

Out of the shell (rewrite)

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This is a revamp of the previous version. I went back and didn't like the old one so i redid it. Hope the new style works. Lt me know. The old fic will be up until both the chapters I have up are rewritten.

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Chapter 1 - So it begins

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1 - So it begins

“No! What have I done? This can’t be happening!”, Yuji yelled jerking awake. A glint of black steel flashing in his hand as he yanked a blade from its sheath bolting to his feet in one fluid motion. The neat stacks of papers, scrolls and books on his desk toppled over skittering across the floor as in his panic he overturned the desk with his free hand to create cover. As reality came rushing back to him Yuji stood in the midst of the clutter panting heavily, cold sweat beaded on his brow and drenched his shirt, his blade glinted dully in the dim light held ready for an assault that wasn’t going to come. Yuji’s eyes darted around the small room scanning every bizarre shadow the skewed lamp cast as it flickered feebly. Gradually the realization he was in no danger settled over him and his shoulders sagging in relief. “It was just a dream...” he mumbled lowering his blade and letting it clatter to the floor before collapsing back into his desk chair still trembling, “No, not a dream....A nightmare.” he shook his head trying to shake the terror that refused to loosen its grip on him. Leaning forward he placed his head on his knees, his arms clasped behind his head and closed his eyes letting his breathing calm and reality catch up to him and chase away the remnants of the terrible fantasy. “It’s okay. I’m fine. I dozed off studying. That’s all. It wasn’t real,” Taking a few slow breaths and feeling more composed he stood and shook his head, “I didn’t do it. It was just a dream.” He reassuring himself once again with a nod.

Looking around the wrecked study, he grimaced at the mess and with a sigh began absently sifting through the disarray making little headway in its clean up. His mind was racing trying to analyze its way through the nightmare, but the details were slipping away faster than he could process them. Yuji was not one to place stock in such things as dreams, but this one seemed different. It was so vivid, so real. This dream had haunted him five bone-chilling times over the last month, each time he had awoken in panic, drenched in cold sweat. This dream gripped him with a sense of foreboding, the chill of omen tolling in its weave. This dream reminded him of the dreams that had plagued Sakura and ushered in events that had taken their toll on the Village. Yuji gave a shiver and shook his head again trying to get a grip. As he picked up a pile of ink splattered papers and tossed them in the wastebasket his eyes fell on his clock. “Damn, Four Forty-three? I’m supposed to be up in seventeen minutes.” Yuji sighed and ran a hand through his mussed hair as he uprighted his desk with one hand and tossed a final stack of scrolls on it. “That really sucks, so much for an all-night study session.”

Yuji sighed as he picked his way across the cluttered study to the apartment’s small shabby bathroom. Closing the door behind him, he leaned over the sink hands on either side of the bowl and stared at his reflection in the small cracked mirror above the sink. He gazed broodingly at his reflections hard stoic expression. He looked so different from when he had first arrived at the village. He raised a hand and covered where once had been his left eye, hazel brown and full of life; was nothing more than a cold sightless socket thanks to Garaa. Dragging his hand across his face, he felt the large dark bags that had formed under his eyes from his constant study and stress. He gave a small sad smile and closed his eyes. They reminded him of his friend Hayate. “These bags rival even the ones you had. Rest in peace my friend.” Yuji took a deep breath and opened his eyes turning to turn on the shower. As he disrobed, he ran a hand down his chiseled body fingering a few of the prominent scars that marred his smoothly muscled frame. He really had changed in the three years since he had arrived at the Village. Was life better? He was unable to say for sure.

Yuji stepped into the shower and leaned against the wall letting the steaming water wash over and sooth him. Closing his eyes, he once again took the time to try to piece together the few fragments of the nightmare he could remember. The steam cleared his head and allowing him to focus his mind. Many of the shredded ruins of the dream he was able to recall did little to help make the dream any less perplexing. The tortured screams of the innocent as some unknown horror extinguished their existence. The hellish flickering of the inferno consuming the Village he loved rendering nothing but ash in their wake. The anguished sobs of anguish from Sakura as she clung to a wilted and battered figure he couldn't quite make out. These all caused a terrifying chill down his spine, but the Images that haunted him the most were those that comprised him, the emergence of dark cloaked figures by his side while he stood by watching the destruction doing nothing to stop it. The image of him glowering at the figures and dragging a blade across his palm spattering blood upon the ground seething with resentment as he acrimoniously swore fidelity to them. The cold trepidation that swept over him as he was led away unbound but unable to resist those fiends in the dark cloaks.

