

Idiot Genius

By sakayume

Submitted: December 13, 2005

Updated: December 13, 2005

Kakashi's supposed to be smart, but he just doesn't get it. Oneshot. Suggestions of Kakalru, but that's not the main focus.

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/sakayume/24689/Idiot-Genius>

Chapter 1 - Untitled

2

1 - Untitled

Idiot GeniusIdiotGenius

sakayume

12.13.05

For someone who's supposed to be a genius, Kakashi can be a real idiot sometimes.

It's not the little stuff that bugs me, like the perverted books he reads or the way he's still wearing that mask after all these years. It's not even the fact that he hangs around and talks to dead people because, y'know, I like the company. Even Kakashi's company. Actually, that part's kind of funny, because you know what he does? He spends so long hanging around here, talking and reminiscing, that he's constantly late to other things. Late! Kakashi, stuck-up-always-follow-the-rules Kakashi, is late all the time now. It's crazy how much he's changed, and not just in the obvious ways like getting taller (he has) or settling down (he hasn't). I guess that's what happens when you grow up. I mean, he's twenty-six already. Twice as old as I'll ever be.

So by now, you'd think he'd be less clueless. Especially considering how he's spent those twenty-six years. He's been ANBU. A jounin. Practically a legend, even if he never brings that kind of thing up when he talks to me. (He's gotten less smug, too. That's a nice change.) So you figure in a life like that, you see a lot of death. I know better than anyone how true that is in his case; my name isn't the only one he looks over on his visits here. I tried to guess it once, to estimate it out – how many comrades has he lost, right in front of his eyes---my eye---our eyes? Is it a hundred? Two hundred? And he always survives, which means he's the one carrying around all those last words, coming home to tell the wives and kids and parents what happened. Death doesn't shock him these days like it did when we were little – he acted cool, but he was pretty messed up after mine, I know he was. You figure he had to be, if he's still wandering down here to talk to me after all this time, but that's off the point.

The point is that he doesn't get it. He hasn't learned. And I'm not even talking about things that take twenty-six years to figure out – what he's missing, somehow, he could have understood thirteen years ago. I mean, he *did* learn some things from me, I know he did. He doesn't make assumptions like he used to, and he lets the rules slide when there's a good reason, and he looks out for the people that matter to him. He can still be a stubborn jerk sometimes, but---well, he's Kakashi. Wouldn't be the same if he wasn't. If anything, he could be a little more of one and I wouldn't hold it against him; he gets sentimental a lot, like he doesn't remember how much we used to fight, and it's a little weird. Then again, I like it better than the way things used to go; the one perk to dying, or at least dying for a good cause, is that people respect you afterwards – I guess he's grown up even more than I realized.

It gets really obvious sometimes, like when he sits in front of the memorial early in the morning and tells me about the kids. Not *his* kids – ten to one says he never has any – but the ones he got stuck training a while back. You know what's funny? He went back and looked it up in the genealogy charts, and apparently one of the members of the team he got put in charge of is my first cousin, once removed. Or my half-nephew, or something. Some kind of sorta-relation. It's a small world, huh? You should see the way he talks about this kid – he's proud of him, it's obvious, but at the same time he's trying not to make me feel bad, because the kid's a prodigy---lived up to the bloodline I was never really cut out for. I wish he wouldn't tiptoe around it so much, trying not to hurt my feelings, but every now and then he makes some gentle teasing joke and it feels a little more like the Kakashi I used to know. He says he taught him Chidori, the technique Sensei was so strict about.

Sensei. He talks about him too, but it's usually on a side topic; it's kind of hard to believe, but the guy who used to teach us is now such a fixture in the village's history that he's just sort of assumed into a lot of the stories. The kyuubi, the sealing – it's the stuff of legend, and I remember once right after it all happened he came down and told me everything. Of course, I'd already heard it – word travels fast on this side of things too – but I listened. Now, it's that sacrifice that everyone remembers, and that Kakashi talks about, because he's teaching the boy Sensei used to seal the creature away. It seems kinda appropriate. I mean, our teacher taught Kakashi *everything*. There can't be anyone better suited to handling the kid Sensei tried so hard to present as a hero.

Kakashi disagrees.

He complains, about the three of them. My relative, and the kyuubi-boy, and their teammate – a smart girl, I guess, but she sounds annoying. Too clingy. That's one thing Kakashi and I have in common: neither of us likes girls much, for our various reasons. I wonder if it'd be different if I were older. You don't think about stuff like that when you're just assuming you'll grow up someday, but it seems like a much bigger deal when you know it'll never happen, y'know? Like, I wonder how Rin is doing. I wonder if things turned out okay for her; she must have moved on better than Kakashi did, because I don't see much of her unless I go looking. I didn't worry as much when I was around. Plus, I mean, I've been thinking about stuff like that lately. Because of Kakashi.

The reason I never got interested in girls was that I just didn't stick around long enough.

The reason *he's* not interested is because he's fascinated with this *guy*. This teacher. Iruka. He says we might have been in the same class; I've seen him around, but I'm not sure about the memory. He's got a weird scar, and you'd think you'd remember something like that. Then again, when time passes the way it does now, you forget things you wouldn't expect to. My whole clan's gone – it's been a couple of years, but seeing the empty district where we used to live still creeps me out. I went back there after it happened, and you know what? I'd forgotten what my house looked like. My room, the street we were on, everything. So not remembering something doesn't mean it wasn't there.

