

## A Wreath for a Lonely Soul

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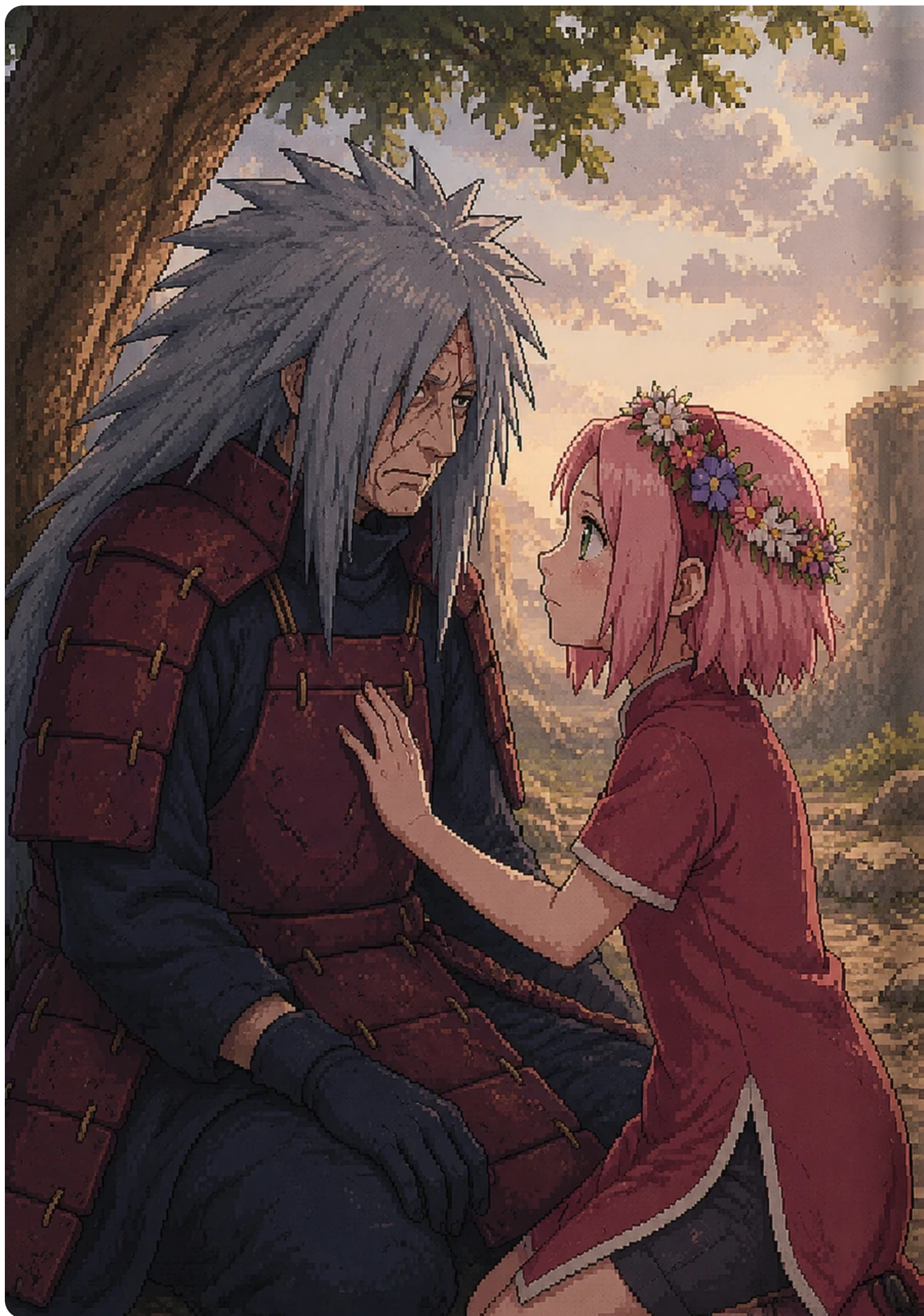
Sakura opened her eyes with a soft cry, finding herself as an ordinary baby in Konoha Village. She had no memories of a past life, no knowledge of clans, chakra, or what the future held. She was simply a little girl born to ordinary parents, named Sakura Haruno.