Yuji slammed his fist against the wall of the shower splintering a tile; his teeth gritted he bit back a curse of pain and took another deep breath. This dream was getting to him, he needed to forget it for the time being, besides; he reminded himself, he didn't believe in dreams meaning anything. He was simply working too hard. He sighed, opened his eyes, and looked at his fist still embedded in the crumbling debris of the tile wall as blood trickled down and tinted the water pink eddying before the drain sucked it down. Yuji straightened up with a groan and adjusted the water temperature to cool. Tilting his head back, he closed his eyes again and washed, shaved and let his mind settle and prepare for the day ahead. No use abiding on something you could recollect fully.

Yuji felt calmer as he stepped out of the shower. He delved around in a drawer next to the sink and fished out a stack of gauze pads. He absently plucked out the fragments of tile from his knuckles and bandaged the wounds, he would have Sakura look at it later. Yuji lobbed his towel into the hamper and meandered back through his study to the diminutive sleeping area crammed in the back. Flopping down on his rarely used bed, he began gathering his clothes. Black gi pants with blade pouches custom sewn into the outer thighs, a black sleeveless tee, and black multi pocketed tactical jacket, with white trim around all the edges, and tabi boots. Fashion didn't concern Yuji; he instead dressed for functionality and simplicity. The minimalistic style suited him balancing out his otherwise intricate persona. He felt it gave him the stoic manifestation he needed to hide what he thought of as someone debilitated with emotion. His humanity he felt held him back from his full aptitude and he cursed it. From the bedside table he picked up the final to pieces of his ensemble. He slid on the black cloth face-mask that would conceal his human expressions that he felt betrayed him. Finally, he tied on his Hitai-Ate around his forehead angled across his mangled left eye hiding it. As he strapped on the last of his gear he checked himself in the full-length mirror on the wall smoothing his attire. Yes, the minimalism suited him.

Standing Yuji strolled back to the disorder in the middle of his study and began once again ferreting about through the scatter of scrolls on the floor. Finally find what he was searching for he straightened up holding a large scroll. He absently tapped it against his palm and carefully secured it in one of the jackets numerous pockets. The "ShoBu" contained every Jutsu he knew and had acquired in his years with the Village including multiple summoning technique. As he secured the pocket giving it a final pat, he took a final look around the diminutive, cramped apartment before ducking out the door into the waning morning twilight.

Outside the twilight lost ground as the soft hues of sunrise painted the horizon. The tranquility of the

morning was nearly complete, only the shuffle of a few villagers opening their shops for the day marred the silence. The delicate bouquet of cherry blossoms hung heady in the air; dewdrops glistened on the buds and the chill of night lingered. Yuji sauntered through the streets Konoha musing about the day ahead. It was not exactly a congenial thought. Yuji would have rather not deal with the majority of the day's proceedings. First was the meeting with the Village Council to determine whether to give him license to participate in the Chunin Exams this time around. Majority of the Council believed him proficient and equipped enough for the tests and privilege of the Chunin rank, but one supercilious Tokubetsu Jonin had barred his path of obtaining that privilege every time; Yuji growled quietly at the thought of him. "Ebisu!" Yuji couldn't brook the @\$@\$' pompous ego. Ebisu had barred Yuji's way to Chunin ever since his first attempt sixth month after his arrival in the Village. Yuji winced at the memory; he had forfeited his match in order to save the lives of Ino and Sakura and never been given another chance to compete. Ebisu had gleefully proclaimed that as an outsider not from the Village he was not skilled enough to handle the pressure, duties and responsibility of the rank. It was a load of Bullshoot and the Council knew it, but alas, it required a unanimous vote of the Council to allow his passage to take the Exams again and Ebisu would not relent. This would make the sixth attempt to make the cut, but as Yuji knew, so long as Ebisu was on the Council, his chances were slim to none. Yuji nowadays applied more to rile the pompous asshole rather than really succeed. It brought him a fraction of happiness to know Ebisu's exasperation when the topic arose at the enrollment of every Chunin Exam. Although his patience was wearing thin in the matters of his rank, this needling on Ebisu's nerves kept him applying.

