifa blinked when she heard a slight muffled sound of terror. At first she thought it was the silver haired ninja, but then Naruto spoke “he can’t baachan.” The woman’s eyes snapped to him “what?”

“HE is afraid of people, baachan, if you go anywhere near Kakashi he’ll panic and freak out again.”

Tsunade was about to open her mouth and speak again when Tifa saw something. Around the back of the cyclops leg something moved, an strip of flesh. The sound of that muffled terror came again, only this time she identified it from the back of the ninja about just over knee level. When Kakashi moved slightly the strip of flesh became visible, moving around to wrap around the mans legs, holding him in place.
An arm, a small pale arm covered in cuts, bruises and scars.

Tifa looked closer and was just in time to see an face peek out from the side of the arm just very slightly, just enough to see one violet glowing eye and messy white hair, the face of an beaten and frightened child about three or four. But she knew that face, the hair.

A clone, a child clone of Weiss. But why was he beaten? Why was he so frightened? “Tsunade san” she gasped “look, child.” The woman’s head snapped back, just in time to see the head and arm disappear behind the cyclops again. She frowned at it “where did YOU get a child from?!”

Naruto answered “we found him at the base we destroyed. The DeepGround soldiers there were....” he swallowed and looked sick “abusing him in every way possible. He’s a clone but for some reason he’s hated. They must have been abusing him since he was....born...he doesn’t know kindness and when Kakashi saved him and protected and was gentle with him he latched to him and hasn’t let go. He’s even afraid of me. He lets no one else near him but Kakashi.”

“He doesn’t have a name so we’re calling him Yamaneko.”

“Wildcat?” Tsunade frowned “you’re calling him Wildcat?” Both males shrugged. Tsunade decided not to protest and instead moved towards them. Immediately both males cried "NO!" and the silver cyclops backed up a bit from her. The blonde healer frowned "you are injured, Hatake, probably severely, and only have minimal healing skills. You need someone else to heal you."

"You can not approach without scaring him." The blonde woman opened her mouth but Tifa acted. She crouched down to the abused boy’s height and making sure she felt and looked harmless and smiled at him “hi there.” The child ducked back behind the cyclops leg, only for one curious but frightened eye to peak out again at her. There was suspicion there, but Tifa understood this reaction and didn’t take offense. She spoke gently “My name is Tifa. Do you have a name?"

The boy continued the watch her silently, blinking a few times and just when she thought the child wouldn’t answer she heard a whisper of something. “What was that?"

A small timid voice spoke again “TI156.” Tifa frowned “that’s not a name, Kakashi san and Naruto san are right. You’re name from now on is Yamaneko.” He looked up at her slightly “really?” She smiled and nodded “yes. I know you’ve been through a lot and are scared, but no one here will hurt you. We will all protect you and help you, just like Kakashi san here did.”

“Kakashi san?” the boy looked up at the cyclops who looked down at him and nodded.

“That’s his name” Tifa said to him.

“Kakashi san” the boy said again as if confirming it to himself.

Tifa went serious “Yamaneko?” When the boy looked at her she went on “Yamaneko, Kakashi san is hurt, just like you. He needs help and Tsunade hime can heal him. But he won’t let her near because you’re afraid. Kakashi san needs healing and if you let lady Tsunade near him he can get help, just like Kakashi helped you.”

The face peaked around the man’s leg at the blonde healer and he solemnly shook his head.

“What about me?” Tifa asked gently “I have a heal materia, I can help him, but I’ll need to touch his arm to do so, will you let me do so? I swear I won’t hurt him or you. You can watch me while I do and make sure I don’t.” After a long pause the child nodded solemnly and watched Tifa closely as she slowly carefully approached them. The closer she got the more he shrank behind the silver cyclops and clutched himself closer to his legs. To show he trusted her, Kakashi reached out and
took her hands in his gloved ones.

Concentrating on using the heal on him, Tifa watched the green light from the bangle on her wrist flow over and around him, mostly concentrating on his wounds and injuries.

And frowned at the two.

As the light surrounded and worked on the silver cyclops, it was also flowing down to cover the child. It looked almost like the kid was absorbing it and Tifa could see his own wounds and other injuries closing as well. Not just that but the boy seemed to be using the power of the materia to strengthen himself.

If the boy could adsorb the power of materia, WHY was he a reject?

Once the man’s wounds and injuries were healed completely, Tifa stopped the flow and let go of the ninja’s hands, stepping back and away to make the boy feel better. Once done she looked the child over and spoke to Kakashi “maybe you should take him inside and get both yourselves cleaned up. You’re both covered in blood and dirt and it might make him feel better being clean. I’m sure Lord Godo has some other clothes he can use.”

The man nodded and with Sai and Tenten in tow to protect his back he lead the terrified child inside.

Distraction gone, the others turned to the fight still raging a distance from them.
Chapter 26

Just in time to watch Sasuke slam an ball of sparking electricity into Weiss' chest and send him flying into a tree. When the man rose to his feet with an effort Naruto was there, hands clawed, eyes blue cat-eyes flushed with red, teeth sharp and incisors elongated and whiskers thicker and darker against his cheeks. HE followed up his mates attack by slamming an spherical object with what Tifa SWORE was three tails of energy from it into the enemies chest in the exact same spot as his mate.

Causing the man to gasp loudly in pain before going back down heavily onto one knee. Naruto immediately summoned another of his spheres, Sasuke his and the blonde looked at his companion and mate "ready Teme?" Sasuke nodded, face firm in determination "let's do this, dobe." With a cry of "Tailed Beast Chadori!" the two in union slammed the two attacks together into one and turned to thrust the incredibly powerful...THING into the figures chest.

This time a scream of pure agony echoed the clearing.

The force of the explosion threw everyone off their feet, Sasuke and Naruto twisting in mid air to land on their feet, Naruto immediately wincing "ouch" and briefly touching his lower stomach. Sasuke looked concerned but before he could move towards his mate the light started to die and someone yelled "LOOK!"

Bent over inside an smoking hole on knees and hands, Weiss was wheezing but still alive. Mouth agape they watched the man slowly rise to his feet with an pained "it will take more than ARGH!" The last sound was a cry of pain and shock and at the same time they all heard the meaty thunk. The enemy looked down himself and following his eyes they all gasped. Sticking out of the chest, directly from the heart, was a sharp golden gauntlet, clumps of blood and gore hanging from it. The fingers had been together and outstretched, giving an almost 'spear' effect and now they were fully out they opened, meaning when it withdrew back it pulled even more flesh out with it and widened the hole even more than going in. "Vincent!" Tifa gasped as the impaled figure gasped, blood flooding from the mouth and slumped forward slightly. However it WASN'T the demon vessel who appeared behind the figure but the demon, yellow eyes glowing in demonic fury, face twisted as he snarled "you tried to kill my grandchildren, you will pay for that."

The glove withdrew and he looked for a second at Tifa. "Out of here!" Tifa yelled "NOW!"

As the group scattered Tifa looked back-just in time to see the demon thrust Cerberus into the hole he had made and power up the gun. The resulting explosion threw everyone to the ground, arms over their heads to not only muffle the sound but protect them from falling debris, and, more....disgusting bits. When it had all cleared, Tifa stood slowly and turned to look back.....VincentChaos was casually walking towards them, looking almost smug "he will endanger no more lives" (especially what is mine).

Tifa frowned "but was that just another clone, or was it....."

"It was the real one" Chaos said.

"How can you tell?"

"The clones were created before my host and I fought the original" the demon explained "they are mere shadows of the true form. After surviving the fall of Omega, the original still bore traces of his energy inside him, even if he could not use it."
"So the original Weiss still had some of Omega's mana inside him while the clones didn't, that's how you could tell them apart. That guy had that."

Chaos nodded.

"How do you know that he didn't make any more clones between his....rebirth and now? If he did, they would have Omega's energies as well, wouldn't they?"

"Nah" Naruto said "buji-or rather demon energy-can't be artificially reproduced. Do you have any idea how many people in our world tried that? The were able to produce similar, but in the end it was cheap copies and nothing compared to the real thing. Do you think mother Gaia would allow that here?"

"He is correct" Vincent said as he shifted back "after Lue put Chaos in me Hojo tried numerous times to clone that dark mana, but he failed—even with Gailan. The closest he got was Hellmasker and Death Gigas." Tifa looked at him curiously, she never realized that the two....forms came from Chaos, it explained why they had been compatible in the first place.

"So Hellmasker and Death Gigas were people Hojo used in experiments to try and either reproduce or replicate Chaos' energy, but when it failed either Hojo somehow put their souls inside you with Galian, or Chaos absorbed them?"

"Chaos is a product of the lifestream. He was supposed to reap the souls of any life left on Gaia so they could return to the lifestream, then Omega would take that very lifeforce to another world. How do you think he would do such a thing?" Itachi spoke "he would kill every last being on this world then absorb the souls. Meaning...."

"Eat them" Sasuke said for his brother. "He ate their souls and for some reason they remained instead of returning to the lifestream."

"Exactly" Vincent nodded. The group started back to the estate, ignoring the...parts now dissolving to green energy, Tifa wanting to check on Kakashi's progress with the clone\child before making sure Jundo was resting. Approaching the baths she found the silver scarecrow waiting outside the door, the sounds of yelling and things breaking coming from inside. Itachi on her heels she approached the man with a purpose "what are you doing out here?! You should be in there bathing him yourself!!"

The silver haired man shrugged "it is their job, let THEM handle it. He's just a kid."

Tifa never wanted to hit him as hard as she did then. Maybe Tsunade had it right in some ways. "For an so-called genius you are an idiot. Are you sure you are supposed to be smart? Even Naruto would have handled this better." He eyed her "what do you mean?"

Tifa sighed heavily, indicating he really was blind. "He has been physically and sexually abused probably his entire 'life'. He latched to you because you showed him that what he's grown up with is not all there is. Then you just hand him off the first opportunity you get, proving to him—at least in HIS MIND—that it was another lie, a cruel trick. After this you'd be lucky if he ever trusts YOU again."

