In Another Life

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Summary

Their sacrifice would not be in vain, he would save them all from the corruption and selfishness of them all. He would fix it or die trying! Belive it! Yaoi boxXboy Don't like then your loss KakashiXNaruto (mentions of Naruto X Shikamaru) Time travel (Smut free version on ff.net)
Chapter 1

In Another Life

Chapter 1: Save Us

Naruto held regret. His body held all the bijuu and tragedy befell him upon the moment it happened. It started with the change of his hair. His blonde he had grown in his seventeen years of life changed to a startling red like garnets. It was done once Kurama was freed from the seal and combined with his newfound junchuriki in a bid for them to live in the desperate moments of war. Yet nothing hurt quiet as much as the loss he would face or the decisions he had to make now that he was facing the precipice of uncertainty before him.

It felt like he couldn't breathe when he watched his lover collapse. It was the final strike against Naruto that his now retreating enemy could muster. His heart was pounding and if he had any doubts about their plan it was gone in that moment.

"Shika!" It was a lot of strain on his already abused body, but Naruto caught the genius before he could fall. His blue gaze blurred, and Naruto willed the tears away. For a moment he almost called for Sakura only to remember both she and Lee had died the day previous. Naruto cringed away from the image of lifeless eyes and cold bodies choosing to focus on the gasping one in his arms.

They had been caught unprepared, just after the war all the other nations turned on them wanting to steal away Naruto. They were all hungry for his powers it made the once blonde turned red head regret taking in all the other tailed beast and learning fuinjutsu. The only ally now that all the other bijuu containers had died was Gaara. Suna had stood strong by their allies' side and Naruto was being protected by Gaara who had lost everything and was about to give him so much more. Though they had been begging for Naruto to do the task they lay on his shoulders. Naruto now was the only one who could accomplish this for them and holding the slowly dying man in his arm's he could no longer doubt them.

"Naruto, we have to go to Sasuke now. It's time." Naruto's dark red hair soaked up the blood of his lover as he held him despite his body's protest. Naruto lifted the fading man in his arms and the trio rushed off to the former hideout of Sasuke when he used to be on the run as a missing nin. Sasuke stood in the middle of a hidden room as the trio slipped behind a barrier. Sasuke held his side blood was leaking and he strode toward Gaara looking him over before the pair embraced in a hug. They kept distance from the seals that lined the far wall and floor.

Their romance never went beyond a shy kiss and Naruto wondered of it was the harshness of a war that drew the pair to one another or rather kept them so far apart. Naruto had never thought Gaara and Sasuke would have found something romantic in one another but looking at them there was only sorrow of what if's. Though Naruto's gaze was focused on Shikamaru who refused to allow Naruto to bind his wounds. It was pointless and they both knew it.

Naruto cried as he fell to his knees before he gently settled Shikamaru against a wall.

"I miss your blonde hair sometimes." Shikamaru said as he coughed up blood. Naruto had let out a harsh laugh pressing his forehead to Shikamaru's as he cried. The shadow ninja stared into the deep blue eyes of Naruto that now seemed to have encompassed looking like a maelstrom of pain. Shikamaru pressed forward and they kissed.

Naruto could taste the man's blood on his lips, and he could only cry harsher when they separated.
"Save us Naruto. Make sure we are so powerful that no one would stand against us or Suna. Take out the Akatsuki before they could weaken us." Shikamaru's eyes softened. "Stop the war by making the leaf so powerful that a threat against us would be submersible to suicide." Naruto was nodding his head making sure to offer that power to Suna in his mind as well.

"Then I want you to find love." Naruto furiously shook his head still unable to speak past his tears. He couldn't imagine loving anyone else other that Shikamaru and even if their plan worked the demon container would vow lifelong chastity and ensure the younger versions of themselves could still find love. He would make sure a version of his Shika would get his troublesome blonde.

"Naruto, no it will be Haru now won't it." Shikamaru's laugh was choked by blood but he still smiled through it. "My sunlight, the only sunshine in my shadowy world. Grant me my last wish and don't be stubborn. I'm on my death bed here, you aren't allowed to say no, them's the rules." He tried to smile through the pain etched into Naruto's expression. "Younger me gets to keep the blonde. I know you will make sure that love story goes on, but I want you to find happiness. I love you and won't put up with you being stubborn right now. Let me nag you one last time. Do it, for me. Do it or I could never forgive you." Shikamaru was crying now as Naruto openly wept his shimmering red hair fell forward and Shikamaru could see it would be troublesome for his Naruto to handle. Shikamaru tugged out the leather strap that held his hair. His own dark locks fell far past his shoulders and his hands worked pulling the garnet tresses into a messy tail.

"Say it Naruto. Promise me." Shikamaru held the weeping face in his hands. It was always strange to see his Naruto with the vibrant red hair. It seemed no matter what his Naruto could never be subtle. Blonde or red hair the teen just couldn't help himself it seemed.

"I promise Shika." Naruto finally said but it was squeezed past his lips like it hurt him to say it. Shikamaru nodded satisfied by that. Once Naruto made a promise he never went back and that comforted him wholeheartedly. He couldn't stand him to be isolated ever again.

"Sasuke, Gaara we have to do this before I die." Naruto whimpered he had never understood why him, but everyone had faith in him. Naruto knew how to inspire and insight strength. It had to be him no other could accomplish this. They had to get to a younger Naruto and have his graduating class be seen as a threat to the outside world. They had to ensure and change so much but the only one who could was Naruto. The person who lived through all the problems who everyone confided in, who could use their sacrifice and use it for the better. Naruto was their best bet to circumvent the disaster that they lived through.

Sasuke and Gaara went to each side of the Nara and lifted him gently. They had stayed silent through the exchange saying their final wishes to the world. To each other and praying for Naruto to succeed and come out of it still Naruto.

"Naruto,save my clan. You can save Itachi before Danzo pushes him to act. Only do it if you can get away with it safely. We need you more than we need my past self's happiness." Sasuke said and the young man took a scroll with his clan's plans of takeover all stemming from Danzo and shoved it at the garnet haired man.

Shikamaru sighed "We don't even know how far back he will go." Sasuke shrugged.

"We're giving up three lives, it better be far enough." Sasuke said muttering ignoring the dark glare from the Nara who was bleeding rapidly now.

"Save me Naruto. Use your sealing on me before I have a chance to lose the bijuu." Gaara's soft seafoam eyes looked into Naruto's and they both nodded.
"Do it Naruto you are our Hokage you have to make this sacrifice. Now." Shikamaru said and quickly the man of seventeen years pulled out his ink brush and created seals over the blood over the dirt over the wounds. The trio watched Naruto move to stand in the center of his seal while they stood on the outskirts of it. They had been debating this as a last-ditch plan, the issue with this forbidden jutsu of the Uzumaki clan was a life had to be sacrificed. The last three of both the leaf and Suna stood before Naruto offering their lives so their fates could be changed.

Naruto focused and fought through the tears and pain. He couldn't think that these were his friends that one was his lover that they were like family to him. With the final stroke Naruto called forth at the powers of his tailed beast with tears in his eyes he watched as he began to glow and both Sasuke and Gaara slit their own throats while Shikamaru struggled and dug his hand into his open wound. Their blood pooled around Naruto's feet. Sasuke's sword was thrown the scabbard and handle covered in the blood of the men who sacrificed their lives and Naruto gripped it tight enough that it hurt his hands.

With their sacrifice and the power Naruto was gifted a blur of light pulled away the heart broken man.

The rumors had started with the disappearance of scrolls and artifacts stolen away by a powerful red head. Anything tied to the Uzumaki line was taken in the matter of day's like a ghost of the line had come to reclaim the formerly pillaged items.

Rumors followed the tale of the red headed man. A man who stopped war, who felled great foes. Who saved children and people of the tailed beast. A shinobi that appeared out of air and challenged and defeated missing nin collecting bounties on their heads or returning other's back to their villages alive to be tried.

He was known as Haru and S classed shunobi that appeared in bingo books. They called him the Bloody Typhoon. He had the hair of an Uzumaki and the talents of their line as well. A seal master who traveled and saved the demon containers. A bounty hunter that knew how to battle against missing nin as if he could read into their future moves. The man wore the clothing of the Uzumaki but denied telling others of his surname. He was Haru a mystery who saved other's out of the kindness of his heart. Yet vicious to those that wanted to thrive in other's pain. Many other hidden villages were seeking out the mysterious man. Hoping for him to be added to their strength.

It was not all rumor either. The Bloody Typhoon had gone out of his way to save the Hyuga heiress Hinata from being kidnapped. They avoided a political disaster all because he had given a warning to the Hyuga clan head about the plot. When they found and captured the ninja responsible their village had claimed no tie to the would be kidnappers. Many had thought he would come seeking repayment for his deed but years past and the mysterious man was rumored to be onto a new task of helping the young demon vessel of Suna.

Hiruzen sighed, they needed to bring this man to the village, if he was who the third suspected. Rumors of his possible tied to the fallen city of Uzushiogakure, never from the man's mouth but from those who claim to have seen him. The possibility of another living Uzumaki was something they needed. His loyalty could be obtained for the good of the village but if Hiruzen was being honest he wanted it for little Naruto's benefit. The scorn the anger the hate aimed at the young Naruto was unsettling as it was. The boy had to be removed from the orphanage for the caretakers were a danger to the young boy's life. He was constantly watched by Anbu but the civilian council refused to allow any other to help the child. Only family could intervene only another Uzumaki.

Yet Uzumaki was a name that could be a threat to the village and Naruto as well. They were a clan that respected the position of the jinchuriki and he could resent the leaf for the fall of his village.
Especially since it was an S-class shinobi. He was powerful but was he dangerous. Would he kidnap the young Naruto? Yet he had only done good for villages. Even in the systematic take down of rising threats from missing nin across the elemental nations.

With such a reputation it was a surprise for the leaf to get another warning from him. At first when receiving a letter with the Uzumaki seal, Hiruzen had assumed it was going to be a threat against the village. He had helped the Huygan clan but confirmed rumors was the man had a soft spot for children. It didn’t change the tension that could still be between the leaf and Uzumaki clan. The Uzushiogakure was under the protection of Konohagakure when it fell. They had arrived too late to save the village and any who survived had hidden themselves away.

The third Hokage feared this S class shinobi wanted revenge but was surprised to be given a warning. A man who owed them nothing but offer to aid even if from a distance.

'To Sarutobi Hiruzen. I write you to heed a warning. Rumors of the Uchiha rebellion had found my ears. Do not damn them, but do not sit idle. Fault their rebellion on a man named Danzo and elders tied to the Uchiha clan. Place those responsible on trial. Do not allow Danzo to get his hands on Itachi Uchiha or your choices will be taken from your hands. There is a secondary scroll hidden in a seal placed behind my given name.’ A simple Haru was signed at the bottom of the letter and for once the third was at a loss of what to say. What was Danzo plotting with the Uchiha elite's?

"Bear." An anbu appeared before the hokage bowed before the man.

"Find Jiraiya. Bring him to me." With a wave the anbu disappeared and Sarutobi released the scroll hidden within. Hiruzen noted the Uchiha seal on it but the seal was expertly broken. Opening it his worst fears were confirmed.

The Uchiha would have to pay and it would not be pretty, but they would stomp out a rebellion before it could take place. It would bring shame to the clan but it would keep other's from daring to insight rebellion.

Sarutobi read the missive once more. Danzo seemed like he had not taken heed to Hiruzen's past warning. They had been friends for many years, but the village of the leaf came first, he would not be undermined. "Hound. Koi." Two more anbu appeared before the man.

"Hound to are to keep Itachi Uchiha safe and away from Danzo. Koi, you are to find a trusted team and bring me any damning evidence against Danzo. Go." The two masked figures spit up to do their task. Hiruzen would not let the young ten-year-old jonin be used by his friend.

He needed to meet this Haru. His eyes looked intently at the Uzumaki seal that once held the scroll closed. The older man hoped he was part of the scattered clan of Kushina. Especially with the young Naruto now living on his own for his own safety. How and where did this Haru find this information. Why warn the hidden village? What did he want?

Jiraiya had heard many rumors of a red headed seal master. The man Haru had made quite a name for himself in the shinobi world. He had saved villages and taken down S-rank missing nin, helped the vessels of bijuu and created seals to protect many of them.

The toad sage was impressed, but also flabbergasted to be faced with the man. It had been an accident on Jiraiya's part. He had only returned from his summons with Hiruzen. He had orders to bring this mystery ninja to the leaf.

The Hokage felt he owed the mysterious man for saving their village from a civil war and saving a clan from annihilation. The Hyuga clan was more than eager to allow the S class shinobi into the
The leaf had horrified and shocked to find the news of what exactly was happening under the surface. Itachi had been saved from the clutches of a man who manipulated many to do dark deeds. Danzo had already gotten his free pass after trying to kill the third and for this second crime and the crime of stealing away children to become part of root he was sentenced to death.

More proof of his manipulation even went into the exploitation of Uchiha elders to press them into the attack on the leaf.

For that the Uchiha clan was shamed and many of the rebellion leaders were tried and jailed. The rest of the clan realized they were close to being destroyed by the whims of a man when all his plans and wrong doings were brought into the light of day. The remaining members of the clan promised complete loyalty beyond that day. The possible annihilation of the Uchiha clan had tempered any offence they had felt.

All this crisis averted due to a warning from a mysterious man who had the Uzumaki seal. Yet this so-called mystery man who was only known by the glowing garnet of hair was found within hours of Jiraiya's search.

Jiraiya focused on the red head who he happened upon. The man's hair which shimmered like a garnet stone was true Uzumaki fashion. What surprised the toad sage was how the young man looked. He was also small thin and beautiful like the wife of his dead student. Vibrant eyes of blue and pale skin that he almost mistook him for a woman. Wearing clothing in a shade of dark and light blues, a kimono styled top covered a netted undershirt both tucked into dark black shinobi pants. Seals were inked into the man's skin from the netted black shirt Jiraiya was almost envious of the beauty in the man's funijutsu. It was delicate work that the toad sage wanted to take time to study.

He wore a worn and weathered headband that hailed from Uzushiogakure even bearing the traditional long hanging pearl earrings with their clan insignia etched into it.

This man was pale, petite and terribly short and young yet there was no mistake this was the man he was searching for. The only other notable marking's he had were similar to Naruto's facial lines. Had that always been a trait of the Uzumaki line? It must have been a trait of Kushina's line if Naruto bore them then this man Haru had to be a close relative to Jiraiya's Godson.

The man looked very similar to his godson despite the difference in coloring. It was almost as if he could see the ghost of what Naruto could grow into in this man.

Though watching the red head fight off the advances of a drunk man in the bar distracted the toad sage from thought. It was amusing but what better opportunity did the sage have to get his target to be willing to heard him out.

He had just started on his journey to search for the man, had gone to his favorite bar in the fourth village over near wave country. He had hoped to use his spy network to search for the red headed stranger Haru. Not at all to be faced with the man being fondled by a drunk.

The mysterious and deadly Haru who had earned the moniker bloody typhoon was peacefully trying to tell a man he himself was a man. It was interesting to see him dodging the grabby hands aiming for his small body.

Jiraiya held back a chuckle and jumped forward surprising the pair.
"Haru you naughty minx, I leave you for one second and you run off with another man. I'm taking you home to teach ya a lesson." The sanin said making the red head sputter and blush as he was pulled out of the bar and away from the spying eyes and ears. For a bounty hunter the man was ridiculously complacent in being led around like a toddler.

Jiraiya wondered what to do with the strange man who was willingly following him still in awe and looking as if he was about to burst into tears. The toad sage led them to an open field and let the young man go. He eyed the read head up and down. This very small and young man was in bingo books across all the elemental nations an S-class shinobi took down missing nin and dangers against bijuu. Yet this guy couldn't be any older than eighteen.

"Well kid, you weren't what I expected." Jiraiya had become a bit guarded. Sure, he had helped the leaf, but this man was still an unknown and powerful shinobi.

"Well I'm not into older men but thank you for saving me." The red head snickered making Jiraiya growl.

"Oi! I am the Legendary Sanin the great and powerful Toad Sage Jiraiya!" Jiraiya jumped into a pose before the teen who fell over pointing at the white-haired man and laughing making his grand gesture become a huge waste.

"Well you sure are different from what I though you would be oh toad sage Jiraiya." Haru snickered eyeing the older man. The happiness at seeing his former mentor alive was a soothing balm to his soul. He had only been in this time for a year and after resting to recuperate his chakra, Haru followed the plan given by his former lover and friends. Not a moment was wasted in the year he had made a name for himself.

Haru only had one shot and he was not going to waste it. His Shikamaru had been the tactical genius and the Naruto of this time would appreciate it as much as Haru did before the pair were separated. Haru would not let this time follow the path his own did.

This ninja was nothing like Jiraiya had expected. He was open, friendly and personable. The red head straightened and sighed looking back at the pouting sanin.

"What does the great Toad sage need with a simple traveler." The red head was tweaking his clothing and pulling his long red hair up tying it messily with a leather strap. The teen plopped himself onto the grassy field eyeing the older man.

"My Hokage wishes to extend a thank you for saving our village from catastrophe." Jiraiya eyed the casual young man. Though the Uzumaki's land had been destroyed he could be a descendant of the almost decimated Uzumaki clan.

"I see, and you are here to be assured that I am worthy of that thanks." Haru's blue gaze met the with Jiraiya and there was a look the older man couldn't read. Almost as if he were calculating something. Weighing the pros and cons of something before nodding to himself. The teen hopped up surprising the older man. "If you join me on the last of my journey, I will meet your Hokage. I mean you did pretty much save my ass back there." Haru said laughing before looking outward almost as if hearing something. "Though you will have to make the decision quickly."

Jiraiya looked at the teen oddly but then he vaguely felt the flow of Chakra headed their way and the red head was running.

"H-hey brat!." Jiraiya shouted chasing after the strange teen. Who the sage discovered was a freaking talented sensor.
Jiraiya followed the kid deeper into the land and Haru had guided him deep into the ruined lands of Uzushio only stopping when they reached the center of the town. The teen plopped down to the ground facing the sanin and he seemed to have a look in his eyes.

"So, toad sage who don't I explain exactly who I am." The smile on the teens lips didn't foster a good feeling but Jiraiya nodded. He wanted to ensure that despite his offered help he would be safe to his village.

"Have you heard of the Uzumaki interrogation technique?" The red head seemed almost eager and Jiraiya nodded.

"There is a seal that allows one to see your every memory, thought, and emotive. It bares your soul to whoever is the interrogator and every secret you have will be known to the interrogator" Haru brightened at Jiraiya's quick explanation.

"Correct! Now do you know how to draw the seal?" Haru smirked this time like he knew something the sage didn't.

"I do know it." The sage felt like he was missing something the red head wasn't reacting how you would expect an S class shinobi to act.

"If it would ease your worries you may use the technique on me. I will even willingly offer up my blood for the ceremony." Haru quickly pulled out a small jar and bowl. He poured a small amount of ink into the bowl and before the sanin could blink a kunai cut across the teens palm and dripped into the bowl to mix with the ink. This was too easy, and it kept Jiraiya on edge. The teen stood pulling out a fresh ink brush and handed it extended to the confused sage.

Yet Jiraiya had to press on, he had to hope this man was an Uzumaki. The council would not let them into the boy's life, no but a true Uzumaki they could not stop. He needed to hope that this man was the real deal. Jiraiya was forbidden to help Naruto and so he clung to the hope that this man was the key to save the barely four year old orphaned Uzumaki then the toad sage had to do this, He had to take the risk for Naruto's future.

"I give you my word, I will cause you no harm." Haru said to the warry expression aimed his way. The teen tugged off his clothing letting the kimono top hang off his hips and tugged off the netted shirt turning and pulling that lovely red hair away. Quickly Jiraiya set to work and quickly created the seal. From what he had heard of how Naruto was treated they needed a good man like Haru to help raise the boy. If the powers this Haru had were as the rumors spoke the village desperately needed him. This teen who was willing to offer up his mind to the sage, offered a vulnerable position of turning his back to a potential enemy.

It was insane and honestly bold, very much admirable to the sanin. With the last stroke of the brush and the power Jiraiya pressed through the seal it seemed like it worked.

"All right kid, let's do this." Jiraiya gulped before he plunged into the beginnings of consciousness for the teen. For the leaf.

For Naruto.
In Another Life

Chapter 2: Trustworthy

The memories burned themselves into the mind of the toad sage, like a slow pantomime of tragedy. Jiraiya gasped choking on air as Haru fell forward vomiting immediately crying softly. The things he had seen that the boy had been through like a lifelong nightmare. The toad sage had to gather himself before he could speak properly.

"Naruto?" Jiraiya's voice came out soft as he pulled the slim red head into his arms. The teen did respond hit body finally slowing his retching. Haru's clothing was draped around his small frame and Jiraiya could see the years of malnutrition in the boy all like a phantom pain pressed into his mind. He knew his godson had gone through many days with the ache of hunger tearing him apart. He pulled the teen away from the vomit on the floor and carried him into one of the still standing building's and just fell to the ground cradling the still weak form of his godson.

Jiraiya's protective instincts wanted both him and the guppy hidden away from an open space for now. He couldn't believe this was his Minato's child, someone who was sacrificed for the village at birth. His time traveling godson, it ached his heart to see what he had gone though just to come back to fix their future.

"Shit Naruto." The sage cursed softly but Naruto shook his head looking a bit tied as he gasped for breath.

"Haru, I am Haru. I am my Shika's sunlight, his light for the future. The other me died when he died, when I stood in the blood of my lover and brothers. I am Haru Uzumaki who will forge a path of power for the leaf, so we may never be so weak that our enemies would strike out at us again. The Naruto of this time can were his name proudly, I will not make his share it." Jiraiya was crying and only held the teen in his arms feeling like he failed in his care for the boy before he had met him.

Haru smiled grimly struggling to sit up in the hold of Jiraiya. "I missed you pervy sage. Oi! I'll kick your dumb ass if you go on a suicidal mission again. Though I did already make sure Konon and Nagato were officially on our side almost immediately, so that particular mission won't ever come up. You won't be able to get rid of me and Naruto this time you old pervert." A sobbing laugh escaped the sage as he just gently held onto the boy.

"I know kid. Shit, Nagato and Konan, how did you save them when I did a shit job at protecting them." Haru laughed and gently patted the older man's shoulder.

"It's a gift fixing your blunders, I did it with your trashy books it's way easier to fix people. I got to them a lot earlier this time, the rumors of their 'deaths' at my hands have surely gotten back to Madara by now. I didn't get to save Yahiko though, I'm sorry about that. I arrived here maybe a
year and a half ago." Haru looked up finally able to move and pulled out of the hold his sensei had on him.