Yuji continued to brood on his exhilarating day of tedium and frustration after what was sure to be another disappointing meeting with the Council. Following the meeting, a full day of D-ranked missions to run with squad nine awaited him. Customarily this was not a problem, he got along great with the team, but D-ranked missions meant lackluster, unremitting and seemingly inane work. Yuji was not above menial labor, it just was the fact it reminded him that as a Genin other mission ranks were unobtainable. The fact that Genin rarely saw combat or were given more advanced training made Yuji restless and on occasion morose. These proceedings further lent to the gall of his day by reminding him that he performed the missions with other teams because he had no squad of his own. Ever since he had arrived in the Village and proven his worth and right to join the ranks of the Shino-bi, the decision of placing him in a team had never made. Until the Council made the decision he would remain a tag along, unable too truly fit anywhere. His plight disheartened him despite the fact he knew the people of the Village brooked and loved him; it still felt sometimes as though he didn't belong, reminding him, he was still an outsider to the Village.

Yuji sighed and massaged his temples. What was wrong with him today? He couldn't seem to get out of this sulk; at least he could see a candle in the gloom that was to be his day. After all said and done with the probable→→ disillusionment of the meeting and the mind-numbingly thankless toil of the day, he had a training session with Sakura. Yuji brightened at this thought and a smile played beneath his mask, Sakura was by far the most auspicious Medi-nin the Village had witnessed since Lady Tsunade. Sakura had become a close friend of Yuji's over the years and spending time with her always brightened his day. To be honest, though he wouldn't admit it to her, he had a major infatuation with her. Lately she had taken to joshing him about how he always returned from even the simplest of missions wounded. Yuji took the ribbing good naturally never realizing her genuine concern over this. It had come as a shock when she announced she had inquired and received permission to cross train him as a Medi-nin. Now twice a week he had a pretext to relish her company and get his private fix of Sakura. Despite his excitement on seeing Sakura so often, Yuji had mixed feelings about his Medi-nin tuition. Sakura was an

excellent teacher; he on the other hand just was not as proficient at this subtle art as she was. She had nearly keeled over laughing when he had managed to stitch his own hand to his jacket with a simple mending Jutsu. Another daunting but somewhat appealing idea about the lesson today was the fact they were starting anatomy of chakra points and Sakura had expressing her disdain of book learning and said they would be studying hands on. Yuji couldn't help but blush curiously at what she meant by hands on, as they were private lessons with just the two of them.

Yuji's ears perked as the morning bird sounds went silent in the trees above him. The soft sway of the branches and the gentle whisper of the leaves took on a more laden feel than was normal. Yuji rolled his eyes, sighed, and began counting down as he continued to walk. "Wait for it, five, four, three, two, one, and now." As his countdown ended Yuji etched an x in the dirt with his toe and took a single steep back as an orange blur plummeted into the pavement landing neatly on the x. Yuji merely gave a grunt of satisfaction at his prediction and began strolling again hands in his pockets. "Naruto, if you are going to try to ambush me you are going to need to work on your stealth. I could hear you coming a mile away. "He called casually over his shoulder to the form plastered face first into the cobblestone road.

Naruto sat up rubbing a large bruise on the side of his face; looking down he noticed the neat x he had landed on and growled a bit. "How'd ya know it was me and why the hell did ya move for?! That really hurts hitting the ground ya know!" Naruto bounced to his feet as he grumbled running to catch up to Yuji who was disappearing into the darkness of an alley.

Yuji rolled his eyes and slowed his pace a bit allowing Naruto to catch up. "For starter it would be a bit more effective if you hadn't tried that on me every morning for the last three days. It was rather predictable."

