

# Understanding Does Not Presage Peace

## Chapter 12: The Grit of the Sublimely Accomplished

### (II)

“-. Kurama, the Nine-Tailed Demon Fox .-“

He hated humans.

“Nobody move or the Kyuubi brat gets it.”

They trampled his father’s dream, destroyed everything he worked for and spent the ages doing their best to erase everything that hurt them, even when they were themselves completely unworthy of inheriting the earth.

“I advise against whatever it is you’re planning.”

He hated that sanity could be destroyed by the single worst among them accumulating more power than everyone else combined.

“Doctor, I’m surprised at you. Condescending to other people, why, one might mistake you for someone else!”

He hated how the worst among them got together like yeast and drowned out the voices of the handful with any claim to sanity until they vanished like bird cries in wildfire.

“At least it would be *other* people mistaking my identity and not me.”

Their gawping was even more unseemly, exceeded only by how revolting it was that the ones with the best composure were the biggest killers.

“Whatever could you be insinuating, doctor? Was it not all of you who mistook me for the poor gatewarden? Besides, I don’t remember making any claims to any identity, now did I?”

Look at them, standing and watching even after their own children were saved only because of the sacrifice of the one among them who was *not* a killer.

“Naruto,” Masanari began speaking tongues. “*This is the bad man who forced Kurama to kill your mom and dad and the village.*”

“What?! He’s-AH!”

“Speaking in tongues now, Doctor?” Uchiha Obito said idly while twisting Naruto’s head by the hair. “Don’t you think that’s rude?”

The way humans could take Kurama’s own words and twist them into poison never failed to make him want to kill all of them.

“Kid, your keeper just *gutted* me, you have no room to talk.”

The way even the best and brightest among them inevitably became party to lies and deception was contemptible and left no room for their redemption as a species.

“Did he? It doesn’t seem to impair you much.” The black and white creature began to slither out of the ground behind the interloper, arm missing and a massive gouge in its torso slowly knitting together like black tar. “That was quite the feat you pulled off too, as far as it goes. How many Celestial Gates did you have to open just to match a mere shunshin?”

He hated the Uchiha the most, with those loathsome eyes of theirs that could steal even his will and their chakra more ominous than his own.

“Naruto,” Masanari said without taking his eyes off the Uchiha bastard. “Stop squirming. You’re throwing me off.”

He hated their self-delusion that could run so deep that they became wilfully blind to what was right in front of them.

“Yes, brat, stop squirming and watch, your uncle and I are about to show you how the world works.”

But if there was anything more galling than everything else, it was seeing an Uchiha with delusions of knowing how anything worked at all.

“Kid, you don’t want to get into this with me.”

It was as galling as it was useless for anyone else to try and reason with them.

“See, fox brat? Your uncle wants peace, but at the same time he’s just aching to charge at me in a flash and hurt me like he hurt guruguru. In the end, the life of humans always comes to this.”

They all put themselves at the center of the universe, every last one of them envious, malicious! And even after they broke everything they claimed to want fulfilled, they still thought they were in the right. Jealousy, insolence, arrogance, deception, betrayal, utter hate! Those were

the true natures of Uchiha, they were sickening! Even thinking about it made Kurama's chakra froth and seethe, but now it was a hundred times worse because he was forced to sit and watch all of it!

"Naruto, pay close attention to what he's saying, I'll be quizzing you later on why it's all bullshit."

They were all hypocritical fakes, every last one of them useless! That's why Kurama didn't even regret attacking Konoha, even the death of just one Uchiha was worth it!

"Yes, Kyuubi boy, see, this is what I was talking about. Man seeks peace, yet at the same time yearns for war. These are the two realms belonging solely to humanity. Thinking of peace whilst spilling blood is something that only humans-."

"Ants enslave other ants," Masanari said flatly. "And that's when they're not waging genocidal warfare against each other. Hippos are vicious murderers, dolphins make sport out of torturing baby porpoises, otters assault their wives and eat their own babies, carps eat until they collapse entire ecosystems, chimps, dolphins, seals, ducks all rape and murder not just other animals but their own kind, locusts *exist*-"

"AUGH-ngh!" Kurama's jailer cried in pain.