"Now that Nagato's eyes are safe from Obito it will be almost impossible to complete his task and Konon will keep me updated about them when she deems it safe. I made sure my few months with them to take down a few missing nin and the rewards from bounties went to them so they could stay underground for years. Though I think I should check up on them before I tie myself with the leaf, warn them and let Nagato say his piece to you." Jiraiya did flinch but gave his assent to the plan.

Steadily Haru stood and pulled out a cloth from his pocket and crouched down. "If you could clean the seal off, I would appreciate that. memory lane is so not my thing." Haru gave a laugh but Jiraiya was already swiftly scrubbing the seal off the teens back. Haru had muscles and you could see the steady diet he had now helped him, but his body showed proof of the years of neglect and it surprised the sanin.

He had always assumed the demon within would keep the kid going, and it did but at a cost. Years of war, ostracization and now constant travel have had their hand at affecting the kid. Jiraiya was glad now Haru would be there for his younger self, to prevent this level of damage and the kid still had a chance to grow before puberty ended for him.

A steady stay in a village where you have access to regular meals and can be stationary would do the war-torn kid some good.

Haru stood and slipped into his clothing once more settling everything back into place almost as if a nervous gesture. Only then did Jiraiya see the beautiful sunset orange of the Uzumaki swirl on the back of the teens clothing before his long ponytail of garnet hair fell over to cover the insignia.

A loud sigh made Haru turn back to his exhausted looking godfather. "You realize how far back you went was off from your calculations." Jiraiya eyed the teen who smiled guiltily.

"Shika did emphasis it was an estimation, we thought I'd be sent back to around our genin days or right before the Uchiha massacre. It was unexpected to return months before Kumo tried to kidnap Hinata. Though you gotta admit it was good I showed up when I did." Haru had started to pace the dilapidated room.

"It changes my plans but not by much, it just mean's I have more time to help train the chibi's and plenty of time for the leaf to get used to me. Right now, and for a few years to come people are going to hide away their children because of the scare on the leaf. Kumo really needs to stop trying to kidnap kids by the way, they suck at it anyways." Haru shrugged and thought over the strategy.

"I can still follow the strategy to keep helping from a distance if this all seems to be too much of a hassle." Jiraiya waved his hand getting Haru's attention.

"You don't realize what you did guppy. You saved the Uchiha clan from annihilation, you saved the Hyuga's heiress and thus saved them a lot of political bullshit. The Kumo leader denied knowing his most trusted guard and allowed to man to be taken into our interrogation unit. You exposed Danzo and all his dark dealings to the leaf, the clans are practically demanding I drag you back kicking and screaming they see you as someone who is willing to protect strangers. Trust me the leaf wants to snatch you up before another hidden village can. They will still be suspicious, but that is to be expected, you Haru already have allies in the leaf." Jiraiya was now gripping Haru's thin shoulders as he tried to rise in shaky legs. It made the redhead wince, feeling a bit guilty at making the man use up so much chakra.
"You have already endeared yourself to the leaf and in this age of unsteady peace you are currently worth your weight in gold to the village. Even the third is on my ass to bring you to the leaf. I am here because of the threat on Naruto from civilians. The state of our politics is shifting again due to the exposure of corruption. I can't be in the village, I'm the only spymaster of the leaf and Hiruzen is getting blocked by the civilian council to see for the care of the jinchuriki. They won't even let Kakashi near the kid but if there is another Uzumaki, someone to take the mantel of clan head everything changes. You would be the one to make decisions for him. The Akatsuki are mostly in hiding and you took out two powerful key players early on. I have to continue traveling to keep track of their movement's and I will keep you updated but you have to do your duty here." Jiraiya now clung to the teen who grimaced at the desperation hidden in the older ninja's eyes.

"You have to be such a frightening force, to the civilians and their twisted council. A great show of power so they never hurt Naruto again, take your place as clan head and the civilian council as it is now will practically force Hiruzen to put Naruto in your care. A chance to pass burden of cost for caring for the boy is too tempting for them. Those greedy bastards will practically toss Naruto into your arms. That life of loneliness was hell for you, don't make me a failure of a godfather twice. Please." Haru immediately soothed his sensei the burden of knowing all of Haru's past and thoughts was like a web of despair given to the man. Yet, he was trying to make it right now. They had the opportunity and Haru would take advantage of the political climate if only to save their future.

Haru led Jiraiya back out of the building, and quickly the teen moved swiftly through the fallen building's collecting hidden items and tomes sealing them away. Haru was swift picking up his few meager items everything else was stored safely away. He armored up and slid Sasuke's onyx and pearl sword into a slot in the back of his jacket. The blade was practically invisible with the overflowing garnet tresses covering it. Where the kid had hidden a blade almost as long as he was was still a mystery to Jiraiya.

Haru had removed the leather strap from his hair and sealed the worn strap away into his wrist. Jiraiya watched fascinated as the teen strapped dangling fans to his petite waist. Some glowed while others lay dormant bladed or rigged with seals. Finally, seemingly satisfied the red head turned to the toad sage smiling brightly despite his unease.

"Let's do this pervy sage. Though we might have to make a quick stop to a certain blonde drunk and a few of my new friend's. Besides Jiji has to get the idea in his head that we bonded on the road rather than overnight. Old man might pass out or think I'm controlling your mind somehow if we don't make it appear like our relationship blossomed on it's own." The soft smile Haru gifted Jiraiya seemed to ease something in the man.

"Stupid kid's growing up better than me. Stop being so smart you'll make me look bad." Haru's jovial laugh seemed to overtake the dark thoughts that once overwhelmed the sage. Silently Haru led the sage out of the fallen village talking animatedly about how he was propositioned at the bar. The pair had taken a detour for a few months to check in on both Jiraiya's spy network and Haru's personal charges, even if he and Konon did have to keep an angry but weak Nagato from attacking Jiraiya. They had mended their hurt in the end and Haru had reminded them to stay low and avoid anyone dealing with the Akatsuki organization.

Haru used the time away to check in with the jinchuriki ensuring their modified seals were each fortified, especially little Gaara's. Naruto could never get over how soft and squishy the small red head was. Though he was only about five years old and now under better supervision of his father since Haru had warned them about the possible familial threat of Gaara's uncle. The young child wasn't at risk of being overtaken by Shukaku any longer and it eased something in Haru to know
that he could help Gaara who he hoped still could grow close to the Naruto of this time. He had especially hoped he and Sasuke could have a better chance this time around. Gaara himself was especially fond of Haru and his gentle handing of him, the small child was adorable trying to find excuses to cling to the older red head.

The Kazekage was disappointed that Haru would be looking to join a different hidden village but seemed to realize, with Haru's suggestion of course, that if Suna strengthened their alliance ties with the leaf it would become beneficial. The Kazekage, Gaara's father, did not ever want to face the bloody typhoon as an opponent, and this would be politically beneficial to do now that Suna no longer had a raging bijuu roaming the village. So, with that left to the mind of the Kazekage, Haru and Jiraiya had left to fine their favorite blonde alcoholic.

They had tracked down Tsunade and after convincing the gambler into a poker bet and if she lost, she'd have to do as Jiraiya dared her. Not surprisingly Tsunade lost and was introduced into the memories of Haru Uzumaki. This time Haru didn't vomit, though Tsunade nearly did.

Being lost in the memories of a boy who she instantly loved with every fiber of her being Tsunade was a bit hysterical when the eighteen-year-old tried to leave. She had even been hysterical about Jiraiya to the point she let much of his perversion slide. Haru realized the possible death of her teammate had shook the medical nin to the core. Tsunade had pulled from the well of calm within her and promised to return to the leaf soon after they did. She was planning to pay off her debts and return to the village for good, but she did send word ahead informing the current Hokage of her ties to Konoha's possible new recruit and her plans.

It had taken some time and effort but now Haru had follow the first steps of the plan, the foundation of it all. It was time to return home and face whatever he could to change the village for the better. Factoring in that Naruto was so young would only help Haru in the long run. Jiraiya had rehearsed and ensured he would not be one to mess this up, Naruto was their priority and Haru was just the ninja to keep history from repeating itself. Though knowing what he had to do did not quell the churning in Haru's gut as they slowly arrived at the gates of Konohagakure.

They had spotted the village gates just as the sun began to rise over the horizon. "Just remember what you gotta do kid." The sage looked forlornly at the village gates and gave Haru a sad smile. Haru had already risked too much letting both sanin in on his secret, he came to this time to fix everything and the future was to great of a burden on most. Though both Jiraiya and Tsunade agreed Haru was in charge of what was changed and what was not. Haru couldn't risk Hiruzen knowing, Shikamaru had stressed only Tsunade and Jiraiya. He needed them to know the most of everyone, they were his cover and support for the future, in more ways than one. The foundation of their trust would ease tension around a strange new ninja joining the hidden village, it would also get Haru to his chibi self faster.

He had a good backstory and the backing of two powerful sanin, yet he was still a bit nervous. The pair arrived at the gate and Haru had to hold back tears seeing the young faces of shinobi he did not yet know. He realized most of those that were jonin in his youth were still hidden operatives in Anbu right now.

Steeling himself Haru walked beside Jiraiya remembering his task for the next few weeks to possible months was to seem wary. Even if it hurt, he had to seem a bit neutral in joining the leaf. Though if his chibi self was mentioned Haru would have to seem eager to join their ranks. If he could manage that, it had to seem like he came to the village at the beckoning of the pervy sage and urging of grandma Tsunade, he had a plan and was sticking to it.

Haru and Jiraiya gave the information provided and slowly and methodically made their way to the
hokage tower. People openly stared and ogled the petite red head man. Haru had been stared at all his life, with both contempt and reverence. He would always be wary of those who had flipped the switch on how they viewed him, and that caution would help him now. He could feel the familiar flickers of anbu following after him.

Trepidation swirled in the teen as he was pretty much tugged like a child by Jiraiya into the Hokage's office. Amusement colored the faced of those within watching the pouting teen whine while simultaneously being treated like a rag doll to the white haired sanin.

Seeing Hiruzen sitting calmly behind his desk and spotting both Inoichi and Shikaku all alive and kickin was almost overwhelming but Haru hid it well by playing into the feeling of embarrassment of being manhandled. The teen stood almost eclipsed by the white-haired toad sage who was enthusiastically greeting everyone.

Jiraiya never let his grip waver from the small red head who looked ready to bolt at any moment. The entire room could see the teen was reluctant in his visit to the leaf.

Hiruzen had expected the S-class shinobi to have been a towering sight awash with arrogance. Most powerful ninjas were egotistical in their nature especially ninja who were unaffiliated with a hidden village. Yet, what he got was a young man who looked as if he were trying to disappear into the ground. Though he was assured by one thing from the sight of the teen. With hair that deep and vivid he was most definitely a displaced Uzumaki.

Tsunade had also been kind enough to offer a blood test confirming the boy's relation to Kushina. At first Hiruzen had been surprised at the unprompted letter from Tsunade about this ninja but the girl had long ago met the teen and claimed he had been the one to cure her of her apparent fear of blood. The teen seemed to offer nothing but a helping hand and a powerful one at that. Tsunade did say that the young boy had held his loyalty to his fallen clan and was most reluctant to even humor the thought of being a ninja of the hidden village.

Jiraiya and Tsunade emphasized they needed to convince the boy to keep roots in the village. His students had alluded to the hidden power in this seemingly delicate package and Hiruzen knew he could trust his two former students.

Jiraiya and Tsunade rarely agreed on anything but when they both did turn their attention and look into situations their conclusions were insightful. If they both felt, they had to do anything to keep the boy here then Hiruzen knew he needed to pull out all he could to make him interested in joining the leaf.

The clan heads had all been clamoring to have this elite ninja join them, for once the Uchiha and Hyuga clans were in agreement. Just being in the same room as the young man only feeling the slight ebb and flow of his power made the third hokage grateful the ninja had been benevolent toward the leaf thus far. Haru smiled softly and gave a low sweeping boy in greeting but otherwise kept a strained politeness to him.

Inoichi resigned himself looking at the small garnet haired man. Uzumaki's usually had a natural resistance to the abilities of the Yamanaka clan and judging from power alone this particular one would be impossible to break into the read heads mind. Though the pained look in the teen's eyes did kick his own parenting instincts, he had just been gifted his little girl not too long ago. Seeing the gaunt and openly apprehensive teenager made the interrogator feel a bit empathetic.

Shikaku himself silently eyed the uneasy man and noted he seemed reluctant to be there. His demeanor added greatly to the information provided by both Tsunade and Jiraiya. The teen was wary of joining the village, but they had just ended a war and to avoid further conflict brought on
by petty kidnapping attempts they needed someone with power to join their ranks. The war and attack of the nine tailed fox had decimated their villages force. They needed this kid for the security of their village. His overwhelming strength was something to truly behold and it was even being somewhat held back.

Through the reports done by both the toad and slug sanin having this kid Haru join the leaf was the equivalent of having all the tailed beast, the kid was just that powerful. Though with him hunching over and being held there by an exuberant Jiraiya, this Uzumaki just seemed skittish. Though his power was something to marvel at, and Shikaku knew they needed this kid to join the leaf in these dire times. Politically it was also beneficial. The kid had saved a lot of heartache by offering protection to every demon vessel. He had secured Suna's Kazekage's loyalty, something that for years the leaf felt was drifting away like sand in your hands. Yet once this kid even mentioned the possibility of joining with the leaf a secured treaty came to the leaf withing that month.

The kid had to have a natural magnetism or something when he wasn't scared out of his mind. He had even gotten the hostile kumo ninja to marvel after the red head. If reports were accurate. Killer B and A both wanted the elusive teen despite him reclaiming the lost Uzumaki relics and scrolls they had pillaged from the fallen city.

The Kiri desperately wanted the Uzumaki for freeing their former Mizukage from the control of an underground organization the year previous. Iwa though seemed the most eager Yugito and Killer B are both quite taken with the boy, Yugito seems almost smitten. Rumors circling the teen seemed to be flowing past tight lips now that the leaf had made it known the lost Uzumaki was returning to the land of his people.

"Welcome to Konoha Uzumaki san. I am Sarutobi Hiruzen, Hokage to this village. That is Shikaku Nara the jonin commander." The older man gestured to the dark-haired man with hair pulled back into a spikey tail. "The other is Inoichi Yamanaka our interrogation specialist." He said gesturing to a pale blond, blue eyed man.

"I wish to offer my personal thanks in your warnings to the leaf. Our shinobi clans are most impressed with you and your reputation. We would like to extend an invitation in joining our village." Hiruzen smiled openly to the teen who softly gave a greeting in return. The third hokage looked to the teen who on appearance alone looked to be maybe sixteen but he knew from both Jiraiya and Tsunade the Uzumaki was eighteen. His body showed development of muscles, but the boy was still slim and small. Hiruzen knew not to judge on appearance alone but something in him told him to trust in not only his student's words but this seemingly uneasy teen. He gestured for the pair to sit and once everyone was settled his gaze fell onto the teenager.

"I am curious Uzumaki san, how was it that you escaped the fall of your clan, how did you survive?" Hiruzen knew it was a bit incentive but in the weeks leading up to the teen's arrival the civilian council was chomping at the bit to hand off their village jinchuriki to the mysterious teen. The third couldn't waste time on pleasantry. He couldn't just hand the responsibility of safety for Naruto without having a feel for the character of the person. They were desperate, yes but Naruto's safety was a paramount to the need of power.

Haru took a deep breath hiding his pain in faux nervousness and met the eyes of someone who had done his best to see to the village pariah. "When the village fell, I was young, maybe a toddler. My mother and her brother got us out of the village. We were lucky we lived for far from the border of the village, it gave us time to escape through the deep woods and past the overwhelming numbers of attackers."

Haru schooled his expression to appear forcefully stoic. "My mother Natsu, she was pregnant at the
time. The stress of the attack forced her into an early labor and neither my mother nor sibling survived." A flash of pain came across the teens face when he had thoughts of his true mother. Haru knew this wasn't his true past but it was the past of his mother's real cousin and Aunt. Though no one knew the older kid had perished in the initial attack except for Haru who had learned of the child's fate once he had searched for records on his family history. He had ensured the important documentation of the child's death was destroyed so he could take on the identity. Nagato himself even believed the rumors of the misplaced Uzumaki for he himself was one.

It was Nagato who assumed him to be the missing cousin of Kushina and Haru did not correct the man. The rumors seemed to back up that theory for Haru who chose not to deny the accusations of his lineage.

"My uncle Kuru was injured but we managed to survive mourning our fallen home. We traveled and stayed hidden for years, until-"Haru's voice wavered and he cleared his throat. "That was until we heard about what had happened to Kushina chan. Kuru was devastated for not bringing me to Kushina chan's side sooner. We feared what would happen if the next tailed container wasn't an Uzumaki that the vessel would die. Yet it seems that your new bijuu container was a sufficient choice." Haru prepared for the lie that was peppered in half truths.

"Once Kuru felt I was sufficiently trained he went off to search for rumors leading to the tailed beast. We had found ways to blend and devoted ourselves to keep the living vessels from having to face a breech of seal like Kushina chan. It was how we found word of an underground association seeking out information on the jinchuriki. Kuru was killed trying to infiltrate the group but gave his life to inform me they were after the tailed beast and are plotting going after the jinchuriki in coming years. This organization though are so well hidden, and all my contacts died with my uncle." A frustrated look crossed the teens face. "I worked from the other end and fortified the tailed vessels seal's so long as I live, they are safe. This organization will find me instead of me having to search for them." Haru smiled but not like he was happy.

"Tsunade san had convinced me from that point on that my life was now more valuable, if only to keep the jinchuriki's sacrifice from being in vain. I have also needed to secure one final vessel as well as I am sure you are still in possession of the nine tailed beast. I've heard no rumors of it leaving the village of the leaf. Tsunade had been trying on and off in recent years to convince me to stay in the leaf once she realized I was not affiliated with any village. She claimed I would be needed to watch this villages beast container." A dark look crossed the teen's expression.

"The only reason I could come up with from her insistence was that the sacrifice was being treated cruelly." The men in the room felt as if the room had fallen in temperature.

"So, I started looking into the leaf, rumors and the like and came across the plot of the attempted kidnapping for the Hyuga heiress. I warned them and learned your village shuns your vessel but is not outright violent to whoever it is. I was not yet done with my training after Kuru had passed. I had taken to learning ways of the sage and was gifted with the final toad contract. Jiraiya san was most surprised as was I to find a kindship with one another." The older sage scoffed.

"Those toads like you better I swear, they didn't even tell me about you, or the second contract." Jiraiya pouted at Haru who rolled his eyes at the man in response.

"The toads and lady Tsunade made me want to look into your village as a place to settle until this organization shows itself." Haru's glare was dark and made the Anbu nervous enough to show themselves.

"Then I found the information about the Uchiha's plan from a man part of a group called Root. He tried to recruit me to work under a man named Danzo and told me his plan to decimate this clan in
an act of empowering the civilian council. So, I decided to follow my gut and warned you. I was pleased by how you handled the situation; it makes me want see why Kushina chan loved this village." The tension eased as the red head glanced to Jiraiya.

"Then I was greeted by Jiraiya before I could ask Tsunade to get me an audience with you. I lucked out with Jiraiya all but begging me to come to the leaf for a proper thank you. He informed me of this civilian council and their deeds to bring hardship to your jinchuriki and it made me reconsider at least the shinobi of the leaf. I understood that this new bijuu sacrifice is special to the toad sage. I had already planned to fight for your village if to protect what my cousin loved and her successor. I am an Uzumaki and can help train the bijuu to protect themselves then your village can wash its hands of me." The teen hunched back into himself seemingly still plotting to help them and run.

Hiruzen felt oddly astounded by this devotion from the red-haired teen. Hiruzen knew Naruto needed the boy. Merit alone the kid was honorable, he kept a village he was not affiliated with safe in memory to his previously living family member. They needed to change his mind about the leaf and Hiruzen knew the first step would be to ensure the kid had ties here.

"Our civilian council unfortunately blocks us from interceding on the jinchuriki's behalf. Our container was orphaned due to the nine tailed fox getting lose. Many died and it made numerous people fear the child, I have done my best but the boy is a civilian until he joins the ninja academy even if he is part of a nearly decimated clan I am unable to cross into civilian affairs. We need someone from his clan to take overseeing to his care and take position within the clan council because then his care is under his clan head. The civilian council will no longer have control over the placement or treatment of the child. Though to take over as a clan head the caretaker would have to join the leaf and become a shinobi loyal to our ranks. It is not something someone can just walk away from." Hiruzen watched the teen stiffen as his eyes glimmered with a knowledge that seemed to spark in his expression.

"Are you insinuating that you have a living Uzumaki. The jinchuriki is a member of my clan, that was why you sought me out." The teen grew pale and hopeful all at once. He turned to the sanin sitting quietly and looking guiltily away from the teen. "Is it a survivor from-" The teen grimaced and drooped. "No, you refer to the container as a kid." His eyes looked to each shinobi. "Is the child Kushina chans?" Haru's voice had a soft tremble to it now. Like he was scared of the answer.

Shikaku cleared his throat pulling attention to himself before speaking. "The child is Kushina's but they take's after the father who was not affiliated with the Uzumaki clan." Shikaku knew most Uzumaki's bore the brilliant red hair like Haru and didn't want the man to think they were trying to trick him once the two met. "It was how we hid the child's heritage from any who still sought to hunt down those of your clan." Shikaku admired the glint of purpose that slipped into the gaze of the teen. The boy was young had lived through the fall of his clan and still held fast to the duty of what the clan stood for.

They had the kid once they mentioned a possible family, Shikaku and Hiruzen eased a bit as the teen stood and removed his Uzushino headband. The boy bowed deep to the ninja. "I beg that you allow me to join the leaf. I must do right by Kushina. I can not sit idle while her son suffers under the thumb of morally ambiguous civilians. I will offer my life and my power to the leaf, just please allow me to help. I will stay loyal not just for the child's sake but my own for I owe you for overseeing the kid and doing what you could for them." Haru was trembling but stayed bowed at the waist.

Hiruzen had risen to coax the teen to sit back down as the red head now looked every bit of his youth in that instance. He looked as though he were a youth who had be saved from the depths of despair.
"We will be happy to welcome you into our ranks. I would ask you wait until after the probationary period and your finalization of taking the Uzumaki clan seat before we can let you have custody of the child though." The men were all blinded by the dazzling smile Haru gave them at the mention of the kid.

Haru finally looked at ease in their presence and he fidgeted in his seat. "Thank you Hokage sama." The grin wouldn't leave the teens face who looked near to tears.