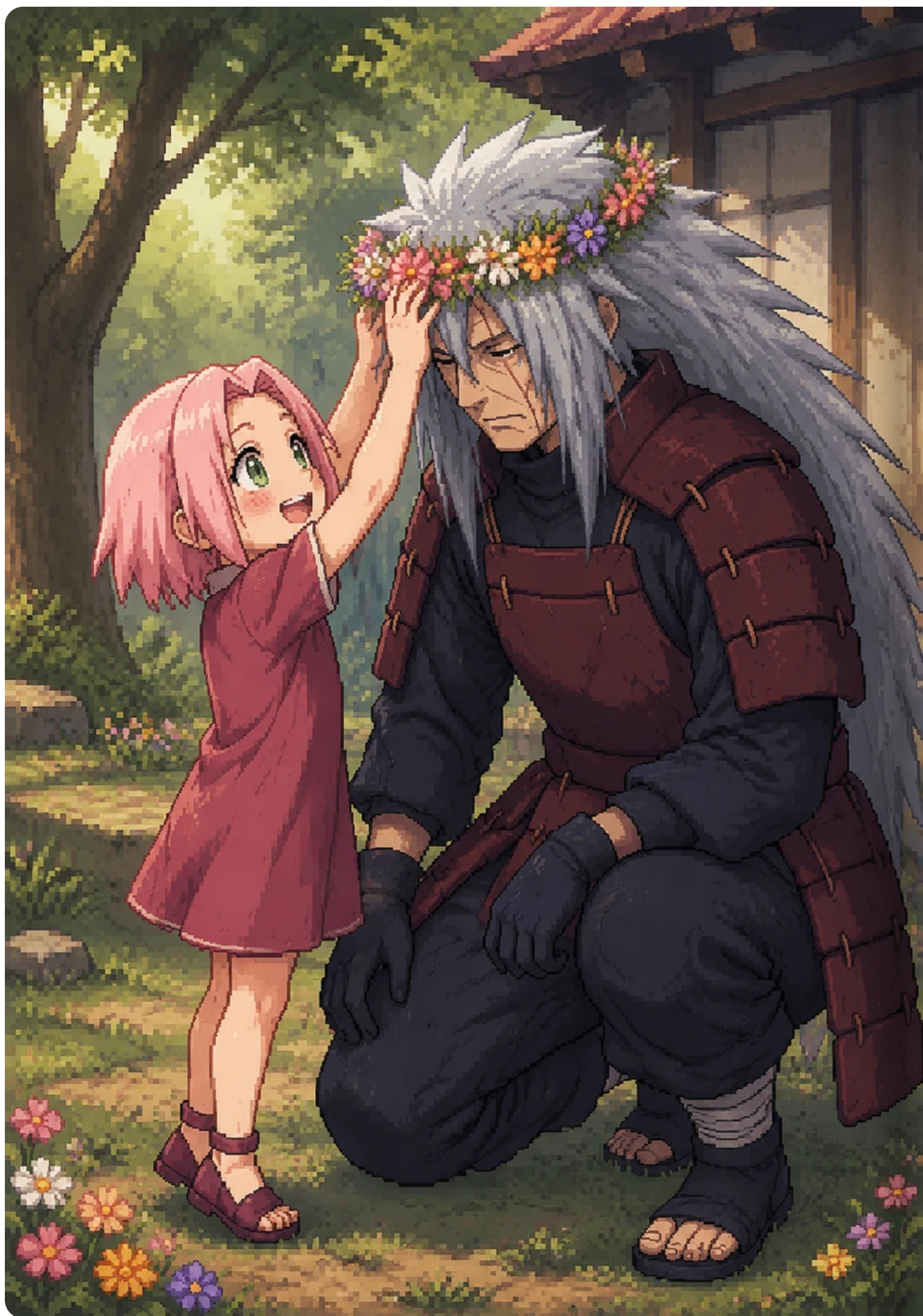
Five years later, on a beautifully warm spring day, the sun gently illuminated the trees while the wind played with falling cherry blossom petals. Near a quiet river, little Sakura sat on the green grass, carefully weaving a bright and colorful wreath from fresh wildflowers.



With a proud smile, Sakura held up her slightly crooked but vibrant creation and ran happily along the riverbank. Suddenly, she stopped in her tracks as she noticed a tall, broad-shouldered elderly man sitting quietly beneath the shade of an old tree.



The old man had long gray hair falling over his shoulders and deep wrinkles carved into a face that carried a profound, ancient exhaustion. Sakura approached him slowly, looking straight into his eyes with pure empathy, completely free of fear, hatred, or mere curiosity.