"And it's that easy to silence even the best of men," said the Uchiha as he harshly pulled on his hostage's hair. "Man yearns for war when he's strong, yet when he's weak he wants peace. And exposing that reality takes just this little pain."

How like the Uchiha to lie and kill and slink around the world pretending to be human, when actually they're only parasites trying to get closer to the best of mankind to do away with them. The gall of an *Uchiha* to speak as if they weren't the ones who committed the most crimes or were the most hostile to their own kind. To speak as if they are as pure as the gods themselves!

"Naruto, this is what we call confirmation bias. Next he's going to say that we're two sides of the same coin, that to protect something another must be sacrificed, as if he's not the one who caused this mess to begin with."

How like the rest of mankind to give them a chance for coexistence, then another and a dozen more, and what did they get for it? A curse upon their kind and a thousand curses upon the rest of the world!

“I wonder if you’re genuine or you’re just pretending to have this steel in your spine, Doctor. Curse me for a sentimental fool, but I think I’m hoping for the latter.”

“And this, Naruto, is *projection*, when you know you’re bad but instead of *stopping*, you choose to delude yourself into thinking everyone else is bad too because you’re a *coward*.”

...

“... Maybe I was wrong about you, Doctor,” Uchiha said lowly. Menacingly. “I thought you to be one of the rare enlightened, but in the end even you default to petty insults. And to think that we share the same pain-“

“If you dare say I should sympathise with you *murdering my entire family* because of a thirteen year old *brat’s decade-long tantrum over not getting the girl*, I will fucking lose it, I swear to God.”

Kurama gaped.

His seething chakra stalled. The outside seemed to teeter. A madman’s audacity sputtered in the face of a completely different madman’s audacity. Different audacity. Different madman. Curse all the children of man, Kurama didn’t want to care enough for them to mess with his mind, not by force and certainly not by accident! What did he do to deserve this?

It was to this frozen tableau of fatally clashing beliefs that Uzumaki Naruto opened his fool mouth. “WHAT? No... That’s impossible! The Fourth would never get beat by someone so lame!”

...

Kurama facepalmed.

The outside world was seemingly frozen under the weight of judgment being meted.

“... Alright, brat. That’s enough out of you.” Darkness encroached on the seal and Kurama snarled, flooded his jailer’s chakra with his and *yanked*. The brat snapped awake before he was even half-way asleep. “Oh, the fox is paying attention?” Uchiha yanked Naruto’s head around by the hair-

“Kid, I *sincerely* advise against what you’re planning.”

-and suddenly that hated eye bore through Naruto’s straight into Kurama’s, those hated eyes-

Naruto *screamed*.

The seal shook, foreign blood came alive along the boy's spine, bloodline *wrenched*-

Uchiha Obito jumped back in shock, his mask shattered to splinters as he turned intangible just barely in time to avoid his face being split in twain by the golden chains that burst out of Naruto's back, Hyuuga Hiashi stumbled mid-leap as Masanari surged forward in the colour of stars and kicked *through* the intangible Uchiha-

“KURAMA, BRING ME INTO THE SEAL!”

-and covered Naruto just as the Uchiha became solid again and grabbed *him*.

*Crap*, Kurama thought as he automatically complied.

But despite that the Uchiha grabbed Masanari first, Kurama's chakra reached him anyway, and suddenly both man and child were in the dark with him.

*What just happened?* Kurama wondered, thoughts reeling as he pulled himself and the other two all the way into the seal where mind worked fastest. *It felt like an injury, but it wasn't-it was-internal bleeding but not the brat's blood, what-?* Those chains! The brat had those accursed chains, those chains that could bind him and seal his chakra away, those accursed chains, the hells and heavens alike damn you Kushina!

“-re are we, what is this place, it's gross-“ splash, splash, splash went the water as the man ran almost as fast as the brat's mouth. “- I was so scared but I knew you'd save me, you always save me, you can do anything but why did he call me the Kyuubi brat, I'm not a rabbit-“

“NEITHER AM I YOU MORONIC FLESHBAG!”

