

Title: Darkest Night Hidden in The Leaf (11)

Even in the world of Shinobi, there is the light side known to others and a dark, hidden side known to a rare few.

For instance, the invasion into Konoha will be known to other villages and the Country's leader within a day! The motives behind this invasion are plain as day—Kumogakure and Iwagakure want to weaken Konohagakure as much as the two Shinobi villages can. The raid will not only trigger the next war, but Konoha's weakness will likely make Sunagakure hesitate to continue its budding alliance with Konoha, easing Iwa's tension around the borders they share with Suna. Not only that, but the current invasion will also deter other civilian countries and establishments from posting missions with Konoha for a little while.

But there are also motives hidden far too deep to be known to anyone but a scant few. These motives aim to affect the world as a whole, but they weave through small actions—persisting, waiting.

In Konoha, two men possess such motives.

It is right to say these men possess the power and resourcefulness to have such motives for their selfish reasons.

And at this moment, these men are unimaginably close to one another.

"Ah, you're such a sweet boy," One of the retired Senju Jonins moves his right arm as his left hand claps his shoulder, "My old joints made winters a nightmare for me. Not anymore. How come other Iryo-Nins didn't get this?"

Nagato blushes a little under such praises and answers while rubbing the back of his head, "I'm trying to mix Fuinjutsu with Iryo-Nin. Tsunade-san's medical jutsu cannot rejuvenate bones and joints. Or rather, they cannot return your body to its prime. But I have a reason to believe that chakra can accomplish a lot more." Whenever Nagato speaks about his area of expertise, he lights up like a bijudama. His excited gush makes the Senju Jonin smile fondly, who pats the redhead on his head while chuckling, "Hey, don't you bore me with the details. I swear, you young ones need better guidance. I remember being this excited when talking about Biwako with my pals. Tch, but that Hiruzen beat us all to it."

Nagato shrugs before nodding, "I will see if others need my help."

The Jonin nods and lets Nagato go.

The redhead starts making short conversations with others as he walks by them within the bunkers. While Nagato has trained under his Jonin instructor during his time in the academy, he simply became a professional medic. So, despite his impeccable Chakra Control, his other skills lag behind his Iryo and Fuin skills—one of the many reasons he is in the bunker instead of the Hospital, taking care of other injured Shinobi like many combat Iryo-Nins.

He soon passes a lewdly smirking Nono, around whom sits Team Kai with thick books in their hands as they bury their noses in the Iryo syllabus.

“Would you like some help?” He avoids looking at Nono while sitting beside Konan.

“Well,” Kurenai begins.

“He asked me,” Konan cut her mortal-teammate mid-speech before looking at Nagato with a mischievous smirk. “We don’t want to hold back the poster boy of Iryo-Nin, now do we?”

Nagato huffs and crosses his arms, “You sound more like Boss with every passing day.”

“But it’s the truth, right?” Konan grins shortly before questioning, “And instead of us, shouldn’t you be tutoring your student?”

Nagato thinks of Rin before humming, “I should look at what she’s doing. Well, good luck.”

As Nagato leaves, Kurenai cannot help but pout, “I really had a question.”

“Yeah, sucks to be you.” Konan returns her attention to her book while Shizune watches them wryly. The three of them fail to notice the subtle shift in Nono’s body as her expression becomes slightly calmer.

Meanwhile, before Nagato can take the stairs to meet with Rin and her teammates, possibly, he finds Biwako making her way to their level of the bunker.

“There you are,” Biwako smiles cordially after replying to a few greetings.

“Biwako-san?” Nagato questions in surprise, “What are you doing here?”

“Oh, Asuma is reckless as ever and injured himself in the knee.”

Biwako gently sighs before gesturing to Nagato to follow her, “Could you look at him? Seeing someone from his batch being more reasonable and obedient may just be the wake-up call he needs to not act like a monkey just because his father can summon one.”

Nagato nods without issues and follows after Biwako as someone tiny slips into his neck-long red hair.

As they walk, Biwako nods in a few directions with a smile, greeting the hidden Anbu members on the level before taking to one of the four flights of stairs connecting the bunker's stories from four directions.

The slightly gloomy atmosphere of the barely-lit stairs fails to faze Nagato in any manner as he follows Biwako calmly.

"Nagato-kun, how is everyone? I hope the sudden evacuation hasn't made the Senju Clan even more annoyed at my husband."

"Nothing like that, Biwako-san," Nagato smiles, "Everyone is okay. The shockwaves rattled some children, but the rest is well."

Biwako half-turns with a smile, "That is great news."

She pats Nagato's head gently as his expression turns sluggish before he falls asleep. Biwako moves quickly to embrace the youth before gently setting him on one of the stairs and walking away calmly.

"Let's see," a deep voice vibrates in the empty stairway. "We have a minute until the shift changes."

A white-humanoid figure shifts out of the wall. Unlike the other cum-men Kai has seen, this one is more human-like than the rest.: no odd spikes in his body or impossibly wiry frame that can blow away with one's breath. Shaggy green hair, jagged teeth, and pupilless yellow eyes stare at Nagato quietly.

The figure silently crouches beside Nagato and jabs his slick white finger into his chest after tugging his tunic down.

The situation lasts 15 seconds as veins wriggle around the cum-man's hand as if injecting something into Nagato.

"Hmm, the cursed seal should take place about now."

He snaps his fingers as Nagato's eyes snap open.

"Your eyes, where are they?" The impressive specimen of the dickless species questions.

"In my sockets," Nagato replies dully.

The corner of his lips twitch as he continues, “The Senju Clan took you in during the war. Do you remember anything odd before you arrived in Konoha?”

‘Rinnegan cannot be deactivated once it’s activated. Madara made sure to trigger it in Nagato’s eyes before receding into shadows, so someone must have taken it before the war. The only incentive that can make the Senju Matriarch break their code of war and bring possible Ame spies acting as Orphans can be—’

“I don’t remember.”

He frowns while looking at Nagato.

Tsunade and Kai took quite a few measures to make Nagato forget about Rinnegan over the years.

The figure with impressive chakra reserves frowns before sighing softly, “Very well. You will report to Biwako from now on.”

Nagato nods his head dazedly as the white figure melts into the floor and shifts away.

As Nagato returns, Kai, still on Nawaki’s scalp, holds an extremely tiny fragment of the cum-man’s green hair. His right eye becomes normal again as he deactivates his Sharingan.

“Hmm, never knew I would gain so much at once!” He scowls as he looks at his status.

[Forbidden Individual Curse Tag (1/100): A cursed seal placed on the target’s heart that restricts the use of their bodies based on the user’s will, including thinking of specific thoughts or acting in particular manners. Decreases time to form the seal by 0.5% at every level. Decreases chakra consumption to form the seal by 0.5 at every level. Current chakra consumption: 14000/seal.

Next Level: Construct 0/20 Seals or 60 SP.]

Kai wanted the excuse for his inability to deal with this seal to take Mukai’s Byakugan once he betrays the village. But this plan is not feasible—

‘Wait a minute,’ His eyes brighten as he thinks of something even more devious. He can always steal a Byakugan from the other traitors the Hyuga Elders plan to become soon enough. But this seal can help him turn the tables at the organization of the dickless cum-men, who are most definitely after the Rinnegan!

That’s what all of this is about, Kai realizes.

These individuals must know the capabilities of Rinnegan, so these men chose to destroy Konoha while keeping it ignorant to steal the eyes eventually.

Why not now?

Because Kai doesn't believe this specimen of wood release chakra has what it takes to deal with the current bulldozer, Tsunade has become.

'But, if I can take control of Biwako, Mukai, and Nagato, I can turn the tables by controlling what they share.'

Kai did not think it was wrong of him to control Nagato. He isn't rationalizing and trying to stand on a moral high ground through mental gymnastics. The reality is Nagato will be targeted for worse if he doesn't maintain the status quo. And the quicker Kai takes control of the situation, the fewer chances the cum-man will have.

And if Kai had any misgivings about his passive role in the situation, all of it changed with the **[Forbidden Individual Curse Tag]**. This technique is a Genjutsu given tangible form!

No, to be more precise, it is a puppet art of the highest order!

'This is my second 100-Level Skill after **[Study of Chakra Weapons]**. The third one should be the Puppetry Skill, I held off till now, but again I have no use for puppets for the time being.'

He jumps away from Nagato. He and Biwako can have their seals altered later. Right now, he needs to adjust Mukai's seal.

'This way, Mukai will still do what he is programmed to do, but I will be the one using him instead.'

Kai has no emotional attachment to Mukai, but he admits Mukai is one of the talented elites expected to be as much of a monster as Sakumo once he grows. If possible, the survival of the distant Hyuga will not be a distasteful turn of events.