When Kakashi looked to protest she shook her head "don't protest like you know better, because you don't, you've never had to handle someone who's been traumatized to this extent."

"And YOU have?!!"

Tifa stared him down until he looked away, uncomfortable, before she spoke "What, you think
Denzel was an happy well-balanced boy when Cloud brought him to me? He witnessed the collapse of sector Seven with the full knowledge his parents were there. He was left an orphan to wonder the streets not knowing how to take care of himself-how to find food, water, shelter and clothes. Finally he’s cared for by an elderly lady, only to have meteor fall and have to watch her die slowly and painfully, knowing THAT was going to be him next. Then he's back on the streets again until he just happened on Clouds bike. Even then his first thought was NOT his own safety but finding out about his parents. When Cloud coped him with his PHS, can you imagine how scared he must have been that he would hurt him for touching his things, that Cloud would 'punish' him?"

Kakashi blinked slowly at her "what do you suggest I do?"

"Go in there, take over his care. I mean bathing him, making sure he eats, all the things an protective mother would do. Be firm but gentle. He expects yelling, abuse and anger, use the opposite no matter what. He'll push you, try to get you to slip up and yell or hurt him, but if you do you'll only prove to him that he was right and he can not trust you. You're the only one who can do this, you're the first he latched to, the first to ever show him he was a child and worth something more than and toy and punching bag, the first to show him the other side of hate, pain and fear. If you do this right you can turn his whole life around. You did the right thing, if he would have remained there chances are he would have turned out a warped person full of hate, lashing out at everyone around him purely for the fun of hurting others-a worse monster than Hojo himself or Shinra Senior."

"Perhaps that was the entire point" Itachi said "he is-WAS-a clone of Weiss. Perhaps he was too innocent in their eyes as a child, so they decided that to traumatize him would give them the ruthless uncaring weapon they needed."

"Good point" Tifa said with a nod to him, turning to look back at Kakashi "but YOU can ensure otherwise." She cocked her head at him "haven't you ever wanted to extend your clan? You can do that. Sure he won't be blood, but he can be so in every other way. You can be an father. By Gaia he even looks more like you then Weiss." Kakashi reached up to pull on his hair subconsciously, eye inward as if thinking of all the things he could do "you think so?"

"Definitely" Itachi nodded.

"Go" Tifa gave him an gentle push towards the doorway "it'll require A LOT of patience and care, but anyone who could teach an child and teenaged Naruto would have that in spades."

"You're right" the cyclops nodded, straightening himself and moving inside. There was protests, loud voices and the female staff soon appeared at the doorway, all in some sort of state-from wet to clothes torn-some even with bite marks, being gently pushed out the door by the one-eyed ninja. "I'll take it from here, ladies" he said firmly, closing the door in their faces.

Some looked angry, others disgruntled, but most shuffled off immediately, glad the aptly named 'wild cat' was no longer their responsibility. The rest left once Tifa told them too. Remaining outside the door, Tifa and Itachi listened to the child's angry yelling and sounds of things being broken, the ninjs's soft drone of words.

"He's trying to scare Kakashi away" Tifa explained "he's learned that doing so is the only way to get anything of his own, the Deepground must have had weak people supposedly caring for him. If Kakashi sticks to it....." Eventually the sounds started to die down and Tifa smiled "they'll be fine now, let's go" and hand in hand they left the ninja to his work.

******************************************************************************************

Hours later both came across an concerned group, both shinobi and AVALANCHE. Frowning they
approached the group “what’s wrong?”

“Both Tenshi and Jundo are missing” Ino said in concern “Lady Tsunade went in to give him his latest injection and he wasn’t in his room. Tenshi is no longer in his crib either.”

“Isn’t he with Vincent?”

“Vincent-sama says he returned Tenshi to his crib hours ago and went to check the perimeter. We don’t know where he is and Kasarugi-Dono and Yuffie are questioning all their staff to find out when exactly they were last seen.” Tifa frowned, concerned. On one hand it could be a simple case of Jundo hearing the attack earlier and taking the baby to hide. He could STILL be hiding, unaware it was safe, sick and unable to move. On the other, what if....

“What if Aeris hadn’t been the target?”

The group looked at her “what did you say?”

“What if Aeris WASN’T the real target. What if that attack earlier wasn’t to have a go at the twins, rather an distraction for they to grab Jundo and Tenshi. I mean Weiss appearing HIMSELF just to have a go at the babies? That would be below him, he’d use lackeys instead. But they’d do it if it means enough of an distraction for us.”

The Shinobi’s eyes all widened. “You’re right. They would KNOW that if the real Weiss showed his face then we would all leave to fight or be distracted by him.”

“What are we gonna do?!” Kankuro asked in worry. Before anyone could speak there was an explosion. Exchanging looks the group took off towards the sound, breaking out of the hole in the side of the building they skidded to an halt in the light, looking up in time to see......

“SEPHIROTH!!” Cloud yelled.
Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

The idea for Reno's background is not mine, I got the idea from a series of stories I loved called "A Little Night Music" and "Adagio". I can't remember the author's name right now but credit goes to her/him, not me. The rest of the ideas is mine (I don't own FFVII or Naruto either).

***************************************************************************************************************************************************************************

Above them in the air, a black wing flapping leisurely, silver hair streaming out on a breeze, was a large figure wearing black leather and holding an surprisingly long sword.

Green cat-eyes moved to them, locking on the blonde and an amused smirk appeared "good to see you again, Cloud."

The way he said the blonde's name was strange, his voice oddly seductive and old-world. Tifa frowned, it was obviously Jenovah, Jenovah wanted Cloud? Or was she just mocking him? Cloud was with Zack, obviously he was homosexual, if Jenovah wanted Cloud for some reason, maybe it was because since she was female she knew she couldn't have him. All the more incentive to take the general's body. Maybe she thought she could kill off every being on the planet, then have Cloud all to herself. Hojo used Cloud as an experiment to try and 'make a new general' could he have been manipulated by the female into infecting Cloud so she could control him, like she had in the past before he had got free? Could she have been planning on using Sephiroth to seduce him?

According to Naruto's dream, Sephiroth-or Jenovah-the Silver General had made AERIS his sex slave, not Cloud. But Cloud would never accept that, he would fight to the death and be with Zack in the LifeStream. But if all of them died, where did that leave Aeris? Would that leave JENOVAH to raise her? Tifa knew how evil the woman was NOW, what would she do to Aeris when deprived of the one she really wanted?

Any further thought ended as Zack barreled out of the hole behind them, skidding to a stop as his eyes went up, mouth opening soundlessly on the name.

The floating/flying figure looked down at him "arh, Zackary, so pleased YOU survived."

Tifa frowned, did she hear jealousy twist his voice when he/she said his name? IF she was right, this only further proved it.

Wait, what if it was more than that. Cloud had beaten Sephiroth TWICE. Tifa had thought that Cloud could do it because he had be enhanced by Hojo in an effort to reproduce the general, but the Silver General was enhanced even before birth. What if in both cases, Cloud didn't win, but Jenovah/Sephiroth LET him win?

What if in her own way Jenovah actually-as crazy as it sounds-LOVED Cloud. Maybe not in an romantic way, but as an true son or something similar? She hadn't really hurt Cloud each time, despite the injuries he received, the sword through the shoulder and such. Sephiroth was an General,
schooled in things like anatomy, he would therefore Jenovah-know just what spot he\she could safely hit without causing permanate damage.

Jundo had been Sephiroth's-so really Jehovah's-femininity and goodness, meaning there was good in there. Jundo had loved Tenshi like a brother, had been fiercely protective and possessive of him, if Jenovah DID love Cloud, in the end wouldn't she\he sacrifice herself\himself for his own safety or protection.

"I will never be...just a dream" was his last words. Could she\he have meant not as some nightmare or virus unleashed onto the world they would never get rid of, but that Jenovah was real, a being who loved and lusted?

There was another angle as well. In the animal kingdom, even between monsters, many females would only accept the strongest alpha as an mate. They didn't know ANYTHING about Jenovah past that she was from another planet, what if HER race choose mates that way?

Now that Tifa thought of it, it made an weird sense. After the being had possessed Sephiroth CLOUD had been the only one to beat him. The village had failed, SHE had failed, even Zack. Yet CLOUD had impaled the figure and then despite being impaled himself, still attacked him, still beat him back. Sephiroth had seen Cloud then as an grunt, not even near the enhancements of SOLDIER, yet look at what he had done. Jenovah must had seen so much potential in him and all the shit they had gone though was some type of test. Cloud struggling free of Jenovah's mind control would have only confirmed it to her.

However the battle they had in Midgar at least a little more that a year ago proved he wasn't quiet ready yet, so she withdrew.

She must be so upset Zack was back. He was competition, unless she was totally confident in her ability to be an more....appropriate mate. She might think in terms of Cloud being attracted to the strongest mate-like she did. After all, hadn't SHE lived for hundreds of years AND died and come back at least 4 times?

Tifa frowned as she looked around at the others, did THEY see what she thought she did, or was it her imagination? Wishful thinking?

If looked like it was....wait, Itachi.

Standing with Sasuke and the rest of his 'family' Itachi was frowning slightly at the figure, looking at him, Cloud and then his head turned to meet her eyes, an slight nod.

He saw it too.

Maybe because Tifa was the only one among the group who had ever had anything close to an normal relationship in her life that let her see it, and because she was teaching Itachi, he saw it to.

Cid's relationship with Shera was more of an obligation, she was somehow responsible for the failure of the space program, or partly at least, so she stayed and 'cared' for the blonde piolet in order to make up for it. Although Cid proclaimed there was nothing more between them than housemates, the fact he had named one of his airships after her spoke some sort of strong feelings to Tifa.

Vincent's only romance definitely wasn't healthy.
Cloud and Zack had started out not only as superior and subordinate, but in the middle of an Shinra mission.

