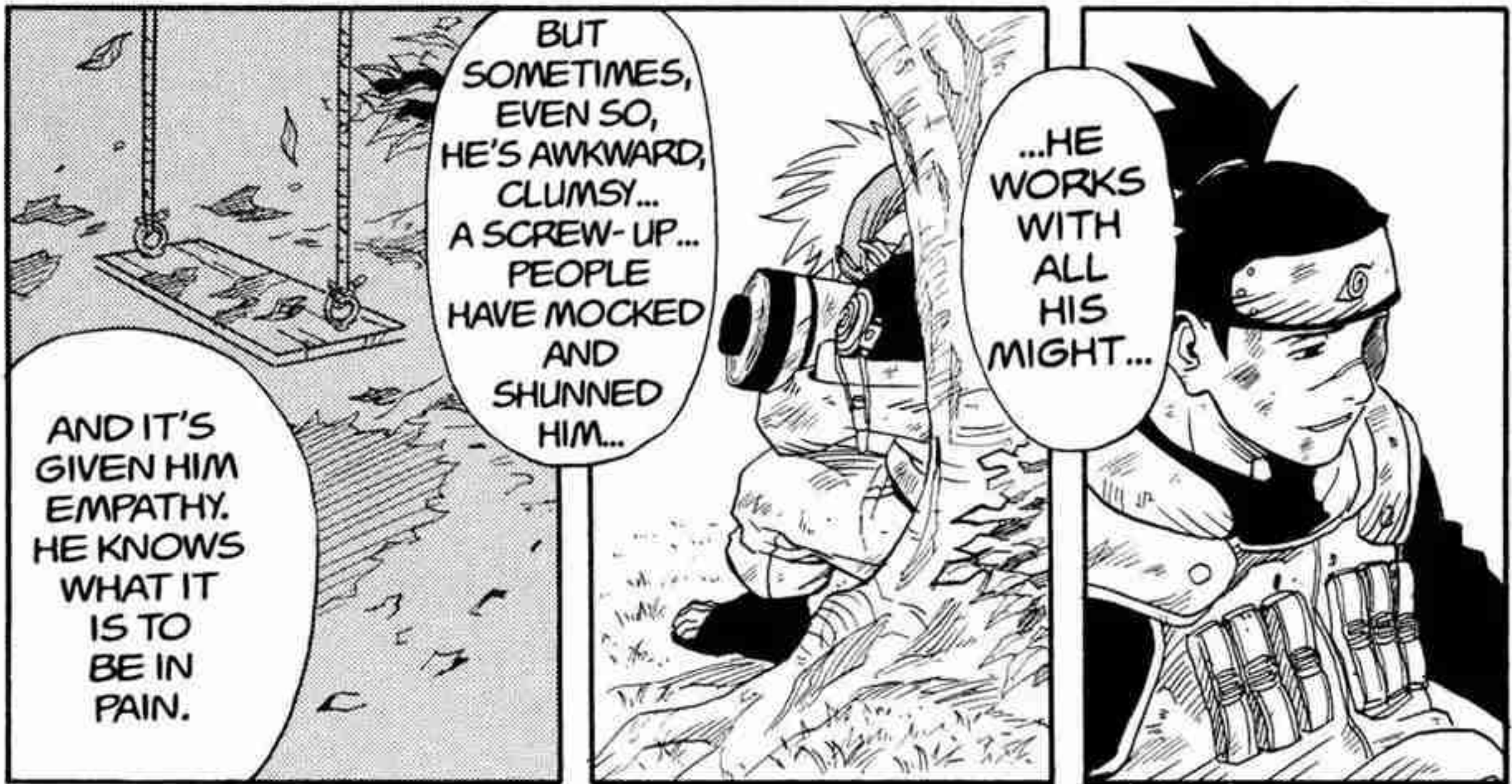


HE'S
AN
EXCELLENT
STUDENT.