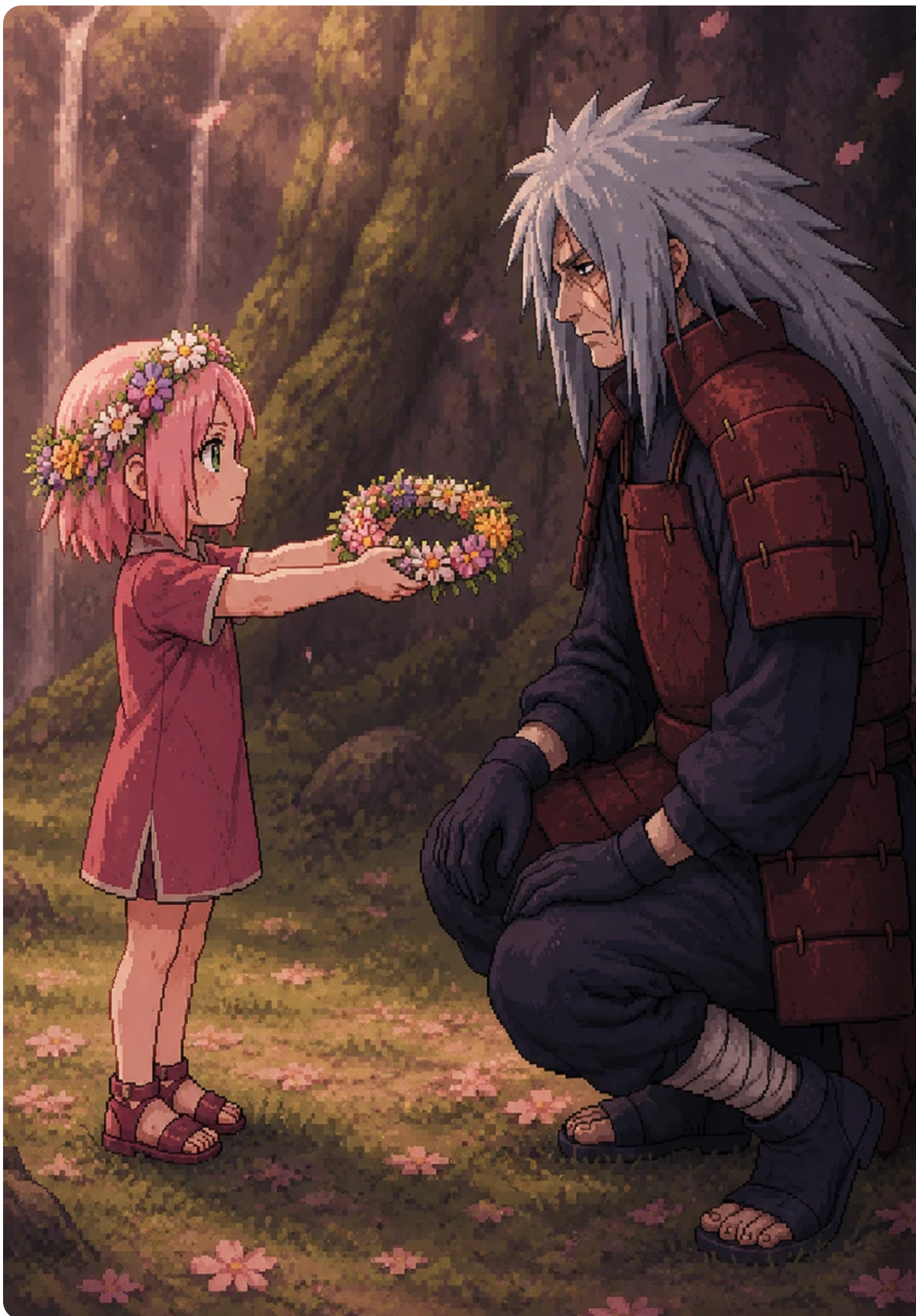
Stepping closer without asking for permission, Sakura stood on her tiptoes and gently placed the colorful wildflower wreath onto his head. The bright petals looked beautifully out of place nestled among his long, silver hair, and the little girl beamed with a wide smile.