Tifa wasn't touching Barrett. She had never seen him in ANY relationship, except his one with Marlene. Although she had seen him eying Anko a few times in the last few days....

Yuffie was too young, despite her crush on Haku, however there was also counting her little crushes on Zack then Cloud.

Nanaki she didn't know about, he WAS the only one of his kind. This meant either there was no others of his kind to exist-BUT could also mean he was the only one like him. Say he was the only INTELLIGENT of his kind. However word was there WAS a female like him somewhere, however that seemed just for when they both went into heat. After all, if she was his mate he would not be leaving her unattended to run around with them.

As an animal, romance and relationships weren't really an necessity, but protecting your MATE, as well as the only other of your kind....

NONE of the ninja's relationships could ever be classed as normal, Naruto and Sasuke had started out rivals for Gaia's sake and Sakura and Lee had been the result of the green clad ninja's near-death. Even Tsunade and Jiriaya had only really got started! And there was Reeve and Shizune.

Rufus and Tseng's relationship was, well, it wasn't love and wasn't lust but something in-between. They had started out apparently because Tseng saw him as an young man desperate for ANY type of affection, his mother killed by his father in front of him as a child and his father the 'man's man' apparently, trying to turn him into himself by depriving him of affection or love, telling him to 'buck up and act like you have some balls, for Gaia's sake, instead of the pussy girl parts!' So Tseng-hired to be his bodyguard-started with tentative touches, just an hand on his shoulder or such at first, but as he started to react to them, more as time went on and ALWAYS out of Shinra Senior's sight.

Soon Rufus was craving that human contact and after his father's 'death' the boy was freed in both mind and body to turn fully to him for what he so needed.

Unfortunately there was the meteor fall, Rufus' severe injuries and the incident with the clones to interfere. When the clones had given him Tseng and Elena's blooded ID badges, it was his father's 'training' all he could do to stay calm and detached.

It helped that he knew they were safe though. Apparently the three either didn't know-or thought they could bluff him—that just after they had left the two close to death and made their way to Midgar, none other than Vincent Valentine had swooped in and picked them up, using an heal to help them long enough to drop them at the nearest hospital.

Tseng's first act before loosing consciousness was to contact him, telling him they were alive and healing and that the three were on their way to him.

Which gave Rufus enough time to arm himself, grab Jenovah's head in it's containment case and enact the 'cripple' disguise.

Apparently Reno and Rude were more then the result of an life-or-death job. Tifa KNEW there was something more to the red head, there had to be to have him become second-in-command of the TURKS after Tseng. She knew he was an quick thinker, smarter than his 'junkyard dog' reputation, but to be good enough to win second-in-command?
Over the last few months of him being around so much she had gotten to see the young man as other than the TURK and his reputation.

He was actually an surprisingly deep person with a sharp mind and shy soul. He loved classical music and had grown up with an mother who played piano and who had taught him. His mother had been rich, but not the sort to flaunt it or associated with 'that type'. That type being the rich who walked around like they were above everyone else.

Reno never knew his father, having being born from an one-night-stand between his mother and some anonymous male, but his mother had loved him anyway, completely and utterly, calling him her 'little fox cub'.

Eck, no wonder he and Naruto were so alike.

There was even a rumor among TURK at one point that Shinra Senior was his father. But it was unproven. Anyway Reno's mother had been fragile and prone to an sickness all his life and when she died when he was twelve he had ended up on the streets, running with a gang. That was until he stole an item that TURK was after, so doing caught the attention of Shinra.

It was Reno's way of thinking that earned him his position as second in command. He was fiercely loyal (to Rufus, not Shinra senior), he could think fast on his feet and like all 'junkyard dogs' was dangerous when cornered. It was his original way of thinking that gave him an unique angle for his job, with unique thinking. Apparently Rude was the first to see the true Reno, the young man raised by an well educated and bred mother, the boy raised in an musical household-and it seemed the young man had inherited his mother's talent.

So it was inevitable the quiet man would fall for his partner.

The two really WERE similar to Naruto and Sasuke, not just because the red head and blonde were loud and hyperactive and their partners silent but foreboding, but because in reality the two were completely different in secret. Behind the scenes they were unsure of themselves and their worth, scarred mentally by their pasts and gifted. Out of all of them only Tifa had had anything near an normal relationship. As the daughter of their home town's mayor, she had dated other villagers-even had learned to see it when she had or was being fooled by those wanting influence on her father-had an normal childhood, at least until her mothers death changed her naive world.

Since she HAD that it gave her an unique look into the relationships of others and what was normal or not. And since she was teaching Itachi he found it easier to see what she did. Learning the subtleties of human expression combined with what Itachi knew about predicting an enemies moves would help the eldest remaining Uchiha learn the nuances of human and relationship behavior.

Tifa exchanged a look with the older Uchiha, an knowing concerned look, what could possibly come from this? Their attention was caught when there was a sound of a-or wings and Tifa looked up just in time to see Sephiroth moving away. "WAIT!" Cloud called "where are you going!?" The silver haired general smiled at him "why Cloud, will you miss me?" The blonde gripped his sword "if you're going to attack and kill people JENOV AH..." emphasizing the last word.

The silver haired man looked at the young man with an unreadable expression for a few seconds before he spoke "those who thought they could use me to their own end need to be punished" before he turned to leave "they pollute this land and need to be punished. This world is MINE. Do not fear, I WILL return." Before they could speak he was gone.

Tifa stopped Cloud from going after him "don't you get it, she's going to hunt down DeepGround. That gives us some time at least to prepare. She won't stop until she gets them all, but she can't know
where they ALL are, that will take a while."

Cloud nodded reluctantly, knowing they needed the time to plan and strategize, for Tsunade to go with Vincent to Lucrecia's prison, to see if anything could be done. And Yuffie's father needed time to organize his forces and keep them as far as possible from Sephiroth\Jenovah.

Hours later AVALANCHE minus Vincent and Cid (they were using his airship), the ninja's (minus Tsunade and Kankurō-who was playing her bodyguard) and with Yuffie helping Iruka babysit the kids and three babies, the rest plus Lord Godo and his best men were gathered in the Wutain's 'war room', trying to make plans. Fortunately the PHS's gave them the advantage of the four absent travelers joining in the talks, both Yuffie and Iruka leaving it to them. In fact Iruka and Yuffie got along extremely well, Yuffie appreciating Iruka's gentle way, and respecting his no-nonsense way of teaching. So while they babysat the three, Iruka gave them some exercises to try to manipulate their chakra or mana to certain parts of the body, promising to teach them an simple hedge if they could master it.

When Yuffie learned she could look like someone else completely-even an male-without changing clothes and so on she immediately hunkered down, concentrating harder than she ever had before. Tifa thought maybe she also thought of it as learning what she could before it all went to crap. It was also a good idea to learn, if the kids looked like someone else and Sephiroth\Jenovah went after them if they failed....at least he'd be less likely to find them if they all looked like say an young Wutain family.

Tifa began to understand Shikamaru a little bit more in the next few hours. The boy's mind was an constant edge, seeing life as an tactical battle. It was a constant frustration when his genius mind told him how people SHOULD act, but they didn't. Somewhere along the way he had resigned himself to the constant disappointment it was and the lazy act was him not even trying anymore. A kind of "why should I even think when every time I'm disappointed? No one understands me." In fact his genius came alive when able to use that tactical ability to its fullest, like now. In fact he and Ibiki-whose knowledge was hard won from his time in T&I-were soon devolving into an kind of glaringyelling match as their geniuses clashed. In fact Tifa vaguely remembered a saying about never letting two geniuses in the same room together.

Tifa blinked, remembering the two supposedly weren't the only geniuses in the room. Neji was with Jariaya, discussing something in low voices, Sasuke, Naruto, Lazard and Genesis were examining a map of Wutai and talking about something over it and Itachi....her head moved to Itachi. HE had planned out his entire events and actions since the day he sided with the village over his clan. Only since the day his body became the host of the six had it gone differently. He had even had a way to ensure his brother stayed faithful to their home. Just how much of an genius did that take? As far as Tifa was concerned it blew the others out of the water. I mean to manipulate the events of your death and even after?

From where he stood watching over Sasuke's shoulder Itachi's head suddenly lifted and turned unerringly towards her, his eyes meeting hers.

There was something....something in those dark eyes. Something beyond desire and approval, arousal and warmth.....He blinked at her then moved away from the others, towards her, his movements fluid and tight, like a stalking cat, and it spread little threads of excitement and fear down her spine, like she did whenever she had felt that urge after a fight to go out and just....
She wanted him, just like HE obviously wanted her. Tomorrow they could be dead, but now, now was about the thrill of the chase. Something also told her it was 'time' and Tifa remembered what Temari had told her after she awakened, "he loves you too. When the time comes don't hold anything back and make sure he doesn't either, HE said the very LifeStream will bless it."

So moving away from Cloud she moved slightly closer to the exit, looking at him over her shoulder.

Unlike Naruto, Sasuke, Reno and Rude THEY would find somewhere out of the others rate of hearing to do what they were going to do.

Leading with coy backwards glances and the graceful movements of an warrior, Tifa lead the other down halls and passageways, knowing exactly where they were going. Lord Godo had an entire underground network of reinforced rooms, kitchen and so on, literally an underground base in case of something like meteor fall again and it was here that the children and babies had been taken for safety when DeepGround had attacked and they had been in danger.

Tifa knew the way there and there was one room in particular she was leading him. She needed somewhere reinforced that could mean they didn’t need to worry about being disturbed if they were going to do this right. She soon reached the room, gave him one last look before entering and moving towards the bed. Standing beside it she waited. She normally would have started to undress before he entered and reached her, but this was the man she planned to spend the rest of her days with-if they lived past the final battle-the man who would help her raise Denzel and Marlene and maybe their own children (she planned on giving him PLENTY of those), she wanted him to have the pleasure of uncovering her body to his own eyes for himself. Besides, he was an virgin, this would be his first taste of a woman’s body and she wanted it to be hers, for his first taste of a woman sexually to be forever imprinted in his memory as only hers. Despite a normal man’s tendency to brag about their conquests, they NEVER forgot their first time. Not that Itachi would ever be like that, he just wasn’t the type who cared about what others thought. He would be an gentlemen that way. Look at Sasuke, HE didn’t do that and except for the early Jiriaya, none of the other ninja’s did too.

