

= Gaara =

Gaara (???) is a fictional character in the Naruto manga and anime series created by Masashi Kishimoto . Kishimoto designed Gaara as a foil to the series ' eponymous character , Naruto Uzumaki , as the two were born through similar circumstances , but develop vastly different personalities as troubled upbringing . Initially introduced as an antagonist , Gaara is a shinobi affiliated with Sunagakure , and is the son of Sunagakure 's leader , the Fourth Kazekage . He was born a demon 's host as part of his father 's intention to have a weapon to restore their village . However , a combination of being ostracized by the Sunagakure villagers , his early inability to control the Tailed Beast , and the notion that his deceased mother called him her curse on the village caused Gaara to become a ruthless killer who believes his own purpose is to kill his enemies . It is only after meeting Naruto Uzumaki that Gaara earns a change of perspective as he eventually becomes Sunagakure 's Fifth Kazekage and gains acceptance by his people .

Gaara has appeared in several pieces of Naruto media , including two of the featured films in the series , the third original video animation , and several video games . Numerous anime and manga publications have commented on Gaara 's character . IGN labeled the disparity between Naruto and Gaara as " emotional " and " a tad creepy " . Anime News Network called Naruto 's fight against Gaara the high point of the entire series . Among the Naruto reader base , Gaara has been popular , placing high in several popularity polls , and always making it to the top ten characters . Numerous pieces of merchandise have been released in Gaara 's likeness , including plush dolls , key chains and action figures .

= = Creation and conception = =

Naruto author Masashi Kishimoto created Gaara as a foil to the series ' protagonist , Naruto Uzumaki . He and Naruto have a similar background : he was rejected by his peers and fellow villagers for being the host of a tailed beast , Shukaku , a situation that Kishimoto describes as " very much like Naruto 's " . Gaara 's development from this state into a highly withdrawn , sadistic character was intended to induce sympathy for him from readers , as it was contrasted against Naruto 's development into a cheerful troublemaker . Additionally , his design was designed to look like the Tanuki since Kishimoto thought that it would make him a good rival for Naruto 's Nine @-@ tailed Demon Fox since several parts from the Shukaku were considered by Kishimoto to be opposite ones from the Demon Fox . Gaara 's backstory became one of Kishimoto 's favorite stories from Part I ; Kishimoto had to revise his illustrations in such chapters in as he wanted readers to understand more Gaara 's mental state .

Gaara 's initial attire , along with the costumes of his siblings , was difficult for Kishimoto to draw on a weekly basis . Because of this , Kishimoto gave the three of them simpler costumes towards the end of Part I ; Gaara received an outfit with an upright collar . In addition to being easier to draw , it was used to demonstrate the change in relationship between Gaara and Naruto following their previous fight . Kishimoto cites The Matrix , one of his favorite movies , as an inspiration for Gaara 's new costume , and he considers it to be his favorite costume of the three siblings .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In Naruto = = =

Before he was born , Gaara 's father , the Fourth Kazekage Rasa , had Chiyo make Gaara into the Jinchuriki for the tailed beast Shukaku the One Tail (????? , Ichibi no Shukaku , English TV : " Shukaku the Sand Spirit ") while he was still in his mother 's womb before she died giving birth to him . Though believed at the time to be Shukaku 's power in action , Gaara can manipulate sand , which subconsciously protects him . Rasa intended to use Gaara as the village 's personal weapon , but Shukaku 's bloodlust proved too much for Gaara as he suffered night terrors brought about by

the tailed beast 's influence . With Gaara 's sand adding to his inability to control Shukaku , the boy became feared to the point his father decided to have him assassinated . After his maternal uncle (who was the only person that Gaara thought cared for him) tried to finish that very job in an attempted murder @-@ suicide , Gaara adopted the belief that he could only rely upon himself and Shukaku , and that he had to kill others in order to confirm the value of his own existence . He thus became narcissistic , even permanently scarring his left temple with the kanji for " love " (? , ai) for his new drive .