'I can even program him to take one Byakugan for me,' Kai plans as he skips through the bunker to isolate Mukai. He didn't use Orochimaru for this. If he did, he would have to include the woman in many endeavors of his where Nono is already enough.

Still, his mood takes a pleasant turn as he now has a great skill to grind. He admits he was a little sour when he had to use his SP to complete other skills today, but this makes up for it more than enough!

'And fuck! It's also going to work well for the project, Mr. Worldwide!' He giggles to himself impishly, 'Now, only a few more Jutsus to create and one Succession Quest to complete~!'

“Alright,” Kai huffs and looks at the clone who came from the Uchiha Police, “Make sure—”

“Yep,” the clone shrugs and leaves as Kai scoffs, “Fuck you, can’t I have an inner monologue for once?”

“Externally having an inner monologue will bring shame to all of us,” the clone shrugs and snickers, “But we made it big this time, huh?”

“Who’s inner monologuing now?” The third one speaks as he questions while standing up.

The three of them look at each other before pointing to the other one at once!

“He is!”

Their voice echoes in the empty lab room as Dodai’s corpse lie between them.

One of the clones shrugs and disappears while Kai picks up Dodai’s corpse, slightly regretting his bad luck in not getting the cursed seal a few minutes ago.

Dodai would have made an excellent spy!

‘Then again, the cum-man must have other spies across the five villages. I just have to turn all of them.’

He nods at the clone stationed in the Senju Compound.

‘Let the cum-man sweep through if he arrives,’ Kai shrugs, using the shared mind to converse with his... another mind?

‘Yep.’

‘Let’s hope Kushina and others are alive and kicking,’ he uses Hiraishin, not really fearing for Kushina since he already knows her strength, and Tsume, too, since he is the one who used the Chimera Seal on Kuromaru.

The clone for the Senju Compound, however, cannot help but muse.

‘How do we start using the Rinnegan? It’s too risky to convert it into chakra to be used with the Chimera Seal until we learn to reverse the process... maybe we can use this Rinnegan to create more? After all, it’s another one of Sharingan’s forms, right? But holy hell, how the fuck

does the Sharingan has so many stages... and still create bitches so impulsive that it's cathartic to smack them around?'

Pondering this question maybe will make Kai an actual sage.

Alternate Title: Schemes That Run Deep; Mr. Worldwide Project; Nagato's As Eager As Any Other Redheaded Cousin; Hiruzen Bagged a Vixen; Prime Biwako Must Be Hotter Than The Will of Fire; Konan Taking After Certified Orphan Beater; Candy-Stealing Konan Coming Soon; The Enemy's Motives; Nagato Escaping DAT Bad End; The New 100% Grind; Inner Monologue is Not External; Three Spiderman, ehm, Kai, Pointing at Each Other; Dodai Becomes a Fatal Meme; The Loss of the Veritable Rubber Shinobi!; Uchiha are Blessed Children?; Turning Mukai; Informant Employment; A Forbidden Jutsu; Genjutsu Given Life; The Peak of Puppetry

Title: Darkest Night Hidden in The Leaf (12)

{A/N: Thank you for bearing with all the setup till now. The remaining chapters of this invasion will now consist of various battles and set-ups concluding—to a satisfying end, I hope.}

Nosuke, Shizan (Senju), a Nameless Jonin, and the Late Sui dying at Tsume-Kuromaru's fangs are the designated team deployed to stall or kill the current Jinchuriki of Konohagakure. Of these men, Sui is dead—unable to deal with Tsume's reckless use of an incomplete jutsu, saved by one of Kushina's remaining clones. Nosuke is still stalling Kushina's real body brilliantly, reducing the number of her clones to a zero on their battlefield. Minato and three of Kushina's clones face the nameless water-lightning Jonin and Shizan, an admitting Senju Jonin born in Kumogakure—and a clone of his.

Needless to say, the situation is dire for all of them in a sense. Kushina's clone is keeping Tsume and Kuromaru stable. The duo's minds are tired beyond imagination.

Nosuke's dojutsu poses enough threat to Kushina to make her consider going all-out.

And Shizan's addition with the nameless surviving Jonin makes Minato's battle a real threat to his life since the lab-Senju has enough skills to take out the remaining force of Kushina's clone in their section of the forest not too far from the appearance of Hachibi.

Kushina's eyes steel as the bubbling coat of chakra around her hides a flash of orange-gold on the soles of her sandals, her figure blitzing near the annoying Shizan kiting her. Her hand rips through his neck, his body bursting into a poof of smoke as the clone cannot even register the sudden burst in speed. Yet, the plume of smoke explodes in that fraction of a second, reducing Kushina's clone into a plume of smoke, too.

The Senju's clone was explosively insured with a paper tag.

"It even the odds somehow, no?" Shizan smiles breezily, his tanto swinging on one of Kushina's remaining two clones when Minato flashes beside her. The enemy Jonin's tanto shifts seamlessly toward Minato while a clone forms in front of Kushina's clone to block her attack.

'Amazing chakra reserve and skills not too far from an Elite,' Minato disappears again, bugging the other Jonin and stopping him from using a jutsu for umpteenth time. The Blonde Chunin can assess if someone is an *'elite'* or not because of his memorable sparring sessions with Kai. Chakra reserve alone does not make up for the skills. And a shinobi like Shizan, who has yet to use any other major elemental jutsu, feels far more troublesome. It is only because of Kushina and her Kyubi *'goodness'* they are standing alive!

'What would Kai do?' Thinks Minato before focusing on the matter at hand. 'He isn't here. What can I do?'

All he can do at this moment is act like a fly and annoy the enemies, who are superior in every way but Hiraishin and reaction time.

'I cannot try to construct a **[Taiyogan]**, or it will give the enemy a chance to weave a jutsu—'

His thoughts still when Kushina, facing the unnamed shinobi, charges at speed almost invisible to Minato save for a flicker of orange-gold he catches in time as her tanto bifurcates the enemy from shoulder to waist as her body flickers away, not letting a drop of blood catch her as the enemy vaporizes in another second and explodes out!

'What was that?' Minato thinks while throwing one of his special kunais at Shizan, who raises his eyebrows in muted surprise.

"You've used such speed twice, now," He jumps away but doesn't let Kushina's clone catch him in a similar. Blood graces his palm as he waves his hand, creating a web of seals mid-air in that very second.

Poof

An enormous pitch-black crow caws aloud, his feathers flapping Shizan to the sky quickly as he assesses the situation calmly.

"Tch, that bastard," One of Kushina's clones scowl.

"If you could do that, Kushina-san, how did your clones disperse? Did none of them catch Shizan by surprise?"

"I don't know, dattebane! The bastard is not hostile at all!"

"Why would that matter?" Minato questions, but Kushina doesn't speak anymore. Her crimson-foxy eyes stare at the flying Shizan with frustration.

She can sense chakra using Kyubi's special chakra molding in her senses, and it should help her original against 'Nosuke.' But it looks like Shizan got high and entered the battlefield because he just wasn't feeling anything negative!

If Minato can point out her snarl, the enemy won't be kind in ignoring it either. Shizan narrows his amber eyes and shrugs. He taps the crow's neck to signal what his summon should do without voicing his thoughts.

“He will have enough time to perform a jutsu now,” Minato exhales.

“We’ll see what he can do.” Two of Kushina’s clones stare at the enigmatic Shinobi, wondering again if they should go all out. Things may get troublesome if Minato speaks, after all.

“Hmm?” While she cannot sense an ounce of malicious intent from the Senju, she does sense hostility from the group of three in hiding toward Shizan.

The clones even remember the trio from her days in the academy, forming an idea. The duo nods at each other before one of them comically picks another on her shoulder.

“Huh?” Shizan and Minato blink, but this is all the distraction *they* need.

Shizan’s crow freezes suddenly, tumbling down like a brick reintroduced to gravity as Shizan’s eyes steel slightly, and he jumps off, landing at the nearest branch only to feel a foreign mind swoop into his own. The mental struggle lasts for a second, his mind proving far too strong for the inexperienced mysterious chunin, but it’s nothing compared to his body falling into someone’s control.

Or, in this case—his shadow.

“A golden shinobi rule—” A distinctly lazy voice drawls from the other side of the tree as Shizan views his pitch-black shadow threading out to a mysterious existence known far too well in Konoha—a Lazy Nara. “—questions the enemy after he miraculously survives a fatal wound in the event—”

Kcchhhh

Kcchhhh

Kcchhhh

“—he proves to be powerful and smart enough.”

The voice’s actions prove more fatal than his voice as a physical manifestation of shadows punctures the man from every corner, including his eyes and the rest of his orifices, as Shizan’s blood start flowing in great amount.

