

Evening Feelings

Von Atemue

Kapitel 1:

Title: Evening Feelings

Part: 1/2

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Warnings: little sad, little humor, sappy

Pairings: Sasuke+Naruto

Archive:

- <http://www.yaoi.de>

Feedback: Please, yes, I love critics! =^^=

Comment: When I started to write this story, Naruto Shippuuden just started in Japan, therefore I was not aware of what direction Sasuke would take. In other words, this story is a 'what if' – idea taking place two years after the fight between Naruto and Sasuke.

Summary: Every five years, since the fox demon was banned, a victory celebrations takes place in the little Leaf village. It is a time for friends and families to celebrate, but Naruto and Sasuke don't want to go to the festival. However Kakashi has his special methods to change their mind. Still no one can change Naruto's decision of the way how he will visit the festival.

Disclaimer: Nothing is mine, I don't own money with it and write only for fun and to get better in English writing. ^__^

And not to forget, much thanks to Deb and Lee-Ann for betareading.

"..." = Speaking

/.../ = Thoughts

#flashback#

Translations:

Genin = under class ninja (Cadets)

Chuunin = middle class ninja (Commoners)

Jounin = full ninja (Elite)

On one of the hidden ways to Konohagakure four people were slowly walking their way towards the ninja village. The man at the front was a Jounin and fully busy with reading the little book he held in his hands. Following were two boys about fifteen, both in the rank of a Chuunin. The first one had black hair and a bored look at his face. He steadied the second boy, a blond one with sparkling eyes and a look full of life and a mischief on his face. The last one was the only girl of the group and in the rank of a Chuunin as well. On first looks she seemed as tired and dirty as her other two comrades. Her light pink, nearly shoulder length hair was dishevelled, but her movements were excited and she was busy quietly singing a happy melody.

The three men had been silently listening to her singing, which was not bad. But now when they nearly reached their destination, the blond boy finally released himself from the hold of his comrade and turned around to the happy looking girl.

"Oi, Sakura-chan, why are you so happy since we started our journey home?" he asked and stopped walking. The girl stopped as well and smiled wildly at her friend.

"Because we are in time to the great festival which will start tomorrow, of course," she answered excited. "And my cousin will play the main role in the kabuki theatre in the evening, isn't that great?"

The blond boy glanced at his dark haired comrade in confusion, but that one only shook his shoulders. He either didn't have a clue what the girl was talking about. Therefore the blond turned around again to face the girl.

"Uhm, and what festival do we celebrate tomorrow?" he asked a little unsure. Sakura eyes widened lightly in shock.

"Naruto, you want to say that you don't know?" she shouted in surprise. "And you either, Sasuke? I thought that at last you would remember."

"Remember what?" the youngest and second last member of the famous Uchiha clan demanded to know in an irritated voice.

"The 15-year victory celebration in remembrance of the fourth Hokage," Sakura answered as if it was the most natural thing in the world. For a moment, Sasuke's eyes lightened up in understanding. Then he had his normally stoic look on his face again. But what the girl surprised the most was the reaction of Uzumaki Naruto, the third member of their little Chuunin group.

"Oh that," he muttered, "'great' already another five years gone, huh? And now they celebrate again the big victory of the 'great' hero, who banned the fox demon, 'thank you very much'!"

Sakura couldn't understand most of the words, but she heard the hint of bitterness in his voice and glanced at the blond boy. She was surprised to find none of his typical, excitements in his face. Instead Naruto's eyes were slits and there was a sore, angry look.

At the same time, their former teacher and mentor, Hatake Kakashi, who had been listening to the conversation of his now fellow shinobi silently, stopped walking at Sakura's last explanation and turned around to his young Chuunin.

"Ah yes, I remember, the traditional celebration we have all five years, will be tomorrow," he said and the three young people could see the hidden smile under his mask. "I nearly forgot this, if you hadn't reminded me, Sakura. This feast was always a good reason for all the families to come together and have a wonderful great day. As you may know from experience, ninjas are very busy. There isn't much time for the family to see each other. This is why the five-years-celebration was also declared as a family day."

Sakura nodded eagerly at the words of her former teacher.

"Yes, my mom told me the same and I'll see my grandfather and my cousins tomorrow again for the first time in a long while. Everyone is so nice, I love them very much, but I haven't had a chance to see them for some time. I am sure this will be a great day."

Her eyes sparkled with untypical excitement. Usually Sakura wasn't the one who behaved so overexcited, that was Naruto's position. But the knowledge of seeing her whole family again after such a long time caused her to lose focus on everything else and she also didn't notice the not so happy looks on the faces of her two team-mates.