"We will need to find a way to evaluate you though Haru." This came from Inoichi. "I know of your clan; it is nearly impossible for my clan to breech your minds." The man looked dismayed but Jiraiya perked up.

"Inoichi san, he has already allowed both Tsunade and I to use Uzumaki interrogation seal. Though each time it's used he looks to be terribly affected by it. Why else would Saritobi sensei's most loyal students trust the kid. Besides it was great knowing everything he could do so I could teach him some of my skill's on our return to the leaf. Making the overpowered brat more powerful for the better of the leaf." Jiraiya snickered at the astounded man's expression.

Hiruzen looked to Inoichi's amazed expression his eyes were practically glittering.

"What is this seal's purpose?" Saritobi asked amused by Inoichi's practical salivation at the mention of the seal. Oddly, it was the Nara who answered.

"It is a secret seal of the Uzumaki's used specifically for interrogation. It requires a massive amount of chakra and the blood of the person being interrogated. You can see the subjects every living moment including their thought's. It means your sanin have already interrogated the teen, though it is not a seal that just anyone can use. It weakens both of the people involved with chakra exhaustion. It only works if both subject and interrogator are powerhouses of chakra though." Shikaku eased completely in the presence of the s class shinobi as did Inoichi.

"It means he is completely safe if both Tsunade and Jiraiya gave their approval to allow him into the leaf." Inoichi finished and Hiruzen felt something within him ease at the thought.

"I'm in the room you know." Haru said pouting a bit at being spoken about but not to. The third was amused at the bit of personality peaking through the teen.

"Then we only need to assess your abilities. I'm sure the sanin's judgement is sound, you made this a whole lot easier on us kid." Shikaku said ignoring the snicker coming from Jiraiya.

"The guppy is overpowered; I would suggest a nice big field where he can't cause too much hard to the environment." The older man had started to tug and pull at the now complacent Uzumaki. The boy looked significantly brighter since the mention of a family member in the leaf. The magnetism was now noticeable with every brilliant smile the teen gave.

"If you want, we can do this assessment now. I will wait for you to decide when my probation is up to meet the next generation of Uzumaki. I just am eager to start this probation." The glittering blue eyes gave way to the enthusiasm hidden in the teen.

Shikaku gave a short laugh and lazily stood. Hiruzen rose and Inoichi was already hopping foot to foot at the door.

It seemed the teen's eagerness was contagious.

Haru was led to the training grounds his sensory skills found the glowing chakra of several Anbu trailing them. The teen gave a low whistle drawing attention to him. "That's a lot of shadow's
Hokage sama." Hiruzen raised a brow as he watched the teen point out each spot where a hidden Anbu was.

"You have the skills of a sensor." Hiruzen didn't phrase it as a question. Haru turned to the older man and nodded.

"It's not as strong unless I am in sage mode, but I can sense the individual affinities." Haru walked to the middle of the field and overly eager Jiraiya trotting after him.

Haru raised a brow but the sanin just smirked, "Can't avoid a spar with me kid." Shikaku stood behind the teen who kept his focuses between his two opponents. Inoichi stood to the side of the third hokage.

"Begin." Hiruzen called out and in a flash of speed that was impossible to follow the jonin commander was lying on the ground trying to remember how he go there. Shikaku stiffened realizing he was bound under a glowing net that didn't seem to have an end now matter how much he tugged at the netting. The man sighed and sat under the net watching the blur of color the two sages were when fighting.

They separated sizing one another up and everyone watched the Uzumaki tug a shimmering white fan from his belt of them. The teen channeled chakra through it and ice crystals hit where the sanin once was.

The teen pouted and snapped the fan back to his holster. In a burst of speed, the teen was gone as Jiraiya struck where he once was. The two exchanged blows for a moment then quicker than they could follow the teen called forth shadow clones. The clones were about to charge but where suddenly held still by the smirking jonin commander's shadow snaked under the glow of the net and split to hold the shadow clones. Jiraiya found the real Haru and the pair started back on hand to hand as Shikaku destroyed the clones with his shadows.

Jiraiya was using a kunai trying to strike at the teen who now had a metal bladed fan and was easily parring the sanin. Quickly Haru shoved the metal fan into the ground and jumped high into the air poured chakra through a seal on his bicep coming out with red string. Flipping and twisting the red head had the sanin tied up and out of range from the jonin commander they had to concede. The kid was powerful of he could trap both men without serious injury done in such a quick space of time. He had been smart in his strategy of immobilizing one of them immediately to focus on the secondary opponent.

Hiruzen was grinning elated to have this shinobi on their side. Haru freed his opponent's and sealed away his interesting ninja tools tugging his weaponized fan from the ground and attaching it with the others. The teenager laughed loudly as Jiraiya ranted about the kid cheating. The kid avoided the hands of the sanin that kept making a grab for him.

The group made their way swiftly back to the tower each contemplating something about the young man. The kid was not shy around the toad sanin though that was Jiraiya's particular talent of making people at ease around him.

There was a life to the Uzumaki, a fire that wasn't there at the start of his arrival but seemed to bud and grow the more he was around someone. Almost like an epiphany Hiruzen realized the teen was already starting to trust them. Then again, he was eighteen, he was young and though powerful it seemed like he wanted a place to belong to call his home. He was betting on the leaf just as they were betting on Haru. Once they settled once more into the office Hiruzen felt more at ease with his decision to have the teenager join them.
An Anbu came forward with a uniform handing it to the bewildered red head. "Welcome to Konoha jonin Uzumaki Haru." The kid smiled so wide Hiruzen wondered if his cheeks hurt. The youth looked as if he was about to cry but bowed in thanks.

"While we make arrangements for the Uzumaki clan home to be cleaned and repaired we will be looking into temporary lodgings for you." Hiruzen needed to talk to Jiraiya alone and Inoichi was eager to offer the Hokage a chance to do just that. Hiruze gave the signal and Inoichi was already bouncing on his feet by the red head.

"Uzumaki san, would you care to join Shikaku and I for lunch. We both have a few questions about your shinobi tools, and your abilities. I'm sure Jiraiya sama will show you your new lodgings on our return." Shikaku was already waiting by the door and Jiraiya was watching the teen place his new headband onto his forehead.

"Yeah, I'm starving I was too nervous to eat this morning." Haru followed the men out the door clutching the jonin vest in his arms.

"So Jiraiya chan. Tell me about the boy." Hiruzen said as he settled into doing paperwork.

Jiraiya laughed wiggling his eyebrows. "What do you wanna know, I know all his secret's. Though the kid doesn't seem to have many." Jiraiya snickered at a bemused Hiruzen.

"Do you trust him?" Hiruzen asked watching his former student not eagerly.

"That kid is a self-sacrificing idiot. He will be the easiest to work in a team, either leading or being led. He worked efficiently and spared life when he could but was pragmatic about his survival and how it could effect not just him but me." Jiraiya snickered again and shook his head.

"The kid is something, convinced Tsunade to return to the leaf, and I'm almost envious of the diplomatic way he handled her. The guppy is the closest thing to a saint a shinobi can be." Jiraiya seemed to think for a moment then smirked.

"Though he has a wonderful secret that you will find useful." Hiruzen looked away from his paperwork to quirk a brow at his former student. "The Uzumaki clan seemed to have a village secret. There is a line in the village specifically Kushina's line that are born with possession marks." Hiruzen eyed the man. "Naruto has them, the lines on his cheek's." At Hiruzen's nod jiraiya continued.

"Those marks are normally supposed to single out not just the best candidates for a jinchuriki but also for the next universal handler. The Uzumaki's had people dedicated to learning the chakra energy of the tailed beast and utilizing it like it was within them. Haru was the last Uzumaki to learn the art and boy he didn't learn just one like the village enforced, smug little brat learned all of them. The Guppy uses this power to help settle the overwhelming chakra of a bijuu. He uses this skill to lock the power in a chosen vessel for a tailed beast. This kid literally put a target on his back to protect Jinchuriki. A saint I swear." Jiraiya threw his hands up in defeat amusing the older man. Hiruzen could see the toad sage was fond of the kid, whether it was for being privy to his every thought or if it was that he was willing to vow loyalty for the good of a family member he hadn't even known existed.

"I wonder if he's any good at editing books." Jiraiya said suddenly making his former sensei snicker.

Haru was explaining the intricacies of the delicate power of his clan's interrogation fuinjutsu. Inoichi was looking more and more dismayed at the explanation prolonged. "So, what your saying
"Unless you want to accidentally kill your target you have to know exactly how much chakra goes into each swipe, you have to balance the ink to blood ratio you can't slap it on like a storage seal. It has to perfectly balance between the intended target and administrator if the technique. It's why it was pretty much a forbidden method." Haru pouted at the blonde man. They had eaten and were seated on the patio outside the restaurant. It helped so Haru could explain the various weapons he carried and their purpose.

"Side note, what was that glowing net." Shikaku asked sipping his water and intently focused in what the red head had to say beyond new interrogation methods.

"It's a regular net I made so the netting is all seals. It creates a never-ending net unless I take it off or the chakra infused runs out. Now that one I can teach you because it requires external chakra to activate. I would have to oversee the seals before it is activated but easy to replicate." Haru had settled his back almost as if hearing something in the distance. He seemed to tilt his head to the side as a familiar signature seemed to dart in their direction.

"Nara san, Yamanaka san, I would suggest moving." Quickly the three darted from the table a teen dressed in a green spandex suit with a bowl hair cut crashed into the table. Haru's brain tried to catch up only to see a young silver haired teen land silently next to the fallen spandex teen.

The Uzumaki edged away from his former much younger sensei who was still towering over him as a teenager. Haru made his way to a snickering Inoichi and Shikaki when the spandex teen began a tirade about the springtime of youth standing and posing in exuberant exclamation while the silver haired teen stared intently at the red head before him.

"Maa maa Gai, go do your punishment, I'll pay for the table. I did kick you into it." The green clad man had turned facing the trio who previously occupied the space.

Gai immediately paled and began bowing and apologizing to the snickering adults and the bewildered red head. Gai spotted the Konoha headband and jonin vest on the petit pretty red head and flushed introducing himself while Kakashi paid off the owner.

"Sorry about that miss, my colleague and I let our spar get out of hand. I am Gai Konoha's green beast of prey." Haru blanched as the two-clan heads tried to contain their laughter.

Tossing a glare back to the older men Haru deftly dodged the arm of Kakashi as it tried to snake around his shoulders. Kakashi eyed the red head and Haru felt nostalgia seeing the eye smile coming from the silver haired teen.

"No need to run away, it's not everyday I can meet a new shinobi." Kakashi stepped into Haru's bubble making the teen wince and duck behind Shikaku.

"I see you are having a good day Kakashi san." Inoichi snarked as the silver haired teen tried to get closer the red head avoiding him.

"Aww Inoichi san no fair telling the new meat my name. Eh cutie tell me your name in return." Kakashi said swiping at the red head who only incited him further with every dodge. Though it was doubtful the young Anbu captain didn't know who the strange ninja was. The village shinobi were clamoring to be able to meet the ninja that had saved their village for civil unrest and Kakashi was infatuated by the man to ruin Danzo and save his former teammate's clan from devastation.

Kakashi was a lot more grabby than Haru remembered. "Kakashi it's rude to manhandle a lady you
know.” Gai implored to his friend edging on the side still standing in the broken remains of the
table. Haru stumbled at being mistaken for a woman again. That was all Kakashi needed though.
The Uzumaki was caught in a tight hold from the silver haired teen who seemed gleeful in the
irritation it caused the red head.

"I'm not a woman Bushy brow." Haru growled out annoyed when Kakashi started patting at his
chest as if confirming his gender.

"Oi!" Haru slipped out of the hold twisting the offending hand and pressing down on a nerv in the
silver haired teens wrist.

"Aww Gai I think I'm in love." Kakashi said giving Haru an irritating eye smile and Haru released
him like he burned.

"Please take me back to the pervy sage. At least he stops when I hurt him." Haru pleaded with the
amused Nara and Yamanaka.

"At least give me your name beautiful. I know you are that shinobi that helped out village, the
Uchiha's won't shut up about you nor will the Hyuga's. I gotta mark my territory fast before they
try making you someone's bride." Now the red head knew Kakashi had a talent for irritating the
fuck out of him, but this had to be one of the worse experiences he had faced with his former
sensei. Swiftly Haru turned tugging the still snickering jonin commander and interrogation
specialist with him.

"Ne Shikaku you think we should tell Kakashi san his name if Haru?" The red head growled at
Iniochi's words not expecting this at all. Shikaku snorted and let the small young man lead them
away.

"Maybe we should mention that Haru will be a new jonin and taking his role as the Uzumaki clan
head." This was not how he thought he would be treated, honestly Haru thought it would be
impossible to consort with other shinobi but they were eased by the words of the sanin and his
gestures in helping their village already. He was marked as trustworthy free game, besides the
Hokage might have mentioned that this teen would become Naruto's guardian and Kakashi wanted
to be allowed access to his sensei's kid. To do that Kakashi would impose himself in the red heads
life, his sensei's kid would finally be free to know him and he could protect little Naruto.

Uzumaki Haru had expected suspicion and death threats not irritating teasing and being felt up. He
didn't know if it was because he had already helped the village that people already saw him as
trustworthy or if there were hidden agenda to the grabby routine. He knew they were still wary; he
could sense the Anbu tail tracking him everywhere he went but that was it. Everyone was working
hard in making Haru want to stay a shinobi of the leaf.

"We can catch up another time Haru chan." Kakashi called out in a sing song voice as only making
Haru more flustered and irritable.

Haru pretended the laughter of both Shikaku and Inoichi wasn't happening as he tried to fight off an
embarrassed blush.
Discomfort

Chapter Summary

Haru gets kidnapped and bribed by cuteness
Haru remembers Naruto didn't have a good life in the Orphanage.

In Another Life

Chapter 3: Discomfort

Haru had assumed the leaf would be terribly suspicious of the strange S class ninja that had joined their ranks. Sure, he agreed that the backing of both Jiraiya and Tsunade helped. Yes, they both gave their words that they had deviled deep into his mind helped ease almost all the suspicion on him. It was really the backing of the Hyuga and Uchiha clan's that had made the suspicions decrease dramatically. Though Hiruzen was the strangest. The third Hokage has kept him away from his chibi self since his arrival but had sent the teen on missions with Shinobi and made the teen interact with someone other than the pervy sage he was forced to live with.

The teens only bone of contention fell into the fact that he had to avoid his pain in the ass former sensei. The damned Anbu captain did not take the hint that Haru was not for touching. Hell! Haru had assumed the suspicious fucker would have avoided him altogether. For years Haru had assumed the silver haired sensei was allergic to affection. Now the red head realized he was just allergic to genin.

The man clearly didn't know how to take a hint. Kakashi had decided his newest pastime was to annoy and hound the red head. Haru was convinced the Anbu captain was stalking him, and to make matters worse now both high members of the grateful Hyuga's and the demanding Uchiha were continuously trying to seek out the new Uzumaki. Haru had to escape the overly polite clansmen of the Hyuga's. Had to dodge the persistent Uchiha's and run from the overly friendly Hatake.

Haru was doing great at hiding in his home and only leaving when on missions for the village. On occasion grandma Tsunade would drag him out to drink with her. She had been fixing up the hospital since her return home and taking her frustrations to Haru about how much of a wreck the villages medical sector was. It made Haru very reluctant to leave his temporary home because he would only be accosted by someone the second, he stepped out the door. The only time he left the house was to shop for groceries, the pervy sage was still a pain in the ass about making Haru do all the household chores. Though it did make the teen become more familiar to the faces of those in the village. Haru would shop, clean cook and run errands for the pervy sage. It would have been amusing to see an S class shinobi acting like the housewife if the toad sanin, if it wasn't so bizarre. Haru's reputation was pretty trashed because of the perverted sage and time as his housemate was luckily coming to an end. Haru was eager to leave, he could only handle so many complaints about Jiraiya's spying. He had been doing a great job of dodging all his problems, avoidance was his best skill.

The red head's luck though had to run out. It did, in one of the worst ways possible. Haru had been out training, his shadows of Anbu were ever present and though he was a sensor, the Uzumaki was probably far too absorbed in his task of fleshing out a new technique. The teen had grown
accustomed to lingering leaf ninja who wanted to peek at the rumored new shinobi. So Haru had ignored the pair of ninjas that hovered around his training area. Until they were on top of him at least.

One of them literally on top of him while the other younger intruder hovered around them unsure of what to do. The raven hair and onyx colored eyes gave away who they were. Uchiha's. Haru gave a deep sigh as the young kid lying on him beamed down at the red head.

"May I help you?" It frustrated Haru that none of the Anbu interceded his would-be assailants but they probably had an idea what it was about and would not intervene.

"Ne, Uzumaki san sorry to jump you like this but you are really good at avoiding my clansmen." Haru eyed the kid happily laying on him not even shameful in the fact that he was using an s class shinobi as a body pillow. The child on him looked eerily similar to Obito and it made Haru's heart clench but kept his internal upset to himself. "I'm Shisui Uchiha, that's my best friend and cousin Itachi Uchiha. Our clan head really wishes to meet with you. Please, come with us pretty please." Shisui finished it off by pouting, it wouldn't have worked were it not for the much younger Itachi in his eyeline twisting his hands and avoiding the red heads eye with a blush on his pale cheeks.

Haru groaned both internally and physically. It wasn't fair, kids will always be his weakness, they were too damn cute. Especially a red-faced Itachi and this pouting Shisui.

"Fine, you win. Now off." Haru ignored the triumphant grin of one and the faint smile of the other. They needed to stop that, or his heart was going to explode. The Uzumaki stood and both young kids took each one of his hands and led him through the village. It was a site to see, a tender expression was on the red heads expression as he held himself back from pinching the young one's cheeks. They became more reserved as they neared the Uchiha compound acting as serious as two ten-year olds could be. Haru was finding this to be just as precious and once again fought down an urge to coo at the young shinobi. Haru was pretty sure they would not appreciate him squishing them for being adorable.

He was also pretty sure Itachi was a jonin, Haru had seen the young boy in uniform before. The Uzumaki thought back to something Sasuke had told him towards the end of the war and the start of the next. Itachi had blazed through his shinobi career like Kakashi had. He had been Anbu at age thirteen and it was around then that Danzo had influenced the boy to annihilate his clan. The man's plans had been going on ever since the young prodigy had become a chunin and the Uchiha's had only just begun their talks and plans of a future coup d'état.

Haru was glad he could save Sasuke's clan but he was sure it would lead to a lot of changes in this timeline and So the older man knew he had to still be aware but focused on his timelines major events not the small stuff.

The trio entered the compounded and many dark eyes followed the redhead who was being led like a child by two Uchiha children. Haru gave bright smiles and bowed his neck in greetings to the many amused expression aimed at him.

Finally, he was led before a small group of teens and a small group of Uchiha adults. Haru watched his tiny abductors scramble over to who he assumed was the clan head. Haru would recognize Fugaku Uchiha anywhere. The man had always scared the shit out of him as a child, but he was older now, and he still freaked Haru out.

"Uzumaki san, I Uchiha Fugaku and my clan welcomes you." The collective group bowed making the red head fluster and bow in return.
"Thank you for being so welcoming. I do not understand the persistence of trying to meet me."
Haru straightened and gave Fugaku full eye contact. The older man eyed him, and it took
everything for Haru not to flinch at his stoic expression.

"You have saved our clan. This Danzo had a hand in helping to corrupt many of my clansmen.
They were plotting to overtake the village in a plan of civil war. You saved us all from a plot of
annihilation if this Danzo's plans had come to fruition." Haru shifted uncomfortable under the
scrutiny of the man's gaze.

"I and many of the new clan leaders are curious though. How did you know and have proof of this
plot, when it was still in the beginning stages of planning? It was not even brought to the clan's
attention; it was still between this Danzo and our clan's now imprisoned elders." Fugaku looked
into the dark blue orbs of the teen who fidgeted.

"Ah, well Uchiha san I was approached by a member of Danzo's formerly hidden group Root. The
man was seeking me out to fill a void for when a pocket of power would be separated from this
village. I had found it odd, in my travels I have not heard of your clan planning to separate nor did I
see or hear of true discord between this clan and the village." Haru scratched his cheek unsure how
to press forward. "I asked for proof of planning. I was given that scroll and told they were seeking
to use a child who was breezing through the shinobi ranks. An Uchiha Itachi was to be used after
Danzo would help kickstart his career into Anbu. His agent said they would use the boy's loyalty to
the leaf to decimate the clan, for you would not expect it." Haru flinched at the frown given him
but sighed and pressed forward. "I gave the plans warning your Hokage, I do not agree with the
corruption of children from the use of Root nor the future plans concerning the young Uchiha. I
was not a shinobi of the village though, but I would not stand by while this man tried to go through
with his plot."

Fugaku was giving the Uzumaki a contemplative stare. "Why? Why help my clan at all, what do
you want in return for the help?"

Haru flinched waved his hands in panic. "Nothing! I just was in a position to help. You don't owe
me anything for doing something decent." The clan head was giving the red head a look he couldn't
quite place and then gave the teen a small smirk.

"You truly are a good man, very similar to your rumors. Fair and just in our line of work is
uncommon." Fugaku watched the teen before him shrug. "You have my clan's thanks and our
support to join the village." Fugaku raised his hand to stop the teen from protesting. "Uzumaki san,
just as you have helped my clan out of your kindness, allow us to return that kindness. Our clan
wishes you to remain in the leaf and from what I have heard you are related to the young Uzumaki.
Having our support may give you a chance to be involved with the child sooner."

Haru smiled softly and fidgeted but bowed his neck.

"You will be welcomed to my home or onto clan grounds freely Uzumaki san. Your character is
one I wish to impress onto the clan's future to avoid a situation like this from occurring again."
Haru smiled softly to Fugaku's words but his attention was pulled as the door behind the teen
opened. Haru looked back and had to stop his hands from plucking up the chubby tot. He may have
been a ball of squishiness, but the hair and eyes were all Sasuke. His dark eyes were huge on his
face and he was sucking his thumb and blushed realizing there was a stranger in their home.

Itachi had hurriedly picked up the cute kid who eagerly hid his face in his brother's shoulder to
hide from the glimmering gaze of the older teen. Fugaku noticed the teen was holding back cooing
to his youngest and found this to be amusing. It seemed the villages newest shinobi had a weakness
to children. Maybe Fugaku would kindly pass this information off to Hiashi Hyuga. It would be a
start to get the two clan's to be less hostile to one another. This whole situation his clan had almost wrought on itself showed the clan head just how isolated and susceptible they were to corruption. They needed to mend ties with the villages and start off with their sister clan of the Hyugas.