Well, whether he was in our class or not---*my* class, and *Rin's* class, because Kakashi was already off being a genius at that age---he's a teacher now. The academy's still set up just like it used to be, same as always. He works there most days, moonlights in the mission room, stays at work too late. I don't think Kakashi really ever meant to tell me details like that – he rambles, though, forgets that he's talking to anyone but himself and goes on about whatever's on his mind. He talks about how Iruka sits there and stresses out, and the kids know they can only get away with so much when it comes to him, but they all push their limits anyways, just to see if he'll stretch. He goes on about the way the guy blushes – apparently it's like a curse he's got, because it happens to him all the time – and how easily he gets flustered. If he's anything like Kakashi says, he's got my respect, because from what I hear he can scare even the special jounins when he gets in a mood. That's pretty kickass.

I don't think it's why Kakashi likes him. I think he likes that he's enthusiastic and lively and emotional. That makes me laugh, because those are all the things he used to say were annoying about me. I mean, geez, he's changed *that* much? But I really think that's what it is. That's what he goes on about, when he loses track of his train of thought, and he gets this real faraway look in his eye and wonders whether he should back off. They haven't done anything, yet. Had dinner or drinks or whatever, once or twice, but not like a *date* because he doubts Iruka swings that way anyways. (I've watched him a little, figured it was my right since this was my old teammate obsessing over him---and I've got a feeling that's *exactly* how he swings. But like I said, for a genius, Kakashi can be pretty dense sometimes.) He likes the way Iruka laughs, because it's really honest. He likes that he's a terrible liar, and that he wears his heart on his sleeve, and that he'll put himself on the line for the sake of someone important to him. And it's kind of a relief hearing all this, because it means I actually – did – get through to him, and if I could I'd gloat a little about the prodigy Kakashi learning something from his clumsy,

average-rank comrade. I guess maybe I've grown up a little too, though, because in the end I'm just happy he gets that part.

So he learned what I was saying while I was alive. Good. The part that makes him an idiot is that for all his brooding and all his dwelling on the past, he still hasn't taken away the big lesson of my death. I don't think it could get any clearer, either. And it kills me – er, you know – because it's so damn *obvious* that he doesn't get it. Whenever he goes on about how he watches them, the kids and the man, I just want to smack him. When he came to the memorial one morning a mess, an absolute –mess-, getting everything off his chest about how one of the other teachers had nearly killed Iruka. When he recounted a battle his team had been drawn into in the wave country, and how my step-whatever had almost been killed by a boy with a mask, and he was just a *boy*, just a *kid*. When he comes to me with stories like that, that's when it's the worst. Because that's when the lesson he's ignoring should be the clearest.

He doesn't tell them.

These people, the ones going out there and getting –this- close to killed, the ones he comes and talks about because he can only bottle up so much –he's gotten attached to them, and he cares about them, and he doesn't tell them.

That's what's so stupid.

He knows by now, I *know* he knows because he *has* to know, that one of these days these people might stop getting almost-killed and get just plain *killed*, and that'll be it. Or he will. He'll go on some mission, and that'll be the end of him. And they'll be gone, or he'll be gone, and it'll all be unsaid. The kids he's always messing with, the ones he says are so troublesome, aren't gonna know he sees them as closer than any of his own could ever be. The boy who reminds him of me and the one who reminds him of Sensei and the girl who, once in a blue moon, makes him think of Rin---they aren't gonna know they were his precious people. And Iruka won't know that Kakashi never pushed for more not because he didn't want it, but because he was afraid to hurt him. He won't know that Kakashi was the one who left the anonymous little gifts on his desk, at the holidays and again on his birthday. There are going to be all these things that they never know, and whether he realizes it or not, he's gonna regret that for a long long time.

You know why I'm so glad with the gift I was able to give him, in the end? Because even *he* couldn't miss what it meant. I probably couldn't have done it in words, but I got to tell him one way or another that I saw him as a friend. If I'd died knowing he thought I hated him. I don't know how I'd manage. It means a lot, you know? People have to be told these things. And you can't waste time, saying you'll get around to it, maybe when you're having a better day or when they're not still annoyed with you for being late, or when he doesn't look so tired out.

I wish I could just tell him, wave a hand in front of his eyes and point out how dumb he's being. How they're going to slip away from him, or he from them, and how unresolved it'll all be. But our conversations are all one-way these days, so I just have to wait it out. I stay around and listen, listen to him go on about the kids and the man and all the loose ends he doesn't realize he's gonna leave behind, listen to him be the same frustrating stubborn Kakashi he always was. I think he'll get it eventually. I hope it comes in time, because I don't want to see him taking on the wounds of his own unfinished business. Regrets are hell when you really, really can't fix the things you messed up.

But it'll click. Maybe it'll take another close call, on his part or theirs, but I bet he realizes what he needs to do, and when we eventually meet up over here, he won't have to sulk about all the things he should have said.

I mean, he may be an idiot, but he's kind of a genius too.