Naruto and Sasuke were both orphans, so why should they look forward to a family celebration when there was no family left they could celebrate with? And while for Sasuke the reminder of the fest also meant painful memories of the one and only time he visited the festival together with his family when he was five years old, in Naruto's case there was even much more than just the fact that he never had a family to celebrate the festival with.

While Sakura was busy talking about every single family member, Kakashi observed the two boys carefully. Naruto had already overcome the sullenness, he had felt before and listened lightly interested to the girls talk about her family. Sasuke showed no expression at all, like usual.

Then they finally arrived the village, Sakura waved a happy goodbye to her friends and ran home. Sasuke and Naruto wanted to go home as well but Kakashi hold them back.

"Before you two leave as well, I have to inform you about something," he explained. Sasuke lifted an eyebrow and Naruto looked confused.

"And what should that be?" the blond boy asked.

"Well," under his mask the Jounin smiled softly at the boys, "two weeks ago I had a talk with Iruka, your former teacher, about the feast. We both know that you are without family and that's not a great thing for a family day, of course. Therefore we already decided that we as your caretaker will take you out to the feast tomorrow night. Please make sure that you have the right kimonos to wear for such an event."

Sasuke and Naruto were both too stunned to retort something immediately and they glanced at each other before they looked back to their former teacher.

"No way!" they both declared at the same time.

"I will not attend the feast," Naruto added in a stubborn voice. "The offer is very nice, thank you very much, but I don't feel like going."

"I don't like to go," Sasuke declared as well in the same stubborn voice. The Jounin sighed a little and then started to smile. The two boys were immediately alarmed, because they knew that smile very well. It promised trouble, a lot of trouble for both of them.

"Well, if you two don't want to attend the festival," Kakashi started, with his smile still present, "you two will get extra lessons for training. The exams for becoming a Jounin are moving closer and maybe you two prefer to train till the end of the festival for that?"

Sasuke stayed silent and did not change a single muscle, while Naruto's eyes widened in horror.

"You mean you want us to train from morning till the end of the great fireworks after midnight? And just a second, you are not our teacher anymore! You can't order us to train as you used to do back when we were Genin!"

Kakashi just nodded and his eyes glowed with mirth.

"That's exactly what I had in mind," the Jounin declared. "And don't worry about me no longer being your teacher. I think Tsunade-sama would be happy to declare this training as your latest mission for me. After all, doesn't she still have something to get you back for after the latest prank you've put on her?"

Being reminded of the Fifth Hokage's last outburst of temper after he pranked her as a good bye gesture before leaving for his mission, the blond groaned pitifully.

"You two can choose, a whole day spent on the festival or training till exhaustion and beyond," the former teacher explained, still smiling sweetly behind his mask.

Naruto's face already showed exactly what he preferred more from both offers. Although cracking jokes every free minute, he already grew up, since he became a Genin, to someone who was willing to perform hard training sessions every day.

And since his self declared rivalry with Uchiha Sasuke, this determination of hard training grew even more. During his first mission, he also noticed, that they both unconsciously encouraged each other to train harder so that one couldn't surpass the other.

Then there was the fact, that he was still indebted to Sasuke for saving his life during

their fight against that boy called Haku. Even though Sasuke stated once that with 'dragging' him away from Orochimaru and getting him back to his senses not that long ago was more than making up for that self declared life-debt.

But Naruto, who never realized just how important his determined actions that fateful day had been from preventing Sasuke in taking his last step into final darkness and insanity, of course didn't want to hear anything of this. He was still declaring to have to repay a debt, even though by now he was more or less stating it only because of habit, not because he really meant it anymore. So every chance to train and become stronger was very welcomed to him.

However for Naruto it was a difference if he had to train till exhaustion and then go home and take a little nap before start to train again, or if he was forced to train till exhaustion and still forbidden to stop and rest until the time to stop, which his former teacher was supposed to chose, arrived. And knowing his former teacher well enough after three years, he was sure that he wouldn't hesitate to make his words come true.

So at last he gave into the 'offer' of his teacher, although with a very deep, burning glare.

"Okay, okay you've won. I'll go to the stupid festival."

"Good decision," Kakashi chuckled and turned his gaze to Sasuke, who glared almost the same way as Naruto did.

"And I still won't go," he started but he had no chance to add anything more, because Naruto already grabbed him by his shoulders and shook him violently.

"Are you crazy?" he shouted to his dark-haired team-mate. "As damn good as you unfortunately are, you won't survive THAT kind of training. And I won't go to the festival alone, so you are DEFINITELY coming with me."

He still shook Sasuke intensively, until the dark haired boy grabbed Naruto's hands and pushed them away. Both boys glared at each other.

"I don't like festivals," Sasuke murmured and his faced became an annoyed expression.