“You three were supposed to capture him! He was a lab-rat Senju of Kumo!” The Kushina Clones express their frustration as Shikaku walks out of the bushes, his shadow-clone on the tree dispersing quietly while the tremor from Shizan’s corpse exploding reaches them.

“Oops?” He shrugs. “A life of a lab rat means little when one of Konoha’s greatest assets is fighting Hachibi. We need the real Jinchuriki of Konoha to deal with Hachibi.”

The two clones cock their heads.

“Kai can’t deal with him alone?”

“He is talking about Jiraiya-Sensei,” Inoichi smirks, the smear of blood from his nostrils revealing how tough Shizan actually was.

“Che, he isn’t an asset at all, ‘ttebane!” One of the clones makes a face, but they are happy for the support.

“The real one is in this direction. I’ll take the lead. The enemy is a weird one, we’ll fill you in on the details, but the original would probably know more.” The other clone turns around, while the first clone disperses to communicate everything to the Original and to plan accordingly.

Minato, meanwhile, looks in the direction of the torn tree Shizen once stood on.

The youth has already killed a few times, staining his hands in the red. But the sight of monsters dying is always eye-opening. It fills him with the thought—*I could be one of them should I be the less prepared or caught off-guard—Or just plain unlucky.*

Shizan must have quite a backstory. His life must have been meant for something else. If Kushina was right, he wasn’t the least bit hostile.

And now he’s dead.

It is chilling as it is revealing of the world he is in.

‘And to thrive, I must always be prepared. Hiraishin is just a part of it. I can no longer spend my days willingly on research when I haven’t even fully trained myself physically. I need to suspend aspirations for rapid growth.’

He needs to work on his weaknesses because this world isn’t so forgiving that he can only work on his strengths and hope for the best.

“Are you coming?”

Kushina turns around and calls for Minato, sensing his inner conflict but not infringing on his thoughts.

“Yes, Kushina-san.”

“Remember, Nosuke. Our clan’s move into Kumogakure depends on your performance. You have trained in the art of Shinobi with the Clan for years and polished your jutsu in Kumogakure for the last few months.”

His thin frame looks at his aged father as the wizened man’s eyes turn blood-red with horizontally white pupils.

“I shall confer the Clan Chinoike’s Forbidden Jutsu unto you.”

The man’s expressions turn visibly sad as he whispers, “Goodbye, my son—”

“Nosuke?” A bleeding Kushina expels the hostile chakra from her systems again, now more intimate with her enemy’s abilities. Her words cause the thinly-skinned pale man with bulging eyes and reddish veins mapping his body to pause.

“How do you know that name?” Questions Nosuke, his words more hoarse than before as he burns his blood to compensate for his chakra to compete with the Nine-tail’s Jinchuriki and keep stalling her for as long as he—lives!

Kushina doesn’t answer anymore. Her intention had merely been to confuse the enemy briefly, dodging the attack. She is still prone to emotions, but Kushina tries to keep things as close to her chest as possible. And unlike her clones, Kushina isn’t in the mood to chat when facing a hydra.

A BLOOD HYDRA!

Calling it a hydra might be a stretch since the blood construct has more than nine heads—14, to be precise.

The long necks rise from the stretch out of the whirlpool of blood around Kushina that Nosuke unfroze. Something she believes has to do with his rapidly thinning skin and enlarging arteries as if mosquitoes bit the entire length of his vessels!

Kushina feels the same chakra creeping on her at his sight, causing her to snarl in frustration as her blood freezes for the barest moment before she expels the chakra again.

‘What kind of Dojutsu is this?’ She groans inwardly, a little annoyed due to her blood matting her clothes under her flak jacket. ‘It’s like Sharingan when using a Jutsu at sight, but instead of a genjutsu, this freak uses some form of blood-related kekkei genkai. It’s obviously a control of chakra in a way, but similar to a genjutsu when it comes to controlling the enemy’s body. Not to mention I cannot use any cold weapons on him, something Minato should explain to the reinforcements.’

But this isn't the worst part.

Kushina stares at the boiling construct of blood roaring in her direction and spitting jets of blood, easily tearing through any physical obstructions!

She dodges again, unwilling to let his chakra anywhere near her in any form, for that matter.

'A ninjutsu cannot just form again. I never see Kai's water dragons forming again until he weaves his chakra again. But this blood jutsu is weird! It started from nine heads, and I destroyed it a few times, but the chakra in this blood is weird—the jutsu forms again without any effort from the user. Well, the more I destroy it, the thinner Nosuke gets. His body is looking worse for wear behind the Hydra, but I don't think he'll kick the bucket anytime soon using this method. Anyway, how is he even getting in my system when I'm in four-tails mode, dattebane!'

Her life could be far simpler than this bullshit!

What did she do to deserve such a fate when she could have spent her time better pushing Kai against a wall in a dark alley or on her bed?

Maybe both on the same day?!

Her gaze suddenly sterns, and she scowls, expelling a sneaky stream of chakra disguised under the usual blood-controlling dojutsu.

'What the fuck?' She sends her intent to Kyubi. 'You let me fall for such a weak genjutsu?'

"You keep thinking stupid things, and you'll eventually win stupid death," comes a casual reply.

Kushina quietly works her jaw while admonishing herself. Unwilling to fall into complacency again by thinking—At Least I caught it in time—she narrows her violet eyes and decides to go all out herself.

'I'll end this quickly,' She affirms, still a teensy bit nervous about her life being a ghoulish routine of being forced to wage wars for Konoha should her skills get known to others.

It's at this moment she feels a source of reaffirming chakra quietly patting her on the back.

'What a drama queen.' Kushina snickers internally at the silent and *'oblivious'* fox. The bubble of crimson chakra around her suddenly gains an orange-gold sheen before sticking to her body like a second skin. Her red hair turns the same glowing color while parts of her front locks rise to form fox-like ears clad in chakra. The sudden transformation catches Nosuke by surprise. His blood hydra explodes the next second with a flashing figure bulldozing through it!

Years of expertise kick in as Nosuke's entire body mummifies and dries, only for a flashing figure to freeze in front of him with a look of surprise. But before Nosuke can do anything further, Kushina's own instincts work against him as arms of golden chakra bloom out from Kushina's torso, tearing Nosuke's wiry body as easily as tearing a sheet of paper!

"Who?"

Kushina doesn't stop. Her entire body feels disgusted at once with the sheer hostility she faces the next second—not from Nosuke's corpse, but—

Boooooommmmm

Several chakra hands smash into a particular spot on the ground at once as Kushina stares at the empty mark in confusion.

'What was that, 'tnebane?' Frowning, she deactivates her chakra.

Kushina had not known she was as bright as a sun to a slithering cum-man hoping to *'instruct'* Nosuke, a Sage battling uncooked Takoyaki, and said rapping octopus.

She quietly returns to look at Nosuke while keeping her guard up. His eyes are as dry as a beautiful carving of sand—his abdomen torn open to reveal dried organs and fuming blood.

'I was... we were stronger,' Kushina stares at the strange man. 'But his dojutsu was too weird.'

'*Search for Ketsuryugan. If you're lucky, Konoha's archive may have something for you.*' Kyubi lets out a throaty hum.

'Why are you telling it to me now?'

"Better late than never."

Kushina seethes slightly, understanding she has a long way until Kyubi and her can look eye-to-eye as the friends she wants them to be.

"Stop disrespecting your flesh on that man, and we might have an accord." A beastly grunt echoes in Kushina's mind.

As the redhead thought—a long, *long* way.

She stares at the reinforcements with a hint of smug pride.

“Took you long enough!” She grins once they come to a stop in front of her. Shikaku looks at the corpse and the glassy Dojutsu that may just turn to ashes with a touch.

“As I suspected, it’s the Chinoike clan,” he reveals and looks at Kushina with unveiled praise. “Works best this way. Now you can support Jiraiya-Sensei, and I can take it easy until needed.”

‘I was unaware a jinchuriki could achieve such heights. Maybe that is why HE is obsessed with the notion?’ Ura thinks while making his way out of Konoha to a predetermined meeting spot in a forested region. ‘I wanted Nosuke Chinoike to harm Tsunade to the best of his capabilities. I swept through the Senju compound and found nothing. The Senju Matriarch must have hidden the Rinnegan. Until new information surfaces, she and her Legacy Guardian are the prime suspects. Not only were they in the same war and met each other, but the archive records of Konoha also show Kai was appointed the Legacy Guardian during the war, during the time they encountered the Ame Orphans and Tsunade decided to take them in.’

Ura grows out of a tree and watches the distant Konoha from a cliff.

‘I only had Nosuke from the men under my seal enter this invasion, and with him gone, my only effective piece is Mukai for now. Let’s see Mukai’s situation play out. Sakumo should be on his way out of Ame, too. These two can help start the plan of feeding that husk. But I need more valuable and talented men. I would have chosen the Dragon Sennin, but to think such a boastful man can keep his identity hidden somehow—Kai must have Hiruzen’s eye for something more. Biwako should suffice on that front.’