Naruto pouted mildly before he spoke. "But you managed to evade my ambush the very first day too! How the hell you know I was there! I was so quiet!"

Yuji couldn't help but allow a small smile. Naruto had a way of being a nuisance but at the same time, you couldn't help but like him. "Well, I guess I just got lucky then." Yuji chuckled as Naruto pouted. "Say, why don't you ever try that on Lee or better yet, Sakura?"

"Are you nuts!? They'd kill me!" Naruto gave a mischievous laugh and put an arm behind his head a playful look in his eyes. "Although it would be cool just to see what they would do, might be painful though. You ever been kicked by old Bushy Brows?" Naruto grinned over at Yuji. Yuji merely rolled his eyes and shook his head with a chuckle.

Yuji strolled on mutely while Naruto traipsed on next to him keeping up his normal unremitting torrent of chatter. Yuji a suspicion he knew exactly why Naruto was so eager to stick around. Yuji's routine was the same every morning and Naruto knew it. Everyday Yuji wind his way through the village to a small diner for his breakfast. Naruto had taken to tailing Yuji in the hopes of an offer to join him in his meal. Yuji smiled slightly under his mask, he couldn't upbraid the kid for the artful venture. Like him, Naruto was an orphan and strained to fit in, in all reality Naruto had it worse. Yuji was an outsider, but he was at the least accepted by the village. Naruto, feared and shunned by many for his unique existence, strove to live his life, caring for himself and making his own way despite the difficulties that barred his way. Yuji knew that if a problem presented itself Naruto would find a way to overcome it, even if that problem was as simple as how to get breakfast without straining his resources. Yuji had to give it to him; Naruto

despite what people thought about him was shrewd at getting what he needed. Yuji listened absently to Naruto's chatter as they sauntered towards the diner nodding at the appropriate points of the one-sided conversation.

Yuji turned into the doorway of the quaint little diner that was his daily morning haunt; Naruto had stopped short looking sulky. Yuji stopped as he put his hand on the handle and rolled his eyes giving a chuckle of amusement before calling over his shoulder. "So are you going to stand out there in the street and stare at me while I eat or are you going to join me Naruto?"

Naruto perked up instantly and grinning from ear to ear rushed past Yuji into the diner. "Hell yeah! You better believe it! They better put on the big pot; I'm starving. I'm gonna eat so much ramen!" Yuji shook his head and sighed as he followed Naruto in. Giving the Shops proprietor a desultory nod Yuji slid into his habitual spot near the back of the shop. Naruto was already there utensils in hand a big grin on his face and bouncing excitedly. Yuji picked up his menu and scanned it absently; Naruto frowned his brow twitching a bit, "Hey! What the hell u wasting time with that for, you get the same damn thing every morning! Hurry up Samurai! I'm starving here!" Naruto growled slightly and waved dramatically at the Proprietor. "Hey! Cook guy! Hook us up with the usual! Pokey here is being to slow!" The Proprietor looked up and blinked a brow raised. Naruto growled again. "What!?" The proprietor glanced at Yuji who sighed and gave a nod.

Yuji gave Naruto a bemused stare. "You certainly have a way with people you know that Naruto?"

Naruto grinned and scratched the back of his head, "What? It's not like he didn't know what we were gonna have. Besides, I'm hungry! I haven't eaten since last night!"

Yuji shook his head in amazement, "You confound me Naruto." Yuji wrinkled his nose and set down his menu. "How the hell can u eat ramen this early in the morning? It's just not right."

"Man, I could eat ramen every meal the day if can." Naruto exclaimed a gleam of excitement in his eye. "This place isn't half as good as the place Iruka-sensei takes me to, but hell! Ramen is ramen and I can't wait to get my chop sticks into it!"

Yuji merely shook his head again before steepling his fingers and leaning back in his seat. "So Naruto, What does your day look like? Mine looks pretty dismal; a hopeless meeting and a day chalked full of tedious D ranked missions with team nine." Yuji tapped his palms against the table as he considered mentioning his training with Sakura. Knowing the ribbing would be endless, he decided against it.