"Ha, it would be a MIRACLE if there is at last ONE thing you like," Naruto stated sarcasticly and continued his glare. Sasuke was simply too tired and annoyed to continue the whole discussion. He gave his blond team-mate a last glare and sighed.

"Don't expect me to be happy, because you take me to this festival," he said and turned around to go home at last. Naruto, for the first time since the festival was mentioned, looked happy, contend and smug again. He showed Kakashi a victory sign and said goodbye to leave for his home. He nearly forgot how tired he was after the mission over the discussion of the festival. But now the feeling of being worn out returned to his body and all he wished for was sleep, sleep and sleep again.

And so he did, as soon as he closed the door of his little apartment and reached his bed.

xxx

One day later, near midday, Naruto's former teacher Umino Iruka walked along the street with a soft smile on his face. He was happy when Kakashi told him, that his not-so-little-anymore-Chuunin agreed to go to the festival with them together. Although he had no idea about why Naruto and Sasuke gave in to their offer.

Iruka now was on his way to pick the young teen up. He and Kakashi agreed that Iruka would pick up both boys and then meet on the festival. And both teachers were determined to give the two orphans a great time on the feast. After all they earned a little fun after all these years of fights, training, mental pain and exhaustion.

The teacher of the Genin Academy had nearly arrived his destination, the apartment Uzumaki Naruto was living at, but suddenly he was stopped when a boy showed up in front of him. Uchiha Sasuke decided not to wait for his former teacher to pick him up and instead meet him half way, which was in front of Naruto's apartment door.

The dark haired boy took a long look over his former teacher in front of him. It was the first time he saw Iruka wearing a kimono instead of his usual chuunin vest. Iruka's kimono was sea-blue with white stripes in it. It looked nice on him.

Sasuke himself wore a midnight-blue kimono with red patterns in it and the usual symbol of the Uchiha clan printed on front and back of both sleeves. Iruka noticed with a mental chuckle that the Chuunin, already handsome before, now must look breathtaking in the eyes of every girl. Unfortunately there still was the bored look on his face not the best thing to add for his charm. This was typical Uchiha Sasuke, always the pokerface on.

"Well, good morning, Sasuke," Iruka greeted the boy with a smile. "Do you want to join me to pick up Naruto?"

The black haired boy nodded silently and let his former teacher led the way to the house of his teammate. Iruka knocked at the door and they heard some hastic movements on the other side of the door, before it finally opened.

For a moment there was stunned silence. Iruka's mouth fell open and Sasuke's eyes widened in surprise of what he saw. Instead of a certain blond boy, his eyes looked onto a girl in a red kimono with black flowers. Her eyes were skyblue and her blond hair as long as Sakura's had been before she cut it in that fight during the chuunin exam. She wore it open and it was embellished with a single white flower right over her left ear. She was beautiful and the sheepish smile she now gave them, made her beauty simply greater.

"Hi Iruka-sensei!" she greeted with a soft, nice sounding voice. "Oh, Sasuke, you're here as well?"

Sasuke was surprised. From where did the girl know his name? He had never seen her before. But his question was answered seconds later, when Iruka finally overcame his shock and his mind started to work again.

"Are you NUTS!" he yelled at the girl in full volume. "Naruto, what do you think you are DOING?! This isn't the time for jokes! Go back to your original form immediately!"

The eyes of the black haired Chuunin, widened in shock. This was Naruto? The pretty girl in front of him was really Uzumaki Naruto? Why didn't he realize it? He knew Naruto's typical technique to transform into a naked girl and drive crazy every male adult he wanted to tease. But this time, it seemed his rival had overpassed himself. There was not a single sign that this girl was only an illusion, created by a crazy Chuunin.

The girl narrowed her eyes in a very ungirlish way and glared at Iruka.

"Damn, why did I use this technique on you so often?" she cursed. "If you hadn't seen my Sexy No Jutsu so many times before, you would never realize who I am."

This words finally proved Sasuke how right his former teacher was and he laid a hand in front of his face in disbelief.

"Idiot!" was all he choked out and shook his head. The comment retrieved him a glare from the girl as well, before she faced her teacher again.

"Listen Iruka-sensei", Naruto said with surprisingly serious voice, "I agreed to Kakashi-sensei to go with you all to the festival although I didn't want to. But I was never told to go as Uzumaki Naruto. I don't want anyone to recognize me, not on this feast, understand? So, if you still want me to join you, deal with me as girl or take your offer back, I don't care. But be sure, this is not a joke at all, I am damn serious!"

He looked to the side, a dark frown on the girl's face, before it finally softened and he quietly added:

"Sorry for sounding so hard, but I still have the last two celebrations very clear in my mind and I don't need a third experience in that direction."