Gaara first appears in the series when he is sent to Konohagakure , an allied ninja village , to take part in the Chunin Exams alongside his older siblings Kankuro and Temari . In truth , he is sent in order to infiltrate Konohagakure in preparation for an invasion by Sunagakure and its ally , Otogakure . There , he and his teammates and older siblings , Kankuro and Temari , easily pass both the first and second phases . In the third phase , Gaara is set to fight against Rock Lee . Lee is able to pass Gaara 's defenses , provoking an enraged Gaara into breaking Lee 's arm and leg , claiming victory . During the one @-@ month training period , he kills several other genin who make attempts on his life . He also tries to kill a hospitalized Lee , but is stopped by Naruto Uzumaki and Shikamaru Nara ; he reveals his past to the two boys , causing Naruto to sympathize with their similar backgrounds . He later fights Sasuke Uchiha in the finals of the Chunin Exams . Sasuke manages to give Gaara the first injury he has ever received , causing Gaara to suffer a mental breakdown and nearly manifest his jinchuriki powers . This begins the invasion , with his older siblings carrying him off as he could not participate in his current state of mind . But when Sasuke pursues him , Gaara 's Jinchuriki powers take effect as he manages to defeat Sasuke . Naruto then arrives , however , and defeats him . Seeing that Naruto 's outlook on reaching out to people with love is making him more powerful than himself , Gaara is redeemed . Later , Sunagakure sends Gaara to help in preventing Sasuke from defecting to Otogakure , which became enemy of Sunagakure once learning that Orochimaru murdered Rasa prior to the attack . While he is able to help Rock Lee fight Kimimaro , Gaara is unable to prevent Sasuke from escaping . He makes amends with the many characters he had alienated , apologizing to those he hurt and improving his relationship with his family . At the same time , Gaara 's fundamental characteristic becomes the desire to protect as many people as he can , as in doing so he believes , like Naruto , he will be able to find true strength . This culminates in his replacing his father as the Fifth Kazekage during Part II of the series .

In Part II of the series , three years after the failed attempt to retrieve Sasuke , Deidara , a member of the criminal organization Akatsuki , is sent to Sunagakure to capture Gaara . Gaara fights Deidara to protect the village , but Deidara manages to capture Gaara by destroying a large portion of the village , then tricking Gaara and catching him in an explosion . The members of the Akatsuki then kidnap him and extract Shukaku from his body . Gaara dies in the process , his body being recovered by Naruto and Kakashi Hatake . Naruto weeps over Gaara 's life , provoking Chiyo into sacrificing her own life to revive Gaara after coming to acknowledge Naruto and Sakura Haruno 's resolve .

Sometime later , he goes to the Five Kage Summit , where the Akatsuki 's leader Tobi , claiming to be Madara Uchiha , breaks into the meeting and announces the Fourth Great Ninja War to capture the last two Tailed @-@ Beasts . Sasuke , now a member of the Akatsuki , arrives there as well , intending to kill the de facto Hokage , Danzo . Sasuke engages the Raikage in conflict , but Gaara intervenes and tries to reason with Sasuke much like Naruto did with him . Sasuke refuses , and under Kankuro and Temari 's persuasion , Gaara reluctantly attacks him before Tobi spirits Sasuke away . Soon after , Gaara attempts to convince Naruto that Sasuke is beyond saving but decides to let him do what he must as Sasuke 's friend while rejuvenating Naruto 's spirits . Gaara later joins the new Shinobi Alliance as its field commander to protect Naruto and Killer Bee , using Naruto 's philosophy of love and the Akatsuki 's philosophy of hatred to unite the army when it nearly imploded from internal conflict . On the second day of the war , Gaara encounters his reanimated father , who is shocked by his development . Rasa reveals the truth to Gaara that his uncle 's final action were his doing and that the truth that Gaara 's mother always loved him , moving Gaara to tears after learning his mother 's will is the force behind his sand . Rasa recognizes his son has