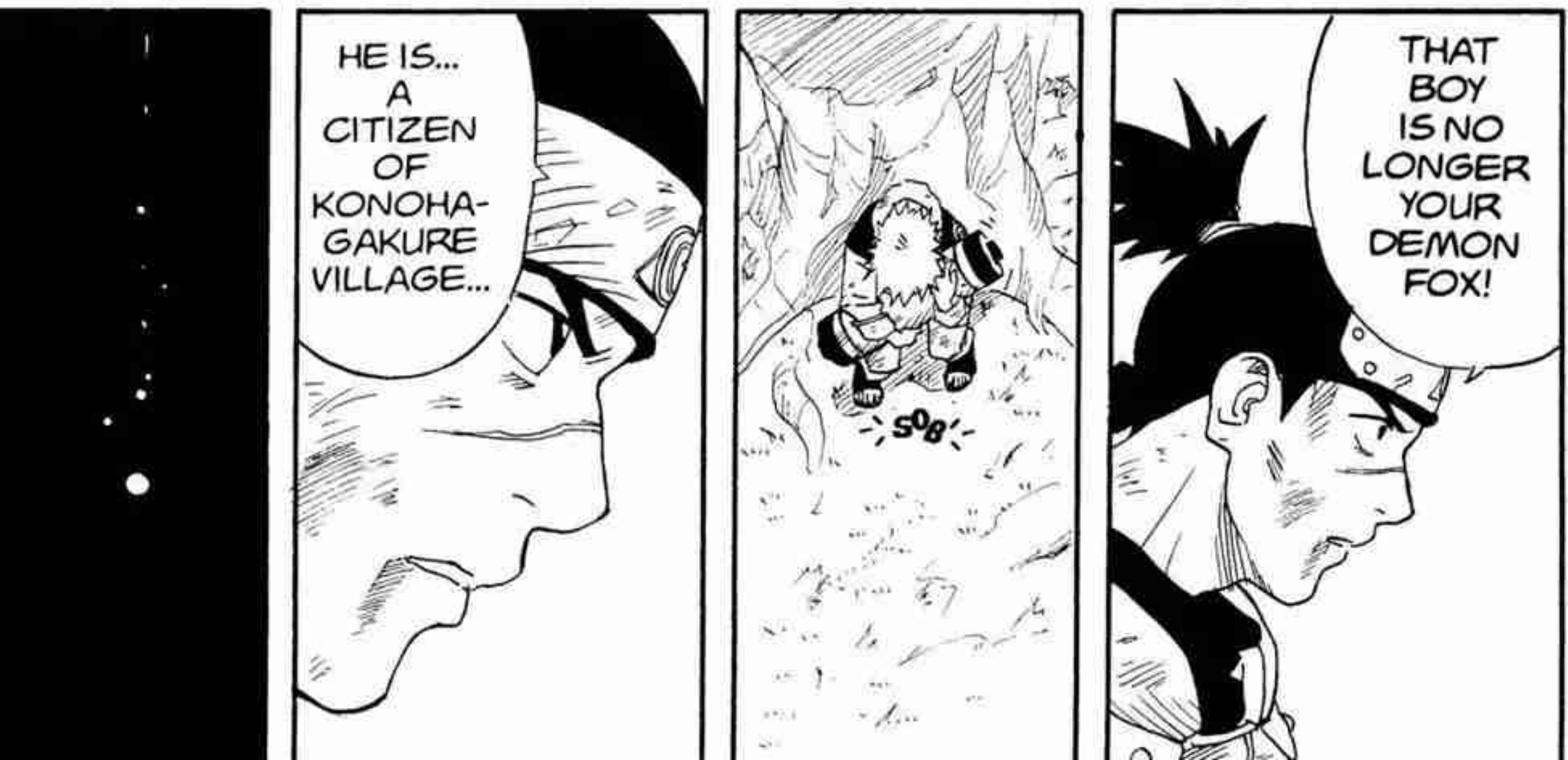
FOR
HIM,
I
HAVE
NOTHING
BUT
RESPECT.



AND IT'S
GIVEN HIM
EMPATHY.
HE KNOWS
WHAT IT
IS TO
BE IN
PAIN.

BUT
SOMETIMES,
EVEN SO,
HE'S AWKWARD,
CLUMSY...
A SCREW-UP...
PEOPLE
HAVE MOCKED
AND
SHUNNED HIM...