"As I hope you will be close to my clan and family, these two are my son's. Itachi who you have met and my youngest Sasuke." Itachi smiled hesitantly and the small shy Sasuke peeked at the red head when his father said his name.

"It was lovely to meet you all, and I do hope to meet again, though next time let's avoid kidnapping me. Itachi and Shisui have proven they are very adept at it though." Haru and Fugaku shared a laugh and soon Haru was free to leave the home. He gave his two abductors and the small Sasuke gentle pats on their heads as way of goodbye and a formal bow to the clan head and his new clan council.

Had Haru not been reeling from the talk with the Uchiha's he would have probably been able to avoid him but once again luck was just not on his side.

The teenager was wrapped up into the embrace of Kakashi who was snickering. "Haru chan have you been avoiding me?" The red head glared at the older silver haired teen straining his face away from the masked teen.

"Hatake san, to what do I owe this displeasure?" Haru was struggling to push away the grabby man who was very eager to snuggle him like a doll.

"Maa so mean Haru chan." Kakashi had lifted the petite teen who flushed almost as dark as his hair. "Don't you want to make more friends? I can be your new buddy to help you make some." Kakashi looked down at the small teen struggling in his arms and cursing up a storm. Finally, the redhead froze and cocked his head to the side. Kakashi was kneed in the gut and the Uzumaki freed himself from the teen who had clutched his stomach. Haru was crouched down by a bush softly chuckling.

"It's not nice to spy on people." Haru said and Kakashi righted himself spotting two small children emerge from the bush. The pair of children were both boys. One dark-haired boy was fascinated by the colorful red hair of Haru. While the other was slightly older with hair like blue ice he clung to the younger boy.

"You saved my brother and I." The blue haired child said looking to the red headed teenager who only looked at him in amusement. "Danzo sama can no longer keep us in that cage, the other ninja said it was you that told them what he did.

Haru gave a soft hum and Kakashi was a bit shocked to see the soft gaze in his blue eyes. The man was practically cooing at the little brats. Kakashi hated kid's it was why he had stayed in Anbu to avoid having to mentor any of them as a jonin. It made the silver haired teen pout. Haru teased and prodded the children poking their chubby faces and making both of them laugh. Though the blue haired one started to violently cough.

Haru immediately pouted looking at the child. "Ehh that cough sounds bad. You should probably get your guardian to take you to the hospital." The kid flushed but was still coughing so the dark-haired boy spoke for him.

"We live in the Orphanage. They said they can't pay for us to go to the hospital." Haru gave another soft hum and clapped.

"Okay then I'll pay." Kakashi jolted at the casual nature the teen offered to help. The silver haired
Anbu was flabbergasted following the teen who gently led the children in the direction of the hospital.

They had arrived and Kakashi followed them like a shadow Haru ignored his presence for the most part and poured all his attention onto the children. The red head was led to the famed medic nin as soon as he had given his name.

It made Kakashi wonder what kind of influence Haru had. He had burst into the room and him and the blonde slug princess immediately burst into childish arguments until Haru plopped the blue haired child in front of her and told her he was sick.

From then on it was only snarky quips between the two but Tsunade's glowing hands had settled onto the child's ribcage.

"He should be fine now, you caught it before it could become worse. A bad cough he must have had for years. Pale skin, slightly malnourished, I'm guessing he was one of Danzo's." Tsunade glanced to the red head who was casually leaning on the wall nodding. The dark-haired boy was by the red head holding a brush and drawing messily on paper provided by the older teen.

Kakashi was still floored. No one was that nice, yet here was Haru who seemed to genuinely give a damn about absolute strangers. Kakashi had liked to jerk the kids' chain so he had settled on overtures of affection. It seemed to grate on the teen coming from him, but the guy was almost too nice. Kakashi's touchy act was to try to get on the teens good side for when he would inevitably obtain guardianship of Naruto. Yet this teenager who helped their village's two most prominent clans and inadvertently took down a horribly corrupt man was just nice.

Hatake Kakashi had been oddly trusting of the red headed Uzumaki. The teen never did anything to bring suspicion to himself, he didn't seem to argue much or seek attention. The guy was full of power, but he seemed to lack in confidence to display of show it off. He didn't seem to enjoy being around Kakashi and it befuddled the copy ninja. The teen didn't seek out to have the clan's he had helped to repay him, in fact he was cornered and practically dragged to the Uchiha's almost forcefully. Kakashi's Anbu that trailed the teen had stated as such when they reported to their captain that afternoon before the red heads emergence from the Uchiha's compound.

The teen just seemed to just want to help. He didn't want praise or favors, or any kind of recognition just wanted to be there for other's when they needed. He was selfless. It made Kakashi feel a bit better and worse about him soon becoming the guardian to his sensei's legacy. Naruto was young and the village pariah only kept away from the protection of the clans and himself due to the interference of the civilian council. Haru was the key to opening that door for the boy.

"Eh Kakashi, I wouldn't try to figure the brat out if I were you." Tsunade snickered glancing at the teen while she beckoned the dark haired young boy to check him over as well. "I've seen his entire life from cradle to present, he really is one of a kind." Tsunade smiled fondly at the red head who now had the blue haired boy talking eagerly with the teen.

"Don't be surprised if he tries adopting these two." Tsunade said making Haru laugh.

"That's a good idea grandma Tsunade!" Kakashi sweat dropped at the other teen. So, it didn't come at too much of a surprise to soon be following after the garnet haired teen who was marching off to the Hokage tower to do just that.

The teenager had been explaining to the third why it would be better for him to be allowed to adopt the pair. The teenager didn't seem to mind taking on the responsibility of taking in two young kids and having another one to later join him.
Hiruzen gave a soft laugh at this generous man.

"Eh, Jiji don't be amused, I need to find ways to have more Uzumaki's and adopting a few kids will ensure my clan can continue. My future relative won't be so alone growing up either." Haru shrugged. "That's only if they agree to it is all." Haru said looking down at the children looking at him with eyes practically glowing in excitement.

"I would prefer my relative have a family and I am more than willing to have these two learn the ways of my clan. That way the future Uzumaki heir won't be alone in his teaching's and homelife. Would it not be better to see if they could adjust to a healthy living environment before I have access to the Uzumaki heir. It would also be a good test for Saritobi san to see how I handle children." Haru was smiling brilliantly and it made Kakashi's heart jump.

Kakashi hated to agree because the red head was right. He could see the merit in obtaining the loyalty of these two young and trained shinobi. They would become loyal vassals to the Uzumaki line if they assimilate, the best protectors for Naruto for when Haru is not near the boy. Yet it was rolling the dice with this one, Haru would be gone on missions. They needed more people to watch over the children alongside the teen. There was one person who would jump at the chance to aid the new shinobi to the leaf. Kakashi had saved the younger man from Danzo's clutches not long ago and once the man was exposed, he had volunteered to take in the children only to be denied due to his young age. Though with Haru's offer the teen would be able to be involved in their lives and assimilation into regular society. Though Kakashi had to ask something before he offered his friend's name.

"Why? Why are you so generous, what do you gain from it?" Haru frowned at Kakashi's words and glanced back to the Hokage.

"My clan was left to ruin. Those that remained hid in fear or died. These boys from my understanding were part of root, one of the few children that survived. I do this because I am in a position to help, so I will. I also helps me keep my clan alive, even if it only by our name." Haru looked down to the two boys who were clinging to his legs. "I was protected by my guardian for years, maybe it is my luck to help others beside my own blood. I can't save everyone, but I can involve those that have the potential to join my clan. Though I might need to find babysitters for when I am on mission. Single dad and all. " Haru said laughing and rubbing the back of his head in embarrassment.

"Tenzo wanted to adopt the kids." Kakashi said looking to the Hokage who hummed.

"That is true, he would be most heartbroken he had tried to save them when he initially defected. The boy may be young, but he holds a kinship with the pair." Haru cocked his head to the side.

"Why could he not adopt them?" Haru glanced between the pair.

"He is fourteen, you would normally not be able to take in children till you were twenty, but you are going to be a clan head. This is a method to expand your clan and you will be allowed to take in any you see potential in for your clan." Hiruzen eyed the small boys that clung to the contemplative teen.

"If this Tenzo guy doesn't mind he can be involved in the children's lives. I would allow him residence on the clan grounds, only if I can meet him and gauge his personality." Kakashi frowned at the teen not really trusting his own ears.

"How nice can you be?" Kakashi narrowed his eye at the red head who only laughed.
"Oi remember I'm taking these kids in for the betterment of my clan, it's selfish on my part. I don't mind taking on a teen who only wants to help. Side's it would be better than me trying to take care of a bunch of kids on my own." Haru grinned and it made Hiruzen chuckle looking at the kid.

"Jiraiya and Tsunade had done nothing but sing praises about you to me and I feel like the compliments are not unfounded." Hiruzen called forth an Anbu.

"Bring Tenzo." The Anbu disappeared and Kakashi moved closer.

"He goes by Yamato now; I still have a habit of calling him Tenzo." Haru smiled softly and turned his head to the pair that appeared into the room swiftly. It was strange to see the stoic Yamato, one of Naruto's former sensei's so young. The younger ninja's gaze fell onto the children and onto the red head and his face wavered a moment.

Haru grinned brightly at Yamato. "How do you feel about becoming a big brother?" The fourteen-year-old blinked rapidly looking back and forth between the occupants in the room.

"What?" the brown-haired ninja turned to Kakashi. "Explain!" So, the silver haired Anbu captain did and to the shock of everyone Haru intently questioned the teen. When the red head was satisfied, he asked the most important question.

"So, if you want, I will allow you to live in my clan's home and you may oversee these little guys." Tenzo was still somewhat shocked at what the ninja was offering him. He had thought he would have had to wait four more years, but it would seem this shinobi was offering him a chance to redeem himself for being unable to save the pair before him. So, Yamato gave Haru a firm nod.

"You may take in the three of them." Haru smiled to the Hokage while Kakashi jerked in surprise. "On one condition, I will want Kakashi and Inoichi to do weekly evaluations on the boys. I'm sure you would agree it would be the best course for everyone." Hiruzen smirked at the now pouting red head.

"I understand Yamanaka san but why Hatake san?" Haru glowered at the offended silver haired teen. "He will be escorting your relative and will introduce him to the boy's and you. I wish to take this slow but familiarizing them all when they are all in a new environment should be best." Haru gave a huge sigh but nodded.

"Fine, but I'm not adopting Hatake." Kakashi snickered as Haru pointed his thumb at him.

"Well the boys will return to the orphanage for now, but I will handle the paperwork Uzumaki san. I'm sure your clan home will be cleared out within the month and I will have you meet the young Uzumaki after you all have settled. We will have Inoichi discuss a schedule for meeting with him after the initial meeting." Haru gave a firm nod as Yamato had taken to escorting the children back to the orphanage.

It was a blur of time between that moment. Haru had astounded Kakashi when he fixed up the former Uzumaki compound. It had been created to honor their fallen allies and the fact that Haru had gotten it presentable and refurbished within days was mindboggling. Kakashi had taken his job as the red heads stalker serious and was in his home nearly every day until Haru would force him home. The two boys Sai and Shin had officially moved in along with Yamato and Kakashi was always amazed to see Haru running an efficient household. He cooked and cleaned and Kakashi spied on the teen in an apron enough times to have a favorite fantasy. Jiraiya was frequently amused by Haru's ever present shadow who had long since given up pretense of being suspicious of the kindhearted red head.
Haru was eager for this day was the day he would be able to meet his chibi, though the teen knew he had time to kill and was far too nervous to stay on the compound and it was far too early to head to the Hokage tower.

Yamato was lying on the floor defeated as the kids tried to evade bath time. Haru though was not one to second guess and soon both kids were captured bathed and dressed for the day. The toad sage felt like he would miss this chaos when he inevitably had to go back on the road, so he soaked it up watching the teen handle the chaos with ease and control like no other.

The red head had taken on his duties as the Uzumaki clan head and his seat on the clan council was secured. No one could refute the man's ties to the Uzumaki when looking at his visage.

Sai and Shin adored the red head and would often cling to Haru. Jiraiya was always amused when Kakashi would watch them interact because the silver haired teen would pine after the red head something fierce. The copy cat ninja was terribly jealous of the two terror's who by the stroke of luck had not been in Danzo's care for long when they had been rescued.

It had relieved Haru learning that he at least got to Sai in time. Though it was still heartbreaking seeing a five-year-old having suffered from being under the thumb of someone like Danzo. Ushering the young kids into the shared living room where Yamato had retreated to sulk in his defeat, Haru quickly caught the young teens attention. It was still jarring seeing his former sensei young. It was still strange for Haru to find that he was four years older than the young man.

"Yamato watch the kids; I'm going to head out to the training ground. Too much nervous energy." The brown-haired stoic teen nodded in assent to the friendly man and set to trying to bond with the two children. Haru left swiftly to avoid Kakashi and was bounding towards the training grounds across from the market so he could be near the hokage tower.

It had been three weeks since his previous kidnapping by the Uchiha and it seemed once again his luck had run out. Haru's heart clenched seeing a teeny tiny whimpering Hinata and a pudgy and soft Neji. Haru cooed down to the tearful girl and the small protective boy.

"My, my what do we have here and little Hime and her Knight?" The small girl was on the verge of tears while the older boy was frantically looking around. Haru soothed the young children gently getting their attention. "What is wrong little hime?"

The chubby cheeked girl sniffled and little Neji spoke. "We got separated from Uncle and father in the crowd. I made sure to stay with Hinata chan but…" the young boy blushed looking down ashamed.

Haru wanted to pinch his chubby little cheek but held himself back though it was difficult. "How about I help you find them?" Neji perked back up.

"Neji kun, daddy said don't talk to strangers." Hinata was still sniffling but was slowly calming. The young boy looked torn on the situation. Haru smiled gently trying to hold back from squeezing the cute duo in hugs.

"Well my name is Haru, I am a shinobi for the village. I will just help you get to your father's. Or I can return you home." The young children were unsure of what to do but Haru heard a faint yell for the children's names. "Ah, just in luck I think I hear someone calling for the hime and her knight." Since Haru was hard to miss with bright red hair the young teen lifted the small Hinata to sit on his hip and grabbed Neji's hand. Gently he led the small boy to the frantic voices. The red head spotted Hiashi and his twin Hizashi Hyuga. The children obviously had only barely been separated from their father's side's.
"Daddy!" Hinata had called out catching the attention of the twins who had hurried to the red heads side. Hinata was easily handed off to Hiashi who was frantically looking her over while Neji gripped his father's leg tightly the older man looked him over for injury.

"Thank you, young man." Neji's father said bowing to the redhead who bowed back gently coaxing the older man to stand.

"No worries, I'm just glad we found you both so quickly." Hiashi eyed the teen a glimmer in his eyes.

"It would seem I owe you many more thanks Uzumaki san." Hiashi said making Haru laugh softly.

"What gave me away?" Haru said laughing.

"Well the hair for one, and your crest for the other." The amused man said and Haru near thwacked his head in embarrassment. He had forgotten he was still wearing the jewelry with his family's Uzumaki crest on it and his clothing always bore his Uzumaki emblem. The teen had grown so used to wearing it that he felt naked without the pearls hanging from his ears or the symbol on his clothing.

"Happy to have helped the little princess and her protector." Haru bowed and was preparing to leave but Hiashi stopped him.

"We were actually on our way to visit you." The surprise must have shone on the red heads face for a moment making the older man smile. "The Uchiha's may have let it slip that you are weak against the forces of children. We were hoping to get a meeting with the man who is adept at avoiding my clansmen." Haru gave a soft laugh realizing he truly was a sucker for kids. Though it had more to do with them being his former friends.

Their previous deaths had hurt him tearing holes in his heart with each one but seeing them alive, breathing and more importantly small and squishy soothed the aching wounds in his heart. It turned him into a gooey pile of shinobi for sure.

"Would you care to join us in the teahouse?" Haru sighed internally realizing he had lost and nodded to the two men following them.

Sitting before the twins, Haru could admit he was a bit intimidated. He had never met Hizashi, the man had died after the kidnapping attempt on Hinata the first time. He sacrificed his life so his brother could continue to lead their clan but this time Haru had given them a warning of the Kumo ninja's plans. So, the Kumo nin was captured alive in a well-placed trap from what Haru had gathered. Kumo's leader denied ever knowing the shinobi and Haru was pretty sure the man was still being tormented in T&I.

"Uzumaki san, I am Hiashi Hyuga and this is my brother Hizashi Hyuga." Both men inclined their heads to Haru who bowed his neck in return. "Our clan has been trying to find a way of giving repayment for saving the clan heir and our clan from the political affair that had occurred before your joining into the leaf. Now once again we feel it imperative to thank you for helping the clan heir and one of the children of the branch house." Haru's gaze shifted to the two small children and both men noticed Haru's lingering gaze on Neji's brow.

"Uzumaki san, I am Hiashi Hyuga and this is my brother Hizashi Hyuga." Both men inclined their heads to Haru who bowed his neck in return. "Our clan has been trying to find a way of giving repayment for saving the clan heir and our clan from the political affair that had occurred before your joining into the leaf. Now once again we feel it imperative to thank you for helping the clan heir and one of the children of the branch house." Haru's gaze shifted to the two small children and both men noticed Haru's lingering gaze on Neji's brow.

"You both realize I am a fuinjutsu master." Both men nodded and the cool blue gaze fell to the clan head. "I'm not someone that agrees with the cursed seal, I understand your purpose for it but if you want to pay me back talk with your clan. You use the seal from my understanding to seal the Hyuga powers after death and control the branch families with pain." Hiashi flinched but nodded.
It was a sore subject between the twins that the elder still felt guilt eat away at him for.

"It's dangerous in the wrong hands your seal. Allow me to create a modified seal for your clan. One that will do what you ask of it but be invisible unless used. Though I refuse to let it cause someone's death and would put a fail safe to protect whomever the seal is on. That is all I would want as thanks from your clan. Allow me to meddle, as you know I have a soft spot for kids, and this will keep them safe while you stick to your clan traditions." The twin Hyuga's stared oddly at the redhead who seemed to be generous in helping others.

"That would only be helping our clan though." Hizashi said looking a bit stupefied as the soft blue gaze of the teen fell onto him. Haru smiled brightly and shrugged.

"It would give me more peace of mind than you know." Haru said something in his gaze that neither brother could quite read. This man was a stranger to them, to their clan and yet he offered nothing but assistance to their clan over and over without asking for anything in return. It was a bit frustrating.

"My clan will do as the Uchihas have offered. We will back you to the council, all that we want is close ties with a man of great character. You will have the Hyuga's support. I will discuss with my clan your request." Hiashi said making the Uzumaki fluster. "No argument's Uzumaki san, it would be in poor fashion to argue with your elders." Haru pouted at the smirking man and the soft smiling twin of his.

Haru was once again freed after saying goodbye to the Hyuga twins and the small versions of his former friends. He was fully overwhelmed and had a difficult time taking a handle on this situation. He wasn't even a clan head yet, but he was already being dragged into political situations, not to mention his task of trying to figure out how to help train the future of Konoha. He had been on the road not long ago taking out threats like Hidan and Sasori before they could become a threat. He had found where Zetsu had hidden away and sealed the bastard before he could rise.

He had found the young preteen Deidra and kicked his dumb ass back home before he could be recruited into the Akatsuki. Sure, the kid had been his enemy but right now he was still a child and salvageable. It helped that Haru had been a scarier force to the kid more than the Akatsuki. The red head felt at ease leaving him to his village to deal with.

Somehow Haru had not yet had a moment to himself to breath and take in the fact that he really was here doing the impossible. He was changing the village for the better and it was only going to get harder and more overwhelming.

Haru had collided with someone in his daze of thinking and immediately began apologizing to the younger boy.

Haru's eyes rose to meet with his brown-haired former sensei Iruka. Haru's heart clenched for a moment. Iruka's death had torn his heart asunder. The man had died doing as he always had, protecting Haru. This young man who was like a father to him growing up.

Haru smiled at the obviously teenaged boy who was giving his own apologies. Iruka was terribly adorable as a teen and Haru realized going back in time must have turned him into a sap. He had just become a badass ninja too but seeing his former friends alive was his weakness it seemed. Haru glanced to the man's headband and realized Iruka was still a genin.

"Hello, I'm Uzumaki Haru, nice to meet you." Haru smiled disarmingly to the younger boy who continued to apologize.
"I-I'm Umino Iruka jonin san. I am sorry! Very sorry!" the boy was in a slight panic.

The red head gripped the young shinobi's hands and smiled brightly at him. "Hey, do you wanna grab lunch with me my treat." Haru internally snickered after hearing a crash from behind him. That would teach Kakashi to stalk him, but his gaze was focusing on the flustered boy before him.

"I mean I owe you for crashing into ya kid." Haru laughed realizing Iruka was sputtering but reluctantly agreed.

Haru had led him towards his favorite ramen stand in the village. It had only been open for a few months by then but Haru would always remember its location. The young Iruka was somewhat gushing because he was able to spend time with a jonin who didn't mind him being a genin. Haru could feel the glare coming from Kakashi who was seething in a tree nearby. The red head almost rolled his eyes at the other teen. Kakashi was something else, an overly possessive friend Haru assumed. Though Haru just assumed the boy was just frustrated by Haru's unwillingness to be harassed by him.

All Haru cared about was that he was able to be in contact with Iruka and knew he could now help the man who for so many years had helped him. Iruka was going to take the chunin exams later in the year and Haru encouraged the boy to do his best and to seek him out should he need anything.

When Iruka had left Haru's side Kakashi had immediately attached himself to an exasperated Haru. "Why must you stalk me Hatake san." Kakashi huffed still clinging to the red head.

"I have told you Haru chan to call me Kakashi or you could always call me yours." Haru rolled his eyes wondering why his former sensei was being such a pain. The time traveler had stopped reacting to his antics in hopes that it would get the Anbu captain to grow bored. If anything, he took it as encouragement to get worse.

"Fine Kakashi san. Why are you clinging to me like an overly friendly date?" Kakashi pouted beneath his mask but Haru was walking and not fighting him off.

"Hokage sama asked me to retrieve you. He said you will be allowed to meet the little tyke." Haru grinned up at the clinging ninja and Kakashi blushed lightly seeing the red head light up.

"Really! Let's go Kakashi!" Haru was giddy and jumping eagerly!

Kakashi was surprised for his hand to be grabbed and pulled along to the Hokage tower. Kakashi along with everyone was a bit nervous to see how Haru was going to react to seeing his only blood family as he was.