"Awww, D ranked missions? That really blows, but everyone gets them now and again. Sorry to hear it man, but what so bad about being with team nine. I mean Old Bushy Brows is a bit uptight, but his team ain't that bad." Naruto said distractedly as the food arrived.

Yuji scowled down at his bowl of creamed wheat stirring his chopsticks through it before answering. "It isn't so much working with team nine or the D ranking in particular that has me annoyed. The fact that it reminds me I don't have a team of my own and of how little I fit in is what bothers me."

Naruto looked up from his bowl a long wad of ramen dangling from his mouth; with a loud slurp he sucked them the rest of the way his brow twitching. "What are you talking about Samurai? Everyone

here loves you. You fit in just fine. Just because you don't have a team doesn't mean u don't fit in. Hell, you fit in better than I do most of the time. Most people in the Village still look at me like I was month old ramen."

Yuji froze in mid bite and blinked spoon halfway to his mouth. "Naruto that has to be the most bizarre analogy I have ever heard." Yuji shook his head and finished the bite. "I suppose your right though Naruto. It just sucks sometimes to not feel like you fit in. I suppose you know exactly how it feels, anyway, just not looking forward to the day." Yuji looked up at Naruto who was busy stuffing his face, bemused by Naruto's utter lack of listening he decided to mess with him a bit. "On another note I hear that Ichiraku ramen is closing and Iruka is turning it into a Ballet Dance studio so he can live out his dream of being a ballerina."

Naruto nodded and as he spooled out another long strand of Ramen with his chopsticks replied absently. "That's really great Samurai. Iruka-Sensei is a good guy, he... Wait What!" Naruto sat bolt upright knocking over his bowl spilling broth across the table. "They are doing what to my ramen shop and Iruka-Sensei is doing what with it!? That ain't even funny!" Naruto blinked and gazed down at his lap where broth was steadily dripping into it. "Gah! Look what you did ya bastard! Now I have no broth for my noodles!"

Yuji slapped his hand on the table giving into the laughter that threatened to burst out before answering. "Easy Naruto, well you weren't listening to me so I figured I would get your attention. Besides, it's bottomless ramen. Just get..."

Yuji cut off as the small bell over the Diner's door jingled merrily causing him to look up. This was of course a normal occurrence as customers entered and exited, but what had caught his attention in this particular instance was the fact that no one had appeared to enter or leave. Yuji craned his neck curiously studying the doorway; from behind the first booth that partially blocked the view of the door trotted a small Pug mix dog. Yuji gave a small grunt of comprehension as he recognized the dog as Kakashie's summon Pakkun. Yuji wondered what it was that had the dog up this early and in a place like this. Pakkun was not known for his good nature or enjoyment of humans; to see him here was a bit of an oddity. Yuji sipped his water as he watched the pug hop atop one of the stools at the counter and begin scanning the crowd intently. It was actually a rather comical sight as the proprietor noticed the dog sitting at his counter.

The proprietor gave a vexed expression with raised eyebrows as he started toward the Pug. "You... doggie....shoo! This is not a place for doggies. Out!" The proprietor waggled his hands in a shooing motion and spoke in the voice people often reserved for speaking to animals. When Pakkun failed to obey the Proprietor sighed and picked him up.

Pakkun heaved a sigh and rolled his eyes. "Look, it's early, I'm tired and I don't want to be here. I'm on official Council business; so, if you value your hands you have ten seconds to put me down and tell me if a Shinobi named Yuji is here before I bite you." Pakkun growled in annoyance.

The proprietor blinked down at Pakkun stunned and apparently left without words. Pakkun's growl became more intense as the time ticked by. The shopkeeper gave an odd squeak of realization and dropped the dog abruptly atop the stool again realizing he was about to be bitten. "That's him over

there at the back of the shop!" the proprietor pointed stiffly towards where Yuji was sitting. "Please don't bite me doggie! I didn't know; I swear!" He pleaded sweat beading on his brow.

Pakkun closed his eyes and shook his head before jumping off the stool and heading towards the back of the shop while mumbling something that sounded like, "Humans, they are all idiots if you ask me."