When he stopped in front of her she had to go on tip-toe slightly so she could reach up to press her lips to his in an hesitant kiss, testing the waters first. He didn’t move except for a hitch in breath and after a few seconds of this Tifa reached out to take his hand and guide it to the buckles on the side of her half-skirt. Deft fingers had no trouble releasing the straps. As the thick leather dropped around her ankles, Tifa stepped it up another slight notch by introducing her tongue to the kiss, licking at his lips to coax them open.

He complied with her silent question and opened his mouth for her.

Where before they HAD kissed with open mouths, it was no more than that, but now Tifa let her tongue enter his mouth, brushing his almost teasingly, trying to coax it into play with her own, careful of his sharp incisors. His breath caught in shock and desire and his tongue moved to stroke hers and after a few seconds Tifa was struck by the thought of how they seemed to sync up so nicely, tongues moving together as if in a dance.

After a minute or so of this Tifa reached out to touch the base of his shirt, silently asking permission.

Itachi drew back only long enough for her pull the material over his head and thrown away from them before he was back to doing what he was before, only now a low aroused growl was coming from his throat. When Tifa laid her hands over his chest to trace muscle ridges, scars and flesh his body pushed closer, urging her on.
Keeping one hand on his chest, Tifa took his hand again and guided it to the zip at the front of her black leather vest, helping him grasp the tab and slowly pull it down, revealing her white sleeveless shirt underneath, there to prevent the leather rubbing against her sensitive skin and prove some protection to her mid-drift. His breath hissed once the vest was open, revealing her generous ‘assets’ under the white of the shirt. His mouth pulled from hers and he looked down, weighting them in both his hands before he looked at her for permission.

Tifa nodded.

She expected him to remove the white material but was surprised when his head lowered to lick an nipple through the cloth.

Her breath caught in surprised pleasure.

He seemed to enjoy what he was doing, using tongue and lips to leave a wet stain on the material, listening to her gasp and moan his name. Finally he didn’t seem able to resist any longer and moved back long enough to yank the material over her head. Then his eyes dropped. When his eyes rose back to hers, many things were there in his eyes. Lust, desire, appreciation, curiosity and the simple want of an man for a woman he loved and desired. It was THAT simple want that both aroused Tifa and filled her heart.

She stood still while he reached out again, touching her breasts, fingers touching her nipples curiously, stroking them, his red tinted eyes carefully taking note over her every reaction and what she seemed to like best, how running his thumb over her nipples THIS way and at just the right pressure caused her to gasp and thrust her chest closer, or to touch the tip with only a feather-like touch with his tongue caused her to moan loudly.

Tifa let him explore for a while, enjoying his touch, before she grasped his head and pulled him to her for a hungry kiss. They both kissed for some time, enjoying the dance of tongues, somehow managing to make it out of their shoes while they did so, leaving both in only their pants, Tifa her leather knee-length shorts with the button and zip in front and Itachi his dark long pants he had worn since his change made him swap his ninja gear for an black, grey and white outfit similar to an SOLDIER uniform, but without all the buckles and belts and all that crap Shinra had made them wear.

When Tifa moved closer still to him, plastering herself to his front to bring their faces closer together, she could feel the purr going through his body as well as the sign of his desire against her stomach. She even reached out to stroke it through the cloth, but immediately stopped when he let out a low warning growl. She knew he was closer to cat in these moments than any other and knew if she was going to do this, she would have to be careful not to let his cat instincts too quickly to the surface. Once they were fully mated it wouldn’t matter anymore.

So she pulled back a little, just enough to guide his hand to her last zip and button.

Once her long shorts were down his head rose and he sniffed the air, eyes filled with arousal.

Before Tifa knew it she was on her back on the bed while Itachi was kissing her hungrily, moving down the side of her face and licking behind her ear. He soon moved to her throat and neck, his mouth choosing a spot on her where shoulder and neck met to hover over, letting out an kind of half growl, half purr as he paused over it. Tifa instinctively knew what it meant and moaned her approval.
Given permission (for whatever it meant) Itachi moved on to her body, sucking, licking, mouthing, learning her body and what she liked. Tifa found herself writhing in an blur of pleasure, lust and love as he began to familiarize himself with her, what she liked, how to most pleasure her and how a woman’s body worked. Every now and then he raised his head so they could kiss and Tifa TRIED to concentrate on stroking HIS body, but she never seemed to be able to think straight enough, or was able to reach.

When Itachi again drew in an loud inhalation of air she looked down at him in time to see....She practically screamed in pleasure as his nose, then mouth not just touched her in the most sensitive of places, but pushed hard into so he could inhale again. A growl of desire filled his lungs as he stuck his head deeper, trying to get his mouth in to taste that wonderful source of her arousal.

She couldn’t help it, she writhed on the bed, begging between gasps and whispers of his name, trying harder than before to give back what he was giving her. He finally seemed to realize this was about him, too, for he stopped and moved back up to her head, face to face, eyes clouded by concern and confusion. “Tifa?” he managed to moan.

Taking advantage of it, she moved their mouths together, drawing him deep into the kiss before she was able to push him slowly back onto the bed, this time on HIS back. He growled at this show of dominance before blinking it away and letting her pull his pants down. Gasping at his size, Tifa immediately began all she could to bring HIM to the same fever peak he had brought out in her, except she kept him with her by kisses, backing off whenever he seemed to close and constant words, words of love, lust, his name and promises about what life would be like together in the future. All the lovemaking they would do, all the children they would have and the many chances that he would have to really let loose in the bedroom with her. How much she desired him, how long their life would be together.

“Truly?” he questioned. She smiled gently at him “of course. We were meant to be together. You and me.”

Itachi’s response was to rise to his knees and gently push her back on the bed, moving with her so that he was laying over her. Tifa wrapped her arms around him, opening her legs in invitation. She gasped long as she felt him slide fully inside her, pulling his face down to hers so they could kiss long and deep while he filled her. She had never felt anyone so deep before, fit so perfectly, barely containing a shudder as she felt his own body do that very thing. He stayed still as if unable to move as he experienced his very first woman under and around him, obviously trying to regain control of his mind through the things his body going through.

Tifa couldn’t have that so she hooked her legs over his hips and pulled him deeper, causing them both to cry out in shock and pleasure. As if unable to help himself, Itachi’s hips pulled back and then pushed forward inside her again. Tifa cried out again and he grunted, his hips helplessly moving back and then in again. What followed for a while was nothing but a blur as she moaned and cried out and managed to murmur his name a few times. However the last time she said it his movements started to slow and looking up into his handsome face she saw his face farrowed, eyes on her face.

“Oh no you don’t” she said, seizing his head in her hands, forcing him to look directly at her “I need you feeling, not thinking!” and pulled him down so she could initiate an fierce kiss. At first he stayed stiff in her grip, then a low growl started, his cat annoyed with her continued dominance, and started to kiss back just as fiercely. Tifa then slowly eased him down, guiding him to be more gentle and softer until they were again sharing loving touches, kisses and movements against one another.

They continued this for a while until Tifa noticed something going through Itachi’s eyes, a kind of
struggle, like he was wrestling with his cat over something, some desire or urge. Tifa knew cat behavior, you don’t hang around and fight side-by-side with one without learning SOME things, so she could guess what his cat wanted but he was afraid to ask for. This WAS his first time, how do you ask someone your sleeping with if you can mate with them like a cat?

She had already done the first part, the coy looks while they were walking, pressing against him during foreplay and by laying on her back, during an ‘mating ritual’ a female cat would do all those to show interest or attraction. They had started mating like humans, but now his cat was confused and wanted to mate like they should. It didn’t know the difference between human mating and cat, especially since Itachi had no memories of previous encounters to draw on.

So Tifa looked up and locked eyes with him, touching his cheek gently and smiling. When he least expected it she rolled them, ending up in the right position and looking back at him over her shoulder him flirty lust “it’s alright, I understand. Do it.”

His mouth opened and closed a few times but Tifa just smiled and wagged her butt at him.

With an smile like she had never seen on him before the oldest Uchiha launched himself onto her, Tifa laughing Itachi gave an deep rare-sounding chuckle as they rolled around together on the bed for a few minutes, just play-fighting, one trying to wrestle the other onto the bed in a position of dominance.

After a minute or two of this Tifa let him overpower her, gasping as they started again, the male aroused by the play and her submission. Tifa was buried in pleasure, her bodies temperature rocketing sky high whenever he leant over to latch teeth to the ‘scruff’ of her neck (well it would be if she were any way feline) or his lips moved to a certain spot on the side of her neck, where neck and shoulder met on the right side. Something in her told her his playing with that one spot was important, that it meant something.

That feeling in her was growing, the one that told her the moment was right and she KNEW something important was approaching, that it was VITAL do this and become all they were meant to be, to awaken inside themselves some hidden power, an sense of unity, of shared consciousness. It was almost like what she had felt when she had entered Cloud’s memories through the LifeStream, only this was more elemental, more vital, more....

Suddenly her sense of balance was interrupted and Itachi sat up and back on his knees, pulling her with him so she cried out as the change of position made the feeling of them together all the more intense. However before she could say anything his hands were around her waist, one gripping her hip to help himself move more and the other went around her ribs and to touch her breasts there. She gasped at the feeling of it, grabbing the hand there and guiding it to her nipples, SHOWING him what felt best, how to drive her wild.

This time his other hand moved up to help his other hand on the opposite breast so she could only cry out at the overwhelming desire, pleasure and love of it all, one arm and hand going back to the back of his head so she could guide him to lean forward slightly so when she turned her head they could kiss again, long and deep.