He further narrows his pale yellow eyes, ‘It’s not just Kushina Uzumaki who has attained great heights as a Jinchuriki. Killer B is an intriguing prospect, too. Unfortunately, his fate as a Jinchuriki is sealed. I must reevaluate the plans and use Ita, Rama, and Tobi to lay a net around the Senju Clan to retrieve the Old Man’s eyes.’

Alternate Title: Curtain Slowly Closes; The Higher You Rise, The Harder The Fall; Intrigue Alone Does Not Entail to Plot Armour; Conveniently Lazy; A Timely Support; Need for Raw Growth; Minato Understands His Weakness; Experience is Merely a Part of Strength; A Deceptively Dangerous Jutsu; A Forbidden Jutsu; Becoming Husk to Stall; Kumo’s Plans; Unhostile As Fuck; Unbothered Mind Stitched By Shadows; Chinoike; A Blood Hydra; A Jutsu Breaking the Norm; Kyubi is Becoming Based AF; Becoming a Torch; Tearing the Mummy; Two Great Powers Against One Another; Understanding One’s Enemy; Sensing Dickless Hostility; The First of Many Plans; Shikaku Actively Trying to Cut His Responsibilities—Nara Seal of Approval

Title: Darkest Night Hidden in The Leaf (13)

“WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!”

Jiraiya can hear two sources roar at once, unable to make heads or tails of the situation since Hachibi’s and B’s transformation is as sudden and swift as Orochimaru’s supposed gender-reveal party since the woman can’t stick to a single lane.

Not everything goes according to the clan, and that is where the need for extreme ace under the sleeves shines.

B is no longer the same.

Eight brown octopus limbs grow out of his tailbones. Instead of being as big as the actual Hachibi’s tails, the eight suction tails spiral into themselves, forming eight springs behind B as he is no longer covered in the defiling mass of dark crimson chakra. A pair of oxen horns jut out of B’s slick ashen-blond hair as the youth’s shades fall off, revealing crimson eyes that retain their intelligence. The right horn is cut near its tip as B flexes his arms, his tails unsheathing eight of his needle-like swords for him.

“Eight swords?” Jiraiya’s throat vibrates a curious noise while keeping a firm control over the Nature Energy around him.

“Eight swords?” B’s thick lips pull back into a toothy smirk as he retrieves another set of shades from under his white flak jacket before rapping, “Ya fool! Open yer Sage eyes! This is no eight swords style!”

The tails behind him coil and tighten further, the tension in their mass increasing to the brim as B juggles his eight swords until catching them between his hands, mouth, and the clench of his knee and elbows.

‘This is the art of sixteen swords! Ya, Fool!’ He parrots internally, unable to speak with his mouth full, as the eight, spring-like octopus limbs let go of their tensions—jumping on a tree before his body disappears, leaving a shattered tree in his wake as his body starts jumping around and shattering nearby trees.

But it isn’t enough.

B isn’t fast enough to escape Jiraiya’s senses in his Sage Mode as the Sensei narrows his eyes before moving—predicting B’s pattern rather admirably to send him flying with another one of

his *'invisible strikes'* to send B flying. Jiraiya simply did not wish to risk getting into physical contact with the Jinchuriki's new form.

Strangely, however, B removes this new form as quickly as it appears.

'What?' Jiraiya locks his brows.

"That did not work as I intended; training sessions are a must! Sixteen is the way to transcend, but mastering the eight is what I should do first! Yeah!"

B starts bobbing his head, his skin transitioning into rust brown as his body enlarges in the blink of an eye before the massive Hachibi stares down at Jiraiya, "Gotta stick to the basics, partner! Let's show this fool we don't need new unpracticed techniques to bring them down! WHEEEEEEEEEEE!"

Jiraiya deadpans.

Not all Jinchuriki should be eccentric, but his luck seems to drag him to the strangest of the bunch!

First Su, and now this Ox!

'Whatever, I should try and end this. His sudden transformation's unknown nature did present a threat, but a large size—' Jiraiya's moving body comes to a halt before he jumps on Hachibi's hand and runs up his arm only to find a part of the skin, releasing pitch-black ink from its pores that seal Jiraiya's sandals!

The sage's body jumps on an invisible platform yet again as he scowls.

'Ink that seals?' He gazes at the receding ink, understanding the trick.

'No, he must have mastered some Fuin seals to cover with a large patch of ink to keep his intentions hidden. Damn, I could save a fortune on ink if I ever became Hachibi's Jinchuriki.'

Ever the writer in heart!

Splash

B ejects a large wave of ink from its mouth that molds itself into a dozen of B's human clones as they let loose their signature—Wheeeeeee—call before storming Jiraiya with attacks as B opens his mouth wide to collect red-blue chakra into a purple mass aimed directly at Konoha!

'No, this calls for a similar jutsu!'

Jiraiya doesn't weave any seal as he faces the horde of enemy head-on, all the while collecting senjutsu chakra in a familiar spiral motion over his hand as it soon appears in a ball of chakra no less than the size of the forming Bijudama!

[Sage Art: Giant Rasengan]!

The mass of chakra turns the clones into splashes of ink as Jiraiya's attack lands on top of B's head, causing his maws to sink into the unstable mass of incomplete Bijudama!

Baaaaannnnng

Splattterrrr

A wet sound follows the large explosion that forces Jiraiya to close his eyes, protecting himself with a coat of formless nature energy, his body flying back in the distance, tearing into the trees and dragging through the mud.

Cough

The blast's impact had been enough to knock the breath out of his lungs.

But it doesn't stop Jiraiya from keeping his senses as sharp and keen as ever.

'This should have done some damage,' Jiraiya straightens his spine only to grind his molars as small figure tears out of the natural smokescreen before the dust settles.

'Jinchuriki are fucking insane!' He blocks the impact of the Jinchuriki in his previous mass of crimson-red chakra, eight tails waving behind as a miniature Hachibi's skull protects B's body. Jiraiya takes on the beast on Taijutsu without fear, his speed, senses, reactions, and sheer physical strength testing the Jinchuriki's limits instead!

'But I 'saw' B's jaws tear open! That attack must have hurt the slightest bit, right?'

Unfortunately, B will never answer Jiraiya's questions.

The impact of their punches and blocks raises mild tremors around them as Jiraiya makes use of his kata stances to pull sneaky nature-charged invisible attacks at times to throw B off-balance.

Their attacks are precise and unforgiving—despite their somewhat similar nature. The couple who could have been better friends than most now fight with their lives on the line. They hold back very little in case of an unforeseen circumstance, perhaps a new transformation of their enemy.

“Hmm?”

It's then Jiraiya feels Kushina's chakra spike beyond what the beast in front of him can compare as even B jerks back in surprise.

The duo's fatal taijutsu match comes to a halt as the spike of chakra disappears, but Jiraiya's senses find themselves mistaken—or are they?

He would need to focus seriously to see what's going on beyond a few kilometers in this state, but Kushina has been relatively near.

'What was that?' Jiraiya notes internally, his thoughts drifting slightly despite the battle. 'Could Kushina always do that? Didn't Kai volunteer to deal with Bijudama? Didn't he know?'

All these are questions for later as Jiraiya stares at B, who suddenly growls and smashes his fist into the ground!

“Damn it!” He snarls. “Keep Dodai-san safe! The invasion has failed,” even he can sense as much as Hachibi within suggests softly.

“That's the Kyubi's chakra—tamed, no less. B, there is no point in dealing with a Sage who has a few more minutes of fight left in him and Kyubi's jinchuriki. The previous attack forced us to revert to your body instead of mine. Announce the result and return.”

“Dodai of Rubber Defense will live as long as he provides information,” Jiraiya agrees calmly when B's senses snap.

His feet sink into the ground as the swamp spreads around them.

“However, why don't you stay, too?” Jiraiya uses the moment of B's kindness against him. He does feel like shit, but he simply refuses to take kindly of invaders for any reason!

Jutsu needs the user to wield their chakra. It's true.

That's why Jiraiya stored multiple jutsu storage scrolls that only one rare Fuin master in Konoha can create on requests.

B's tails help him out the next moment, but Jiraiya is already on the youth.

'What to do now, Ya fool? He won't give us enough time to announce the end of the invasion before the set time!'

“Return,” Hachibi voices out calmly again. *“B, I don’t want to see you die. Believe me, whatever I can do aside from creating ink, the Kyubi can do better. If her Jinchuriki has the same connection as us, we will be in trouble. YOU may not survive!”*

‘I can lead them to Konoha,’ B grinds his chakra jaws as he falls back continuously. ‘If we continue—’

A sudden invisible wall of Nature Energy stops B’s path as Jiraiya narrows his eyes.