Naruto screamed in fright, finally looking up. He gasped.

“Kurama!” Masanari skid to a halt, put Naruto down and walked over to squeeze between the bars, what the hell is he completely craz - “I need you to teach me ninshu!”

Kurama stared stupidly at the extended fist. “What did you just say?”

“I need you to teach me ninshu!” Masanari couldn't get through so he gave up with a huff and squeezed until his fist was past the bars. Pointing up. At him. What. “Quick, we don't have

time to waste! You're Hagoromo's firstborn, he must've taught you how to do it, that's how you know everything that's been happening despite being locked up in here, right? You couldn't have heard me call you, you just know!"

Kurama shied away. "A-are you mad, human? My chakra will burn you to ash!"

"How? Your thing is wind, not fire, and you're just one giant chunk of Yang anyway!"

Kurama gaped at the madman, absolutely stumped.

It was to this frozen tableau of *utter batshit lunacy* that Uzumaki Naruto opened his fool mouth.

"Oh my god, it's the Moon Rabbit!"

Kurama saw white and slammed his claws into the seal with a roar. "I'll kill you!"

"AAAH!" Naruto jumped behind Masanari to hide. "U-uncle, it's the Kyuubi!"

"Naruto, go find a corner to sit in or something, grownups are talking."

"What?! But--"

Kurama *roared*.

It was the strongest, loudest, most cataclysmic outburst he'd had since that night, the water practically exploded away until the floor was exposed for the first time since his sealing.

Uzumaki just cringed and hid behind Hanzo harder. "Uncle! It's the Kyuubi! The Kyuubi's here, he showed up out of nowhere to bully me! Make him stop!"

"Oh for fuck's sake!" Masanari wrenched himself out from between the bars, picked Naruto up, walked ten paces away, dropped him and said. "Stay here or I'm taking Gama away."

Naruto gasped. "You can't!"

But the brat did as he was told and soon Masanari was back to reaching through the bars. "Kurama." He said seriously, looking up in the fox's eyes. "Please."

"No!" Kurama spat reflexively, not even sure why. "You're mad! You don't know what you're asking!"

“Obviously, I’m taking a leap of faith here!”

“Faith?” Kurama’s ears flattened. “In me? You’re even crazier than I thought!”

“In the risk being worth it, God, why couldn’t that moron wait a few more months before springing this, now I can’t coax you into it properly, fuck my life.”

“Coax me?” Kurama hissed. “Coax me?! Who do you think you are? Who do you think *I* am to be coaxed into anything, I should eat you, the audacity-!”

“Why are you so mean!?” Naruto wailed from where he fell on his butt in the water. “I don’t care if you scream at me, but Uncle’s the greatest! Why are you even here? And you even tried to kill me and that’s rude, trying to kill people! What did we ever do to you!?”

“You’re my prison! Why would I ever be happy to see you?!”

“What do you mean?! I’ve never met you before in my life!”

Masanari banged his head against the bar. “Ume, why are all the children in my life complete morons?”

“Morons? Children?” Kurama snarled, itching to skewer the man. “Children?!” It would be so easy, he was right there. “You forget your place, human. You forget who you’re speaking to.”

“No, I really don’t.” Masanari turned his back on him and walked away. Stopped in front of the jailer. Took a knee with his back to him. Within reach. Within his claws’ stabbing distance. He could stab him, claw at him, kill him, cripple his body here and outside, he could break his mind on his razor talons, how dare he, how dare he, how could he, why-?

“Naruto. Obito is completely wrong about everything. The world without us humans would be kill or be killed. That’s the only law that rules in nature. The best growing tree will starve all others near it. A cat won’t stop playing with its food because the mouse might hurt. No goat considers that eating plants all the way to the root means less to eat later. No predator animal goes hunting thinking ‘I’ll only hunt what I need’. Locusts would eat everything if they could. Every beast, big or small, seeks territory, food, and to multiply without end, and the only reason they all fail is because they either run out of food or become the food. And there’s no limit to the creatures that hurt and kill and eat their own. The only think we’re guilty of is winning nature’s contest. Of everything on this world, we’re the only ones who ever think ‘wolves and

snakes have been our bane forever, but we should still be careful not to eradicate them.’ All the reason in the world, all wisdom and patience, all long-term consideration that exists on this Earth, all *mercy* comes from us.”