It was happening, she could feel it, her mana and his chakra AND demon chakra were reaching out to each other, mixing, combining becoming something....she didn't know what. Something of the LifeStream, something BLESSED. Temari HAD said “the very LifeStream will bless it.”

That’s how Tifa knew what they were doing would work out, that the mixing of who and what they
were would work and prove not dangerous to either, mother Gaia was blessing them with her favor, there was no reason to fear what might happen. She had seen too many things in her life to doubt the will of the planet by now. What they would become, that was Gaia’s choice.

“Tifa?” Itachi murmured her name in her ear, uncertain, concerned about what was happening and what WOULD happen.

“It’s alright, just let go.”

“But...?”

“It’s alright, Itachi, don’t you feel it? Mother Gaia is reaching out through the LifeStream to touch us, to show us how she approves of our feelings, our union, our LOVE.”

“I.....” even though Itachi knew about the LifeStream he had not understood. After living in a world where men sought to become Gods and the Gods themselves seemed to ignore human suffering and pain, he hadn’t believed the spirit and soul of the earth could be an actual living being who would aid her people, let alone reach out to touch them, to ‘bless’ them. And she approved of this, of his choice, he could tell. Warmth filled him, warmth for him, approval of his love and feelings, giving him a sense of sorrow for what he had been through in his life and leaving him with the feeling she was comforting him, filling him with light like nothing he had felt in his life before. Even that feline side of him was comforted, purring in his head in peace.

The emotions and love filling him, the emotions and love flowing out of him into the one woman who gave him everything of herself and those around him caused him to convulse a little, he never knew he could be so filled and his arousal spiked so high with his love that he couldn’t hold back any longer. With an cry he was pulling her closer, his chakra pulled from his control so that it surrounded him, surrounded HER, their joint beings fusing together as it all reached an crescendo and they both screamed together.......

********************************************************************************************************************************************************************************
Chapter 28

Cloud and Sasuke's discussion had devolved into an argument, Naruto trying to play peace-keeper, when they all stopped.

"What the hell?!" Naruto frowned thoughtfully, Sasuke suddenly tensing and eyes narrowed "That's ITACHI'S chakra!"

"And Tifa's mana!" Cloud added, alarmed.

Both young men exchanged mutual looks then, before Naruto could open his mouth, were off, the rest of AVALANCHE behind them as well as the ninja. Except Kakashi, who frowned at the younger ninja "Naruto? Do you know what's going on?" The blonde sighed heavily then shook his head, but not in denial "come on, we have to stop them. Itachi's gonna be pissed for a while."

Trusting his student to know what was going on, Kakashi moved to his side and they chased after the group. Naruto almost panicked when he saw Sasuke reach the room first and reach for the handle, fully intent on opening it and walking straight in, so he called on Mother Gaia who allowed him to call up an force-field of energy, blocking their way in and surrounding the entire room in the protective barrier. Even if they brought down the entire building around them they wouldn't get inside as long as the very planet herself Sheltered her two currently vulnerable children.

Unfortunately he was a split second too late as the door swung inwards before the barrier went up, revealing to those outside the scene INSIDE.

Tifa lay naked on the bed, hair tousled and either unconscious or asleep, so obviously having just made-love (or had some really heavy sex).

Itachi was also naked (Sasuke winced, a younger brother did NOT to see THAT much on his big brother-let alone family members) and crouched beside the young woman, hair falling loose around his face, posture of some wild animal.

A pissed off wild animal.

He turned towards them slowly, eyes flashing between Sharingan and glowing red cat-eyes, fury on his face. His back started to arch weirdly-just like a cat's would and before anyone could speak or react, Naruto dashed forward, blocking both their sight into the room and the others exit.

The blondes voice when he spoke and his entire demeanor spoke calm and non-threatening as he spoke backwards "it's okay, brother, no threat to you and you're mate" his entire aura spoke it, obviously confusing the oldest Uchiha enough to arrest his lunge and pause, head cocked at him.

From the corner of his mouth he spoke to the older silver haired ninja "Kakashi-sensei, get everyone out of here, now. He is running on instinct here to protect her. He doesn't know friend from foe. He'll attack anyone who approaches them at this vital time, and he won't stop."

The 'scarecrow' frowned "you know what happened and what they're doing?"

Naruto nodded "I've done it before, with Sasuke when WE mated" he looked at his partner and the father of his children, hurt obvious "but he obviously doesn't remember." Sasuke opened his mouth to speak, but the soft pain in the blondes eyes and face said it all. He had done something that had upset his mate, and now was not the time to argue or be stubborn.
Barrett looked at Naruto "you KNOW what's going on, kid?" When the blonde nodded seriously he questioned "and you'll tell us-other than the obvious bit?" When the blonde nodded again the black skinned gunner turned to walk away, saying over his shoulder "good enough for me." Haku left after him, trusting in his friend's word. Yuffie frowned, glanced at the doorway and followed her crush. It didn't take long for the couple of ninja and AVALANCHE members left followed, leaving only Naruto, Sasuke and Cloud left in the hallway.

Naruto glanced over his shoulder as Itachi appeared in the doorway, still stark naked, gave his younger brother an admonishing look and closed the door.

This left the two blonde and one black haired young men in the hallway outside the room. Cloud eyed the other blonde suspiciously "what caused that surge? If the two were just having sex, why would it cause such a thing?" Naruto sighed "you know your mana and our chakra reacts to your emotional state, the more worked up you get, the higher the level. Do you really need to ask me that? Wasn't it YOU GUYS who told us that Limit Breaks are the result of extreme human emotion mixed with mana?"

"So you're telling me that what just happened was the result of Tifa and Itachi experiencing high emotions during sex?!" Sasuke frowned "what about the Buji chakra I felt, dobe?"

"Yes and no it was" Naruto said "and yes, there was Buji chakra as well." Again looked at Sasuke with that sad look in his eyes. "simply put, Itachi and Tifa are now mates, just as Sasuke and I am." Cloud blinked "what does that involved exactly?"

"Their abilities will be shared like ours are. Logically Tifa should be able to use chakra and Itachi mana and Limit Breaks. I don't know if he'll share her EXACT ones, or develop his own. Any chakra abilities-Genjutsu, Taijutsu excetra-Tifa can use and just as Sasuke can use all mine so will she."

"Does that mean she'll have the sharingan?" Sasuke questioned him. Naruto rolled his eyes "the Sharingan is a bloodline ability, Sasuke. Except for Kakashi-sensei, you can't just gain something like that."

"YOU did." Naruto shook his head "I didn't, AERIS did." Sasuke realized what he was saying and nodded. Both times Sasuke had seen him use it, Aeris had somehow been in control, using her father like an vessel, not much different to how Kyuubi once had. Naruto had not once shown it since her and her twins birth.

An hour later the group had returned to 'the war room' where Naruto had explained in detail what had happened and the end result. He answered any questions he possibly could and reassured them that despite what had happened, Tifa would be not only the same, but more powerful. She would share everything that made the demon side of Itachi, including the extended life.

"How long?"

"Naruto shrugged "baring battle or wounds, A LONG TIME, as long as the Lifestream wills. Itachi and Tifa are at the peak of their power and maturity, while Gaara, the teme (Sasuke frowned at this term) and I still have some growing to do."

"Meaning what exactly?"

"Tifa and Itachi's power together will be incredible, both from their own merged and the three tailed. Because they are both at the peak of their ages and maturity they will stay at their level and physical age, the combination of all three. On the other hand..."
"Because the three of you are still maturing you don't know how powerful you'll all become" Cloud said "while Itachi and Tifa have already reached their peak."

"Exactly" the other blonde said. "So you and Sasuke will continue to age and mature until YOU reach your peak, when you both then will also freeze in age and power" This from Kakashi. 
"Exactly" Naruto nodded to him. "How long will this take?" The blonde shrugged "that I don't know."

Hours later Sasuke Uchiha was beside himself, but would never admit it. Ever since the 'incident' with his brother, Naruto had been acting strange. He had become distant and even kind of closed off. When Sasuke tried to get him talking-even just asked him straight out what was wrong, he just looked at him and sighed "if you don't know, I'm not telling you" and was walking away.

And Sasuke had the distinct impression it was something he did-or didn't do.

Even trying to start an fight, hoping he would burst out with it, didn't work. Naruto just glared at him, refusing to rise to the bait. And this only upset Aeris and Grimoire, causing him to be sent out of the room for upsetting the babies.

He had even resorted to asking the white-haired sage, who shrugged, unconcerned and unsure. His answer-or rather clue-came from a source he SHOULD of sort out first, their sensei-his 'former' sensei. Kakashi smiled cheekily under his mask and asked "why my cutie ex-student, having marital problems?" Sasuke fought his frustration and anger to answer calmly, face passively blank "No, I am not. You know what the real Naruto is. You KNOW when he wants to hide things, we have next to NO chance of finding out. What do you know?"

Kakashi sighed and shook his head "Sasuke, maybe you should try using that thing between your ears. You ARE supposed to be a genius, aren't you?"

The youngest Uchiha grit his teeth against the growing anger and spoke "you know as well as I when emotions and human feelings come into it, logic and genius go out the window. You can predict every possible way a battle can go, but human nature is unpredictable."

"Your BROTHER had everything planned successfully way past his supposed death" the masked ninja pointed out. "Not all of it. His resurrection, his possession by the demons, merging with one, all this, mating that woman..."

"She is the woman your brother has chosen to spend the rest of his life with, and she him. She accepted every part of him, even the demon, and I suggest you not only accept it, but get to know her if you don't want to drive any more of a wedge between you two than already exists" Kakashi admonished his former student in a firm voice.

Sasuke sighed, his ex-sensei was right. But he had only just got his brother back and now he had to compete with a woman for his attention? "Is THAT why Naruto is upset with me?" this question was said half to himself and half to the other. This time Kakashi sighed "Sasuke, Sasuke, Sasuke, think. When did he start being 'upset' with you? At what point did your...inattention make him freeze you out?"