It was only recently that the boy had been rescued from the orphanage that tormented due to a burden he carried. The young boy had only just recovered physically.

Though bursting into the Hokage's office Kakashi spotted both Inoichi and Shikakau who nervously glanced at the red head and back to Hiruzen. Everyone seemed to be tense for the inevitable meeting save Haru. Fugaku and Hiashi both stood to the side of the room, they had made a promise, and both were following through to support the Uzumaki clan head.

Kakashi had freed himself from the teens side and strode off to collect his sensei's legacy and meet him for once face to face. This was going to be an emotional day for everyone involved.

Hiruzen looked to the eager Uzumaki and held back a grimace. "Are you ready to meet Naruto?" Haru's eye's glimmered.
"His name is Naruto?" Everyone was a bit shocked at seeing the teen excited. Haru was odd, friendly and humble but overall, the boy seemed to be on their side, and they worried he would be furious at the state of his relative.

The doors opened and for a moment Haru's face showed soft horror. He had vaguely remembered his time at the orphanage. The caretakers had starved him and isolated the boy. Haru had not learned how to talk until far later on in life and Haru had not realized how much his life had improved from living on his own in an apartment than in the children's home.

Naruto was pale and still quite small for a boy his age. His hair looked to be growing and Haru had a flash of memory of one of the women in the orphanage roughly chopping off his hair. Haru noticed the small boy with bright blue eyes look at him with a hint of fear.

He had separated from Kakashi's side and frantically looked around the room but Haru had already crouched down and cooed at the young boy. Naruto grew less tense and soon the young boy was playing with the long garnet locks of hair but had yet to utter a single word.

"Ne Kakashi san." Haru's gaze was hazy when looking at the copy cay nin who was sitting silently at his side. "Go to my home and ask Yamato to show you my room. I should have a small frog plush on my dresser and go to my refrigerator. I should have a week's worth of prepared food. Please bring it to me." Haru looked like he was about to cry so Kakashi didn't argue and at the nod of his Hokage he was off to do as asked.

Haru had gotten Naruto to smile and laugh more in the last hour than the Hokage had seen the youngster do in the last year. All Hiruzen's doubts seemed to melt away at the teenager's gentle handling with the small blonde. Inoichi and Shikaku were both pretty shocked at the state of the young boy. They had known he had been through much but neither had known to what extent. Minato had been their friend and they each felt immense guilt for failing him.

Fugaku had held back his grimace at seeing the state of the child who appeared to be recovering from worse abuse. Hiashi could not hold back the shudder of revulsion from seeing how someone could abuse something so small and fragile.

Yet no one could deny that the teenager was handling the young boy well. Naruto refused to go near anyone even reacting badly when Kakashi had tried to get close. Though Haru had soothes the young boy and played with him.

Naruto only communicated with soft gurgles like that of an infant, but he responded to his name and seemed to understand words when spoken to. It was no surprise to see the boy cuddled into Haru's gentle embrace when Kakashi had returned. The young boy soaked in the attention the red head gave him.

Haru was gave the chibi a small frog plushy and placed gentle kisses to the crown of blonde hair. His hands were shaking when Naruto's Anbu guard moved to take the boy from him. Another moved in to collect the meals, but everyone could see the heartbreak on Haru Uzumaki's face when the blonde started to wail and sob while reaching for him.

"Have Tsunade check up on him before you take him home Anbu san. Tell her his is an Uzumaki though I doubt she will care once she get's a look at him." Haru spoke softly like he was straining.

Haru had burst into tears in the room full of high-ranking men but the teen could not find it in himself to care. The red head tried to stand, and his legs gave out but Kakashi was there to catch him. The red head had clung to the other teen only letting out whimpering sobs till he jerked upright and turned on the Hokage.
"Who." The room suddenly felt suffocating as the teen faced Hiruzen. His red hair seemed to whip around him like slicing red winds. Hiruzen and every ninja felt dread pull in their guts. They hadn't realized how powerful this teenager was until his power was licking at them like burning embers.

Then suddenly it stilled as Haru's face became blank waiting for the answer. There was a stifling pressure behind his gaze and the wind in his hair stilled.

"It was his former care workers at the orphanage. They had hidden away the deterioration of the boy and so had the civilian council. Once we discovered the neglect, we stepped in." Hiruzen held the gaze of the newly appointed Uzumaki clan head.

A cruel smile graced the teenager's face and it made Kakashi flinch. "Where. Are. They." The words were punctuated as if Haru were holding himself back from screaming.

"Imprisoned." Haru gave a single nod and turned to leave, but before he crossed the door he stilled and looked back to the hokage.

"I get that you wanted me to have a probationary period before I got the kid. I don't care anymore. My blood my last family was suffering and was obviously tormented as to why, I don't give a shit. Give me Naruto, before this fucking civilian council of yours screws him over worse than this." Haru's gaze was hard as he slammed the door behind him.

Haru needed a drink and to yell at the toad sage.

Kakashi sighed and looked at the room of shocked men. "That could have gone worse." The silver haired teen offered lamely but no one could argue against his jibe.

He was right, it could have gone worse.
Kakashi takes of a mask, figuratively.

In Another Life
Chapter 4: Mask

Kakashi was starting to freak out Haru. For as long as the Uzumaki could remember his former sensei was never affectionate. Haru had doubted the man would have been so grabby in his youth. The red head knew it was an act but for what goal he wasn’t sure. It was something his mind had been coasting on while working on a few security seals for his home. Haru had kids, and soon a jinchuriki to take care of. The seals needed to be perfect before he could have Naruto in his home, but he wondered if he should allow the masked ninja free reign in his home.

Haru internally sighed and shook his head as he worked on the entrance seals. This was messing with his mind, and he doubted the silver haired ninja trusted him. His brush froze mid stroke and a bit of anger swelled inside the red headed Uzumaki. His hands threatened to shake so Haru pulled his hands away from his half finished seal.

“He wants something from me.” Haru frowned as he stood and walked a bit away from his work and sighed. “Of course, he wants something. No one ever just want’s to be my friend without a fight.” The teen tossed his brush into a pile of rags and began angrily wiping his hands on a cloth. He was fighting back tears realizing that someone once dear to him was wearing a mask around him. Though Kakashi had always worn a mask around him, not just figuratively either.

Haru yanked his long red hair free and clutched the leather strap. His heart ached when he looked at the leather strap. One of the few things left from his old life, from the man he loved. Haru was so focused in his pain he didn’t see the hesitant Yamato walk out of the house eyeing his turned back warily.

Yamato frowned watching the older teen cry silently in the entrance of the house. To Yamato this young man was nothing but giving. He had allowed him a stranger into his home, to be involved in his clan to help watch over the children he had left behind in Danzo’s care. Not once did the man yell or scream or get frustrated to the lack of emotional response from any of the three. Haru in fact encouraged the expression and luckily for the children the transition was easier. Sai and Shin had not been in Danzo’s care for too long and Haru had been nothing but a savior to their village. It couldn’t have been easy to agree to all this though.

From what the younger teen had heard, Haru was a lost member of the Uzumaki clan, he is powerful and strategic. The man was still quite young, but he had easily taken in strangers into his home in hopes that it would be a better environment for his future relative. From the moment Yamato had met Haru he had been nothing but genuine.

It was strange to see this ninja so open about his emotions. Though Haru Uzumaki was not unflappable and had his own pains that he hid. Living with Uzumaki san you would see the cracks in his normally bright disposition. The man was holding some kind of pain and guilt on his shoulders and his actions sometimes came off as him paying repentance. He had agreed to live with the Uzumaki due to the opportunity to oversee the young Sai and Shin but also in part due to Kakashi sensei. His Anbu captain wasn’t sure of the red head and held true to the phrase of keeping your enemies close.
He took liberties with young Haru who seemed to be able to see through his play and it was something that worried Yamato. His captain was pushing whatever goodwill the new jonin seemed to have. Watching Haru interact with people was interesting though. He saw people for who they were, it was a talent that the young anbu member envied.

Haru was a man who knew who he was and was satisfied with himself yet was still pained by something in his past. Nothing detrimental for he hid it well from the children in the home. The rumors in anbu especially from the former members of root the man was beautifully expressive and outwardly friendly. His interaction with young Naruto was being whispered about through the circles of anbu and some higher level shinobi.

Haru was believed to be able to handle bijuu well as the man had traveled far and wide to ensure the safety and stability of the current tailed beast holders. The power in this young man was astounding and the toad sage Jiraiya had taken such a liking to the young man he was training under the sanin. He convinced the wandering Tsunade to return home and she was focusing on improving the hospital and medic nin curriculum while learning under the third to take over. Her return and Jiraiya’s were kept under wraps though as if they were both here waiting for something else to happen but needed to be kept hidden from public knowledge.

It all had circulated around Haru who was sitting there silently crying.

“Did you need something Yamato san.” Haru’s voice was thick as if he were holding back his emotions or choking on them.

“Hatake san will arrive with young Uzumaki san soon.” Yamato said and Haru gave a soft sigh seeming to collect himself and turned. His features were schooled, and you would almost never guess that he had cried, were it not for the redness in his eyes.

Yamato needed to have a talk with his captain. His gaze followed the red head who tugged his long hair back up into a messy bun with the familiar leather strap he always used to bind his hair.

“Well let’s get the children ready then. I plan to have them, and Naruto enjoy a day out. I’m sure Naruto would enjoy that.” Haru collected his tools after finishing up a seal sitting low on the door frame.

Yamato nodded to the master of the house and set off to dress the children. When Kakashi had arrived, the young boy clung to the covered ninja. Haru was once again a glowing epitome of sunlight as his name suggested. His smile and presence seemed like a burning setting sun warming you before the clutches of night could seep into your bones.

In a burst of movement little Naruto had hurriedly bound into Haru’s open embrace and something in Yamato eased at the sight. The blonde boy was crying still seeing to struggle to communicate with words and Haru only cooed as a mother would, gently coaxing the young boy into easement.

“Naru chan, do you want to know your new family members?” Haru’s gentle smile was nothing but a warm promise to the young boy who eagerly nodded.

Haru called to his shy wards who were hidden behind Yamato while the pair had exchanged greetings. Immediately Sai clung to the young Naruto fascinated with his hair and eye coloring. Shin was more reserved, but Naruto only smiled brilliantly to the boy and babbled nonsensically to the pair.

The older Uzumaki corralled the young kids and nudged along Yamato and Kakashi to take the children to a nearby park. Immediately tension rose in Haru as civilians glared at the blonde boy. Both Kakashi and Yamato watched in wonderment as Haru fiercely glared back at any who had the nerve to look wrong at any of his young charges.

Haru was respected already in the village just by having the backing of the Uchiha and Hyuga behind him. The young man was powerful, and it showed as he strode gracefully though the streets making any who’s eyes lingered too long on his blonde charge cower away just from the pressure of his heated glares.

Yamato was astounded by the man. A man who had killed missing nin and gone out of his way to save others, who never sought out to ask for repayment for that kindness. He was like a doting mother to the three boys’ in his care, though the wood nin would never say that to the red heads face.
Yamato eyed his captain who was eagerly watching Haru interact with the children. The copy cat nin had been rebuffed from touching young Haru easily with the children near. Haru all but ignored the silver haired man’s presence as they walked and soon settled into the park.

The red head kept away from his captain in an almost dance of dodging hands and swift movement. Yamato could almost feel embarrassed with watching the actions of the man pursing the red head. Haru was cool and collected and it made Yamato flinch watching him sternly brush off another attempt from the revered copy cat nin while he focused solely onto the children.

It would have been amusing on some level were it not for the darkening expression that Haru gave Kakashi. Finally, Yamato stepped forward as Haru began helping the boys play in the sandbox. He pulled his captain to the side and was unsure what to say.

“Captain, please stop it.” Yamato cowered a little as Kakashi loomed over him. “Even I can tell you make him uncomfortable. It would not be wise to continue pushing him sir.” Yamato looked away back to Haru with the laughing children. The red head was smiling but his shoulders were tense, and his guarded gaze kept flicking back to the silver haired anbu.

Kakashi let out a frustrated sigh and it was clear he was irritated. “The hell is his problem, I’ve been nothing but nice, hell I’ve gone out of my way to make him think I liked him.” Yamato could tell his captain was angry just by the gaze of his singular eye. Haru seemed to sense it too and both men just stared each other down as with screams of happy children as their background.

The red head sneered and turned away dismissing Kakashi which seemed to anger the man, but that anger settled watching Haru coddle the children his care. Haru didn’t mind or care from the stares of other adults, all his focus was on the children he vowed to take in.

The older man really couldn’t help but fuss and indulge over his small family. Naruto was looking much better. The food Haru had sent over to the boy was filling him out and his hair seemed to be growing back swiftly. Haru knew it was in part to Naruto’s tummy tenant. His own having been keeping his distance unless necessary. Haru knew the fox could feel the familiarity in the older boy, it could sense the peace and so that kept Naruto’s at ease, it was useful becoming the carrier of all the tailed beast. Useful for other’s who needed a guide to them it was going to be a pain but Haru would have to still travel on occasion. Especially since the Hokage was being asked by Suna to have Haru aid their bijuu vessel.

The red head was already told of the mission and it wasn’t going to be easy or fun since he was pretty sure his team would include Anbu. Haru was pretty sure he would be stuck with the silver haired anbu captain, it would be just his luck for that.

He had already gotten Tsunade and Shizune to promise to watch over Sai and Shin and even convinced her to check in on Naruto as well. The red head was doing this mission as a favor to the hokage and to appease the civilian council. His services would not come cheap and they were hoping to be able to use the new ninja as a bargaining chip to obtain a stronger treaty with the sand.

It was something that even if they got the sand on their side early on Haru still knew the invasion during the chunin exams would still come from the sound ninja. Even with his help the sand could still betray the leaf. Large events could not be stopped but they could be stopped in different ways. Haru internally debated with himself and wondered how to get his former sensei to just act like himself again. He needed to establish a trusting relationship with the man before he decided to take on genin in this timeline. The red head wasn’t stupid enough to assume the man was interested in him, but he had hoped after a few weeks of the overt friendliness not working on Haru, that Kakashi would have gotten the hint. Haru almost preferred the aloof sensei he had grown up with, not this fake version of friendliness.

The red head could only be amused by the man’s actions, but he knew Kakashi didn’t trust him. He would always up the anbu guard when he was near Naruto. As if he thought Haru would snatch the child up and run.

It would have been insulting had Haru not been warmed by the thought that he must care about chibi Naruto so much. The blonde four-year-old was babbling to Haru who gave him undivided attention.

Sai had clung to the bright blonde a stubborn expression set in his face as he kept cuddling with the
ball of brightness. Shin went back and forth between the two boys copying Haru’s cooing and the red head was about to die from the cuteness overload. Haru had allowed the boy’s to roam and play with one another till the sun began to make it’s slow descent.

“Alright it’s time for dinner, I won’t be able to see you all together for a little while so let’s make it special. Where do you want to go?” Haru said glancing between the boy’s it was small Naruto who looked owlishly up with bright blue eyes.

“Ramen?” The little head of yellow cocked to the side and the red head had to hold back a laugh. He remembered it, his first word had and always would be ramen.

Haru hopped up excitedly, “Ramen it is!” The small trio roared as young children do and trailed faithfully after the beautiful red head. Yamato scurried after to Haru’s gentle beckoning. With a soft gaze the red head tilted his head at Kakashi who stiffly followed along.

Haru allowed Yamato to hen over the three young boys messily eating their ramen. Teuchi smiled warmly at the small blonde who ate happily while the older brown haired teen was gently wiping at his messy face.

The ramen shop owner gave a nod to Haru who gently returned the nod and smiled. Both he and Kakashi had stayed back in the entrance to the shop so the children wouldn’t hear them talking.

“What’s your game Hatake.” Haru said demanding more than questioning. Kakashi eyed the red head and sighed tucking his hands into his pockets.

“How do you know it’s a game Haru chan, I do remember telling you to call me Kakashi by the way.” His lazy single gaze fell to the man at his side who only openly glowered at him in return.

“I hope you don’t think I’m that stupid. You realize whenever you try to hang off me people around us do double takes right, or worse there was your friend Gai who just sputters at you. The kid fell off a roof when he saw you try to hug me last week before I left for my first non anbu mission.” Haru shook his head and Kakashi looked at the shimmering garnet locks as they shifted messily around his face truly making him look delicate and so similar to Kushina.

Kakashi knew deep down this man had to be related to the woman. There was no doubt about it, from how he acted to his looks it was so similar to her, yet there was something off. The young teen would on occasion smile or somehow fall into deep thought and in those moment’s Kakashi was reminded of Minato. Though it could be the anbu captains still hidden grief projecting onto the smaller man.

“You realize I am pretty giving.” Haru spoke making Kakashi focus back to their conversation as the teen gestured to the people in front of the pair. “So, what do you want Hatake san? Why put up an act?” Haru seemed forlorn as he leaned against the wall of the ramen shop his gaze steady on the excited Naruto before them.

Kakashi watched the red head really watched him and let out a frustrated sigh. “Apologies Haru chan, but my intentions did start out as a way to be close to Naruto.” Haru’s glimmering blue gaze fell onto the taller teen. “I had been kept away from the boy since his birth and worried you would not allow me, a stranger near him. He is someone I wish to protect, and I feared being near him, because of who I am and my curse.” At the raised red eyebrow from Haru, Kakashi internally struggled. He wanted Haru to not hate him, but he felt if he didn’t give some honesty then his chances of being in Naruto’s life would be limited.

“I wanted to be in Narutos life, but the council wouldn’t allow a non-family member to take over the boy’s care.” Kakashi glanced back at Naruto. “I was close to his father and mother but when they died, I was the same age as Yamato. I was also a mess as a person and I still am. Jiraiya was Narutos godfather but the civilian council led by Danzo had barred the man from taking the kid. The civilian council see’s Narutos as nothing but the nine tailed beast that he holds.” Haru gave a soft hum in acknowledgement. “I felt useless, I wouldn’t get the opportunity to be involved on the boy’s life unless he graduated from the ninja academy. Until you showed up.” Kakashi looked to Haru who seemed intently focused. “I wanted to be allowed access to Naruto and you will be the one in control of that in the future. I have very few doubts that you wouldn’t be suitable. The kid trust’s you and Naruto had good instincts for a kid. You are family to the boy, probably the only family he has left.” Haru shook his head gently.
“There are still Uzumaki out there I’m sure. Though Naruto and I are probably the last to come from the main branch.” Haru shrugged his expression gentler when looking at the silver haired ninja.

“There was another reason I wanted to get close to you fast.” Kakashi sighed resigning himself to his fate.

“You know my name from the bingo books. I am the copy cat ninja but here in the village I have another name.” Kakashi tore his gaze away uncomfortable with having to be honest. “They call me the friend killer.” His voice was low somber and Haru gave a soft hum.

“I heard about that.” Kakashi whipped his head to the red head who held his gaze and gave him a soft smile. “I don’t find it an appropriate title for you though. Nor would I feel it’s true.” Haru shrugged and clapped Kakashi on his shoulder.

Even though the red head was small he exuded such power and grace it threw Kakashi for a loop on how to handle the man. “Remember Kakashi san, your life is not dictated by the few tragedies you face but how you work to ensure those same instances push you to be better. How you build yourself to be more than the person left standing in the puddles of blood.” The red head walked off joining Yamato in keeping the excited children clean while talking smoothly with the ramen shop owner.

Kakashi’s eyes followed Haru intently and he still felt the need to wrap his arms around the petite man. He felt an urge within him to bury his face into that elegant mess of hair and trap the man in his arms. Maybe he hadn’t been fully honest with the beautiful man. He could admit to himself that he was truly a but infatuated by the small man but Kakashi wasn’t sure what to do with that information.

Kakashi’s hands twitched when Haru turned giving him a bright smile as he spoke to the small blonde as he gestured to the silver haired ninja.

Gently Haru led the small boy over to his side and Naruto immediately hugged the older teen’s leg. Kakashi ruffled the blonde hair and the blue-eyed boy who looked so much like his mother and uncle gave a brilliant smile to the older man. There was a hint of Naruto’s father in him that made the older boy’s heart ache but as Haru cooed to the boy Kakashi couldn’t stop his heart from thumping at the sight.

Minato sensei may have been gone but his legacy lived on and was going to be raised by a good man. Someone who was kind and held no arrogance, who seemed to be a balm to wounded souls and a champion to the weak.

Kakashi cocked his head to the side in wonderment. Maybe he could put in a real effort to become Haru’s friend. He had not longed for a friend in years. It honestly frightened him but watching the powerful man before him be nothing but gentle to those he considered his made him long for it. Haru would allow the man into Naruto’s life but now Kakashi wondered how he would convince the red head into being just as involved in his life as well. As friends of course.

When Kakashi had to take Naruto away from the warm embrace of Haru to return him to his separate home the silver haired anbu couldn’t help but feel guilt. The boy cried and clung to his cousin who tried to soothe the boy telling him to be brave and patient for him.

The sniffling of the boy only made his guilt grow worse. Naruto gave a whimpering cry as Kakashi walked away with Naruto in his arms. “Hawuuu!” His jumbled cry was muffled and Kakashi gently patted the young boys back copying the red heads actions from before when trying to soothe the blonde.

His small chubby arms were still reaching for the figure they walked away from and Kakashi didn’t need to turn around to know Haru was crying from the separation.

Naruto was inconsolable as the small boy wept and his own anbu was uncomfortable hearing the soft cries coming from the boy. Kakashi had settled the boy into his bed and his hiccupping cried ate away at the captain. Finally, the boy fell asleep exhausted from crying and Kakashi shifted from foot to foot unsure of what to do. Kakashi called his summon’s of dogs to watch over the small boy and immediately his troupe of pups settled around the sleeping boy.

The guilt though made his decision for him. Kakashi was before the Hokage giving his report on
Hara and Kakashi hesitated but still told the older man about how Naruto was not taking the separating of his guardian well.

The third gave a soft hum as he leaned back, and the pair settled in the silence.

“What are your opinions of the older Uzumaki?” Kakashi let his single gaze land on the older man. “He is genuine.” Kakashi struggled to find the words himself. “I think the leaf now has the best asset in that man. He respects Naruto’s title as a jinchuriki but does not coddle nor does he have incentive to push the boy to become powerful.” Kakashi gripped his arm where his anbu tattoo was.

“He is really good with kids and is a powerful motivator to ensure others avoid upsetting the boy. His unique chakra it tastes like a bijuu but it doesn’t feel like it, he uses this ability to ease the Naruto or to soothe him on a level none of us can help him with. He handles his other charges Sai and Shin like an expert and both boys have taken to Naruto fairly well.” Sarutobi gave a singular nod before standing.