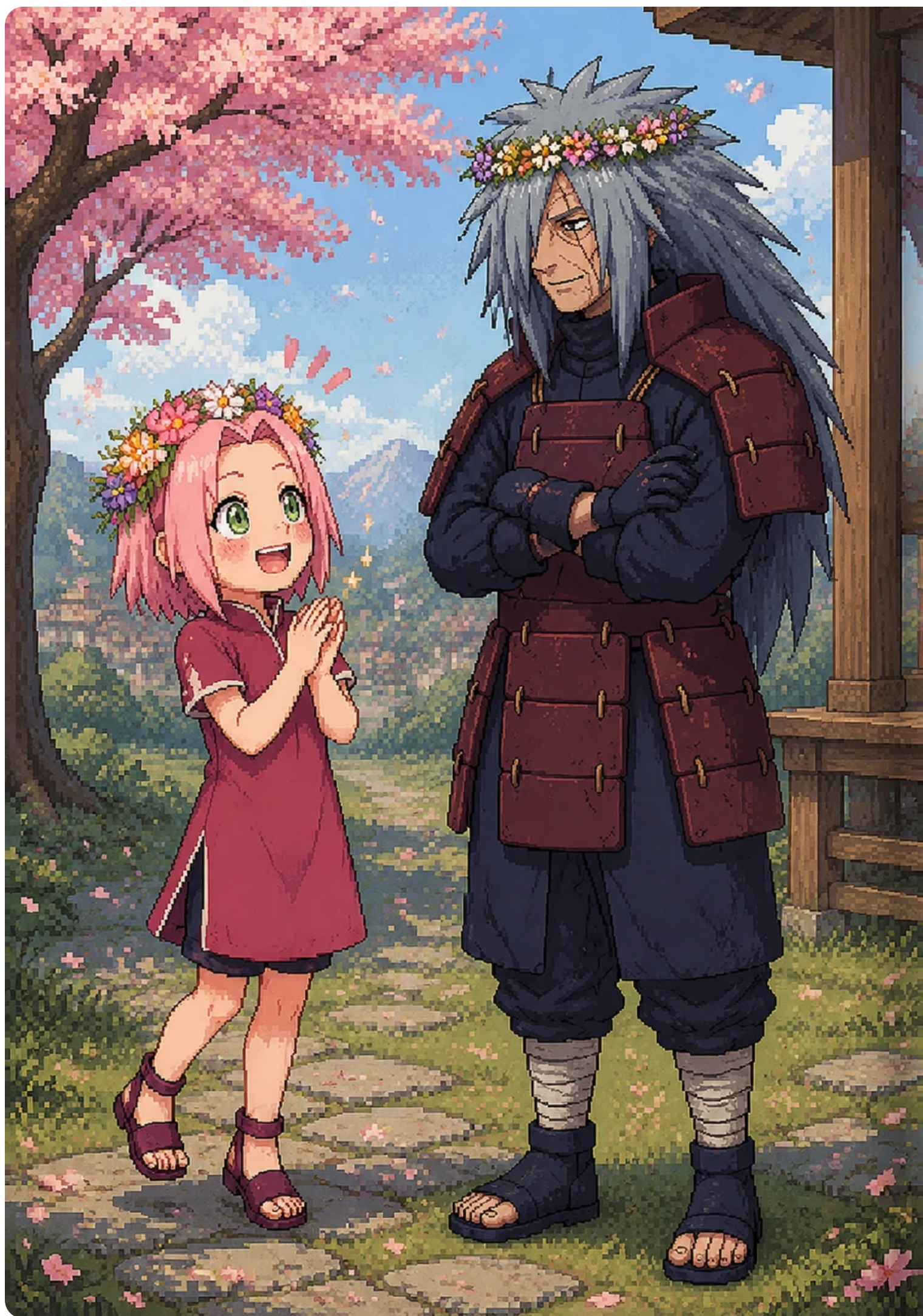
The man, who was actually the legendary Madara Uchiha, froze in absolute shock as he slowly raised a hand to touch the flowers. For decades, the world believed him dead, and absolutely no one had touched him with such pure, innocent kindness without fearing him or wanting something in return.



Looking down at the little girl, Madara softly asked if she was not afraid of him, explaining that everyone else feared him because he was scary. Sakura blinked in surprise, tilted her head, and walked completely around him, carefully inspecting his face from every angle.



With a serious expression, Sakura declared that he wasn't scary at all because truly scary people do not look so deeply sad. She explained that her mother taught her to give something beautiful to anyone who feels sad, which was why the wreath belonged to him now.



For the first time in many decades, the corners of Madara's lips twitched slightly into a faint, genuine smile. Seeing this, Sakura clapped her hands joyfully, exclaiming that she was right and that he looked much better when he smiled.



When Madara asked for her name, she happily introduced herself as Sakura Haruno, and he nodded, promising to remember it. In that quiet moment by the river, an extraordinary bond born of the heart began to change both of their destinies forever.