...HE
WORKS
WITH
ALL
HIS
MIGHT...

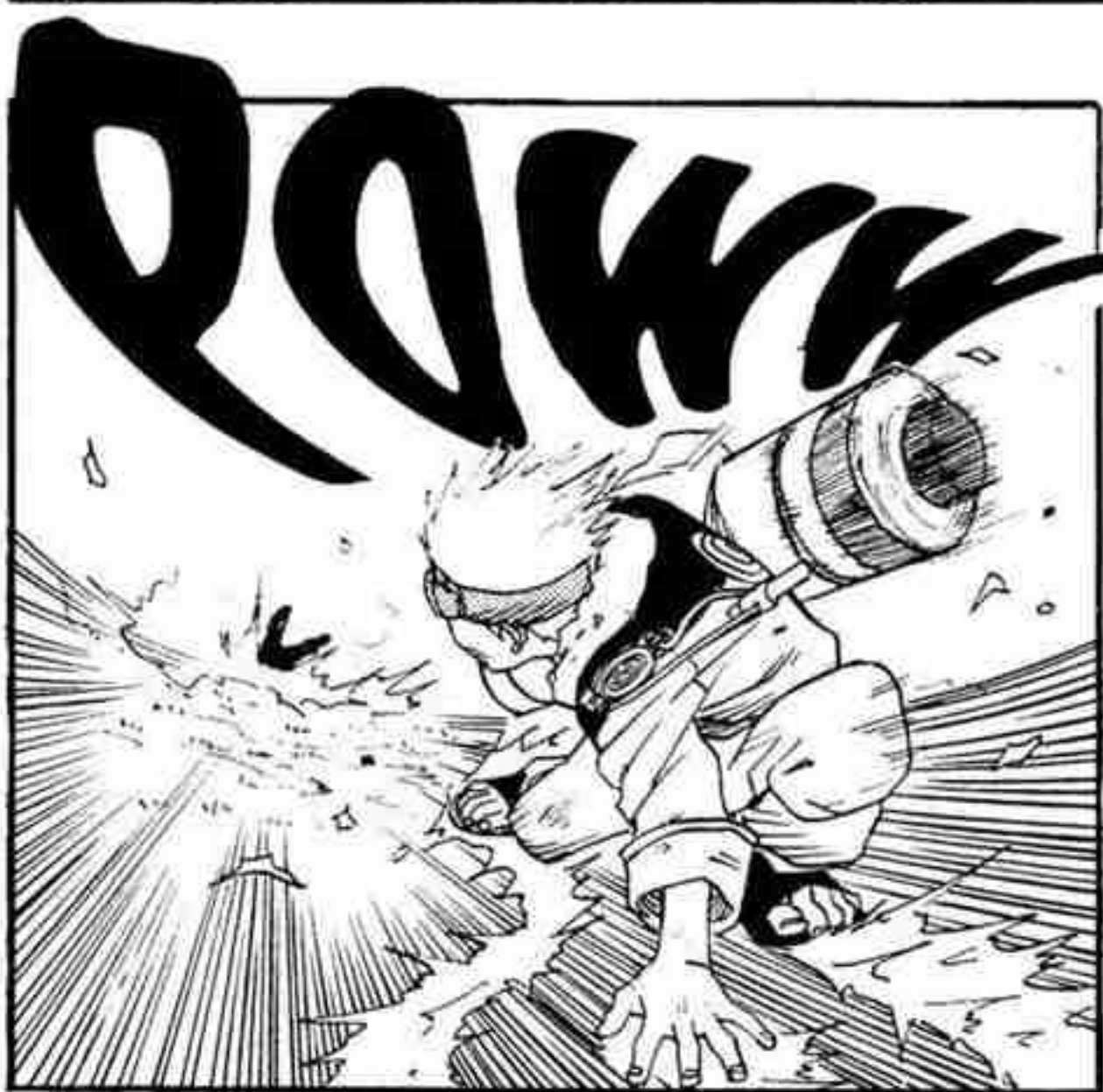