Yuji whom had been watching and listening to the whole exchange grinned at the pug as he trotted towards him. Scooting over a bit on the bench Yuji commented, "A tad snippy are we today Pakkun my friend. I take it you aren't fond of the cutsie voice are you; it's not like you though to threaten to bite over something so petty."

Pakkun hopped atop the bench next to Yuji and ignored the comment instead first going for the untouched coffee in front of Yuji lapping at it deeply before finally answering. "I hate mornings; besides, you know I wouldn't have bitten him. You humans taste like shoot. Your right, I just wasn't in the mood to deal with that damn cute baby voice people use on me. It's sickening." Naruto who had gone back to eating his ramen snorted in laughter several noodles coming out his nose. Pakkun eyed him in disgust as Naruto grabbed the ends of the noodles with his chopsticks and recycled the noodles back to his mouth. "Nice kid. That is really disgusting you do know that don't you?" Pakkun mused.

Naruto wiped his nose with the back of his sleeve and scowled at the dog. "Hey, I'm not wasting perfectly good ramen. Samurai here already made me spill it once and I plan getting my money's worth." Naruto reached over and swirled his chopsticks in Pakkun's coffee cleaning them off. "Besides, like you got room to talk coming from someone who licks his own butt!" Naruto shot looking gleefully triumphant until Pakkun launched himself across the table latching onto his arm. Naruto once again dumped over his bowl of ramen as he flailed about shouting. Yuji leaned back in his seat watching bemused as Naruto thrashed about yelling, "Get off me you sadistic pug. You can't bite me... I'm gonna be the next Hokage!"

Yuji let the two carry on for a few moments more before reaching over and plucking the pug off the knuckleheaded ninja's arm. "So, what brings you here this morning Pakkun? Somehow, I highly doubt you came to keep me company over breakfast. Was there something you needed?"

Pakkun gave a final sniff and growl towards Naruto who was sulkily massaging his bitten arm before turning his attention to Yuji. "No, I didn't come to keep you and the moron company. If it were up to me I would be curled up in my basket comfortably dreaming right now." The pug yawned and scowled sniffing at the ruined coffee before bumping it off the table spilling its content on Naruto's lap starting a fresh spout of swears from Naruto. Pakkun ignored the flailing ninja and sighed looking up at Yuji. "I was actually sent to fetch you by the Council. They moved your appointment up and I am supposed to escort you to the council chamber for some unknown reason." The pug rolled his eyes and turned absently watching Naruto scrubbing at the coffee stain on his shirt. "I don't get why you can't walk there on your own. If all I had to do was deliver the message I could be back home and drooling on my pillow in no time." The Pug stretched and flicked his ears back. "Speaking of messages I ran into Sakura on the way here and since I'm already playing messenger I'm supposed to tell you that since your appointment was moved up you're welcome to stop by the clinic early for your lesson."

Naruto looked up and blinking, a mischievous smirk spreading over his face as he slurped a bundle of noodles from his fourth bowl of ramen into his mouth before pointing dramatically at Yuji. "You never

mentioned you were having private lessons with Sakura Pevy Samurai!" Naruto looked down right gleeful. Yuji simply closed his eyes and tilted his back groaning.

"Damn you Pakkun. You really had to mention that in present company?" Yuji groaned flicking Pakkun's nose. Pakkun sniffed wrinkling his nose growling softly and shrugged raising a brow.

"Hey, I'm just delivering a message. What the dork thinks is his own problem though now I am kinda curious about these private lessons."

Naruto giggled resting his head on his hands. "So what she teaching ya? Female Anatomy? Hell I could teach ya that!"

Yuji looked up ready to deck the knucklehead, but froze as he realized Naruto was performing hand signs under the table. Yuji growled and slammed his eyes close just as Naruto shouted

"Ninja Art Sexy Jutsu."