“You team will be accompanying Haru on a mission to Suna. You will depart in three days and will be expected to return within a month. After you give me a field evaluation, we can discuss taking anbu off Haru and I will see how I feel about letting Naruto start off with overnight stays with the boy.” Kakashi gave a nod to the older man who smiled at the silver haired man.

“Try not to scare off my new recruit now Kakashi my boy.” Hiruzen’s gaze held a glimmer of mirth and Kakashi successfully fought down his blush.

“Right.” With a swift bow Kakashi was dismissed to prepare for his next mission.

“Kakashi.” The silver haired teen froze in his exit waiting for the third to speak. “Haru had given you permission to have young Naruto stay with you until I allow the boy to live with him.” Kakashi jerked around to look in shock at the third hokage. Though only his eye was visible it was obvious he was surprised by the news.

“Huh?” Hatake Kakashi had never been at a loss for words before and it was worse for him to do so in front of the Hokage but that old man just laughed.

“He sent a messenger toad here explaining that he may not like you personally, but you are clearly fond, caring and defensive of Naruto and that’s all that he requires. The boy has good instincts if he can read that from one who doesn’t show his face.” Hiruzen said smirking at the other teen who was lost in his stupor.

“Stay with the boy until you leave for your mission with Haru. Then when you return, we will have you moved in with Naruto, though I doubt the council will allow Naruto to stay out of the Uzumaki clan’s care for long. On your missions out of the village those are the day’s I have planned to be Naruto’s overnight stays with Uzumaki san. It gives a lot of trust for Haru to allow you to have Naruto. We owe the boy a bit of trust in return don’t you think.” The third gave a small smile as Kakashi nodded dumbly.

“Who will watch the boys while the elder Uzumaki and I are away?” Kakashi’s mind was still whirling and Hiruzen waved him off.

“Haru has gotten Shizune and Tsunade to promise to see to all the boy’s, Naruto included.” Kakashi once more only nodded and left the office his mind in a haze.

Kakashi immediately went to his quarters and gathered some clothing and his travel pack that was always ready to go. He rushed back to Naruto’s small apartment and settled next to the boy’s bed. Why was Haru doing this, allowing this. He could barely stand Kakashi, but the red head allowed Kakashi the freedom of seeing the precious boy even when Haru himself was barred to a schedule. Though now the strange red head had a mission stuck in the care of Kakashi and the silver haired nin was determined to figure the boy out.

Yet four day’s later after they set out on the mission Kakashi could see some huctles to figuring out the garnet haired teen.

Though Kakashi found himself at a loss. He was anbu on this mission and was not able to technically talk to his charge. He could not talk to Haru so it was impossible to ask his questions but even if he could his throat would not allow it. They had left for their mission day previous after Sai, Shin and Naruto were taken to Tsunade, Kakashi’s throat had closed up just seeing the redhead
when he and Haru dropped off the boys with the overly cuddly Tsunade. Well cuddly to the three boys and Haru. She glared at Kakashi for jokingly lifting his arms in a hug. His mask would disguise his voice but Kakashi just could speak. Every time he tried to address Haru out of the parameters of the mission his mind and his mouth would go numb. They had just settled for lunch and Kakashi could only stare at the red head and couldn’t even step in his direction. Yamato and Genma had been giving their captain glances of concern over the last few hours of their trek. Shikaku had joined the mission to talk over politics with Suna while Haru did his work.

Uzumaki Haru had given his attention to the Nara as they discussed tactics about Suna, Haru giving fairly thought out opinions. Kakashi had never seen the teen act so dignified, then again Haru seemed to get along with most of the clan heads. Shikaku himself took a particular liking to the teen and the pair had discussed fuinjutsu over lunch having moved from the topic of tactics. From observation the copy cat nin could tell the elder Uzumaki particularly respected the Nara. Kakashi’s eye roamed over the red head as he didn’t really couldn’t focus on the topic of seals they discussed. Haru had his hair tied up high, so the rest twisted and turned in the breeze. He was wearing shinobi pants, but a long drape of a kimono top hung far past his fingertips and his waist held his many fans. Haru had a black and white blade tucked between his narrow shoulders that his long red hair made practically invisible.

Kakashi wondered how someone so delicate looking could be so powerful. He wondered if the rumors of his skill were exaggerated.

“Oi Captain, I get that Haru’s hot but openly staring is kind of creepy.” Genma said whispering and leaning close to Kakashi who jerked his head away from looking at his new obsession.

Genma was a new addition to anbu the teen had an affinity for sebon but with his raccoon mask he was left to fiddle with a sebon in his gloved hand.

Kakashi frowned beneath his hound mask as his ears perked up hearing the breathy laughter Haru had. It was squeezed out like he had spent years trying to keep quiet, though a life on the road it wasn’t impossible to imagine the red head had years of squeezing out quiet laughter or silent tears.

Kakashi gulped and stiffly stood.

“Let everyone know to wrap up. We’re heading out again soon.” Genma gave a confused nod and trudged off to do as his captain asked. It was a blur of hours till they stopped once more only halfway to their destination.

Shikaku Nara had been focusing on asking Haru about bijuu and their vessels. Haru gave detailed explanations about the history of each tailed chakra beast and even discussed some of the vessels.

“Could anyone theoretically be a jinchuriki?” Shikaku asked as they all settled around the campfire for dinner. Haru shook his head as he chewed his food.

“No, you need chakra reserves and the right type of background or breeding to be able to safely hold the beast without it killing your body.” Kakashi stiffed and whipped his head and looked over to Haru who pouted. “Oh, please anbu san, I can guarantee your jinchuriki is perfectly safe. Your vessel had the added bonus of being born to an established vessel and he has the mark of a universal vessel.” Hound cocked his head in question and Haru laughed pointing to his own whiskered cheeks. “Uzumaki are practically made for this, I wasn’t born yet so Kushina had become the next vessel, and your village was lucky to have one born a natural. A perk for most people who carry one of the tailed beasts is you end up having greater longevity. With background and breeding, by that I mean you need a good understanding of the best, you need to be able to have a stable mind so you may have a partnership so the background. Anyone can learn that but most just don’t or have long forgotten. It’s why most jinchuriki only show bijuu ability after emotional outburst. It’s also why when a bijuu is extracted the host dies. Extraction is a ceremonial thing, with the right seals and corrects understanding of chakra control, one can theoretically survive the separation of host from beast. Though it may permanently damage chakra coils, or cause seizures. I wouldn’t want to test the theory honestly.” Haru focused back onto the Nara and smiled softly.

“The breeding part is more complicated. Some people born with psychological or physical
disabilities would not be ideal vessels. Missing a limb can make you vulnerable to outside threats and give the bijuu a chance to outwardly grow its own controlled limb, which is different from if you lose a limb in battle.” Haru contemplated his words a moment.

“I don’t understand why it’s different, I read it in a book a long time ago but…” Haru trailed off a frown taking over his features as he shrugged. “The other breeding aspect is mentality. Some seals differ from my own or even the only on your village jinchuriki. Seals become linked between the bijuu and the vessel, but times there are pockets when the jinchuriki are linked with their bijuu. They must communicate and be able to form the mindscape. It’s why if you put a tailed beast into a host it must be from a powerful line who can either grow into such an ability and who will be mentally stable to keep the beast from bleeding over into their mind unless the host allows.” Haru slid off his kimono top to hang off his waist and he neatly tugged his net shirt down to a seal sitting on his collarbone.

A quick brush of chakra and he pulled out a scroll that held the Uzumaki seal. Haru’s already chattering about the history while Shikaku is nearly gaping at the teen. Kakashi was surprised but his hound mask hid all his emotions. The stiffening of both Genma and Yamato are the only indication they were surprised.

“Ne, ne anbu san.” Haru’s soft blue gaze looked up at Hound in amusement. “We will be having uninvited guest coming in, several and from the taste of their emotional state, they aren’t friendly.” Haru Handed the scroll to Shikakau who looked to the teenager in bewilderment. Haru lifted his blade he had left on the ground and swiftly pulled it out of its sheath. A feral smile on his face as everyone tensed. A group of what seemed to be bandits burst unto their camp and though the anbu were ready Haru took each man out in easy steps. He had done it without killing them only using his blade to block his opponent’s weapons before shoving seals onto each opponent making them immediately pass out. The only reason Kakashi knew the men were alive was due to the steady rise and fall of their breathing. Haru swiftly walked away from the passed-out men and tugged Shikaku with him to pack up camp while he continued to explain the scroll. Haru’s speed was breathtaking. His hair was like a bloody wind that told you where he had been just seconds before.

The group of anbu tied up the sleeping bandits and the tired group found their way to a village to drop off the men before they trudged away on no sleep toward Suna. Kakashi felt like he only gained more questions and mysteries about Uzumaki Haru, and their trip had only just begun.
Chapter Summary

All the chibi cutness, adorable overload!

In Another Life

Chapter 5: Soft

From the moment Kakashi saw the red haired son of the Kazekage he did not like him. It had nothing to do with how he clung to Haru or glared at the copy cat nin or cried whenever the anbu captain got to close to one of the last Uzumaki. The kid was a brat, a whiny clingy brat. Haru fell over himself to check and dote on the young boy. His seal was fortified and functioning correctly from what he knew yet the little boy refused to allow Haru to leave his side for the last three days they had been in Sand.

The bijuu container of Suna had overly protective siblings who attributed to the child's clingy nature towards Haru. The Kazekage seemed to have an affinity for Haru as well and it only made the anbu captain grumpy. Haru fussed over the clinging children while Shikaku handled the diplomacy between the villages. The peace treaty brought on by the red head Uzumaki joining the leaf was finally being documented and combed over. Shikaku was positively glowing at what Suna was offering for the continued aid and alliance from the leaf and Haru. Little Gaara with his teddy bear and big teal eyes was attached to the garnet haired Uzumaki while most of the political discussions took place.

The greatest betrayal for the anbu captain was how much Haru seemed to dote on the three children and how their handsome nanny seemed to be halfway in love with him as well. Kakashi wanted to rip his mask off and tell everyone to keep their hands and flirty eyes to themselves. Okay, he wanted to say that mostly to the nanny. Though it was the small red head who picked up on his swirling emotions the easiest.

Kakashi had been Haru's permanent guard silent behind his hound mask while Tenzo saw to protecting the elder Nara in meetings that Haru refused to join. Haru seemed to have a good relationship with Suna's Kazekage for the normally stiff and ridged man softened in Haru's presence. Though almost everyone did that with the young shinobi.

Kakashi realized Haru wore his more traditional clothing to ease the shinobi around him. Kakashi knew Haru rarely wore the jonin vest unless on missions and it was interesting to see the green vest peaking from under the loose kimono top.

His garnet hair was loose and flowing and next to Gaara and his feminine form Haru practically looked like the boy's mother. Almost as if he heard the thought Haru's sharp blue gaze snapped up to narrow on hound.

"Oi, doggy! I know I'm pretty, but you don't have to stare so hard." Haru sounded exasperated and the Kazekage's eldest Temari was laughing. The little girl was clinging to Haru reaching for tiny Gaara clinging like a monkey to the elder red head's neck. Kankuro was exuberantly telling the older man about learning how to control puppets to make his baby brother happy.
Haru was a natural with kids and Kakashi wondered if the Uzumaki wanted some of his own. He was young and already adopted two children and was only adding to that by planning on taking in the leaf's jinchuriki.

For a moment the hound anbu wondered if Haru wasn't fond of his overly affectionate nature due to him being only into the female form. It would explain a lot though the way the Kazekage's male nanny hung off of Haru on occasion didn't seem to bother the teen. It bothered Kakashi though, it bothered him a lot to see Haru allowing another to freely flirt.

That was how Kakashi spent his day, observing the red head as discreetly as he could. Haru wasn't much different from how he acted in the village though he did seem more on alert in Suna than in their village.

Soon Shikaku had returned a sighed and sealed scroll connecting the two nations. Haru smiled politely to the Kazekage when they spoke and Haru insisted on reminding him to be more wary of strange nin. Kakashi cocked his head in wonderment. He held back his questions and soon after a long whimpering goodbye to the sand siblings and a clingy Gaara the leaf nin were returning home.

Shikaku and Haru had returned to talking about the subject of politics once more. They strayed to Haru's parting words to the Kazekage.

"Well, I have always been cautious by nature and when leaving a village, I do not plan to stay in to protect I just offer reminders. Sometimes they assume I'm giving them a hint to be wary and honestly if it makes them more wary then that good for them." Haru seemed to be deep in thought for a moment.

"Besides, before joining leaf I was on a self-implemented mission of protecting the jinchuriki from an organization that was gathering information on them. I myself don't trust they were searching for information for good intentions." Haru's gaze hardened. "I must always remind villages with a bijuu vessel to be extra cautious no matter what. The containers are important to protect and should be treated with respect..." The teenaged Uzumaki let his words trail off as he let out a long sigh. "When I came to the leaf and encountered your people and how they treated your jinchuriki, I was honestly disgusted. Though there are just as many people who sympathize with your tailed container." The group traveled in a tense silence as Haru stared off not really looking at anything for his gaze had gone hazy.

"My clan understood the sacrifice it is to be a host to a bijuu. There are few clan's or individuals that can house a tailed beast. The leaf may have taken to honoring my fallen clan but none of you really looked into the history of the clan who became your white goat, your sacrifice." Haru stilled and the group stopped walking as Shikaku laid his hand on the teens shoulder.

"You make a good point, and honestly it is something that should be discussed more it's a clan shrouded in mystery for our village. Though this is your clan, and everyone learns of the clans by word of mouth. When we return to the leaf, I would like you to bring your young ones and I will take it upon myself to bring in all active clan heads and their children to all meet." Shikaku smiled and got Haru and the group moving again.

"I had wanted to meet you again though, especially after your debut into the village with our friendly Kakashi." Shikaku laughed while Haru huffed and grumbled eyeing hound who stiffened and sped up a bit in walking. Kakashi knew he shouldn't be nervous because he was covered head to toe and there was no way the red head could know who he was.

"If it wasn't for this mission, I was about to force my lazy son into dragging you to our home for a shogi match." Haru snorted at Shikaku who smirked. "Your secret is out kid; everyone knows you
become a big softie to the little tykes." Haru pouted and he and Shikaku got to planning the gathering. They changed location to Haru's clan home instead and the red head insisted on it because he could also introduce a few traditional foods as they discussed his clan. It would also be a better environment for little Naruto who would be visiting Haru as well. The security of the Uzumaki home was already impenetrable due to the red head placing seals up and the clans would not have to worry for their young children on the grounds.

In the moments of exuberant planning between the Uzumaki and Nara, Kakashi was oddly reminded of the quiet calamity of both Minato and Kushina. It caused an ache to clench in Kakashi's chest. He snuck glances at the smiling red headed teen and soon the party found themselves back in the leaf and reporting to the Hokage.

Though once dismissed Kakashi finally had someone to return home to.

The Hatake compound was off limits for Kakashi ever since his father had killed himself in their home. Kakashi had lived in the anbu apartments for so long he had almost forgotten he was moved in with Naruto.

The small sleepy bundle of blonde was delivered by a cooing Shizune upon his return. Kakashi had taken to holding the small boy often, as Naruto tended to crave affection. The boy was touch starved and after Haru had come into the village the boy had been liberated from his lonely life. The older boy ensured the younger Uzumaki had a balanced diet and did everything in his power to ensure the boy was seen to.

Kakashi was glad to see the mop of blonde hair curled in his arms and his heart swelled in happiness at finally being able to be involved in Naruto's life. It had felt hopeless for so long and Kakashi had drowned in his guilt of being unable to be there for Naruto it nearly shook him to the core.

Kakashi could remember how they tore Naruto from his arms at age fourteen. Naruto was a crying newborn newly orphaned laying by the bodies of his mother and father. They wouldn't even let Kakashi say a proper goodbye and it wasn't until four years later Kakashi found the nearly starving boy who had his blonde hair shorn and was locked up in a closet. Kakashi had nearly killed the people running the orphanage but the bright ball of sunshine just smiled at Kakashi and reached for a hug. Kakashi had stolen away the toddler and taken him straight to the hokage.

It was soon after that that Naruto was removed from the orphanage, his tormentors were delivered to the prison and then the red hurricane that was Haru came into notice.

It was immediate how Haru offered himself up for Naruto. The teen gave up his life as a wonderer and pursued to ensure life for his relative would be happy. Haru had been like a protective shadow for the small boy. The teen was known as the bloody typhoon and had a reputation of creative violence and power that could choke you from just a shift of emotion. None of the civilians dared to even let Kakashi say a proper goodbye and it wasn't until four years later Kakashi found the nearly starving boy who had his blonde hair shorn and was locked up in a closet. Kakashi had nearly killed the people running the orphanage but the bright ball of sunshine just smiled at Kakashi and reached for a hug. Kakashi had stolen away the toddler and taken him straight to the hokage.

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No one dared to get on the red heads bad side. He had just come into the hidden village and established himself immersing himself in the political climate and bent it to his will. It would be terrifying if not for the fact that this teenager did this for the betterment of the Uzumaki heir, Naruto.

There were day's that Kakashi could only see Haru as a blessing, or maybe the wrath of Kushina
incarnate coming back through Haru to defend her son. Kakashi easily cooked dinner a sleeping child cradled in his arm clutching his clothes and making Kakashi truly feel like he was doing something for the boy.

Soon the small boy was rousing after his nap his bright blue eyes watching Kakashi work single handed while he cuddled the silver haired teen and babbled nonsensically a few words he had learned finally coming through.

"Kashi nii, where Haru nii?" The soft mumbling of words made Kakashi smile as he served the food to the table and settled the child.

"Your big brother is setting up a play date for you to meet more friends. So, we will see him at the end of the week. Right now, you need to eat all your veggies and then it's bath time." Kakashi had taken to following the detail schedule given by Haru after he had first moved in with the child.

The boy smiled happily and ate his food. Kakashi had realized long ago that Naruto would not complain, he was all too happy to have a hot meal and company that he was too fearful of doing anything to drive him away.

Soon Kakashi fell asleep with the small boy clinging to his side his thumb in his mouth. His last thought before sleep took him over was that Naruto looked adorable.

The days blurred past and soon Kakashi was carrying the small bundle of precious cargo over to the Uzumaki clan compound. Haru had insisted Kakashi bring the blonde early and so Kakashi had done that. He ignored Tenzo's gaping mouth at him not being late and a half dressed Haru plucked the happy blonde from his arms while Kakashi was stunned at the beautiful sight of the red head. The teen disappeared with a soft greeting to Kakashi while Tenzo sat the stunned silver haired man into one of the seats tucked into the corner of the kitchen. Tenzo was in a frilly pink apron cooking while Haru was buzzing in and out helping the younger teen and setting up a large table in another room.

Finally, Haru shooed off Yamato and Kakashi focused on the radiant Haru once more. His long red hair was free flowing with random braids and glimmering babbles and shells woven into the braids. His clothing was a long almost feminine kimono of vibrant blues and shimmered like flowing water with every move he made. His long earring's dangled from his ears and a lariat styled head piece hung from his forehead with a dangling pearl carrying his clan's symbol.

Kakashi would not lie to himself. He might be completely and utterly attracted to the red head. Haru then cooed to his little trio of munchkins and Kakashi was just a man. His heart was weak to the sight the pretty petite man made.

He could admit seeing Haru fussing over the three boys and adjusting their outfits made the copy cat nin fall just a little more in love or lust, Kakashi wasn't sure which. Naruto's wild hair was combed down smooth with his own little dangling lariat head piece. Though Naruto was dressed in a hakama and kimono top of various shades of blues and greens that made Kakashi think of a hidden spring in a forest. Naruto was adorned in gold bangles and bore a necklace of gold with a large pearl dead center with his clan symbol.

Sai and Shin were both chatting with the boy dressed similarly both wearing hakama as well with kimono tops in more colors of the sea. Sai in seafoam blue for his colors with pale white pearls sown into the colorful fabric of the top along the seams.

Shin wore the shimmering colors of a deep blue he himself had piercings as Haru had and along the hem of his kimono top were his own pearls.
"No practicing tonight Shin, I mean it. I do not want anything exploding while there are shinobi with vulnerable kids in the house." Haru was scolding the blue haired boy who only pouted.

"Explode?" Kakashi realized he said that aloud and Haru gave him a soft exasperated smile.

"Yes, Shin is learning fuinjutsu, it's why I allowed the brat to get his ears pierced. It is tradition and he seems determined to test my protection seals." Haru playfully pinched the blue haired boy's cheek and Naruto was being cuddled by a happy Sai who had plucked the still small boy into his arms and plopped to the ground determined to cuddle the color off the boy.

Tenzo awkwardly came into the room wearing the stormy blues and greys dressed in a tighter fit of clothing minus the pearl accents. Haru had moved over to coo over the young teen only making him blush further. The red head rushed out of the room and returned with a single cuff bracelet with a single Uzuno marked pearl. Haru ruffled the teen's hair who was looking at his captain for help.

Kakashi determinedly avoided the brats gaze and left him to his somewhat guardian's mercy.

Finally, Haru turned his own glittering blue gaze to Kakashi. The man was still wearing a facemask though it was in all black. His silver hair was tamed and combed over to the side to curl around his covered eye. An eyepatch with a repression seal was protecting his sharingan eye. Kakashi wore a smokey grey kimono top with black hakama. His own clan symbol was etched into the shoulder of his clothing fabric. The stark woven red patters like a starburst shone brightly and Haru gave a soft hum. Even if Kakashi was not part of an active clan he was still a clan head and Haru would not exclude the man from tonight.

Kakashi held his breath while the blue eyes roamed his body appreciatively. "Would you look at that Kakashi san, you can look presentable." Haru snarked pinching his cheek making the older of the two huff in exasperation.

Kakashi was soon seated with a steaming cup of tea while Haru was left to host and bring the room to life with each new guest. The wives of each clan head had corralled the red head into the kitchen each baring their own signature clan dishes while helping the red head. The compound was loud with chattering clan heads and the gleeful squeals of children playing. It was soothing to everyone seeing the scattering kids playing in the large compound being chased by a worrying Tenzo, Itachi and Shin. Shisui was no help for he was leading the young children in chaos.

Haru soon joined the room of men and Tsumu talking to one another. Shikaku had his sleeping son napping in his lap while little Shino hovered around his father Shibi who was talking with the Hyuga twins. Shikaku was trying to con Haru into a few shogi matches in his home and by the look of red head the older man was winning the argument. It helped that he had his son as Haru's kryptonite.