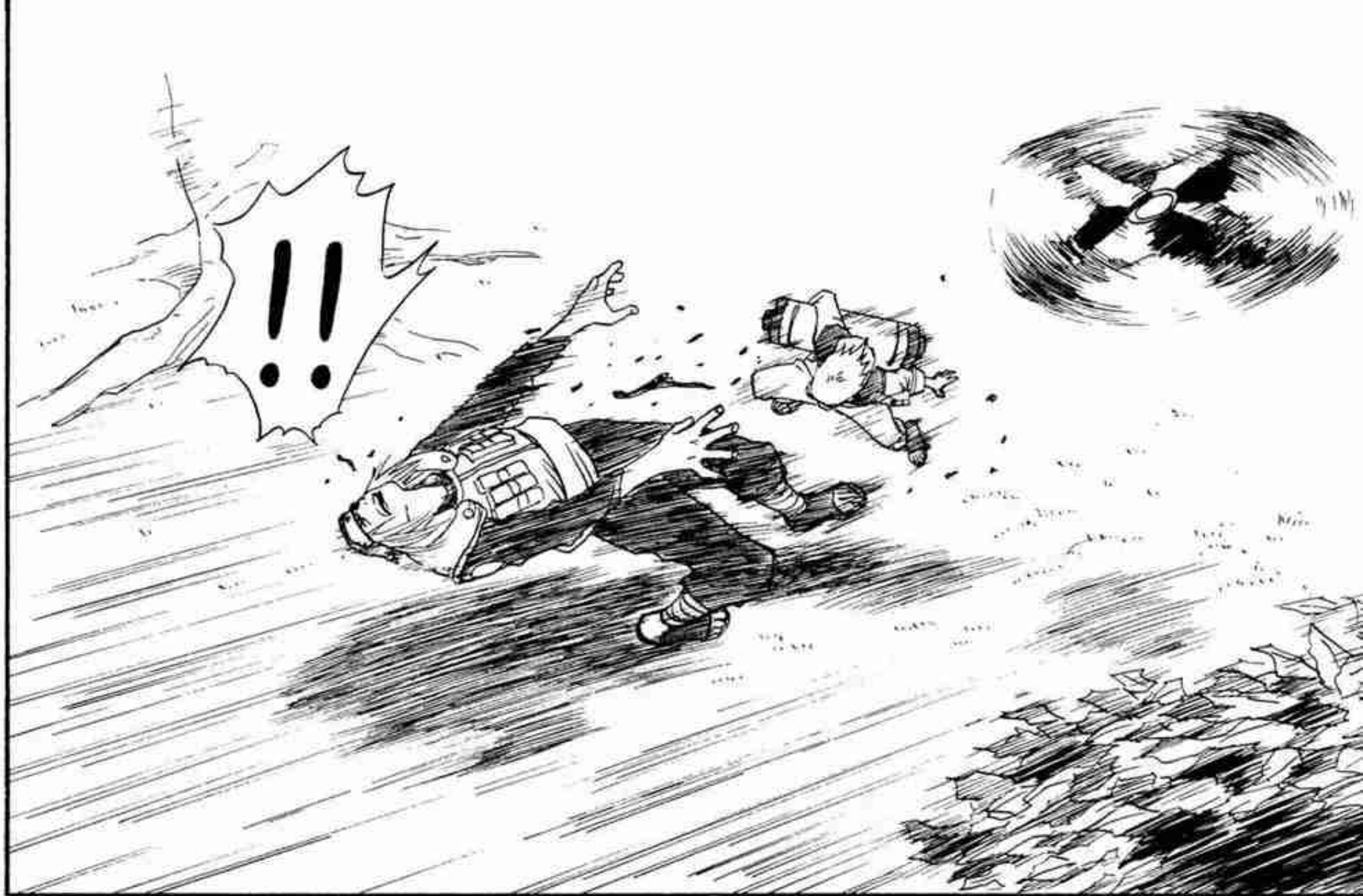