The shop went instantly silent for a moment followed by the shattering sounds of multiple utensils and plates being dropped and a few yelps and curses as hot coffee overflowed mugs and onto skin. Yuji could just imagine majority of the men in the room with their jaws on the floor noses bleeding at the sight of the gorgeous naked female that was Naruto's Sexy Jutsu. From just a few inches away he heard Naruto giggle in a soft sensual voice befitting the body he know was accompanying it. "Awww! Don't you wanna look at me and learn all about the "Anatomy" of a female?" Yuji groaned as he felt a soft hand grab his and start to drag it up towards where the girl's chest would be. He jerked his hand away and stated to punch at the figure stopping unsure what the etiquette was for punching a guy pretending to be a girl was. The voice murred in his ear with a giggle. "Aww. You don't want to touch me Yuji-san? I bet you would like what u felt." Yuji simply bit his lip and ignored the voice cooing in his ear. "Awww, that's no fun. Oh well." and with a small pop Naruto who had apparently returned to his normal form burst out laughing.

"Oh god Yuji! You should have seen your face." Yuji opened his eyes and glared at Naruto who had collapsed back into the booth howling with laughter. "It was priceless. You went so red when I grabbed your hand. I got u good Pervy Samurai! Believe it!"

Yuji's ears burned and he adjusted his shirt keeping his face set in a dignified expression as he looked around the shop realizing the whole restaurant was staring at their table. A raised brow and glare returned the others in the shop to their own business. Yuji stared around the shop for a moment before ignoring Naruto who was still howling with laughter and looked back at Pakkun whom was shaking his head with a paw over his eyes muttering to himself about his master having a bunch of morons for students,

Yuji cleared his throat and bit his lip lightly a small catch in his voice. "I think um..It would be a good idea if we probably left now." Pakkun didn't say a word. Just nodded his paws massaging his temples. "I doubt I will ever be able to come back here now though." Yuji added quietly.

Yuji started to the counter to collect the check avoiding eye contact with anyone Pakkun on his heels. As he pulled out his wallet to pay a small smile crept over his expression visible behind the mask; putting

away his wallet he pointed over his shoulder towards Naruto who was still chowing down. "The young man with me said he would get the bill. Sorry for the trouble. Add on 50% for the disturbance."

The shop keeper nodded eyeballing Naruto with mild distaste in his expression. Yuji winked and realization dawned on the shopkeepers face and he grinned. Yuji strolled to the door as the shopkeeper sauntered over to Naruto who was still giggling in the booth and held out the check with a bemused smile. "I believe this is yours son. Quite generous to put on the extra percentage."

Naruto blinked and looked at the check and slowly worked his way up the keep to look him in the face his brow twitching. "I don't think so guy. The Pervy Samurai was buying." Naruto looked across the table pointing, but froze as he realized there was no one there. "But...He was just here. He said he would buy breakfast!"

The shopkeeper smiled and shrugged. "The young man u were with informed me you would be paying and adding extra for the disturbance. My suggestion is you either pay the bill, or." The shopkeeper shrugged and waved airily towards the kitchen. "You wash dishes. I suppose I could speak to the Kage about one of her Shinobi jipping on his bill though." The keeper rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

Naruto paled. "WHAT! No no no. Where is that Pervy Samurai? I'll kill him!" Naruto looked wildly about the shop spotting Yuji at the door and pointed at him glaring. "You! Get back here and pay the bill!"

Yuji simply grinned and waved calling over his shoulder as he stepped out into the morning air. "Maybe you can give some anatomy lessons to get some cash. Have fun."

Naruto blinks and growls shaking his fist at Yuji. A soft cough from the shopkeeper made him jump and turn back sheepishly. The shopkeeper's brow rose and his bemused expression faltered to a more serious one. "So? What will it be? Pay, dishes or Kage?"

Naruto scowled muttering under his breath as he began to clear the plates from the table. "I ain't got no money guy. Which way to the sink?" he asked miserably.

Yuji chuckled as he and Pakkun stepped back out into the now bustling street. "Fates know he deserved that one."

"Amen. After pulling that I don't blame ya. That was bang out of line." Pakkun said with a grin. Pakkun quirked his muzzle pretending to think and raised a brow a grin spread slowly across his muzzle as he cleared his throat. "So uh...How is Sakura's female anatomy? Pretty good?"