‘The invasion must have a time limit. For him to lead me to Konoha despite Kushina and others minutes away means he wants to warn others. And anyone with a speedy Reverse Summoning Jutsu will be out of here. No, better yet, maybe only one of them has the Reverse Summoning set back to Kumo—B. The rest may be summoned back by the Jinchuriki of Two-Tails. I hope Kai sealed Dodai for now, or he’ll disappear with the rest!’

And then it strikes Jiraiya.

‘He can return now, and the two-tails can summon others back. He is still risking this. There must be someone who cannot be summoned back.’

Only one fits the bill in Jiraiya’s description—The Third Raikage, who is blitzing near the Uchiha Police Grounds!

‘How the hell did A get here if he cannot be summoned back?’ Jiraiya frowns, his scowl turning harsher as he attacks B more aggressively while creating a shadow clone, who surprises B by jumping back and closing his eyes as if to sense something.

The clone disperses the next second as Sage’s gaze hardens.

The simplest of the answer turned out to be the truth.

A traitor amongst the Barrier Squad’s sensing team. The Head shinobi is nowhere to be found, while the rest of the shinobi are dead under Hokage’s Residence.

“B!” Hachibi snaps at the youth, who snarls in frustration as he, too, senses the nearing Kushina.

He won’t make it in time.

‘I hope C senses my disappearance and informs the rest.’

Helpless despite all his chakra reserves, B forms a seal and disappears with a poof of smoke.

The battle concludes in the most expected manner in Jiraiya’s experience.

After all, those who live get to fight another day.

'But, when will the fighting end?' Jiraiya sighs gently, not undoing his Sage Mode just yet. He has three more minutes remaining.

'I can deal with the troublesome jonins,' he affirms internally, unwilling for the strong enemy to return right away. So, he doesn't wait for Shikaku and the rest and rushes away.

To Shikaku's credit, his plan of retrieving Kushina to support Jiraiya worked a little too well!

If it wasn't for the looming threat of Kushina, B wouldn't have felt helpless to unknowingly expose a few of these weaknesses!

But Jiraiya cannot stop to congratulate the youth on his strategy.

Not now, anyway!

Alternate Title: Another Curtain Closes; You Win Some, And You Lose Some; The Magnificent Sixteen Sword Style!; Incomplete Form; Naruto's Bellamy!; Jiraiya: Can I Throw a Punch, You Ask?; Possible Friends of Another Life; When Life Gives You Lemons, Squeeze It On Your Enemy's Eyes—Shinobi Code; Shikaku: My Genius Is Almost Frightening; Jaw Shattering Blast; Insane Jinchuriki; Uncovering Enemy's Plan With the Slightest Hints!; Kushina Got Exposed?!; Kai's Innocence Reigns Supreme!; Shikaku Ending Battles Using 8D Shogi!; Unwilling Heart to Kill, Bound By Duty.

Title: Darkest Night Hidden in The Leaf (14)

“You cannot get summoned if she also has to summon Shizan and Kassha.”

A looks up calmly, his arms sprawled over the wide couch as the almost ethereal, mist-clad scenery of Kumogakure expands beyond his office’s windows. His expression remains stoic as he hears Dodai’s concerns.

“Being part Senju and Uzumaki—Shizan, and Kassha have tremendous chakra reserves. But their reserves fall short of Yugito, who’s born with an astonishing chakra reserve since her birth.” The Raikage looks at the ceiling. “But if she and Nibi’s reserves are spent summoning the rest of the invasion force, she won’t be able to summon me. Summoning B isn’t even close to her full power.”

“Killer B can be transported to Konoha using the Heavenly Transmission Jutsu, but that will allow the enemies to understand its strength and weaknesses.”

“They probably already know,” A contemplates. “Similar to how we know of other village’s secrets. Why else do you think we recalled the civilians back into the village? But our spies in other countries sent the news that other Shinobi Villages have done the same. Why would they do that if not for the realization that the information of their civilian clan members is leaked?”

“Then why continue with this invasion?” Dodai sighs softly, massaging his head. With their information line so confounded, it made no sense to take such risks. Even if Raikage’s son is captured, their ability to use him will be limited. First, A and his son aren’t powerful due to training and genetics alone. They consumed various herbs and other medicines from an early age to promote rapid physical growth. Second, A’s strength comes from researching as many jutsus that assist in battles. Many of these jutsus are known only to him!

The Raikage narrows his eyes.

“Read this.” He leans forward to grab the scroll on the cushion beside him and tosses it toward Dodai. It doesn’t take long for Dodai to mutter under his breath.

“Information on the team leader of the Konoha’s barrier’s squad Detection Team?”

“Danzo Shimura executed his elder brother. The lack of repercussions to Danzo’s Root even after Danzo’s crimes have come to light dissatisfied this shinobi,” A punctuates. “That is how I will arrive in Konoha. That man will be my way inside Konoha without raising any alarm.”

“Onoki will not be pleased,” Dodai thins his lips.

"I will start by dealing with Yata Uchiha," The Raikage moves beyond Onoki's topic. "That man and other Uchiha Clansmen became too troublesome."

"That is why we sent for the Chinoike Clan," counters Dodai.

"That clan alone isn't good enough. The Uchiha Clan drove them out once before in the warring era, and the Hyuga Clansmen are a direct counter to Chinoike's Clan's strongest ability."

"Dodai, whoever is behind the sudden release of confidential information clearly favors the weakening of Konoha. We will lose good men in this pursuit, but that is exactly why we have a time limit to our invasion for Yugito to catch her breath and summon others back on time and let B indicate the end of the raid if things get troublesome on your end with Nosuke, Shiza, Killer, and you dealing with Kyubi's Jinchuriki. Meanwhile, I will try to kill Yata and steal his eyes. If the information we received is indeed faithful, Yata has commissioned the Senju Legacy Guardian to create a seal similar to the Caged Bird Seal. Part of the reason is to allow Hiruzen to isolate the Hyuga Clan. The other part is to safeguard the Uchiha Clan."

"Why don't we try and bring the Hyuga Clan?" Dodai muses. "It may take some time, but it would cost us fewer men than this raid."

"We don't need clans with rigid cultures," Raikage scoffs roughly under his breath. "All we need is to timely capture a few of their members from the main family, that's all."

Dodai nods as A dismisses him. "Prepare for the raid. I know you have doubts about the mysterious party orchestrating all this, but you and I are powerful enough to weather such foes."

"As you wish. Have a safe journey to Konoha, Lord Raikage." Dodai bows slightly, but by the time he looks up, the veritable hill of muscle that is the Third Raikage is no longer on his couch.

'Did Konoha already unseal my son's consciousness seal and find someone to train in the **[Lightning Cloak]**? The user's physical strength would also leave my offspring in the dust. Konoha doesn't have the same medicines to prepare a body of that kind. And finally, the user's body was miniaturized. A member of the Akimichi Clan?' A narrows his eyes, several thoughts firing off in his brain as a visible cloak of blue chakra produces crackling lightning around his body.

There are only a few shinobi around him after the shockwave bursting from the point where the unknown assailant hit A, clearing out the gory streets only to repaint the contents on the nearby walls and shinobi left standing.

“L-Lord Third?!” The Kumo Jonin behind A gasps in shock before retreating quickly and clearing the battlefield as the Raikage settles his gaze on Yata, whose chakra nature experiences a significant shift in intensity.

Ominous dark-indigo chakra surrounds Yata, whose Sharingan whirls into a prominent straight shuriken pattern. A trickle of blood flows down from the corner of his right eye as he, too, stares at the Raikage quietly. His sharp gaze is unwilling to ignore a single twitch of A's body while the indigo chakra forms a ghoulish phantom of a terrifying skull and ribcage around Yata.

“One of the most famous abilities of the Mangekyo Sharingan—The Susanoo. Yata Uchiha, are you aware I created this Lightning Cloak in an attempt to wield the same power as Madara Uchiha?”

“Well, you clearly failed,” Yata strains a smile and half-shrugs. The corner of his eyes briefly twitches as he feels Mikoto near them and hides discreetly after sensing their intense chakra reactions. Although, Yata would want Mikoto to leave this location as soon as possible.

“I changed my objective once Madara was defeated for good by Hashirama Senju.”

“Are you a wood-style user?” Yata inclines his head.

“No.”

“Well, you failed in that, too,” The Uchiha Patriarch shrugs again. But words fail to excite the Third Raikage as he chooses to observe Yata's Susanoo.

‘That's a Susanoo?’ Mikoto stares at her father from a distance, wisely choosing to stay behind instead of being a burden. Kiri, too, stares at the legendary Uchiha Jutsu with a complicated look—His teammates wouldn't have died if he could use such a jutsu.