HE IS...
A
CITIZEN
OF
KONOHA-
GAKURE
VILLAGE...

THAT
BOY
IS NO
LONGER
YOUR
DEMON
FOX!







READ
THIS
WAY

GET
OUT OF
HERE!
SAVE
YOUR-
SELF!!

STUPID
KID...
SHOULD
HAVE
STAYED...
AWAY!!

...OR
I'LL
KILL
YOU!

KEEP
AWAY
FROM
MASTER
IRUKA...

LOUDMOUTH
BRAT!!
I CAN
KILL
YOU
WITH
ONE
BLOW!!

TAP

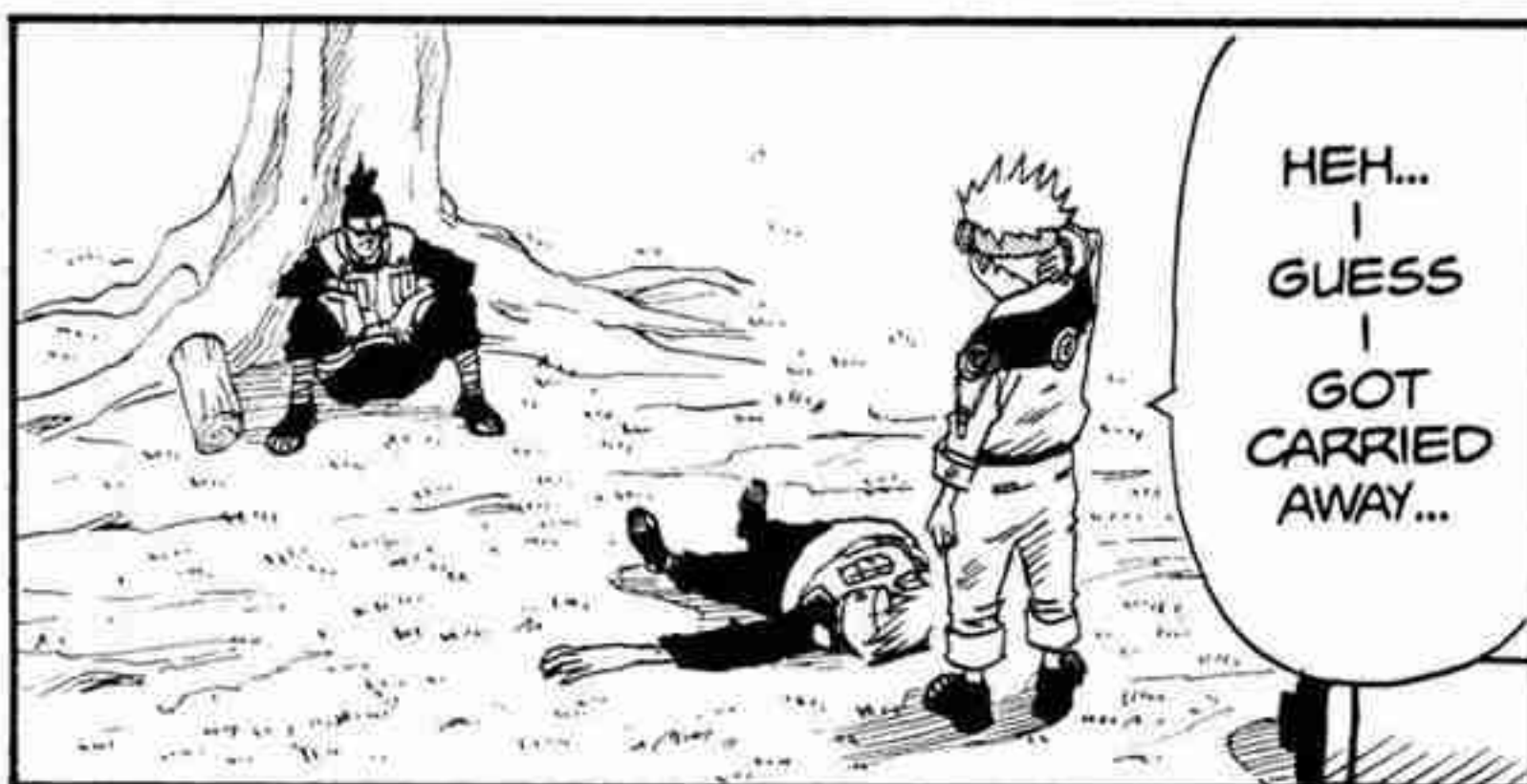
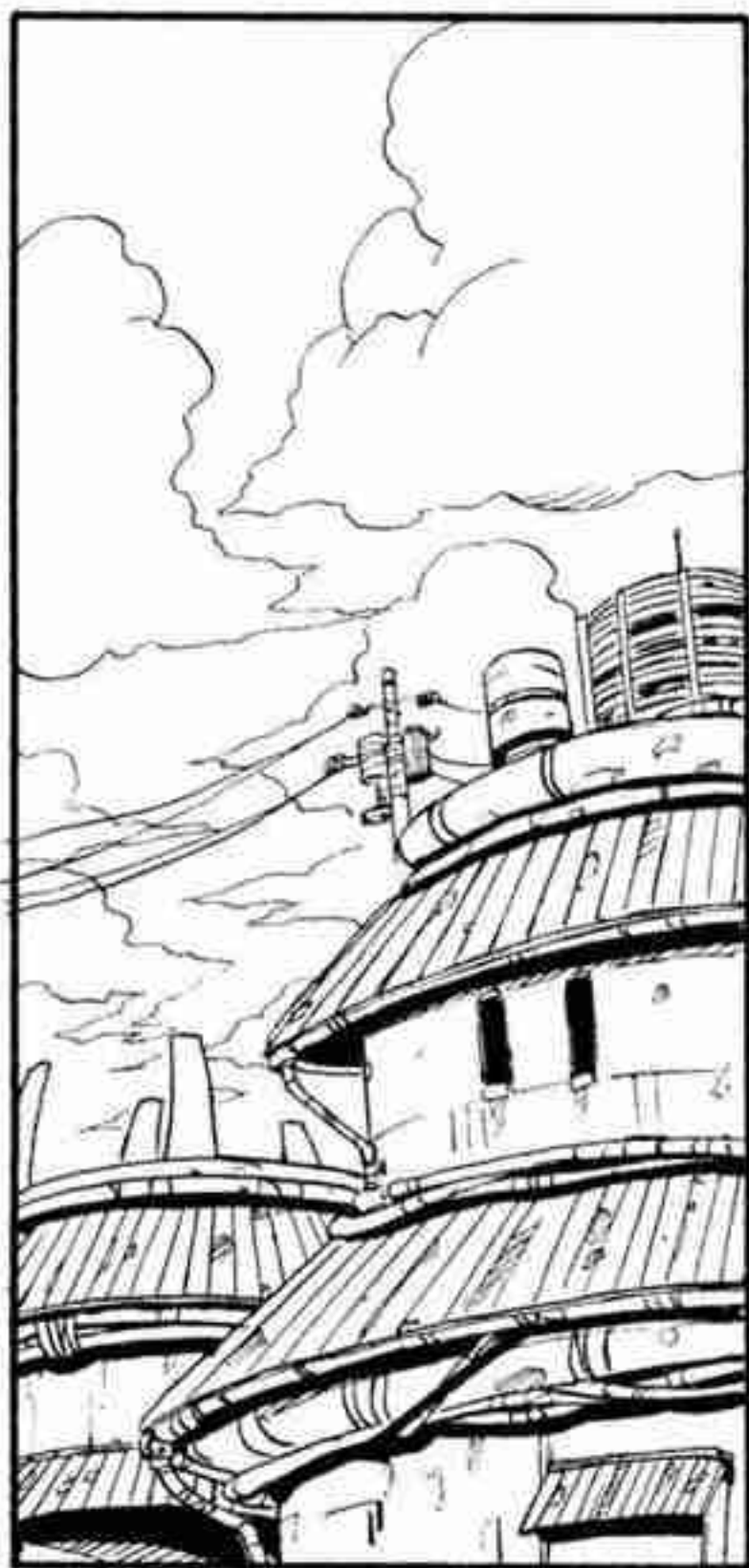
BRING IT
ON, YOU
JERK!
ANYTHING
YOU THROW
AT ME I'LL
GIVE BACK
TIMES A
THOUSAND!