Yuji halted back stiffening his ears burning again, without turning to look at the pug. "You are one pervy Pug you know that?I wonder what Kakashi would say if you returned to him neutered." he commented offhandedly as he started walking again Pakkun now the one left standing in shocked embarrassment.

"Damn kid you gotten some balls since you've lived here." The pug ran to catch up and fell in to pace with Yuji again shaking his head in amusement. "When you first got to the village you would hardly say two words to anyone. Now you fit in with the rest of the young folk here. Ornery, friendly and loyal to the people and village. I dip my head to you Yuji. You've grown."

Yuji glanced sideways at the dog then looked straight ahead as he answered his expression somewhat blank. "This has been the first place I have really had friends to be loyal, friendly and ornery to. The first place aside from back home with my parents that I have ever felt was home enough to allow close friends." Yuji pondered his thoughts for a moment absently pulling a kunai from its pouch on his thigh and twirled it absently as he thought. He was quiet for a few blocks before realizing he was lost in his own memories. Glancing down at the pug he spoke again.

"Before I came here I never had a home, a place to belong or a real reason to fight." Pakkun shifted his weight a bit seeming surprised and slightly uneasy with the change of mood that had taken place. Yuji couldn't help but let a small smile cross his features as he realized the oddity of confessing such thing to a dog; much less how awkward Pakkun looked listening. Either way it felt good to get it off his chest so he continued. "I simply fought for a general idea. An obscure moral code. Now...." Yuji took a deep breath inhaling the scent of the crisp spring air the delicate aroma of cherry blossoms making him sigh. "Now I have a purpose and reason to fight. I fight for those I care about. I live because they are here. I have changed since I've lived here. It's been because the people here." Yuji looked down at the pug and gave a bit of a laugh and sighed giving a small shrug and flipping the kunai he was holding into the air catching it by the ring and sliding it into its pouch. "I'm not entirely sure it was a good thing me getting my shell broke down. It has protected me for years and now despite the feeling of belonging I feel somewhat vulnerable with the walls down." Yuji sighed lapsing back into his thoughts.

Pakkun Trotted along silently beside the young man. The fact the boy had opened up to him had surprised him. Yuji was not the kind to pour out to anyone, even with the changes that had occurred since he had arrived to the village. The pug studied Yuji for a long moment as they walked. He could tell despite the cool exterior that the young man still struggled with some powerful inner turmoils. These battles had aged him far beyond his years and left a somewhat haunted look in his eyes. Yuji had spoken of the walls coming down, but Pakkun could see in other places the young man had built up new walls stronger than before.

A few more blocks of silence passed before Pakkun muttered to himself. "This bites. I'm horrible at this kind of thing, but I feel like I have to say something." Pakkun looked up at the young man striding along with him, If he had heard the mutter he hadn't shown it. Pakkun cleared his throat. "Look kid. I know u have had some bad situations in the past, but trust me. It's worth it to bring down your walls to the people you care about. That doesn't mean you have to let your guard down. Just don't be afraid to let those u care about help you with your problems. If you truly believe you are home here then you can know that these people will do their best to help you. I know it's hard, but hey I know a few people here that would die for you just as you would die for them." Yuji looked down at the pug with an expression Pakkun couldn't quite decipher but he returned the stare and simply stated "Just think on it kid."

Yuji raised a brow and nodded at the pug. "I will Pakkun. Thank you." He was a bit startled by the advice. He had not expected understanding from the pug. He was constantly surprised by that quality from both Pakkun and Holly, his Keeshonden summons. Yuji let a smile of appreciation show in his eyes. Pakkun stopped and Yuji looked up realizing they had arrived at the doors to the council chambers. He looked up at the ornate building and sighed putting a hand on the door handle. Before opening the door he looked down at the pug. "Thanks Pakkun. I'll think on what you said about letting people I care about in. This is home after all."

Pakkun gave a small smile and nodded. "That's all I ask kid." Pakkun and Yuji stared at one another for

a moment before Yuji opened the door and ushered Pakkun in first.

“After you.” Walking into the council chamber after the pug.