"When we found Itachi and..."

Kakashi shook his head "no, that's not why. Think, try and remember. What happened afterwards, think about it, replay it in your head. I can't tell you everything" and he was gone, walking away, leaving the youngest male pure-blood Uchiha to his thoughts.
When DID it start, if not when they found his brother and that...Tifa? If Naruto wasn't upset with him for interrupting the two's bonding, then when? Kakashi had told him to think back, so he replayed it in his head, paying closer attention to his mate's reactions.

Kakashi frowned "you know what happened and what they're doing?" Naruto nodded "I've done it before, with Sasuke when WE mated" he looked at him hurt obvious "but he obviously doesn't remember." Sasuke opened his mouth to speak, but the soft pain in the blondes eyes and face said it all. He had done something that had upset his mate, and now was not the time to argue or be stubborn.

Sasuke frowned, could that have been the moment? Naruto is upset with him because he thought he didn't remember the day they fully mated? He should have known better, Sasuke remembered every second of it, it was finally getting what he had worked for for a long time. Naruto didn't remember he had the sharingan activated the entire time so he'd remember every moment.

***********FLASHBACK************

"You don't understand" Naruto said softly, unemotionally "the village needs you, you have to continue the Uchiha line. You can't do that with me."

"I don't care about that!" Sasuke snapped "as far as I'm concerned it can die out, just like Itachi. I won't hunt him anymore, as far as I'm concerned, he's already dead. YOU are all that matters to me, as far as I'm concerned this village can go to hell!"

Naruto looked pained "you don't mean that, Sasuke. This is where you and your entire family were born, this is where your friends are."

Sasuke frowned, Naruto had said "you" and "your", not "ours". Was he distancing himself from the village and people inside it? Even those he cared about, even loved? I have seen the way the villagers treated him now, and despite everything he's done, they STILL see him as an monster. Has he...given up? Did he think he was a monster now because of what he had been forced to do?

He must have expressed his thought, or at least some variant of it because Naruto spoke lowly "they are right."

"No" he denied. "They ARE. What I did to get you back..."

Sasuke seized the blonde's shoulders and pulled him to him, forcing him to look at him. In hindsight it probably wasn't a good idea doing such to not only a trained ninja, but one with animal instincts to boot, but he was confident in the fact Naruto seemed to care more for him then his own life. That he trusted him completely still, despite all he had done to hurt him in the past.

"NO" he said firmly.

When Naruto pulled away, however, he let him go. The other turned his back on him (another sign of his trust) and lowered his head "how would YOU know." He said this softly under his breathe, almost as if convincing himself and asking a question at the same time. Sasuke laughed, and it wasn't a sane laugh. It was filled with self-loathing, sarcasm and anger "you really ARE an knucklehead, dobe. Have you forgotten who you are dealing with?! What I have DONE!? What I HELPED do!?"

"But no matter what you did, you are still human, I am not. I...

"Are you so sure about that?" Sasuke said in an even but gentle voice.
“What?!” Naruto was shocked and spun to face him. Sasuke locked eyes with him and held them to him with sheer will "are you so blind you don't see-or remember all those I hurt, or worse, under HIS command or otherwise, I was so filled with hate, with hurt and pain..." he shook his head slowly, sadly "I never noticed you were the same as me, I was so buried in my own little 'we are Uchiha's-and we don't trust or believe in others' world I barely knew others existed. I saw others outside my clan in terms of either 'what can they do for me\give me\can I take from them' or 'what do they owe me', not as beings like me, just trying to live, to exist, from day to day. Some of them have it easy-or easier, like the villagers. They don't hate you because you're a monster, or the Kyuubi took their loved ones, but you and the fox shook them up, showed them the truth, and they hate you both for THAT."

“What do you mean?” The blonde asked, his body frozen and face expressionless, but something in his voice...

“They grew up thinking they were untouchable, that no one and nothing could touch them. They are surrounded by forest, a wall, ninjas and finally the Hokage. They grew complaisant, believing they couldn’t be touched-were virtually immortal in a way-no one would dare step out of line, the Hokage, ninja and council..." he could barely choke off the hate that came with that last word "...would all deal out swift judgment. No village would DARE attack the village, Kohona would easy repel them, it WAS one of the strongest villages in all the nations. No one would dare." His eyes on Naruto sharpened "but someone did, didn’t they, they DARED to attack, using a power greater than even them. Now that illusion is broken, Naruto, they know the village isn't 100% safe, and they hate it for that, not because it's an demon, or youkai, or once a celestial being, but because it made every being realize they were human after all."

Naruto frowned at him "are you saying they see me as a monster, not because I held the Kyuubi, but because I remind them they are human. I AM a monster..."

“EVERYONE is a monster inside, Naruto, it's just a matter of what you do with it. Yours is just a little more real than some.”

“What do you mean?” the blonde narrowed his eyes at him.

“EVERY single being has an dark side, a shadow, an monster inside of them, even those civilians who mistreat you. Most ignore it or hide it, but some revel in it, using it as an excuse to hurt others. Ninjas especially understand. Have you ever noticed that all but a few of your friends are ninja or ex-ninja? It's because they KNOW what it's like to have a monster inside you, spurring you on to do things you don't want to do, making you sometimes fear yourself, to need control, ANBU and Hunter-nin understand especially. After what happened between us in The Valley Of The End I understand.

Have you ever wondered why Kakashi-sensei never feared you? It had nothing to do with your father, he KNEW what it is like. Every kill drives that shadow closer to the surface. What about Iruka-san? He was willing to sacrifice himself to protect you years ago from Mizuki, yet HE had reason to hate you, Kyuubi killed his parents. He KNOWS that the demon isn't you, because HE knows the crouching demon inside who will do ANYTHING to live and get free."

By the time he had finished, Naruto was standing still, eyes distant as he tried to take in and accept what he had revealed.

Later after they mated Sasuke discovered why this affected him. When Naruto had merged with the fox, he had been confronted by his negative side, the violent, dark almost homicidal version of himself which was the result of a life of pain, sadness, self-doubt and loathing, anger, fear and loneliness. It wanted out, it wanted control, and in a massive fight he had finally overpowered and
won against it.

Naruto had been so scared that that part of himself made him all the more of a freak, having a violent part of him was because of Kyuubi and made him a monster, but to hear everyone had the same thing inside them...

"Is that why some people do so bad things? Because they let their shadow-self consume them?" the question was asked under his breath, but loud enough for Sasuke to hear and said with all the innocence of a child-yet also all the age of an adult way past their physical age.

"I know in the past you were able to sense good in people, it is your gift, but some just aren't worth saving. Do you think Kakashi would have stopped to talk to Zabuza, or Haku? You still saw good in ME, even if no one else did-myself included. You may have bore another being inside, a separate entity, but you are just as human as everyone else, even now."

While Naruto was distracted, his thoughts a mass of confusion, relief and slowly fading pain, Sasuke stepped forward. He gently took the blonde's face in hand and took advantage of his confused state and pressed their lips together. Under his grip he felt the other freeze up, startling like a frightened deer, causing Sasuke to deepen the kiss just to keep him from pulling away.

Finally when he thought it was time he pulled back, but just far enough to see the others face fully. Sasuke's comparison to a deer was spot on, Naruto looked halfway between flight and shock, only surprise kept him rooted to the spot.

"Sasuke you...I..." he tried, blinking almost stupidly at the other.

The Uchiha locked eyes with him "you are mine, Naruto, just as I am yours. We have been since the moment we met-beyond even our birth I think. I knew it from the first time I saw you, I just tried everything to fight against it. You made me feel when I didn't want to and at first I hated you for it..." the blonde looked like he was in pain from that comment, but Sasuke went on "when I was with the snake-nin I realized the truth, I wanted you, NEEDED you, craved your presence" his own face twisted "it's why I didn't end your life that day, I couldn't do it, I couldn't force myself as I had when I was fighting you. It would have made me a true monster if I had of, destroying my only light. I didn't realize then but I may have told everyone-even myself-that I planned on going down with Itachi when we finally fought, but in reality I planned to return to you or for you, whichever one was necessary, and that wouldn't happen if you were dead."

Naruto looked stunned, Sasuke had just told him that he was not only planning on returning to him once he had killed his brother and taking him-as his lover in the least-husband and mate in the most.

"You...you wanted me as your mate? But the clan..."

Sasuke's eyes hardened "I told you, I don't give a shit about the clan. When I ended Itachi, he would have been-as far as I was concerned-the last. I no longer see myself as one of them. I am yours, Naruto, whether that makes me an Uzumaki or an Namikaze, it doesn't matter."

Naruto's eyes softened "No you are still an Uchiha, Sasuke" when the others eyes narrowed on him he quickly explained "because if you are an Uzumaki, that makes ME an Uchiha."

The Uchiha's eyes widened fractionally "does that mean..."

"Yes, teme, I'll move in with you" he laughed, causing the Uchiha to narrow his eyes on him again "you know damned well that's not what I meant!

He laughed louder once then grinned, that same cheeky grin Sasuke so remembered from their
youth and had never seen again since he left. It made him feel infinitely better seeing it now, like everything would be alright again and he could eventually find happiness and forgiveness for his dark past. It was that little piece of home and youth returning to him and he physically felt himself relax at sight of it.

Reaching out to again take the others' face in hand he guided it closer, and this time when their lips touched, the blonde willingly pressed back. After a few seconds of just touching lips, Sasuke opened his under the others and let his tongue come into play, at first just as a lick against the others lips, concerned he had gone too far to fast when the other startled again, but then reassured by the tentative touch of the blondes of his, copying the move.

As he brought his tongue back into play, curling it around Naruto's, he was confused by the others reaction. He acted like he didn't know what he was doing, but surely he had kissed someone before? He HAD hung out with the Hyuga heiress before he had brought him back, surely THEY had done something, even if it was just a kiss.

He HAD to know, if Naruto was a virgin, even in THAT sense...