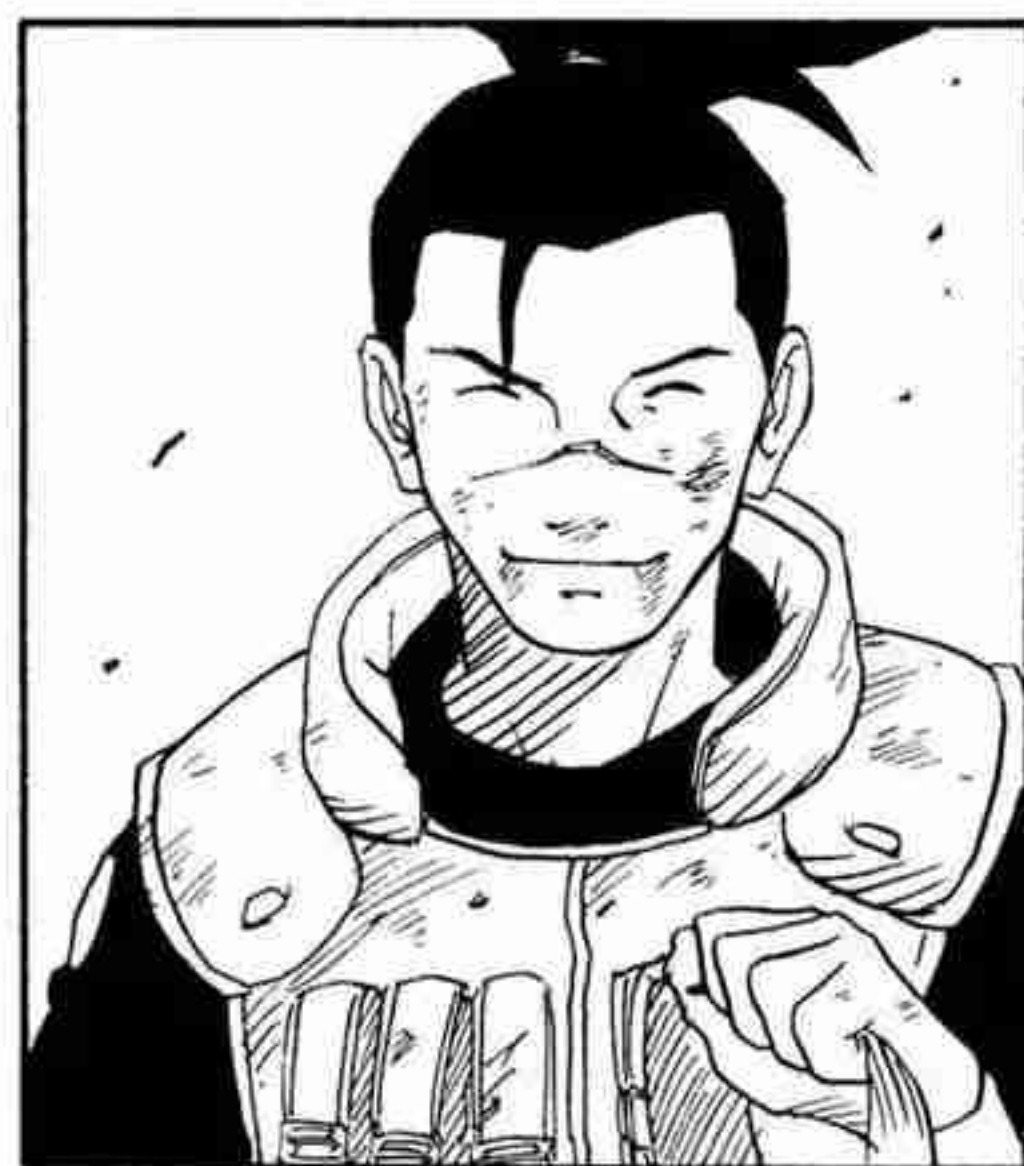
YOU'RE
WELCOME
TO TRY,
LITTLE
FOX!