“Some apes do it too!” Kurama spat in his desperation to distract himself from the urge to murder the man, he was no base beast to be ruled by *urges*. “And-and elephants! And otters play with anyone and... you’re forgetting summons too!”

“Exceptions prove the rule!” Masanari shot back over his shoulder. “And I’m building a whole theory for summons, or I was before Uchiha Obito decided to crash into my life.” Masanari turned back to Naruto. “Nephew, uncle loves you.”

Naruto flinched back, teary-eyed. “N-no!” He pushed Masanari away, why-? “Y-you don’t get to say that j-just because some bad guy showed up! I’m gonna earn it fair and square!”

“Oh Naruto, that’s... I don’t have time to get into why that’s a bad way to live and it’s some parts my fault. There’s a crazy man out there who wants to burn the world because an evil jerk got to him when he was having the worst day of his life. I know you don’t owe Kurama any sympathy, but we can’t let Obito enslave him again. I need you to protect him alright?”

What.

The *certifiable maniac* kissed Naruto on the forehead, stood and strode back to the bars, his Yin pouring into the seal with every step, infusing the air, pushing through the bars at Kurama, probing, whipping, latching and grasping uselessly in a bid to do things it was too knotted to do even if it any idea how, but the intent was so clear it was *searing*- “You dare?!” Kurama was livid, the man presumed to force the issue, he dared think he’d just bare his whole being to anyone, for any reason, just because he- “You have the arrogance of the Uchiha and the stubborn pride of the Senju themselves! One moment you're driven by logic and the next you throw it to the wind because of the most perverted sentimentality. Do you even know what you’re asking? My hatred is all your kind’s hatred piled up over centuries, every last grain of spite I ever felt that *your* kind felt is one I carry with me. It will break your mind! Would you become like the Uchiha outside, a slave to your own suffering?”

“That won’t happen.”



“You would still be you, but more fool, more mad. No restraint, no respect, your woe would have no end. Drunk on the pain of your victory you’ll spare no thought for those who’ve suffered for your spoils, those who’ll suffer for crossing your path and being left in your wake, betrayed and hopeless, if you do anything at all but lie and die of a broken spirit. Why ask me this? You’ve always stayed your course, pursued your heart’s desires with eyes unclouded, even deprived and robbed of all your just reward at every turn, would you throw all that away, and for what? If it’s the winner’s justice you want, it will be fleeting, and this will not earn it regardless, you’ll only be another one of the many woebegotten, silenced, stripped of voice and claim, not even a footnote in history!”

Kurama grit his teeth as the man before him waited for him to have his say as if he wasn’t being blasted with a thousand years of underserved vitriol.

“...If it were anyone else, I would gladly break them. Why you, human? Is it not enough that the madman outside drove me to butcher your family and so many others? Would you have me finish the job? Would you have me start with the only one in your worthless species who restored our names and legacy back into this world that has spat upon us for so long? Would you throw my clemency back in my face?” *Would you add to my suffering by making me the unwilling destroyer of even that?*

“Oh Kurama.” Did-did he just *pity* him?! “You don’t understand humans any better than you father did, do you?”

“You arrogant, uppity, insufferable-!” Kurama was only half of his full self, just the leftover Yang of the world of yore with the Yin sealed in the Death God’s stomach, but he was still himself and he had his own soul, he had Yin all his own. “Fine then! Let history burn once again upon a human’s whim, see where it takes you.”