He pulled slowly back from the kiss, keeping the others head in his hands to keep him from pulling away from him, amused a little by the others face as he slowly came out of the haze to realize he had stopped.

"Naruto" he said softly but firmly, repeating the name until the blonde blinked at him, looked disgruntled and asked "what?!"

"Are you a virgin?" When Naruto immediately withdrew mentally and tried to pull away, he kept his grip, refusing to let go "tell me."

"Let go, teme!"

"Not until you answer the question."

"LET ME GO!"

"No" he ignored the building power burning at him as the blonde's chakra grew with his feelings. If he let go now, he would loose. Naruto would withdraw from him, thinking he was being mocked. He would NOT allow that too happen. Naruto was HIS and only his.

"Answer the question, dobe" he said firmly. "No!"

"Why are you so determined not to tell me?"

"Why do you want to know so badly?!" the blonde shot back, wrenching his head free and moving to put distance between them, mentally and physically. He narrowed his eyes at this action "because you are mine, dobe, and I want to know who touched what was mine." The blonde's eyes narrowed at him and as he watched-for some reason-he flew into a rage "I AM YOURS?! HOW DARE YOU?! ALL MY LIFE BEING REJECTED AND TREATED LIKE WASTE BY YOU, WAITING FOR YOU TO ACCEPT YOUR CONNECTION, AND NOW THAT IT'S CONVENIENT YOU EXPECT ME TO BE READY?!"

He frowned as he analyzed the others words. If he HAD been in a relationship, he would have said something like "you expect me to wait for you after it was YOU who left ME", but instead he had brought up the fact HE had left HIM. The blonde was trying to distract him off subject by starting a fight about Sasuke leaving the village to go to Orochimaru. If he let him have the subject change by defending his decision, all his hard work here to seduce his dobe would be ruined. What he had
done in the past didn't matter here and now, it was the present that was important.

"You haven't, have you. No one has touched you since I left." Still in his rage, Naruto slipped up "no one has touched me THAT way EVER! You're the first I let willingly touch me since that day at the academy! Who wants to sleep with the demon!"

Instead of questioning why he never slept with the Hyuga heiress when she had obviously worshiped the ground he had walked on, he seized onto something ELSE the blonde had said "WILLINGLY touch you?! Naruto have you been.." he swallowed a lump in his throat, the very though making the avenger and shadow in him arise, screaming together, one to avenge his loved one's hurt, the other that someone had touched what belonged to him, had tried, and maybe succeeded to claim what was HIS.

When Naruto didn't answer except to turn his back on him, he found himself grabbing him from behind and spinning him around, shaking his shoulders roughly so he could growl in an not-quite human voice "tell me, tell me who I have to KILL for taking what was mine" then barely restraining himself he added "who hurt you? Naruto, they need to be punished."

He sighed "they HAVE been, Sas, they are dead now, forget it."

"Who was it? What did they do to you?" he growled. "You don't want to know."

"Why won't you tell me?!!" he exclaimed, frustrated. Naruto looked up and met his eyes with his blue ones, face twisted in anger "BECAUSE YOU LOVED YOUR FAMILY!!!" then realized what he had said and immediately looked away. Sasuke released him and stumbled back shocked, horrified "a member of my clan....." he couldn't believe it, his mind whirring. If one of his clan did such a thing it would have to have been before their slaughter, making Naruto.....

He wanted to throw up.

Unless....

"Itachi" his eyes narrowed in hate, but Naruto shook his head "it wasn't Itachi. In fact he was the one who saved me from your clan member. He was just an new ANBU then but he often watched over me. He said he knew we were friends and you needed friends outside the clan. He said he KNEW we were supposed to be together always, he could see it, but we wouldn't understand until it was over. He killed the guy and got rid of the body to protect me. When I learned later he had killed everyone except you I knew....." he lowered his head and mumbled "I had thought he had spared you for me, because even insane he had remembered that connection he sensed. And, maybe, for himself as well."

His mind was a whir of chaotic thoughts. Itachi had killed a fellow clan member to protect Naruto. He had known Naruto was destined to be with him. He had slaughtered the clan but left HIM alive, why? For Naruto? He loved him? Why had he tried to get him to hate, if that was true?

Maybe the one who had killed the clan was still partly sane, which was why he let him live. Part of him still loved him. Maybe the next time he had seen him was after he had totally lost it. Another quiet thought crept in which he had immediately tried to destroy "maybe he destroyed the clan because they knew what that member had done to Naruto. Maybe they were ALL in on it."

No, he WOULDN'T believe that, his mother had been too sweet, too kind to accept someone touching a child that way. He looked at Naruto, he had to clarify "how do you know it was Itachi?" The blonde started ticking off on his fingers "he is and was the only ANBU I know of that size and shape, only one ANBU I knew wore a crow mask, he often was there, protecting me, his voice was
the same and lastly his scent was the same."

This clenched it for him.

Repressing his turmoil of thoughts he concentrated instead on his destined mate "what did he do to you?"

"It doesn’t matter now."

"Then it shouldn't matter if you tell me" he took his head in his hands again, locked eyes with him and said softly, firmly "tell me." Naruto sighed and closed his eyes, gathering his thoughts before saying softly "he touched me."

"Where?" The blonde looked at him again "everywhere, but that was all he managed before Itachi stopped him." He drew the other into a deep kiss, showing him it didn’t effect what he felt about him "is that all?" Naruto managed to nod through his clouded emotions. "Itachi stopped him before he could go any further."

His already compounded emotions regarding his brother was increased by an overwhelming gratitude that his brother had saved his mate that fate. So he pushed it all aside and instead concentrated on the here and now, seducing his dobe. His lips were back on the others, pressed firmly, demanding a return action from his chosen mate. He pulled the other closer, pulling their bodies flush together, one hand around the others waist, the other reaching down between them, trying to prove to him HE wanted to sleep with 'a demon'.

The other gasped against his lips as his seeking hand found what it sort and after a second to analyze it and make sure it was what he thought—a good sound, he continued. Naruto moaned as he moved his hand, stroking and running his fingers up and down the material of his chosen’s pants, an coil of dark satisfaction at his reaction running through him.

The blonde trembled, pushing himself closer, his hips starting to push insistently into his hand, his hands first scrabbling for purchase on his back, then settling on his hips so he could pull him forward further so they lower bodies met.

Both moaned into each others mouths as they met and suddenly it wasn’t enough for him. He broke the kiss, lips locked to the others cheek before slowly trailing along the cheek and around the jaw towards the ear. As he moved his right hand grasped the tab of that orange and black jacket (once they were mated, he was going to get HIS blonde out of those ghastly clothes. Humm, maybe some blue, black and/or white) and slowly pulled it down, opening the jacket and helping him shrug out of it.

Underneath his dobe wore only an mesh sleeveless shirt of black, hugging his curves and stretched tight over his chest and the top of his stomach and his mouth watered at the sight of those washboard abs, slim but muscular chest and well muscled arms.

He never thought he’d be drooling over another males body. Oh well, life was strange like that.

His fingers of his left hand slowly reached up, touching the others chest and pecs, letting his thumbs flick the nipples there and was surprised when he gasped loudly and his body shuddered. He would expect such an reaction from a woman, not a man.

"Sensitive there are we, dobe?" he murmured, amused.

"Sh...shut up, teme" Naruto only managed to stutter as he continued his work on the chest area. He grinned, pleased with himself and let his mouth replace his hands, letting them wander down to the
others hips, then paused. This didn't feel quite right, something told him this wasn't the place for this. Pulling his mate into his arms he preformed the hand seals behind back.

They disappeared in a cloud of chakra.

When they reappeared it was in the master bedroom of the Uchiha compound. Without letting his mate go, he activated the seals around the area, meaning no one would hear or sense anything that happened there.

"Why here?" he looked back at the blonde to find him looking around them, just moving his head because he-like Sasuke himself-didn't want to let go.

"There are protection and silencing seals here, so no one will sense or stop what we are about to do. Father told me it was to ensure our privacy from others outside the clan, so our jutsu's could be practiced in peace."

Of course now Sasuke knew the truth, it was so his clan could plan their coup of Kohona without anyone else knowing about it. And there was also the fact that he was dominant here, this was Uchiha ground, HIS territory, it would help him dominate his other here. But this wasn't about who was in power, it was about who had the will to be always the protector and who would just let go and be protected.

Naruto had always been alone, an orphaned child thrown too fast into a cruel world. HIS past had ensured that he was both an protector and avenger, an dominate being. In a round-about way, Itachi's action that night had ensured he could and WOULD be able to forever protect his mate. That he would always ensure his other was loved and shielded from ALL harm.

After all, even in the BDSM business, it wasn't about power, it was about trust, trusting someone to protect, care and guide you, not abuse and hurt you. A good dom was someone who understood it wasn't about doing whatever you wanted to someone, it was about showing someone your complete trust in them, by letting them control you in such an vulnerable way.

As Naruto was part of the animal kingdom now, it was all about domination and submission. His demon-or rather animal side-would fight him for control, demanding IT be in control as the bearer of such strength, but if he wanted this relationship to go any further than it was, HE needed to be the dominate, because in the end Naruto didn't have it in him to be the one in control.

He needed to be loved and protected, something told him that if Naruto was in control he would become warped, wrong. Someone like him couldn't handle the power right. HE on the other hand...yes, he was dark and had had become warped just like Naruto would have become, but that had been the wrong situation, he wasn't meant for THAT power in THAT situation, this was RIGHT and he knew he had his mate to tell him if he was wrong. ONLY his mate, no one else-least of all those asshole villagers or bastard council-could tell him.

His attention shifted from morbid thoughts to what his body was doing, his hands stripping his soon-to-be mate of his mesh shirt so his lips and tongue could tease and play with a pair of nipples in front of him, dark in color to compliment the tanned skin, his eyes finding it fascinating to watch his own pale skinned hands moving over those tanned hips towards the low-slung black pants.