‘Susanoo, the one who protects, is a Jutsu that awakens from every Mangekyo Sharingan user, fusing offense and defense in one,’ Mikoto's sharingan continues to try and understand the use of this chakra. Chakra, by itself, needs another force to let it impact the material world. The Rasengan needs a concentrated spiral force, Kushina's Chakra Cloak needs a specific nature change of yin-yang and much more! Mikoto believes the Susanoo loosely falls under the category of yin-yang nature release, instinctively giving chakra a translucent physical manifestation.

‘But I can't study it. It's the same for Kushina's Chakra Cloak and the Raikage's Lightning Cloak,’ Mikoto furrows her brows. In theory, the Sharingan should copy most of the jutsu at sight, so what makes these physically augmenting jutsus any different?

‘It's the same for other elemental kekkei genkais, too,’ Mikoto clicks her tongue internally. As long as the chakra has an undefined shift of nature from more than one nature release, the

Sharingan cannot copy it due to the inability of the eye to peer through the composition of the chakra down to the ratio of the Kekkei Genkai.

'But father's Susanoo is so dark,' Mikoto observes calmly, recalling one of the well-known *'myths'* surrounding the jutsu.

"The Susanoo adopts the same color of chakra and inherent emotion when the Mangekyo awakens," A hums aloud. "You must have suffered quite a bit to feel so emotionless and helpless when your Magekyo awakened."

Yata tosses his broken sword aside and smiles. "Why don't you look in my eyes? You can have a chance to understand it, too."

A's eyeballs suddenly match Yata's gaze before his body disappears in a flash of lightning, his outstretched arm failing to smash the nearby Fugaku's head in as a gentle drape of deep-red chakra flashes around the stoic youth. Yata looks at Fugaku, whose sharingan rotates and connects into three-pointed curved stars with three dots between them.

A disappears once again, landing on a ledge as red skeletal arm tears into the empty space where the bandana-wearing Kage stood a fraction of a second ago.

"I wasn't aware of another Mangekyo user," A scoffs. "Intriguing. Fugaku Uchiha, right?"

Fugaku stares at the threatening Kage before issuing orders to the other stunned Uchihis.

"Get out of here, now! Deal with—"

A moves again, a burst of black flames catching the ledge where he once stood as Yata clicks his tongue.

"—Other enemies!" Fugaku finishes as the two shinobi tack stock of the lone Kage.

"What are those black flames?" A questions calmly.

"You're a researcher, no? Touch them and find it out for yourself," Yata fails to answer straight back-to-back.

"Amusing." A replies. The green kanji pattern of lightning on his right shoulder buzzes with wisps of black as the Raikage flashes around, not stopping for the gazes of the two Magekyo users to catch him lacking even once until a coat of pitch-black lightning sparkles around him, turning him into a menacing beast as a strained growl vibrates from his throat. "Assess the properties of my jutsu, will you?"

Fugaku finalizes a ghoulish phantom of deep red chakra around himself, too, biting back a scowl at the Raikage's speed.

Bzzt

The world comes to a still for Yata and Fugaku as the black lightning surrounds the Third Raikage one second and the next second—it fills the duo's vision to the brim as the entire section of the street bursts apart with a blast of pitch-black lightning splashing around with no mind of its own, charring enemies and allies alike with many nearby Uchihas not even needing to worry about their eyes after their death for everything about them disappears into ashes.

A narrows his eyes and watches the dust settle without losing his caution, reflexes as tense as they can be under the jolting refreshment of lightning chakra coursing through his entirety!

"You're not used to Susanoo, are you?" Fugaku's left eye closes with blood flowing down both his eyes. Instead of his Susanoo, which was destroyed under the sudden impact, the youth observes an indigo shield covering him with Yata standing in the distance, looking as weary as a man can get.

"And you are?" Fugaku sighs softly, regaining his breath.

"No," Yata smiles back, blood trickling from the corner of his lips.

"There is a reason why the Uchiha don't rule this world despite their talents," A's voice cuts in. His stoic look barely shifts as he watches Yata's Susanoo with slight respect. Instead of a ribcage or a skeleton, Yata's Indigo Susanoo wears thick-plated armor and a twin-horned helmet to hide its shadowy face, only revealing two orbs of torches for eyes.

"Why don't you enlighten us?" Yata lets a soft breath as Fugaku promptly materializes his Susanoo under Yata's protection.

A's words bring the remaining Uchiha members on the empty crater to a still.

"Eternal Mangekyo Sharingan," A observes them coldly. "None of you can match the might of Madara Uchiha. None of you possess an Eternal Mangekyo Sharingan, so your powers are fleeting. You cannot match me."

"So, you know about that, huh?" Yata thins his lips, wanting to quit the battle and return to his mattress for a good night's sleep to relieve the strain on his eyes.

"A Mangekyo Sharingan strains the user's eyes until they go blind. That is the sacrifice for their powers. Once they lose their light, the users of this power will forgo all the benefits of the Mangekyo Sharingan, too. But things aren't the same with Eternal Mangekyo Sharingan. When Uchiha achieves that stage, they are free from the risk of blindness, and even if they lose their

eyes, they do not lose their abilities not tied to the use of their eyes—the most prominent of this example being the Susanoo. Did I miss something?”

Yata frowns harder. “Your point being?”

“That I am willing to talk despite the raid’s race against the time. Tell me the name of the individual who stopped the fatal blow planned against you, and I will make this quick. You two endured my creation—The Black Lightning Chain—did you not? You two have no chance against me.”

And the two Uchiha users are forced to accept A’s assessment to some degree until Yata’s Susanoo connects two of its shields by bringing their arms together.

The new chakra construct takes the shape of a non-folding war fan with a handle growing out from one side for the Susanoo to wield.

“That Jutsu?” Yata works his jaw. “If that’s all, you might as well turn around now.” He looks around at the charred remains of his clansmen with a baleful expression. “This isn’t a battle you win, A.” The usual casualness in Yata’s voice takes a sharp turn to a cold hiss. “And you are nothing more than a jumping monkey spouting nonsense after getting some half-assed information about things you dream of to this day.”

The half-man, armor-clad Susanoo suddenly waves its fan toward A as the Kage disappears again. Yet, a massive blast of wind rends the entire building of the Uchiha Police into rubble as the sharp wind continues to move forward and tears into the forested region.

Before Yata’s attack even finishes, A’s body flashes beside the chest of the Susanoo, his fist smashing into the tough exterior of the chakra armor and visibly chipping Yata’s jutsu.

“Fugaku, you’re going to be a burden on this one. Take others away. I’ll stall him.” Yata whispers with a meaningful look as Fugaku recalls Mikoto’s chakra signature and nods without issuing any resistance.

He understands that he overestimated his Mangekyo by a great margin.

“And how will you grant this youth a safe passage?” A questions.

“Go,” Yata smiles at Fugaku, retracting his expansive shroud of Susanoo to leave Fugaku be. But before A could think of moving, his body still briefly as Fugaku escapes in Mikoto’s direction without looking back.

A’s expression shifts barely as he finally has to ‘dodge’ Yata’s attack instead of predicting a move and moving away before time, narrowly escaping another burst of black flames.

Speaking of black flames, the ones of the Police Building fizzled out when the last of the rubbles were consumed, giving A a good idea about how the flames function.

‘The black flames work similarly to my black lightning, not exactly the same. But it’s close enough in chakra reactions. Like black lightning, I cannot sense the black flames once they are fully formed. I can only dodge these attacks based on the direction of Yata’s eyes. Does the Uchiha Clan have some relation to the specimen I found? The ones that transform into beasts after some unknown reaction due to a special enzyme?’

He frowns and looks at the dimly smiling Yata. Instead of voicing his true doubts, A questions calmly, “A Genjutsu? How?”

“Oh, you know how.” Yata doesn’t fall for the crap one bit.

Indeed.

A knows he fell into the Genjutsu by coming into physical contact with Yata’s Susanoo—another ability, perhaps.

The Raikage continues to fluctuate his chakra reserves as he notices Yata’s smile broadening.

‘Wait!’ His instincts scream as he notices a pinch itching his body.

Raikage’s eyes snap wide open, finding himself lying in a crater with Yata’s war fan swinging upon him!

Raikage’s figure blitzes away once again as he steps on a nearby tree, putting more distance between himself and the suddenly enigmatic Yata.

However, the man feels a *‘pinch’* again.

His eyes snap wide open, finding his body cratered in a wall this time.

“You must be wishing you faced someone else right about now, huh?” Yata stands before him without his Susanoo.

Instead of breaking away from his confines, A chooses to accept the situation temporarily and questions.

“A Genjutsu. Is this another ability of your Mangekyo Sharingan?”

Yata’s smile widens.