Kurama loosened his chakra, connecting it to Masanari’s with all the consideration he showed him, which was none of it. His father’s teachings were to share chakra so that people could share spiritual energies with one another. Ninshu was meant to allow people to understand themselves and each other without communication, to lead the world into an era of peace. Never mind that complete understanding only made every other people dislike each other even more. Never mind that a single person could have so much pain, so much delusion, so much hate inside them as to poison all others that connected to them on any level. Even the best and worthiest of mankind were tainted, even here and now when he was baring himself to a demon

beast, even he had a canker in his spirit. A devouring void that used to be a young, innocent soul far too long removed from the Pure World. What kind of man would be haunted by his own spawn like this, what had he done that his own son would turn to weighing and devouring his very spirit? If Kurama held anything against his father, it was that he believed in mankind when he *shouldn't have-*

A life lived until Kurama's coming ruined it. Another life lived, far different, older. A different time. A different world where no wonders existed save those that sprung from humanity's polluted dreams. Nations, visions, prejudice, machines that made it to the bottom of the ocean and beyond the sky into the cosmos itself. Carnage of a scale even Kurama had trouble fathoming, millions languishing in trenches, falling by the tens of thousands to mad charges and typhus and gangrene and starvation from ego and anger and logistical failures the entire time. And the world they bought in blood and lives... It languished under the perpetual threat of annihilation by inconceivable weapons, and even then it barely lasted. The cowardly and degenerate debased it through the loyalty of the strong and brave who lived for coin. With each generation the lives of mankind became more and more hollow. More and more empty. Until the only escape was in the fancies of imagination. Art. Books. Moving images. Still images turned moving images backed by voice and song depicting epiphanies that showed Kurama's world with terrifying accuracy, from the far past to a horrible alternate present and well into the future.

For the first time since ninjutsu came to be, Kurama joined a mere man in ninshu and it was *his* will that utterly broke in the face of the revelation.

He stumbled back and lost his footing. His flank and shoulder hit the stone floor with a splash. His breath was as erratic as the ripples in the red chakra making up his body. Red. And black. Flakes of gold flitting in and out of view as impossible anticipation warred with unfolding shock and existential crisis.

“That... That's a lot...”

Kurama blearily pried his eyes open, though his ears stayed flat against his neck and he stumbled back instead of forward when he tried to stand, his chakra and soul churning so violently that his whole body shivered.

Masanari was climbing to his knees, wet and pale and his eyes dreadfully clear as he bore the resentful suffering of ages of an immortal demon and just... pushed it all aside to deal with later because he had more urgent problems to worry about at the moment.

“How-“ Kurama’s scratchy voice caught in his throat, but he couldn’t *not* force the words out. “How are you not catatonic?”

Masanari peered into the darkness of the seal and gave a feeble smile full of sickly indulgence. “Us humans have a cap on how depressed we can get, and I was all the way at the bottom for years. This is easily the worst I’ve ever felt, but I’ve been here before, at rock bottom.”

No. No, he had been *lower*. Ninshu showed the truth of it with inescapable, wretched clarity, Masanari wasn’t lying but he was wrong. Depression... Kurama thought he knew what it was, but he didn’t. Hadn’t. Even just the memory of it felt like he’d fall eternally into a gnawing pit of despair. If Kurama didn’t have his rage to fill that void instead he didn’t know what he’d do. If he didn’t have all of man’s negative emotions to make him seethe and writhe while impaled inside Kushina for so long, despair would sure have taken him. Accursed man, Kurama didn’t want to be grateful to any suffering, damn him to the darkest hell. Damn him for being *wrong*, this wasn’t rock bottom. It was close, but fell short. Something was different. Something had changed.

Masanari crawled away through the ankle-deep water and knelt next to Naruto’s unconscious form. “I guess even just the proximity was too much for you, kid. Still so young...”

“How can you still – the first thing you do, compassion, here, now after what-? How-?” The leech. There had been something in the man’s Yin, a leech inside his spirit. But it was gone now, just a raw, gaping wound in the knotted mess of his spirit. Kurama struggled to pick through the terrifying impossibilities that had completely shattered his beliefs, but he was sure it had been there, just before the... the...

“Suffering leads to compassion,” Masanari said weakly. “Sometimes. And sometimes compassion prevents suffering. Hopefully.” The man took a shuddering breath and- “Dammit, Naruto’s still too young, too frail, chakra not homogenous enough, activating the chains guaranteed to have repercussions, figures it would be a bloody Uchiha that forced my hand, fuck.” The man slumped and wiped a hand down his face. “Oh well. If contingencies were perfect, they’d be plan A.”