Before the other could do more than gasp he had unfastened them, allowing the material to fall to the floor, revealing... He raised an eyebrow "commando, dobe?" "Sh...shut up...teme" the blonde stuttered.
"Don't get me wrong, I like it, the idea that you are there, only a single layer of cloth hiding you from me turns me on. Even better if I could I would have you walking around naked, ready for me anytime. The only trouble with that is other people seeing you" his eyes narrowed in dark anger "NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE YOU LIKE THAT, YOU ARE MINE, MINE ALONE." He blinked a few times as a dirty thought occurred to him and his grin was dark "that doesn't mean you can't do so around here".

"Teme...?" the other stutter, shocked by the idea and image of the Uchiha making him walk around the compound all the time, naked. However he grinned sardonically when he felt, despite his obvious shock, the blonde react to the image, "Find something...exciting, dobe?" The blonde blushed and moved his hands to his front to hide himself. But he grabbed his arms and gently pulled them away, "don't hide from me, I want to know what do excites you, Naruto." The blonde hesitated then nodded seriously.

In reward for his trust (and submission), he dropped to his knees in front of him.

"What are you..." Naruto sucked in a sharp breath and did an full-body shiver as he got to work on further arousing his mate. "Sa...Sasuke" he moaned, head back as he gripped the others shoulders in an effort to remain standing as his knees went weak with his reaction. He grinned, pleased with his reaction and continued, his smile widening when he heard the words start to fall from the others lips, first just words of wonder and confusion at his own bodies reactions ("oh dobe, you truly ARE an innocent, aren't you"), then cries of enjoyment and pleas for him to continue.

However he KNEW if he went any longer, it would be over before it could begin. And that COULDN'T happen.

So he released him and slowly stood again. "Please, Sas" Naruto begged, face twisting in pain and fear he had upset him for something he had done. That he had done something to cause him to somehow rejected him. But he just grasped his head firmly and turned it, making him face him. "Dobe, look at me." With slightly teary eyes the blonde turned to look at him. He went on "you did nothing wrong. You will NEVER do anything wrong to me."

"Then why'd you stop?!

"Because this is your first time, and I'm not going to rush it." The blonde blushed again then decided to cover it with anger "I'm not a girl, teme!"

"No, you're not" he agreed, one hand stroking him below and causing him to gasp and close his eyes, head back as he rocked his hips forward into his hand needily "you're MY mate, MY other half, MINE to protect and care for, no one else." He lowered his voice, making it go husky "mine to love." Naruto jerked as if struck "what did you just say?!"

"Mine, mine to love" he growled again. The former demon vessel looked at him with wide eyes "you...you love me?"

He growled angrily "of course I do, dobe, you're mine, of course I love you. We were meant for each other, YOU make me feel again and guide me, I protect and love you." Before the blonde could spoil the mood by mentioning the past, he pressed his mouth back to his and silenced him with a kiss. When he felt he was suitably distracted he pulled back and looked him in the eyes "on the bed, dobe, let me pleasure you in ways you never have before."

Nodding the other moved to crawl onto the bed, settling himself among the pillows on his back, watching him undress, totally unaware of the blush growing across his face at what they were about to do and the sight of all that pale muscular skin being revealed to him. Once done he moved onto
the end of the bed, choosing to crawl up the bed on his hands and knees towards his mate, like a wildcat stalking prey, smirking in satisfaction when he saw his mates eyes move to his arousal, blush deeper and jump to his eyes.

On the way past, he paused to pull something from the bedside cabinet before ending up over his mates still body, lowering his head just enough to kiss him deeply, wiping away that silly little blush of embarrassment to become one of arousal once again. Once they released each other for air, he slowly lowered his body down on top of the other, hearing him gasp at the contact and letting him use his arms to stroke and arouse once again.

Slowly he coaxed the other to open his legs, allowing him to lay between them, rewarding the blonde, and himself, with digging his feet in to the bed and pushing his body upwards, moving his ninja-trained body in an sensual ripple, rubbing their bodies together wherever they touched. His mate moaned at the feel of his body rubbing against him, something inside him shivering in satisfaction at the contact. HE sensed this and realized it spoke to both his mates human side-which craved contact-ANY physical contact-he didn't receive what he needed as a kid-and his fox craved the contact as well, it meant family and/or clan.

He repeated the move, moaning into his partners mouth, this time shivering OUTSIDE as their arousal's rubbed together. It wasn't just the act, it was the knowledge his soon-to-be mate physically as well as mentally found him just as arousing as he did to him. It was the confirmation he needed, Naruto wanted him just as much as he did him.

After a couple more moves the same to tease the other as well as himself he moved on.

Distracting the other with his mouth back on his chest, he moved to sit up slightly, his hands busy with his work. Once he was ready he threw the object carelessly off the side of the bed and moved back to touch the others body while murmuring his name. When the blonde finally looked at him he moved so their faces were close together and spoke to his softly "Dobe, are you sure about this? Once I start, I can't stop, I want you too much."

The blonde smiled, reached up to take his shoulders in his hands and before he knew what was going on, he had rolled them over so Naruto was on top, becoming the aggressor in their actions, mouth plastered to him and hands moving over his body. He let his mate have control for a few seconds then narrowed his eyes and all but growled at him.

To his surprise the other immediately went still, submitting with a whine, even baring his throat.

After blinking away his shock and surprise he took back control and after getting him back under him he tried again "what we do next is going to be uncomfortable, dobe, just so you know, but only for a few seconds. Then I SWEAR it will feel better" he lowered his voice into a growl "I swear it will." Naruto grinned widely at him "I've had your chadori through my chest, teme, NOTHING you do can hurt worse than that."

Ignoring the good-natured jibe at him he pressed his mouth to his chosen and for a few minutes they kissed while his hand wondered downwards, touching him in an area that made the other wince. However he distracted him with deepening his kiss and using his tongue to force him into play so he wouldn't think about what else was happening.

When he was done he moved to position himself and pulled back long enough to look into his soon-to-be mates eyes "you are mine, Naruto, I won't let anyone else hurt you. I...love you." Naruto's smile changed to a moan as he slowly pressed forward into the man under him. After the initial first burn, both crying out but for different reasons, their mouth met again and he waited, trying to keep control until his mate was ready.
Finally he moaned and his hips moved almost hesitantly.

Relieved he trailed his hands down his partners sides and began to move, his hands fluttering over his partners bodies, keeping him buried in pleasure as he did. Soon his own began to grow and he fought the urge to bury himself in his own pleasure instead of his lovers.

For a few minutes he just concentrated on having what he had finally been trying to get for so long, his dobe, his mate, his chosen and destined, HIS to protect and care for. At one point his eyes rolled in his head at the feelings surrounding him. His mate's chakra was leaking into him, bringing warmth, feelings and desire more than his own.

It was growing, that chakra, making his desire and pleasure go through the roof, making him almost drunk with power and the strength of it all. What was happening?

"Wha..." he managed to gasp, it was pushing into him now through his pores and flesh, burning at the curse mark still on his shoulder, both energizing him and giving him an almost high. All he had ever wanted was the power to kill his brother, but now he had renounced his vengeance for his mate, he had found it. And all along it was IN his mate, he should have listened to him long ago. He vowed from then on, his mates word was law, he would listen and while he may not believe everything he said, as he was prone to exaggerate and sometimes make things up, he would always defend his word.

Naruto blinked up at him "Do you trust me?" and locking eyes with him he said without hesitation "yes." This seemed to be the right thing to say because the others eyes lit up in happiness and he raised his head to kissed him. Once finished he laid back down properly, letting his lover have control and slowly the chakra surrounded them, covering them almost like a bubble-like the chakra cloak Naruto sometimes had through Kyuubi.

The chakra wasn't red, though, but violet, almost purple, like a mix between Naruto's and kyuubi. And now it was coaxing his, almost like it was getting him to play, trying to get his to come out. Trusting him to know what he was doing, he let go of his chakra, letting it out, cautiously at first, but the more the blonde coaxed his, the more he let play, glad the activated seals would hide...whatever they were doing.

The lick of their energy, fire to wind, against each other, feeding each other and merging in an elemental level also fed their feelings AND desire, causing an circle as this ALSO fed their chakra back at them.

It drove both of them on, higher and higher, desire and pleasure and love and need and desire and pleasure and love and need. The chakra built as their emotions did to almost unbearable levels, but he could do nothing about it, he needed to trust his mate no matter what, and he did.

As their pleasure started to reach it's peak, so did their chakra, building to such incredible heights he distantly began to worry if they would survive it, if HE would survive it. Also if the seals would hold against this.

He moaned, digging his elbows and knees into the bedding for better purchase. His lover matched him in enthusiasm, arms surrounding his waist and pulling him closer, almost as desperate as he felt. The power was almost at a point he was SURE it would either kill them both or make them something...he wasn't even sure of.

Under him Naruto panted his name and instinctively he knew what he was asking for, so he bent his head to lock lips once more. The blonde's arms surrounded him, his legs rose-almost like he was making sure he didn't move away from him-and when he opened his mouth to him he gasped as the
flow entered him from even there. It was as if every tenketsu point in his dobe's body was pouring energy into him.

He was too close, the power surrounding and pouring into him, his own wild like a fireball, the pleasure and claiming his dobe, the knowledge he was finally his, they were too much and ripping his head away he roared, his entire body going stiff as he did. He was only able to move forward, once, twice more before he felt himself literally pour everything he had and was into his mate.

He had enough consciousness left to feel his mate also stiffen, cry out as well before the surge of chakra got too much and everything went black.

Naruto had thought that he'd know what was going on with his brother and his chosen due to similar surges in chakra, but THEIR mating was different to his brothers. For instance—there had been an THIRD power among them he had felt and although it was non-threatening, feeling his brother's chakra flare, the woman's mana and this mysterious power at once—what else WAS he to think?

He frowned, he had to seek out his mate and straighten this out, no matter what it took or how he tried to change the subject. He had to show him he remembered every bit, even if he had to use Tsukuyomi to prove it.

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