surpassed him and entrusts Sunagakure to him after being defeated . Gaara later defeats and seals the revived Second Mizukage and joins the rest of the five Kage to fight the real Madara Uchiha who was reanimated by Kabuto , nearly getting killed as a result . Later healed by Tsunade with Orochimaru 's help , Gaara departs with the other Kage to site of their side 's battle with Madara and Obito . There , after using his former Jinchuriki status to free him , Gaara is reunited with Shukaku as they assist Naruto and the other tailed beasts against Madara . Before watching him be absorbed by the Gedo Statue again , Gaara manages to make his peace with Shukaku while thanking the tailed beast for ensuring that he would meet Naruto . Gaara then witnesses the Nine @-@ Tails get extracted from Naruto , and desperately brings him to Sakura . They take him to Minato Namikaze and Gaara holds off Madara before Might Guy takes over prior Naruto being successfully revived . Once the Infinite Tsukiyomi is activated , Gaara is caught in the illusion of being with his entire family and Naruto as his friend before being freed by Naruto and Sasuke . By the series epilogue , having the Hidden Leaf Village 's Nara Clan as in @-@ laws through Temari , Gaara remains active as the Kazekage . In Boruto : Naruto the Movie , Gaara and the other Kage attend the Chunin exam in Konoha before they engage in combat against Momoshiki and Kinshiki in a rescue mission after Naruto was kidnapped .

= = = Appearances in other media = = =

Gaara has made several appearances outside of the Naruto anime and manga . He is present in the second and sixth Naruto feature films , Naruto the Movie 2 : Legend of the Stone of Gelel and Naruto Shippuden the Movie : The Will of Fire . In the former , he protects the Land of Wind from an assault by Haido , the antagonist of the film , and later battles the lightning user Ranke , one of Haido 's subordinates , and defeats her , while in the latter , he temporarily becomes enemies of Konohagakure as they are the prime suspect of a pitfall attack on him while he is about to attend a meeting with Tsunade , in reality being done by a missing nin , Hiruko , and briefly battles Naruto , although after the confusion is cleared , he allies himself with them again . Gaara is also present in the third original video animation released in the series , in which he participates in a tournament of various characters from across the series . Naruto video games commonly feature Gaara , including the Clash of Ninja and Ultimate Ninja series . In some games , he uses his Shukaku form for combat , as well as other moves not seen in the anime or manga . Naruto Shipp?den : Gekitou Ninja Taisen EX marks the first appearance of Gaara in his Part II appearance in a video game . An upcoming light novel titled Gaara Hiden will focus on the character .

= = Reception = =

Gaara has ranked highly in the popularity polls for the series , continuously placing in the top ten . The last such poll was in 2011 , in which Gaara was in 4th place . Several pieces of Gaara merchandise has been released ; including key chains , plush dolls and action figures of his Part I and Part II appearance . AnimeCentral listed him as eighth best villain in anime with comments focused on how flashbacks made him a tragic character and at the same time similar to Naruto Uzumaki . Additionally , his fight against Rock Lee was listed as the second best one in anime for exchanges in moves and its conclusion .

Anime and manga publications have mostly praised Gaara 's character . IGN noted that Gaara was an " anti @-@ Naruto " , possessing a " dark , solemn character " as opposed to Naruto 's continuous cheer and excitement . In another review , IGN also called Gaara 's background " emotional " and " a tad creepy " due to the disparity between the development of Naruto 's and Gaara 's personalities . Anime News Network celebrated the " depth and emotion " that Naruto 's and Gaara 's similarities added to the plot , and commented that " nowhere in the entire series run does Naruto shine brighter than in the peak period of his battle against Gaara " . They also complimented Kishimoto 's visual presentation of Gaara in the manga , referring to " chilling [glimpses] of Gaara 's crazed , exposed face " . Mania Entertainment noted that Gaara and Sasuke 's first fight shows how the former has a " fragile " psyche despite his violent attitude . His backstory

was also praised by Mania Entertainment since it includes " a ton of legitimate emotion " allowing viewers from the series to understand more Gaara 's personality . Liam O 'Brien , Gaara 's voice actor in the English dubbed version of the anime , has been praised . IGN noted that he did an " excellent job " of making Gaara sound terrifying to the viewer , and Anime News Network noted him as one of the best voice actors in the series .

Gaara 's promotion to leader from Sunagakure in Part II of the series was deemed as the most surprising development in the series by Briana Lawrence from Mania Entertainment . UK Anime Network 's Kevin Leathers stated that while in the first part of the series , Gaara was a fearsome villain , in the following one he became " much more three @-@ dimensional . " Similarly , Todd Douglass Jr. from DVD Talk praised Gaara 's development in later episodes from *Naruto : Shippuden* owing to his relationship 's expansion with Naruto . His fight against Deidara has also received positive response , with critics poiting the revisit of Gaara 's popular moves and the strategy both fighters employed .