“Are you a fool, a brute, a monkey, or an overconfident butcher?” Yata’s ghastly voice echoes as the world around A starts burning with pitch-black flames.

“How dare you spend time chatting with your life on the line?”

A’s eyes snap again, his right arm and leg getting consumed by flames that take no moment to get close to his chest and face!

But not moving from his spot this time around, A’s right shoulder crackles with brilliant black lightning again and suddenly merges with his body!

“Puu!” The Raikage vomits blood as not only the black flames but even his skin scorches and melts! His eyes flow down his cheeks mixed in chunks with his blood as his hollow sockets snap forward to stare at Yata with gritted jaws.

Despite all this, A does not move from his position.

“Oh? Fine, you earn the name of my first ability. It’s quite amazing seeing someone countering Amaterasu.”

“Did your tongue melt in your mouth?” The Uchiha Patriarch smiles, his Susanoo persisting around him. However, if the Raikage had his eyes, he would have seen Yata’s eyes turning slightly milky.

“Attack me...” A voices out hoarsely. “If you dare.”

“Wonderful,” Yata smirks. “I guess you figured out my second ability, too. But no rewards this time.”

He, too, does not move.

‘A motherfucking Genjutsu Arena... nature energy charged fire and lightning jutsu, and a beast of flesh surviving all of that,’ Kai’s clone stares from the distance, arriving shortly after using Dodai for all his worth.

‘Amaterasu, huh? I wonder what his second ability is called. And Fugaku’s got these goodies, too? Too bad I can’t snatch it from him. I kind of like him,’ Kai shakes his head and stares at the Third Raikage.

If it wasn’t for his senses, he would have tried to assassinate the Third Raikage right here and now. Even if Kai has enough confidence to tackle the Jutsu in his Sage Mode, he cannot risk getting caught by Jiraiya, whose working his way here as other enemies start disappearing from Konoha with plumes of smoke!

The battle is coming to an end, and he will have to straighten his story while watching Jiraiya get the chance to dismantle this juicy jutsu.

'Not to mention, Yata is going blind. I have the Rinnegan... is it helpful in any way?' Kai narrows his eyes.

He always loves getting a good number of objectives to work through. And his motto has always been—One step at a time.

Cataloging all his desires, Kai settles down. He's had his fair share of fun and will soon get a Byakugan to look through.

'If only I could have gotten those blood eyes in time, too,' Kai shakes his head. 'The Chinoike Clan, huh? No worries, I'll soon live in Kumo, too. I'll have a chance to try everything~!'

Alternate Title: Yata Racially Profiling A Kage; Yata's Dark Susanoo; A Mangekyo is a Sign of Helplessness; Blooming Black Lightning and Flames; A Monkey? Yata Becoming Frieza's Apprentice; A Genjutsu Arena; Fleeing Fugaku; Amaterasu; Standing on the Edge; Fading Kage-Level Threat—Yata; Violating A; Kai Munching on Popcorns; Highly Destructive Battle; An Overconfident Butcher Vs An Annoyed Father of Two; All Part of Yata's Keikaku!

A/N: I am definitely alluding to the mix of nature energy in Amaterasu and Black Lightning. Don't blame me, blame the show we all love despite the plot holes, kek.

Title: Darkest Night Hidden in The Leaf (15)

The sky darkens gradually as Onoki and Hiruzen's battle rages in the forest above the Village's Prison. The two Kages of the same generation manage to uproot and crater quite a large portion of their surroundings as their summons, whatever remains of it, at least, is no longer present with them except Hiruzen's personal summon—Enma.

Pools of blood and poison from their previous summons can be observed around the duo as Onoki stares at Hiruzen sternly, looking worse for wear. Multiple tears surround Onoki's elaborate outfit, one blue bruise near his left eye, while Hiruzen stares back earnestly, his dissected right ear caked with dry blood. Their injuries have been quite non-fatal only for one reason—Third Raikage.

Their strategy changed the second they sensed the Third Raikage. The two Kages did not plan on killing each other at the cost of a pyrrhic victory. They may threaten each other with words during their battle, and the chance of a fatal blow was present, but they did not want to kill each other for a similar blow to themselves.

"Konohagakure and Kumogakure have lost too much," Onoki begins with a sneer.

"And you only have enough chakra to fly back to your hole like the pathetic runt you are," Hiruzen mocks without skipping a beat.

The duo is low on chakra, their battle consisting of many chakra-intensive jutsus to keep themselves from harm's way. None of them boast a swift, efficient killing method with a good chakra cloaking technique great for assassinations. It's not for the lack of trying, of course. But the Kages are usually the boldest of the bunch, these traits bleeding into their techniques and strategies fairly easily.

Another blast of pitch-black lightning rises to the sky, attracting the duo's attention and cutting their umpteenth round of insults.

"Heh, leave it to that Brute dealing with your other elites," Onoki smiles while wondering internally. 'What is that black lightning?' The experienced Kages are aware of the rarer and 'sharper' yin-charged purple lightning and the 'stabler' yang-charged yellow lightning.

But Black?

It's the first for them, too, and they somehow feel nothing from the lightning, even when seeing its bolts crackle loudly as if born from an explosive chain!

'He has researched quite a few things—which weren't disseminated to our Villages regarding Kumo.' Onoki and Hiruzen realize at once. Their murderous desire to uproot the mysterious organization orchestrating all this madness grows with every passing second.

'If Kai had been here, I'd ask him to assassinate Onoki just like he assassinated the Kazekage. Things will be simpler when someone like Onoki dies. None of his successors are known to be as devious and ruthless as him.'

Hiruzen sighs in his heart. This would be a good opportunity, too. Onoki is just as worn down as he is!

Onoki glances at the dark sky before snorting. The two of them simultaneously feel the intense chakra of one of the jinchuriki fades from the distance. While they aren't specialized Sensors, they have decades of experience, and their keen senses can easily pick on the distant, albeit massive, chakra reserve.

'Hachibi's jinchuriki disappeared. The raid is ending.' Onoki narrows his eyes, his body floating in the air for a second as he casts a fleeting glance in the Raikage's direction before scowling and flying away swiftly.

"Enma, can you sense him around us?" Hiruzen sighs as his adamantite staff transforms back into the white-furred Enma, who closes his eyes in concentration and shakes his head.

"I can't, Saru," Enma grunts and grits his jaws. "That old bastard and his bees cost me a lot of my clansmen."

Hiruzen exhales in exhaustion and nods. While he feels bitter about their losses, he also has to think a lot more about the situation. And as a leader of his tribe, Enma can empathize with Hiruzen's circumstances.

"I'll stick around till that Third Raikage extracts himself."

"He will," Hiruzen moves his left arm slightly, wincing at the sharp pain jolting around his chest due to a cracked rib or two. "I sense a few other surviving Kumo shinobi disappear. It's good we kept most of our promising chunins near the evacuation site. This battle shouldn't have reached Orochimaru."

"Speaking of Orochimaru, all three of your disciples have mastered Sage Mode. You should be a little ashamed of yourself," Enma scoffs.

"I had a bad teacher," Sarutobi shrugs jokingly as he jumps on a branch before skipping in A's direction. "Even you haven't mastered Sage Mode, Enma."

"But I *can* use Senjutsu near the Rock Egg Shrine," Enma scoffs.

“I don’t tolerate excuses from my students. I won’t hear one from you either,” Hiruzen snickers. “Besides, wars and responsibility took the prime of my life. I’m glad that my students got enough peace to master this power for themselves.”

“Well, you can have peace knowing that Sages die just like the civilians. This life is merely a struggle in our own ways.”

“There are hundred different situations where you could have said this, but you chose the time and place where Konoha is arguably at its weakest under my care.” Hiruzen deadpans at the monkey, who laughs loudly.

“I suppose I did,” Enma turns into a staff again and warns as they near the site of the destroyed Uchiha Police Building.

“I sense a large scope of Genjutsu. No. It’s something more ridiculous.”

Hiruzen slows down as he watches the quiet Yata surrounded by his grim indigo Susanoo, wielding an Uchiha-brand war fan similar to the one held by the Madara Uchiha, and the charred Third Raikage, who seem to have seen better days.

‘His eyes,’ Hiruzen focuses on Yata from a distance, not shocked by the Mangekyo Sharingan but by their condition. ‘The Uchiha’s Power comes at a massive cost. Madara truly was an outlier amongst his own clan.’

“Can you sense the scope of Genjutsu?” Hiruzen questions Enma.

“It’s everywhere,” Enma replies plainly. “You will regret moving without caution.”

Hiruzen notes the arrival of two of his students at the same time—possibly attracted by the burst of black lightning.

Tsunade’s side barely encounters any extraordinary difficulty after rescuing Nawaki. Her clones are still working their asses off to heal other shinobi in the battlefield and the hospital, not to mention guarding the hospital against all the foes alongside a large chunk of anbu members and other Jonins since Jiraiya transferred half the Anbu under his authority to her side.