“... What *are* you?”

The man huffed and shook his head. He didn't answer. Didn't seem to be all there himself.

“What have you done to me?” Kurama staggered to stand but he didn't approach the bars. The seal. He... he was - “What is all this – what was all – what I saw, it's insanity, it makes no sense!”

“Don't worry about it too much,” the man grunted as he took off his jacket and folded it along with Naruto's shirt into a makeshift pillow for the child.

“Don't worry about- I'm having an existential crisis!” And now Kurama was feeling embarrassed too, embarrassed, him! He'll kill him, he'll- “You-that life, that world – you think you saw the future! You saw this world, somehow, what you know-what I witnessed...”

Masanari sat back on his heels and breathed slowly, trying to get his trembling under control as he curled his arms into his chest as if to stem the wretched void in his spirit that Kurama had so viciously ripped back open. Around them, the water began to ripple as the connection keeping all three tethered inside frayed along with the jailer's encroaching absence as the dark closed in.

Kurama snarled. “Why did you do this to me!?” He hated how harshly his voice broke at the end. “You... you know the future! You showed me the future, you *entertained yourself* watching my future, all this world's future, what am I supposed to do with this?”

“Nothing right now, I hope,” Masanari said weakly. “You can think about it until you run out of ideas. Then forget about it. Something will dawn on you after a while. Do that, whatever it is. Ignore every impulse between now and then. Everyone *except* me being rash and crazy is what got us into this mess, don't be one of them too. *Please.*”

“Fuck you!” Kurama roared, taking what refuge he could in bravado as gold and black burned into and out of each other all over his frame at the man's earnest plea. He felt like he would puke, even the gold and silver brothers hadn't made him so sick. “Don't beg, it's disgusting!” But the way the black bloomed into gold for a moment gave light to his true feelings. “I mean it!”

“I believe you.”

“I’m not going to add to madness in the world!” Kurama roared, his limbs moving ahead of him as he started pacing furiously back and forth, his tails all but causing storms as he moved. “You’re crazy! Every one of you humans, you’re all sick. Repulsive. I can’t stand you! You think showing me the future will make me help you?! Your future sucks!”

“Alright.”

“There’s going to be another war! And everything up to there is going to be a total mess that nobody will care about until it’s too late, because of the blissful illusion they build over the seedy underbelly of this place! By a perverted womaniser who abandoned his chief responsibility on a dumb old man’s say so! Your best words went in one ear and came down the other, why do you think I’ll have better luck?! *You*, cursed with knowledge, all your kin are dead, I *killed them all*, and more children will be dead from here onwards, there’s going to be terrorists coming for us, we don’t even have that word here yet you bastard!”

“Okay.”

“The lunatic outside is mind-controlling the strongest among your wretched kind! My *father’s eyes* will be slaved to the lunatic outside! Your future would have me *sympathise* with that delusional nutcase, fuck you and fuck him! And the rest of the Uchiha too! How the hell did that stupid ANBU child live that long, never mind his illness?! Killing all of your relatives except for your favorite is somehow forgivable as long as you have some masked old man telling you to do it? It means you can then delude yourself into thinking it was a self-sacrifice, are you crazy?! And then everyone else also believes it! Your Hokage and everyone else too! Even when it’s only a sacrifice of literally everyone else *but* yourself, why should I lift a finger to help any of them- any of *you* when you’re all so... so... ARGH!”

The seal shook at his howl the hardest it ever had, the scraps of golden chakra casting away from him so the rest of all of him could burn vicious, foul, red and black, as terrible as the fate of all those monsters once he gets his claws into them.

“And *Uzumaki Naruto*,” Kurama’s throat rumbled with disbelieving rage. “This *brat*. He’ll make grand boasts and never follow through because he’ll waste his life chasing acknowledgment from a second-rate *Uchiha*. And when that *Uchiha* successfully *beats him to death* and he only survives because I save him *multiple times in ten minutes*, this *brat* will be so amazed that the *Uchiha* chickened out at the last second that he’ll see him as the one who

acknowledged him the most! Because it's not like his godfather taught him his father's legacy and two different Hokage chose to put all their faith in him to the point they willingly died for it. Uzumaki Naruto will even forgive the *genocide of his own species* as long as the madman who commits it feels a little bad afterwards! I will *never* become willing partners with someone like that! I'd have to go mad first! I'd have to be mind-controlled again somehow, it's the only explanation! It's insane! You're insane! I'm not! I'm not crazy, I'm not going crazy like the rest of you, you hear me human?!"