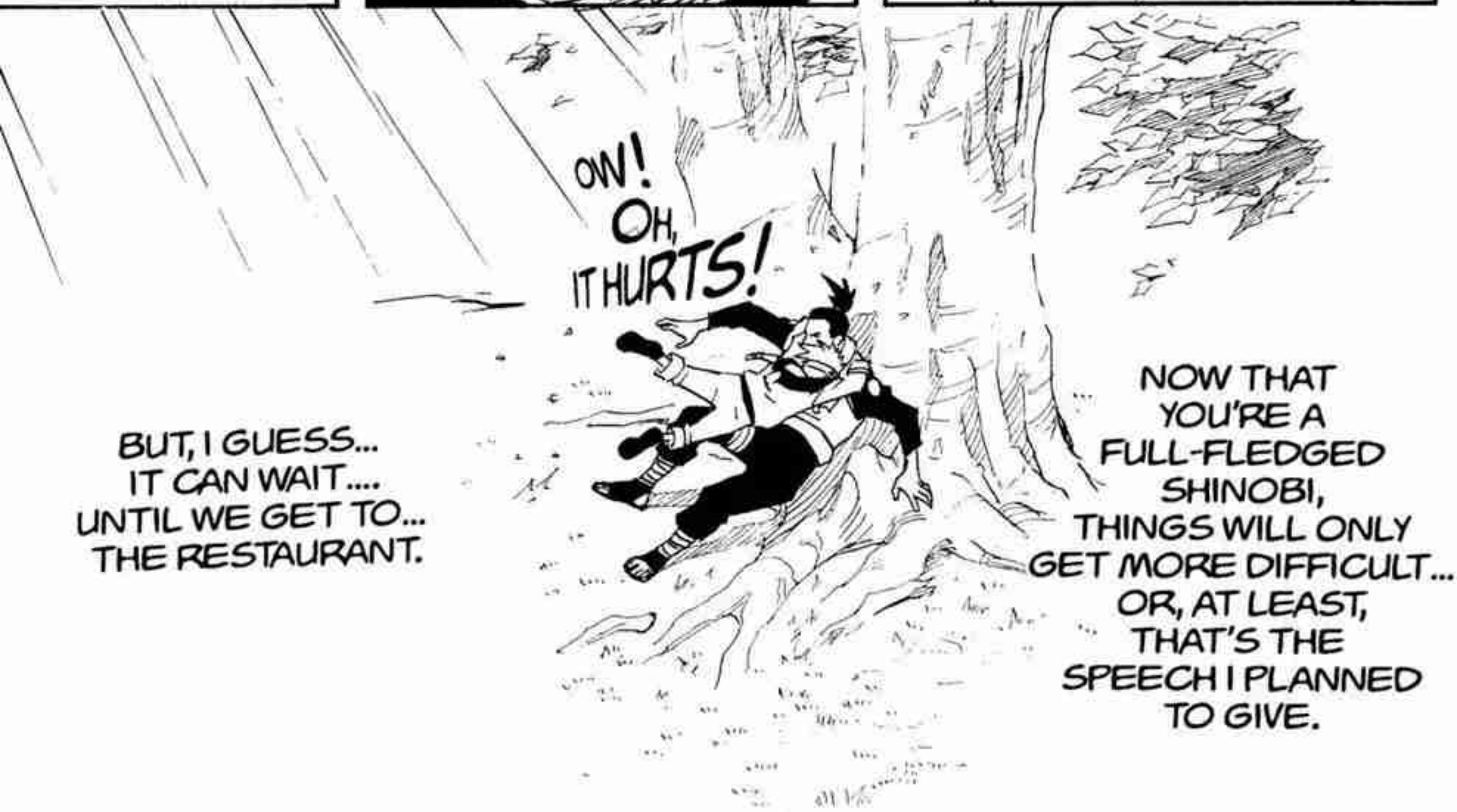














This is the very first sketch of Naruto that I drew. It was for a one-shot story in the Japanese *Weekly Shonen Jump*'s special seasonal edition, *Akamaru Jump*. Notice that he wears boots instead of *zori* (traditional Japanese sandals).

In the one-shot story, *Naruto* wasn't a ninja comic at all, but just about magic and sorcery. Even though the setup was completely different from the current storyline, it was the very first character-driven manga that I ever drew, and I liked the character so I decided to keep using him. But drawing the goggles each time was a pain! That's why I came up with the idea for the ninja *hitai-ate* (headband).