Shikaku covered his snicker at how the Uzumaki clan head lit up at his sleepy son and the shy Shino. Shikaku handed over his sleeping bundle who cuddled immediately into the red heads hold. Shibi nudged his son over to the red head who practically lit the room up as he fawned over the shy boy who only showed a faint blush hidden by his small round glasses.

"They are so adorable." Haru was gushing over the small kids. A crash was heard further in the house and Inoichi went scrambling away from Fugaku only to see his guilty looking daughter pointing at laughing Shisui and Kiba. Yamato was cleaning up a mess of books.

"Inoichi san, it's fine, don't worry. If they break something, I will fix it later." Haru waved his hand making the light-haired blonde let out a puff of breath.
Ino came scrambling forward at her father's stare though and Haru practically gushed over the teeny tiny girl.

"Sorry Uzumaki san." The pale blonde girl said giving him puppy dog eyes Haru grinned brightly and whispered loud and conspiratorially.

"If you ask Naruto nicely, he will be happy to help you take revenge on Shisui. Get payback for my honor Ino chan." Haru watched her pale blue eyes light up and she bowed quickly running off to find her fellow blonde. "Tell him no lasting damage!" Haru called out and both Inoichi and Fugaku descended on the teen.

"You are a freakin saint Haru san." Inoichi sighed and plopped next to Haru who was complimenting Shino on his buzzing buddies. The little boy was eagerly showing off his bugs as Haru allowed the boy to let him weave his companions against the flow of his chakra along his palm.

"I apologize, it seems my son's and nephew feel very much at home here." Fugaku spoke stiffly glancing back at the squeals and laughter of what had to definitely be revenge of the Ino and Naruto tag team. Haru gave a soft laugh waving off the comment. He had maneuvered the sleeping Shikamaru to his shoulder and soothingly rubbed his back. The small boy was burrowed into the soft red hair lain in Haru's shoulder.

"It's fine, I enjoy the sound of life in these halls. You know me I am all for happy children, in these trying times they must enjoy it while they can." Haru gave a gentle smile and Tsume leaned forward eyeing him.

"I'm pretty sure my runt is going to end up becoming fast friends with your own troublemaker. I can hear them scheming from here against the older Uchiha. Heaven forbid they get Sasuke involved, they'll be unstoppable." Tsume snickered and Haru smiled even brighter. It was a charming smile the teen had; he was just naturally magnetic.

"My boy's would love to make friends, I do not mind. It's an Uzumaki trait to be pranksters." Haru winked making the adults laugh stirring the drowsy boy in Haru's arms.

Shikamaru and Shino were both enthralled the vibrant red hair of the Uzumaki, it seemed to shimmer and shine like a gem stone. Haru planted the chubby cheeked boy next to Shino and stood and small round Choji came into the room rubbing his stomach and Haru smiled fondly quickly snatching up three cookies and handing one each to the boys in the room. Choji settled next to a sleepy Shikamaru and quiet Shino while they nibbled on their snack.

"Let me help out the ladies who kicked me out of my own kitchen so we can eat." Choza stood along with his fellow red head to help both talking about the traditional foods of Uzino.

Kakashi observed everything alert and aware of every action of the red head. He was so consumed with the thoughts of the other man that he realized it was nearing the end of their night. Haru had spoke of his clan and its history to the children who were each looking at the red head sleepily. Shikamaru was long asleep in his mother's arms and Ino was fighting sleep held by her father. Choji was giving little soft snores while little Sasuke was asleep cuddled up next to his brother and cousin looking at Haru in barely concealed excitement. Hinata was held by Neji asleep as well, while the boy drowsily listened to the older teen.

Naruto was looking at the red head with a stubborn determination but Kakashi could see him struggling to stay awake. Sai was asleep in Tenzo's arms while Shin eagerly listened to the older boy his eyes practically glittered.
Soon Haru promised more traditional tales to the kids as each guest left for the evening. Each clan offering an invitation to Haru and his little family to discuss more on the Uzumaki clan.

Kakashi was saying his own quiet goodnight to Haru, Naruto was tucked into his arms asleep.

The silver haired nin couldn't help himself from leaning forward when Haru was cooing to the sleeping boy in his arms. He gave the red head a soft kiss atop his head making the teen flounder and flush angrily.

Kakashi ignored the whispered and censored insults and only blew the red head a kiss unsettling him further.

All in all, Kakashi was now determined to win over the tuff as nails red head who became a teddy bear to kids. The copy cat nin seemed to find someone who could finally keep his interest. Haru was astounding in keeping the Hatake's interest and somehow kept the silver haired teen trailing after the red head like a pup with a first love. The Uzumaki clan head was intelligent, strong, maternal and was all shades of beautiful. His fuinjutsu skills had Kakashi half in love with him already.

For a startling moment Kakashi wondered how proficient the Uzumaki was at seals. His gaze had marveled around at the protective seals that littered the Uzumaki compound. Maybe little Anko could be rid of her curse seal, well when she finally returned from her self-imposed seclusion inside T&I.

Kakashi woke in the middle of the night to a messenger bird and a sleepy Naruto sitting up eyeing the creature who had pecked at the window to be let in. The anbu captain sighed and stood settling Naruto back to bed and calling over his summons to huddle around the boy in his absence.

He and his team were before the third hokage in a flash. Soon to be sent out on a mission and Kakashi wondered if a certain red head would be mad at being awoken at pre-dawn hours.

Kakashi sent his team out to prepare and scurried back to grab his own bag and blonde cargo.

Naruto was wrapped up in a warm blanket and Tenzo was standing ready to go outside of the Uzumaki compound with a fussing Haru next to him. It would seem the Uzumaki’s mothering wasn't just for the young children in his care.

The red head gently pulled the sleeping child from Kakashi. Both Tenzo and Kakashi had to prepare to mask up upon leaving the village to not let Haru know of their belonging to anbu. "Come back home safely guys, both of you." Haru spoke softly but his gaze lingered on Kakashi for a moment a strange look in his gaze.

Kakashi and Yamato left Haru holding his young family member and it made the copy cat nin feel vaguely determined. Haru looked like a worried bride and it was something that appealed to the silver haired anbu.

Haru watched the retreating backs of the men and adjusted his precious cargo before turning and heading back into his home. Swiftly he settled his chibi into his bed and set back to work on paperwork for his clan. The red head had his messengers and Jiraiya out searching for one of the few Uzumaki's he knew was alive. Karin Uzumaki. She later on became a companion to Sasuke but currently the young girl should be hidden somewhere in kumo and Haru was determined to bring home his family.

Haru leaned back in his chair and gave a silent sigh. His mind was racing and everything had been
going by so quick. Glancing back at the bed with the sleeping boy was strange. For so long his self esteem had been so low. Haru had always thought that he must have looked wrong in his youth for people to treat him as they did. That there was something to prove their worries yet nothing. He only saw the soft blonde hair, soft chubby features and the cheek markings. Haru knew logically nothing had been wrong with him, he had even been a cute was why he felt such a terrible urge to protect his chibi, because no matter what he didn't deserve that, even if the he was his younger self.

Haru stood glancing to the window as the sun's early light slowly crept into the room. With a jolt the red head realized he was alone. There was no anbu watching over his property like they usually would. Happiness fluttered through the teen because this meant they trusted him a little.

He danced his way into the kitchen and immediately began cooking breakfast for his little one's. The Hokage and Inoichi wished to see them later this morning and Haru had to bring the little rugrats with him to start on their chakra training. He had allowed the hokage to push one of his jonin on the teen to observe training the tots but honestly it would be pretty uneventful.

He tugged his hair up and washed his hands soon settling into cooking. It didn't take long before Haru caught a small trio of heads peaking at him cooking.

"Good morning boy's." The red head held back a snicker as the kids jumped and Naruto was the first to tackle into his legs with little Sai clinging to his other leg.

"Do you need help Harun ii?" Little shin was a bit older compared to the two boys and often held back from trying to topple the older boy. Haru smiled and leaned over to kiss the crown of icy blue locks.

"Set the table for me and help your brothers settle in." His warm smile was gifted with one from Shin who scampered off to set the table tugging the two littler boys with him to settle them. Using a clone Haru brought breakfast to the boys and the small family settled in for a quiet morning, well as quiet as you could get with three little boys.

It took a blur of moments for Naruto and Sai to make a mess of themselves but with a clone and Shin's help all three of his boys were washed and dressed.

"Since I am by myself I you boy's are going to behave okay." At the agreement from the boys Haru gave a gentle smile and lifted both Sai and Naruto in an arm each while Shin held tight to Haru's hanging kimono sleeve.

The villagers had learned to not look wrong at the boy's or face the wrath of the overprotective red head. The boy's chatted with each other and Naruto was finally coming out of his shell to do the same. Haru and Kakashi had each gone back and forth with tutoring the boys about reading and writing. Though Haru was extremely strict on calligraphy, he was trying to build a clan here. Naruto was finally coming along in his speech at least and it was a good idea to have him interacting with as many children as he could. It would help him more than anything, especially since the ban on Naruto interacting with others was lifted the moment Haru took over looking after him.

They soon settled into an appointment and Haru left the kids with a gentle Inoichi while the red head and Hiruzen settled into discussing his recent mission in Suna. The third hokage smiled warmly watching the Uzumaki clan head keeping a steady look at the boys who were eagerly chattering with the Yamanaka clan head.

"I heard from the Hyuga's you are building a new seal for them. One that will be invisible to the naked eye but will protect their eyes from being stolen." The hokage diverted the topic of politics
"It's done actually, I am just waiting for their clan's internal council to give approval." Haru smiled and crouched down as Sai came running at him giggling and cuddling and to the red heads arms. Haru had to hold back his laughs as his head and shoulders were then being overtaken by an exuberant Naruto and Shin was fretting about his little precariously balanced blonde brother. Haru allowed the Hokage and Inoichi to chat as he adjusted Naruto to sit proudly on his shoulders and Sai hung from his neck like a happy scarf. Shin had gotten into the playful mood and was tickling his squirming brothers.

Hiruzen and Inoichi came back smiling at the patient teen who handled three boy's easily.

"We are just waiting for the jonin to arrive, then you may all head out to train." Haru gave a soft laugh and settled the children so they played with one another.

Though Haru had not expected to be met with a grumbling Anko. Her hair was loose, and she looked half awake chewing on a dango looking around the room almost uninterested. Haru stood and everyone stiffened as he eyed the kunoichi.

"Ne, doesn't that seal irritate you?" Haru's eyes looked as if they were glowing in blue flame as everyone stood in tense silence.

Anko held back a growl and yanked her brown coat tighter around her shoulders. "I didn't exactly ask for it red." Her tone was harsh and the three small boys behind Haru immediately quieted which made the purple haired woman flinch.

"Oh, you want me to remove it then?" Anko sputtered as Hiruzen eyed the Uzumaki with a glimmer in his gaze. Inoichi had a look in his eyes close to admiration as he eyed the teen.

"What do you want in return." Anko's gaze was hard her dark eyes flited over the petite man.

Haru's face scrunched up in annoyance. "Doesn't anyone do anything just to be nice? I swear I just want to be nice." He huffed and the woman eyed him before looking to the hokage for permission.

"Well, Anko was supposed to watch over you. Will removing her curse mark have side effects?" Hiruzen settled down not realizing they could have had Haru doing so much for their village.

"She will need food and rest because the process will drain her. Maybe nausea and vomiting while her body adjust to the change of being without it but otherwise, she should actually be able to improve her skills once it's removed." Haru's eyes glowed again and his brow quirked.

"Whoever made this wasn't extremely knowledgeable with seals but unless you studied from the original Uzumaki archives, I guess this would be difficult to break down." Haru was now invading Anko's space looking at the seal up close humming to himself before he moved to the side and pulled out sealing paper and his brush. Haru worked swiftly crafting ink then pulling out a sebon and stabbing his thumb to squeeze out blood. He motioned Anko forward and had her do the same. Each adult watched as the red head worked swiftly drawing out a complicated seal. Hiruzen drank in the artful work feeling the press of power that emitted from each stroke of the brush.

Haru finished not a drop of ink or blood wasted and he gestured for the kunoichi to shift her clothing. Shino was watching everything in wonderment amazed clinging close to his gurdian.

"Remember shin our clan's work is a guarded secret but we use our work and knowledge to help other's no matter who they are." Haru tugged out a leather strap he used to hold his sword and handed the blade to Inoichi. He held the strap in front of Anko's lips. "Bite." Anko immediately bit
into the leather and everyone watched captivated as he pressed the inked seal into her shoulder.

Haru caught the kunoichi as she collapsed still holding the seal to her neck. His eyes glowed brilliantly for a few moments and he quickly peeled the paper off to show a clean shoulder. The red head glared down at the parchment eying the center that held the bound curse mark.

"This this is child's play, but it is disturbing, drawing on power and lifeforce of it's target." Haru tugged out a fan from a seal on his inner arm. It was a shimmering brilliant red and Haru set the paper on the open fan and everyone watched flames jump at the paper burning it away. Haru shut the fan and it no longer glowed red before sealing it back into his arm. Anko was surrounded by the small children of the Uzumaki and the boys were asking if she was okay. Little Naruto had given her a timid hug and Anko was soon crying happy tears as the red head helped her over to a chair.

The three boys were trying to cheer up the crying kunoichi and Haru tugged his sword back into place before cleaning out his ink pot and brush.

"Kid I swear I'm really close to offering my daughter to an arrangement to your clan." Inoichi spoke in awe and Haru snorted knowing the man was joke but remembering how Ino and Sai had fallen in love in his original timeline.

"How about if she happens to fall in love naturally with one of my boy's we can talk." Haru gave a laugh and Inoichi smiled brilliantly.

"I'm about two seconds from kissin ya red." Anko commented weakly holding back a giggled to the little boy's offering her water and looking at her with big soft eyes.

Haru waved her off, "Don't mention it. In fact, my only payment is me hoping you don't let everyone know I could do that. I do not need the civilian council on my ass trying to force me to offer my sealing services as a pricy commodity," Haru huffed and settled back down. "Now is another waiting game, please let me have a Jonin I don't need to fix."

Hiruzen smiled softly at the joking tone given by the red head. A knock sounded and soon Haru had to hold back a snort. Gai came into the room in a flurry of motion immediately taking the attention of the trio of boys.

Haru had his two youngest working on their calligraphy while Shin sat in a protective seal working on a basic line work. The boy had worked on theory and Haru was allowing supervised line practice for chakra control. Too much and it starts to sizzle, too little and the line will actually fade within moments.

Haru allowed his clones to work with each child and sat back almost meditatively. Gai was seated next to the observant man who eyed his kids carefully while he kept guard over a wider range of view. Gai was impressed at the dedication to protectiveness the teen seemed to give to the boys.

"Uzumaki san, you seem to be quiet at ease with children. Well actually at handling the many personalities of the many individuals." Haru glanced to Gai who seemed to struggle with how to say what he was trying to say.

"You are wondering why I can be friendly to everyone but Kakashi right?" Haru quirked a red brow and Gai flushed but nodded.
Hurus sighed and let his chin rest on his knees. "I prefer someone being genuine with me. Kakashi san has only recently begun that so I am being more cordial sort of as a reprimand for trying to deceive me in the first place." Gai gave a burst a laughter that made Haru smile. "Hopefully, he learns his lesson."

Gai patted the red head on the back. "You are a youthful man Uzumaki san." Haru gave a surprised laugh happy for the compliment.

"Call me Haru, I'll start to feel like an old man otherwise." Haru said standing and gathering his boy's to clean up and begin on meditation.

Gai oversaw the gentle training Haru had put into the boy's and used children's games to help them develop their skills naturally. It was inspiring and impressive to see a game of hide and seek turn into a sensory and teamwork lesson. Haru tugged along the jonin to a lunch for ramen and Gai could see why his friend was infatuated with the red head.

It would seem that finally his friend had met his match. Eyeing the laughing red head who eagerly talked about the boys to the ramen shop owner it was obvious how dedicated Haru was to his little family.

Gai knew he could be just as good for Kakashi. Now just to convince the red head that Kakashi would be good for him, that would be the trick.
Nightmares

Chapter Summary

Haru is such a daddy

In Another Life

Chapter 5: Nightmares

Naruto had had a bad night. Haru had hovered around the small whimpering boy who had woken up in the early mornin a scream of terror had slipped from his throat. It had spurned Haru into action and Shin and Sai had scrambled into the room as Haru had violently searched the room for a moment until the whimpers from his chibi caught him.

Haru had eased down remembering the years of nightmares that had gripped him after his liberation from the orphanage.

Haru had an easy time separating himself from the idea that these children where his former friends and makeshift family. It wasn't painful because he could relish in the fact that they were alive and small and so utterly helpless. Haru watched Sai who had snuggled up next to Naruto who had seemed to slowly be calming down. Shin was gently petting the boy telling him a sort soft story about how they had seen Kakashi walk into a wall his nose in a book.

It had eased the boy and Haru's heart alleviated as his body relaxed and he shuffled into the bed behind all three of the boys. The red head still felt a small ache at seeing Sai and Shika or any of the smaller versions of his former friends and family. Yes, they would never be his Sai, or Shika or Gaara or Sasuke or well it was a long list but did that matter. Haru had never dwelled in past hurts or pain only pushed onward to make himself stronger and better for everyone's betterment. Swallowing past his own pain of dealing with the small children gave new life to happiness that burned within him.

He was happy they were alive, even if they would never be 'his' they would all still be Naruto's. Though the older Uzumaki was sure seeing them grow to the ages he knew them best was going to hurt him. Emotionally or mentally and Haru could only hope he could avoid clinging to the possible hurt he would encounter in the future. He had a hard time already dealing with Kakashi, he was somewhat the closest to what he looked like when Haru had originally met the man. It was a struggle, but it was manageable with indifference. It would be appropriate

Haru's gaze shifted to the window and he could see slivers of sunlight peeking through the curtains. His three boys had fallen back to sleep in his arms and the elder Uzumaki slipped out of the bed covering the trio. Sai and Shin were both cuddling Naruto and Haru resisted the urge to coo at them.

Swiftly he had moved to the kitchen beginning breakfast for the day. His mind was still racing over all the things he still needed to do when heard a knock at the door and jolted. Swiftly he turned off the burner and moved to the entrance of his home.

He had not been expecting anyone, so it was a surprise to see Shikaku holding a sleepy Shikamaru.
The elder Nara looked to the red head sheepishly and Haru invited his guest inside.

"Kumo it seems is visiting about the Hyuga incident." Shikaku watched the surprise filter across the teens face but the confusion still was on Haru's expression. "My wife is on a mission and I am too nervous to leave my son in our clan home. I and other clan heads will be required to attend for solidarity behind this situation. Their Raikage asked you to be excluded until he and his brother may have a private audience with you. That will be most likely tomorrow as he will be demanding proof." Haru smiled softly to the embarrassed expression given by the Nara.

"I'm sure the boys would love to spend time with Shikamaru and their other friends." Haru had easily shifted the young Nara into his arms as his father thanked him and offered a joking warning.

"I'm almost entirely sure everyone will be bringing their children here, with the clan heads being required to attend your home is one of the few fortified from anyone being able to break in." Haru gave a soft laugh and waved the man off.

"I will be fine being the daycare for the day. Remember small cute things are my weakness, should I be wary of any allergies for Shika. I'm making breakfast which I realize I will need to make more of." Haru smiled gently easing the elder man's fears.

"He's not allergic to anything, if you can trick him into eating that would be great though. Kid would rather sleep than eat." The red head snorted and soon Shikaku was off. Haru and settled the small boy onto the living room couch and covered him with a throw blanket.

Going back to the kitchen Haru worked hard and swiftly ensuring there was enough food to feed a small army. Choza and Tsume had dragged along Shibi with their little one's and Haru had settled Choji letting the little boy snack a bit till the food was completely finished. Kiba was zipping around between Haru's legs and little Shino was sitting in the quiet living room with Shika but he was silently reading.

After Inoichi and the Hyuga's had dropped of their little one's Haru found the meeting would take all morning and the wives of each clan were needed to run things internally for the day or were out on missions. A few had even been asked to take extra shifts for better security around the village. Haru didn't mind helping out and understood his home was the most secure in the village. Tiny Hinata was clinging tightly to Haru's cloth covered leg and the red head was extra careful to ensure he didn't tip her over.

Neji was sitting next to an awakened Shin and both boys were acting like little baby grown up's talking about their beginnings of training, and Haru tried not to snicker at the cuteness. Ino had taken Shin's spot next to Naruto and cuddled the blonde to get a bit more of sleep.

When Fugaku arrived with his trio and blush on his face Haru only smiled brightly and shooed the elder away to his meeting. It seemed Shisui was generally looked after by Mikoto who was stuck running the police force for the day.

Little Sasuke had scrambled into Naruto's room and a bit of shouting and one Shisui later everyone was awake, and the two blondes were chasing angrily after two of the three Uchiha's. Itachi with the help from Shin and Neji and corralled the children to wash their hands and head to the dining room as Haru moved the food there. Choji had woken the sleepy Shika and soon everyone was eating. Haru ensured everyone had eaten before clearing the dishes.

"Naru, you and Sai have everyone play hide and seek like how I taught you." The two boys lit up and scrambled to tell the kids how to play. Shin, Neji, Itachi and Shisui had all scrambled to help to older teen clean up a bit.
Once that was finished Haru shuffled the older boys outside for some meditation and light chakra control exercises in the inner garden. It was an annoying reminder that Shisui and Itachi were already both trained ninja as young as they were. The Uzumaki head was nervous when the older boys told little Shin about blurring past the academy to be now be chunin. Haru still encouraged the boys to act their age in his home. The Uzumaki head knew he would have to push his two eldest through academy mostly due to their skill set and current training. It still made Haru feel guilty, but the teenager knew there was very few options. All the generations of his line would have to be powerhouses and of that wasn't a frustrating thought. He knew each of his boys could handle it but it did quell the fear within the red heads heart.

Though Haru found it funny to see the curious eyes of little one's sneaking over to watch the older boys working themselves through katas and jutsus. The teen worked with each boy a bit because he knew the Uchiha would not like them letting a day off of training. Little Sasuke and Naruto looked to their respective elder brothers in pure awe.

Haru and sighed and gathered all the youngest into a circle allowing the older boys to continue while Haru gave the kids a large rubber ball they had to push with a burst of chakra towards one another. Haru sat back watching both groups with a critical eye. He needed to figure out how to convince their families to allow group training more often, preferably with each clan taking a turn. He didn't want them to give away clan techniques, but maybe fresh eyes could spot weaknesses the other's could improve on. Haru pondered how to bring up that discussion with their parents. The teen realized he would probably have to show by example. He might have to have Shin become chunin and that ment he would have to do the same with Sai, he couldn't do it to Naruto unless the entire class did the same. Sai and Shin were already advanced in their young age, they just needed to learn the clan art before Haru could progress the boys further.