Kurama came out of his tirade breathing heavily, his fur bristling like spears as black and gold flowed over it like liquid life turned half to poison.

"It doesn't matter," Hanzo said. "In the end, you still saved the world."

The fox faltered.

Laboriously but strangely smoothly at the same time, the man climbed to his feet. "My name is Masanari Hanzo. In the life before this one I was Miron Cadáin O'Conroy. My likes are clam stew, sunshine and peace and quiet. I dislike nagging, extroverts and liars. My dream for the future is to fix this world's schizophrenic technological base in time for the follow-up invasion of Kaguya's siblings. And I always thought that Naruto was never the hero of that story." The man turned to look into the cage. "You didn't put the fight you could have against Hashirama even mind controlled. You only attacked Konoha because you were mind controlled again. You didn't try to kill Naruto or his parents until you saw they meant to seal you back. You won Naruto's battle against Haku. You won him the battle against Hyuuga Neji. You won him the battle against Shukaku. You saved his life and won him the battle against Uchiha Sasuke up until he *threw it*. You fought off Orochimaru, you convinced Sasuke not to murder Naruto right after, you saved his arm after Kakuzu – his one single triumph of strength, and even that was bought with all the endurance and chakra your seal gave him. And you literally carried him through the entire fourth ninja war. *You* were the hero of that story, not him."

Kurama had no idea what to say.

"I'm not asking you to help me save anyone. I know you'll do the right thing when the time comes. Of everyone I know of in this world, you're the only one who never failed when it counted."

Kurama slumped. "I... You're insane"

“Hopefully temporarily,” Hanzo grunted. “Especially if I do go ahead and die in the next few minutes.” But his gaze and tone both melted back into that earnest sincerity Kurama so dreaded now. “Thank you, Kurama. Really. Your father should be proud of you, and if he’s not, I’ll kick him in the nuts on your behalf when I see him in heaven. Forget Indra or Asura, his heir should have been you. None of them knew what the hell they were doing anyway.”

Kurama sunk into the water with his eyes buried in his arms. “Why couldn’t you just let the Uchiha all die?”

But Masanari batted aside his poor deflection like it wasn’t even a fly. “It’s not easy being cursed with knowledge. I’m sorry, but I couldn’t trust this to anyone else.”

“Go to hell.” Even after what Kurama did to him, even though this didn’t even begin to make up for how Kurama hurt him, Masanari still looked at him like all his beliefs had just been validated. What was he supposed to do with this?

“Power circuit established, amperage steady at 66, paralysis success.”

What was he talking about *now*?

Water waded. Kurama watched as the man dropped to his knees next to Naruto again and... and his chakra, his spiritual energy flowed forth from him, crudely but well enough now that he and the boy were joined in ninshu just well *enough*, for a moment.

“Adamantine Sealing Chains... discerned.”

With a grim final smile, Masanari Hanzo disappeared from the seal, back to the real world and the Uchiha maniac wanting to murder him. Or *worse*.

Kurama snarled and jumped to his feet. “Damn you!” Kurama *hated* humans, but he hated it even more that one always showed up who made him reconsider, who made him trust in an all new, vain hope for the future. “Curse you!” He hurled the last of the golden chakra away before it dissipated, before he took it back and it turned again into the seething, biter red that made up his whole being now. Let the purified Yang of his remorse fall where it may.

Let the ghosts in the seal hide from him *now*.

“Damn you,” he faltered out, not knowing who he was cursing anymore. “Why couldn’t you have lived during my father’s time?”

Hanzo sprouted claws, slashed the clothes under his arm with a blast of smoke while Uchiha couldn't move, why-?

BANG

The nail shooter blew a hole through Uchiha's chest and straight through Zetsu's face.