She did not have any issue coordinating attacks with the clones being the mokuton-variant.

“Uh,” Nawaki grunts, holding his head as he is unsealed.

Unsealing Nawaki wasn't an issue. The Uzumaki she captured in this group was all brawns and no brains, in a Fuinjutsu sense. The sealing pot of the group's leader was child's play when one considers the amount of practice she has as the *'Sensei'* when it comes to the scrolls Kai shifts in his boredom.

'A's Son, Kakuzu, Utsu's Remains that Katsuyu barely stopped herself from swallowing it voraciously, and now this group. Then there is Fukushu, too. I don't think everyone's valuable in this group of captives, but it's for Inoshi Yamanaka and the T&I Department to find out. Still, if I'm stubborn about researching all of them on my own, I won't have time to kick back, relax, and train on some of my slow days.'

Tsunade works her jaw ponderously while observing Nawaki recover from his dizziness.

'But I don't wanna go asking Orochimaru's help since I denied her the last time. Hopefully, she'll come running back. She's become slightly easier to handle ever since she became a woman.'

"Where am I, Onee-san?" Nawaki groans, massaging his head as Tsunade calmly replies, "In the hospital. I wanted to check up on you myself."

Nawaki looks around the hospital room before croaking hoarsely. "Is it over—"

Boooooooooommmmmmmmm

They hear a distant explosion as Tsunade hums. "One of Kumo's corpses exploded again. They're troublesome like that."

Nawaki issues a sharp groan as he stands up. "I'm fine. I can still fight."

"I know," Tsunade nods again, surprising Nawaki.

"What's with that look?" Tsunade narrows her eyes. "Did you think we trained for months for me to sit you this one out? One of my clones took your spot in the Senju Compound. You'll replace the clone near the Hospital, got it?"

Nawaki agrees without missing a beat.

"Yes."

Tsunade's lips curl slightly as she pats her brother's shoulder. "You're doing good. Better than I would have, really."

"You were stronger than me when you were my age," Nawaki frowns.

“Not everything’s about power,” Tsunade scoffs and flicks Nawaki’s head. “You’re going to be a great Patriarch after this war.”

Nawaki’s eyes widen momentarily before he nods again and flickers away—

Bang

—Running headfirst into the nearby wall.

“Ow,” Nawaki scowls, massaging his head again as Tsunade chirps. “Maybe take it a little easy and walk normally till you reach the hospital’s entrance.”

“Got it,” Nawaki hurries away, cheeks burning with embarrassment.

As he leaves, Tsunade casts a glance toward Mount Kage.

‘Tch, she really has nothing to do,’ Tsunade scoffs at Orochimaru’s luck.

The woman then flickers out from the open window and lands on the rooftop, staring toward the distant forest where the meteor crashed.

She would like to help everyone, but she can’t. It is physically impossible to do so even with her attainment in mokuton. So, she refocuses her attention on a pair of Jonins using flaming swords while feeling a weak connection to them.

‘A Senju? Weak ones at that. Kumo really doesn’t hold back with this stuff,’ She scoffs in her heart and targets them at once with the intent to kill and raze their bodies with explosives until nothing can be cultured from their corpses—even by her allies.

Their battle soon shows a favorable turn, Kumo’s numbers depleting enough for the rest of Konoha shinobi to attack in groups. The home advantage comes to play since Kumogakure has a limited number of shinobi, while Konoha can still rely on the reinforcements waiting for the initial charge to lose momentum.

And that’s what happens.

But the enemies must understand their strengths and weaknesses, resorting to a systematic retreat while trying to save their strength as much as possible.

The raid is ending—an emotion that spreads to everyone else, infecting the morale on both sides as Konoha’s shinobi gain more ferocity. On the other hand, Kumo’s shinobi find themselves more pressured despite their retreating maneuver.

The number of deaths tolls up for Kumogakure. The dimly lit surroundings of Konoha are alight with various elemental jutsus sparks from the clashing of metals and a good portion of explosive seals!

The losses to the village would be imaginable if the civilians weren't evacuated on time or hurt in any manner during the meteor's descent and the Hachibi's bijudama! After all, the shinobi can only perfect their craft if civilians are shouldering the economy.

'There's a massive battle going on near Uchiha Police Grounds for a while,' Tsunade notes to herself, slipping away after taking care of anyone who remotely felt like a Senju to her as the sparkling burst of pitch-black lightning highlighted with a strange glow catches Tsunade's attention again.

'I wasn't sure the first time, but it is similar to a Senjutsu Chakra. But I've seen Kai use Lightning Release in his Sage Mode. None of them looks any different from their usual colors and properties aside from their intensity and power.'

As an expert in Lightning Jutsu, even Tsunade does not boast such a strange Jutsu.

'It must have some unique properties.'

Tsunade's senses glimpse again at the sudden disappearance of Hachibi's Jinchuriki as she promptly activates her Sage Mode, straight viridian green marks inverting from the green dot in the center of her forehead until she feels Jiraiya cleaving through the enemies from the other side and rushing in Yata's direction, too.

She can sense more in her Sage Mode. She senses the mass of emotionally gloomy chakra around Yata, his dwindling power, his charred enemy, and a veritable hill of chakra surrounding them in the form of—

'Is that Genjutsu?'

Tsunade's eyes widen briefly as she lands on a ledge, observing Hiruzen and Jiraiya.

And when she feels someone '*sit*' on her head, she cannot help but vibrate her throat indignantly.

"How come I can't sense you even in Sage Mode?"

"Would you believe me when I say I have mastered the art of standing so incredibly still that I am invisible to the eye?" Replies an impish voice.

"Sage Mode doesn't rely on the eye," Tsunade scoffs.

“Well, the answer’s kind of simple. I masked what other sages sense at first using my Senjutsu Chakra. So, you’ll have to sense something else about me.”

The meaning behind his words is simple—it’s not a jutsu but pure chakra manipulation.

And Kai believes his control of Senjutsu Chakra is the best in Konoha despite Jiraiya and Orochimaru attaining this form previously. He’s spent a lot of time mastering other senjutsu variations of elemental jutsu, going as far as **EARNING** an affinity through his connection with nature and Space and Time!

“And you’ve got an answer for that?” She looks at Yata, not inquiring about the Legendary Susanoo, but something only Sages like them can view.

“Well, I’ve got a good idea what it does, but I have no clue about the Jutsu itself, just that it drained Yata way more than I imagined.”

Jiraiya’s Sage Mode dwindles about now, the red pigments around his eyes receding and his eyes reverting to their obsidian hues.

“Who gets a shot at A?” Questions Kai, “He is clearly waiting for something. A Kage like him shouldn’t have come here without a plan to retreat.”

“Or he was overconfident,” Counters Tsunade.

As it turns out, Yata is the one who moves again, coughing blood suddenly. What should have burned on A’s body instead lights up in the air slightly beside him. Pitch-black flames darker than night itself roar into life, consuming tiny rubble as A sighs. His hollow sockets stare in Yata’s direction eerily as Kai senses A’s chakra invoke a seal built inside of him.

It’s not a reverse summoning jutsu.

Strangely, a beam of white light swallows him as the man disappears, leaving behind a scorched hole the size of the circumference of the beam of light.

‘The same Jutsu used by Hachibi’s Jinchuriki,’ Others think at once as Yata’s weak voice echoes.

“I wouldn’t have wished to say it, but don’t move near me. My Jutsu lasts for 30 minutes. But if possible, toss some food my way. Be accurate. I cannot move more than I already have.”

Hiruzen nods with a slightly bright gaze, more than happy to understand some of the limitations of the Jutsu he cannot even fathom.

'I hope everything is well with Mukai and the rest.' Hiruzen orders Jiraiya to bring some food and bandages while thinking about the issue that caused this mess in the first place.

The Hyuga Affair!

Alternate Title: Verbal Insults Are Just As Good Of A Tactic As Any; An End To a Fatal Confrontation; Lightning and Flames Darker and More Brilliant Than Night; A's Return; A Failure On All The Ends; Tsunade Refuses To Lower Her Head to the Mommy Bimbo!; Hiruzen's Prime Stolen By Wars and Responsibilities—Should Have Gotten a Paper Bitch; A Genjutsu Trap; Yata's Helpless; Failed Amaterasu; Cost of Power; Madara Being Og Even After All The Years; Madara's Fan With Yata?; Nawaki's Crash; Shift of Battle; End of Battle; Worrying over the Source of Issues; The Pending Hyuga Affair; Orochimaru's Lucky... to Be Bored?; Tsunade Vanquishing Senju Bloodline Like a Menace!; Tsunade: EXPLOSSSIIOOOONNNNN! *Megumin Approves*