From the corner of his eye Haru caught little Shikamaru explaining to a grinning Naruto how to put out a little burst of chakra instead of blasting it at their playmates. It would seem Naruto's awestruck expression was making little Shikamaru shy because the boy was gaining an adorable blush while the younger kids all played. Sasuke was pouting and trying to intervene between his best friend and the Nara heir. Haru had to stifle a snort seeing the little glare both boys were giving each other on opposite sides of an oblivious Naruto. Choji didn't hold his little snickers in though. He allowed the children a break to roam the house and warned them not to open the shut doors or shut the open doors. Though Haru was sure he was forgetting something he focused on helping Shin work on using seals in battle. Everyone froze hearing laughter and a crash come from within the clan home.

Haru hurried back inside while the children who had all decided to tear apart his office. It was until little Shino who was running around trying to keep the chaos down. Shikamaru and Hinata were both standing off to the side wereing equal expressions of astonishment. Haru suddenly remembered he hadn't shut his study door and groaned making everyone freeze.

The teen looked woefully to his office and the sheepish gazes of the children before settling everyone down for a nap. The older boys were still being helped through their own training with the help of Haru's clones this time.

The red head had allowed a few clones to begin preparing lunch while he organized his office, nothing was damaged just in disarray. He had everything cleaned in time for the little ones to wake up and have lunch. The teen needed Shin to continue working on his seals having already noticed the sloppy work he did when fighting.
Haru had later settled Shin into a room littered in his protection seals before allowing him to practice his training. Many red headed clones awaited the door to help with fighting and seals work. Naruto and Sai pouted at being forced to practice their calligraphy and everyone groaned realizing the red head was making everyone except Shin and the snickering Shisui and focused Itachi partake in his lessons. Haru had even tugged away Neji to work on his calligraphy.

Haru while the kids practiced spoke about the great Uzumaki clan, Shin could still hear as the room he was in did not need to have the door shut to keep him safe. The Uzumaki expanded to fun stories about his clan while walking around correcting everyone on their calligraphy.

Soon one by one parent's came to Haru's home collecting their children. The first one's were the Huga's Hinata was eagerly showing Hiashi her calligraphy work as Neji recounted to his father about the chakra exercise he had been allowed to work on with the older boys.

Haru shooed the men away from thanking him and watched as Shibi and Tsume sauntered up. Kiba was given to his mother half asleep and she looked stunned.

"Tell me your secret, please." Haru laughed and waved her off.

"It was the other kids; I think all that running around really tuckered him out." Tsume smirked as Kiba curled into his mother's hold. Little Shino had given the red head a leg hug surprising the boy's father who bowed to the teen. Haru was flustered begging the man to never to bow to him again.

Soon Fugaku came to collect the Uchiha's and Sasuke had hugged the red head refusing to let go. His watery eyes were enough to break down the red head who promised to bring along his boys to play at their home soon.

The older Uchiha was amused and listening to the older boy's talk about the training with the Uzumaki clan head. Fugaku had smiled and gave Haru a thoughtful look before escorting the boys home.

As they left the and the older generation of Ino Shika Cho were watching in wonderment as Shikamaru was talking a mile a minute asking questions about The Uzumaki clan. Shikaku was having difficulty trying to remove his inquisitive son from the red head who was being latched onto by Ino who was jumping back and forth between Haru and her father. She was excitedly showing off her calligraphy and Choji was talking about the Uzumaki stories and delicious snacks Haru had given the boy. His chubby little hand was tugging on the long kimono sleeve of the Uzumaki who smiled tiredly.

Shikamaru had wrangled a promise from the red head for him to especially bring along Naruto to visit his home. Haru had snickered and had to ask, "Oh, Naruto in particular huh?" The little boy pouted and crossed his arms stubbornly.

"Naru said he had never seen a deer; I want to show him how cool they are." Haru laughed and pinched the boy's cheek and before Shikamaru's father could press further, Haru threw his hands up in defeat.

"Fine, you win i'll bring the boy's around next time Shikaku is free. That way he can get his Shogi match. Two birds one stone." Shikaku snickered as the three kids waved goodbye to the older teen and Haru waved away the thankful fathers.

Finally, the red head sat on the living room couch too exhausted to move until a certain blonde menace jumped right onto his gut. The older teen groaned as listened as Sai and Naruto talked a
mile a minute before Shin let Haru look over their work

Exhausted the older teen gathered up his boys and they headed out to get ramen. Naruto was sitting on the teenager’s shoulders while Sai and Shin each took a hand from their guardian. When Haru heard the muttering of demon and noted how Naruto seemed to deflate it pissed Haru off.

His cold gaze pinned the man down, a civilian who froze under the gaze of the red head. "Say it again. I dare you." The man stuttered and turned tail and ran.

Haru relaxed and settled his kids into the ramen shop. Teuchi cheerfully greeted his regular customers who had settled in swiftly and ordered. Ayame was helping her father for the day and Haru cooed to the little girl who chatted and observed the cooking being done as it was her ‘training’. The eight year old was adorable bossing around her father who took it in good natured.

After their bellies were full Haru had gotten his sleepy children home, bathed and dressed for bed. Instead of their rooms though the boys clung to their guardian and Haru accepted his fate and burrowed down his boy's using him as a cuddly pillow.

The next day Haru was a bit worried, as he knew the Hokage was going to be wanting him in a meeting as he was the one to intercept the attempted kidnapping. Haru had proof and even better he could use his skills to show everyone the memories of the prisoner. Honestly it was easy to find the proof of guilt when he had helped rip out the memories of the prisoner after first being free to partake in missions. The supposed shinobi diplomat who the Raikage denied allowing to be part of his envoy for peace between the nations.

Inoichi had already claimed the man used a jutsu to scramble his mind and Haru used an archaic fuinjutsu seal to dreg up proof guilty action. A and Haru had already met once when Haru first arrived to Kumo to add a seal to his brothers bijuu for protection. He had been the most stubborn man Haru had dealt with and now firmly held to belief that Haru was a demon himself. Let's just say their first meeting did not go well and the fact that Killer B loved Haru did not color him in a better light to the older man. Though all of that was not the issue here, Haru could handle political intimidation easily and his reputation helped him be personified as the political nightmare.

Haru's only problem, what to do with his little monsters. There was no way in hell he would be showing the village jinchuriki or his young clan members identity to the Raikage. Haru did not trust ANBU in his home unless it was Kakashi or Yamato, but they were out on a mission still and Tsunade was busy dealing with a bout of illness spreading in the hospital.

No way would he allow a genin team to watch over his charges not when people still held such unfavorable inclinations toward Naruto. Haru wondered what to do while he cleaned fed and dressed his little ones for the day.

So, deep in his thoughts he was surprised to hear a knock at his door and be greeted with Gai. Haru blinked owlishly and the grinning green teen was already speaking about the youthful day set before them. The red head huffed amused and stopped his yammering noticing an unamused Anko standing behind the green clad man.

"Gai, Anko-san did you need something?" The teen watched as Gai collected himself and offered a brilliant smile. Anko snorted and lifted her hands showing she was harmless.

"Hokage sama asked us to watch over your little brats while you attend the meeting." Haru gave another slow blink to Anko's words and nodded.

"Oh well, that's convenient. Thank you." Haru ushered the two in and explained the kids schedule
offering for them to follow it as it was posted on the fridge. Their lunches were already sorted in the fridge as well.

Gai and Anko were equally astounded at how organized Haru kept his kids. Even with three boys and working often on missions and duties for the Hokage the older teen was proficient in handling everything. Unmarried and pretty much their age, his handling of responsibility was amazing to the duo.

Haru had dressed similarly to how he had before arriving to the leaf and had his weapons strapped or clipped to his body. He said his goodbyes and made the boys vow to behave before leaving.

Haru was a blur as he zipped through the village and into the hokage tower. Upon his arrival he was immediately rushed into a tense and quiet room. The large imposing figure of the Raikage A only glowered at the amused expression of the third hokage. Hiruzen eyed his deceptively calm red headed jonin who had entered the room.

The Uzumaki clan head had his hands hidden within his long kimono sleeves no doubt clutching a weapon and the teenager eyed B who was looking to the petite man in happy familiarity. Yugito was standing in the corner of the room and straightened immediately seeing the garnet haired man who walked into the room silently. There was no love lost between A and Haru. The tenseness that expressed itself through his posture was evidence enough.

The red head bowed slightly to the Hokage who inclined his head to the teen. The Raikage glared at the red head who only inclined his head. A held back a sneer spotting the Uzumaki clan symbols etched into the shinobi's jewelry. Long red hair was tied high and glittering like a gem. A knew of the bloody typhoon and nearly growled at the bratty teen. It annoyed the man that the leaf somehow got their hands on him. He had breezed through and adjusted the jinchuriki seals of Kumo. Before A could offer the Uzumaki to join them the teen and left the village like wind blowing through the streets. It was insulting for him to be ignored and for the talented teen to join the village hidden in the leaf.

"Right, let us get to the topic at hand. Haru here is the one who heard about the abduction, and honestly his claims were not proven invalid as we found your shinobi in a trap set up in the Hyuga heiress's bedroom." The red head stared impassively at the glowering Raikage.

"I gave my diplomats no such orders to go after a child. In fact, that man, Nuzumi was removed from duty weeks prior, he was not part of the party." Haru gave a cruel smile and stood next to Hiruzen.

"Nee A-sama be honest with me now, I can easily unscramble your 'former' shinobi's mind and use whatever I find against you." Haru cocked his head to the side as if hearing something. "It would be easy with my fuinjutsu, I even have one that might destroy his mind but all secrets about you and your village may also come tumbling out." The red head smiled brightly to the third hokage who leaned back in his chair seemingly at ease.

The tense silence only made the Uzumaki pout until a cruel smile etched onto his features. Haru tsked softly and pulled his hands from his sleeves holding a scroll.

Everyone stiffened seeing the seal of the Raikage and Haru easily placed it before Hiruzen who was still holding a smile toward his tense guest.

"I would normally rip apart a shinobi's mind using a seal so he couldn't remember his name afterwards. Though he made it easy by holding onto his mission scroll, I do believe you even signed it." Haru was all smiles and A had to repress a shiver.
"Your talent is wasted here kid, Kumo would have been better suited for your skills." A had deflated and had his two jinchuriki eased down from their uneasy positions. The taut air eased, Haru's gaze practically glowed looking at the pouting B and demure Yugito.

"You have nothing that would have made me stay. Your people helped to decimate my clan and stole from the Uzumaki clan. Nothing that would have bound me to be loyal." Yugito flinched from the comment and Haru's true blue eyes looked back to the Raikage. "I would never have taken an offer to tie myself to Kumo. I will use all my knowledge and power left to me by my clan to help the leaf fight you all if I must." The dark smile was back, and the malice hidden in the red head's expression made the room tense once more until the third Hokage settled his hand onto the petite man's shoulder.

"So, if that's settled would you like to discuss the terms to a real peace treaty now?" Hiruzen was smiling jovially and A gave a terse nod before Shikaku was escorted into the room with a few advisors from each village. "Let's begin."

After standing for hours and allowing his presence to be the only intimidation needed Haru was soon freed from the office. He had swiftly moved away from the group even, but B had moved in front of the red head. The Uzumaki sighed and glowered half heartedly at the man.

"Fool, ya fool! Haru upset big bro and will see his wrath one day for sho." The red head sighed and gently patted the buff man's shoulder. B looked upset at Haru openly making an enemy of A but the teen knew it had to also worried the big guy. B and Haru got along and the Uzumaki was sure he could smooth out relations between A and him in the future, just not right now.

"Don't worry about it B, I will not hold anything your brother does or says against you." B brightened up and Haru waved as he left.

The Uzumaki's mind was a blur as he made his way home lost in thought. Jiraiya had convinced Hiruzen to keep Haru close to home until this situation had come to pass. Sarutobi had been happily using the political prowess of his newest shinobi to the villages advantage. All his internal missions were to sweep and strengthen the protective seals around the village and hospital but Haru knew he would be sent out soon. Kids or no kids, Haru was always too valuable to keep in home.

He had kept Neji and Hinata from spiraling into depression from the results of a kidnapping had done to the Hyuga clan. Haru had already begun the teaching process for the kids and had a plan on how to press further in training each of the little guys in the future.

Currently the ninja's who made the biggest impact and influence were targeted first and everyone fell after. Haru needed to ensure that during the chunin exams for the year Naruto became genin would be the year of a show of power. Everyone was about four or five years old right now. Haru had already helped their numbers by keeping the Uchiha from imploding from within and he was grateful to stop the process before it grew in influence toward the main house.

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"Uzumaki san!" The Uzumaki stalled in his steps and glanced over to the young version of Iruka. The genin eagerly strode over to him and Haru had to hold back a smile. Iruka's death had hurt him long ago but Haru had luckily never seen it. Sakura had and it had haunted the girl till her dying breath.
"Iruka, how goes the training?" The red head smiled gently continuing his walk as Iruka followed along at a slow steady pace.

"It's alright, though I need to work on a lot until the next chunin exams, we got teamwork down. I'm just struggling with taijutsu and a fluidly moving from one attack to the next." Iruka was pouting but Haru was all smiles as they walked into a grocery story.

"Join my clan for dinner, I will help you train, and you help me cook dinner though. Just come by the entire week so I can help you out." Haru spoke as he hurriedly picked up a few items needed and pretended to not see the glittering exuberance in the young teenager's gaze.

"If you are sure Uzumaki san." Haru waved off the boy almost pouting.

"Call me Haru, you're really going to make me feel old." Iruka laughed and the pair had easy chats on the way to the Uzumaki land. Iruka's gaze was jumping all over the grassy and flower filled land. Haru had kept the growing vines that curled around the house and it was almost like a forgotten shrine.

"I'm home." Haru called out removing his shoes and pulling out slippers for his guest.

Anko walked out with Sai clinging to her back petting her vibrant purple hair. Gai came forward carrying a laughing Naruto and Shin who was covered in ink splotches. Iruka stared awed as the boys scrambled from the two other jonin to barrel into Haru's legs as greeting.

The teen handled the boys gently as Gai took Haru's bags and settled them into his kitchen. Anko was eyeing Iruka with interest in her gaze and Iruka nervously waved at the girl. Haru let them chat as he approached Gai who was playfully fending off a cheerful Naruto who was attempting to latch onto the orange leg warmers the teenager wore. Haru plucked the boy mid air and snickered at his small pout the small blonde delivered in retaliation.

"I would-a got ya bushy brow!" Naruto's voice was high pitched, but the red head snorted at his words.

"I would have gotten you is what you meant Naruto. Don't fault Gai he has allies to save him last minute from your great pouncing skills." Haru was amused and unfazed by the wide blue gaze Naruto had given him.

Gai was running off on a tangent in the background about the power of youth and Haru made his little monsters run off back further into their home to continue their lessons. Anko had bullied Iruka to help the boys with their work and the pair had focused on the boys. Haru had invited his babysitters to a home cooked lunch and each had agreed to the puppy dog eyes given by the little boys in the red heads care.

Gai eyed the red head who was prepping the food and allowing a soup he made to stew on low heat.

"Did you need something Gai?" Haru's back was to the green clad teen but Gai didn't question how Haru knew he had been staring at him.

"I'm just curious, about why you are starting training for the boy's so soon." Gai hadn't had the nerve to ask this of Haru the time previous but the Uzumaki head didn't even hesitate.

"Naruto is an Uzumaki. It is in his blood to learn our clan teachings. I see he will struggle with learning in a class environment, he is hyper and can't sit still but if I get him used to the process he will pick up things easier in his time at the academy. Besides with his Uzumaki line he will have
chakra reserves that need to be honed and maintained now." Haru's gaze was echoing a bit of pain.

"His extra issue of having a tenant inside means his control needs to be developed here and now." Gai nodded understanding the reasoning for the blondes lessons.

"Sai and Shin had been rescued from cages hidden in Danzo's secret labyrinths. They need assimilation but not stagnancy. They are already trained killers sadly and nearly desensitized to all emotions. They both have to get used to a class room setting because all my boys will be separated by years. Shin is turning eight soon and will be entering the academy. I don't plan to allow Shin nor Sai to sit in the academy for long either, both boys will most likely skip a few years. They may be just boys but Danzo has already made them killers. Getting them onto a genin team and ensuring they understand teamwork will be the best course of action for both boys. Sai is a year ahead of Naruto in age, but I might have to send him a year or two ahead of his class. Sai and Shin need the small bit of normalcy in home before being put into a class setting and Naruto needs the precaution." Haru washed his hands and set aside the prepped food and pulled off the soup, rice and sides for a light lunch. Gai just stared dumbfounded at the thought out process the Uzumaki had given to the boys.

Everyone ate the light lunch and Haru was immensely amused by Anko flirting with Iruka who was flustered right up to her departure with Gai. Haru had settled his boys to watch as he observed Iruka's solo kata sessions. The red head had hovered around the teen correcting him where he could and adjusting stances easily.

The elder Uzumaki then pressed Iruka into a spar with him ensuring the teenager put his focus into his taijutsu and then focused on ninjutsu before giving a soft hum.

"Why did you become a ninja Iruka, why do you want to advance to become better?" Haru had eyed the teen who was swept easily to slam into the hard ground.

Iruka wheezed feeling the air escape him but Haru held him in place in the ground. The brown haired boy collected his thoughts before a sigh left him as the red head moved back from the boy who now sat before the older teen.

"I want to protect the village and make a difference with my skills. I want to protect kids like me from wasting their lives and I hope to become a chunin instructor. I want to be able to prepare others better than many of my comrades. We are in peace now but there is always tension between the elemental nations." Iruka had a slight blush on his face as Haru moved to crouch before him a smile on his lips. "The instructors are life boat in the sea of bloodshed for aspiring shinobi. I don't have power or great intellect like many from my generation. My chakra refuses to expand further, and I know I can at least help others become better by preparing them in the academy." Haru tugged the brown haired teen to his feet and moved away to a ready stance.

"Well, then I guess you better be prepared for me to kick your ass into gear so you may pass the exams." Iruka gulped at the foreboding smile directed at him by the Uzumaki.

Somehow Iruka felt like he was going to regret coming to the red head for training now.

In a blur of a week Haru had booted Iruka out into the world fully in control of his skills and determined for his exam. The Uzumaki head had been just as prominent of a dictator in the educations of his three troublemakers.

His week had been much louder handling three little boys and a young teenaged Iruka but it had not been unpleasant. Haru had stayed up late contemplating where his emotionally stunted former sensei was and his pain in the ass former sensei was.
They had been gone a week and it made Haru a bit nervous waiting for their return. The teen had settled his trio to sleep in their own beds and stepped out to the living room. He was tense and didn't understand why.

That feeling was answered when a bloody and wounded Kakashi and a worried and hovering Yamato stumbled into his home. Haru gave a frustrated sigh and lifted the stubborn silver haired man up and into one of the bathrooms.

Internally he thanked Tsunade and Sakura for pounding first aid training into his pea brain. Yamato helped the red head stitch and tape up his captain. The man was skilled and worked quickly before then turning on him and stubbornly working on the younger teen.

After Haru was satisfied he helped Kakashi clean off the rest of his uninjured body while Yamato had quickly washed and left to report for their team. The red head had settled an unconscious Kakashi into his bed and sent off a clone to collect Shizune. Haru knew she would be awake and free as tonight was Tsunade's free drinking night.

Haru had the most convenient luck, either that or his thoughts could conjure up anything he wished. That would be vaguely concerning though as he had a lot of silly thoughts.

Shizune had arrived to his home and Haru allowed the woman into his room to look over his stupid former sensei. Yamato had returned looking exhausted and Shizune bullied the teen for a check up as well before allowing him to go to bed.

The dark haired woman had approved of Haru's medical work on both men and left the Uzumaki home leaving an annoyed red head behind.

"Chakra exhaustion, how fucking reckless." Haru huffed and stewed in his upset while the sun decided to rise. Haru had began cooking for the day and woke up the kids to eat. He took food to an injured Yamato who was grateful and then took food to Kakashi who was awake and looking around his room.

Haru's eye twitchs as Kakashi smiled at him.

"Yo." For a split second the red head wanted to throw the hot soup at the annoying man but squashed his anger and gave him the food leaving without speaking.

Haru made Shin work through katas while allowing Sai to work on his art jutsu. The red head was looking over Naruto's seal before meditating while leaving his palm on the boy's stomach.

Haru could feel Kakashi settle into the same room observing and Haru and Naruto slipped away into the younger boys mindscape.

Naruto was looking around the sewer styled tunnel and soothed the boy before walking forward a small blonde clinging to him. A growl scared the boy but Haru didn't even flinch.

"Oi, Kurama stop being a bastard." Haru had lifted the blonde as they looked up to meet the large imposing nine tiled beast.

"How do you know of me human." Kurama growled out glaring darkly at the teen who only smiled darkly.

"He can't hurt you Naruto, always remember that." The little blonde Haru looked up to the fox demon. "Know this you bastard of a fox, Mandara lives, and he will come for you especially if you leave the boy weak and vulnerable. You will need to work with your host. You and I both know
the sage created his children for this purpose. You will disappear and decay if separated from a vessel, and there aren't many that can hold you." Haru watched the fox tense and settle down unease was in the demons gaze.

"Who are you human." Haru snorted and Naruto looked back and forth between his guardian and the fox.

"I am the one who will train the chosen child." Haru looked down meaningfully at Naruto and Kurama became thoughtful and gave a singular nod.

"Fine, for my father I will work with the boy, but you will be required to explain one day." Haru gave a soft laugh but nodded.

"I will put a secondary seal, to protect you from the danger that threatens all the sage's children. Come let me touch your snout." The demon gave a curt nod leaning forward as Haru bit his thumb and created a seal on the nose.

"Naru bite your thumb and touch the center of the seal for me." Haru watched as the blonde did as asked and smiled brightly to the boy.

"We will return." The fox huffed and Haru brought them both back to reality. Kakashi watched them and eyed a new seal that settled in the center of Naruto's own before it faded back into his skin.

His single eye watched the elder Uzumaki smile to the blonde and sent him off to let Sai and Shin train him. Haru looked exhausted and Kakashi settled close to the teen.

Too exhausted to fight him off Haru fell asleep somewhat pleased Kakashi had returned back to the leaf. "Welcome back dumb ass." The red head fell asleep to the sounds of masculine chuckles.

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