Sasuke glanced in confusion from his former teacher to his rival and back. After the last words, Iruka's eyes suddenly softened in understanding and he gave in with a sigh.

"Fine, Naruto, I think I understand what you mean. And if you really wish to visit the feast as a girl, so be it, it's your decision."

Naruto smiled and faced his team-mate now, who still had the look of confusion written all over his face.

"Hey, Sasuke!" he called him. "Please, I know you don't understand this, but can you do me a favour and treat me as a girl, maybe your friend you know from a neighbour

town or something like that? I already thought about a name. I am Nuriko, okay?"

The dark haired boy gave the girl a last strange glance before his pokerface set back on his face.

"If you wish so, usuratonkachi," he said and smirked a little when he noticed the well known fuming look on the girls face. After all this was Naruto, wasn't it? So he could call this girl like that, because he always did.

Maybe his words would have started one of their usual fights, but Iruka was quick enough to prevent Naruto from any retort to his team-mate.

"Well if all things are clear now, I suggest we go to meet with Kakashi on the festival, shouldn't we?"

The boy and the boy in girls disguise, nodded and Naruto finally stepped out of the house and closed the door.

The three made their way to the festival in comfortable silence. Sasuke was a little stunned that also the number one loud mouth Uzumaki Naruto didn't utter a single sound, but he soon shrugged it off. He was intelligent enough to realize that this feast caused his team-mate to act out of character anyway. Why else should he insist to go to the festival as a girl?

Finally they arrived their destination. There were little stalls made of wood standing in the long bright streets and the air was thick with the delicious smell of food. Everywhere was colour and music. People strolled around and laughter of children could be heard miles away. It was a nice atmosphere. For Naruto it was the first time he experienced it in this friendly way.

Irukaka told the boys that Kakashi and him decided to meet at the kabuki theatre where also Sakura would be. And because the first show was to start soon, they were forced to hurry a little.

While the three walked through the crowd, Naruto's mind went back to the day when he experienced this celebration for the first time. He was just five years old that day, but he remembered everything clearly. It had been one of the worst days in his life.

First he was excited, because he had never experienced a festival before. And then he arrived there and saw all the happy looking people, he was looking forward for a nice day more than ever.

But everything changed as soon as the adults noticed him. Instead of ignoring him as usual, they sent him angry glares full of hate. The worst moment had been at the kabuki theatre. He only wanted to enjoy the show about the victory over the fox demon, but all people who noticed him during that time, glared and pointed at him. Some whispered to each other and started to laugh while glancing to his seat, where he sat all alone.

That day there was no need for him to play jokes, to get people to look at him. But he also was not able to bear all the mean looks for long. Before the evening arrived, he had given up and ran back home. He also missed the great fireworks but he didn't care. All he cared for was the question if he maybe cried himself dry.

Of course Naruto did not understand that immense hate at all, especially not on a day which was supposed to be one of pure happiness. But he never forgot the feelings and the sadness he felt on that day. And five years later, then the 10th anniversary had been celebrated, he did not go to the festival for long. He was not willing to bear the hated looks longer than necessary.

Therefore he only went to get himself something to eat and tried to ignore the looks the adults gave him. After he provided himself with food, he returned home. The only thing he allowed himself that day was to watch the fireworks that started around midnight from top of the stone faces of the past Hokages.

Iruka, Sasuke and the female Naruto arrived at the kabuki theatre in time. All three started to look out for Kakashi, but the Jounin was nowhere in sight. Instead, Naruto spotted Sakura with her family within the crowd.

As usual he wanted to call her and already lifted a hand to wave, but in the last moment Sasuke grabbed it and put his other hand over the blondes mouth to prevent him from shouting. Naruto wanted to glare, but the words of the dark haired Chuunin stopped him.

"Do you want to blow up your cover, 'Nuriko'?"

The look in the delicate girls face told him, that Naruto had forgotten for the moment. He sunk his hand and gave Sasuke a sheepish grin. Also, there was no need for calling the girl anyway, because she already spotted Sasuke and her former teacher as well and together with her family, came over to them.

"Hi Sasuke, good day Iruka-sensei!" the blond girl greeted and left her family for a talk with her former teacher while she herself turned to Sasuke.

"Hey Sakura-chan!" Naruto greeted the girl, before he realized, that she was not supposed to recognize him. The female Chuunin send the strange girl a surprised look.

"Uh, why do you know me?" she stuttered in confusion. Sasuke send his disguised team-mate an unseen glare.

"Sakura, this is Nuriko," he explained calmly to his friend. "She came from the neighbour village to pay me a visit. We were child-friends and I already told her much about the three of us being a team since we became Genin."

The girls face calmed down in understanding and she nodded.

"So, you are a childhood-friend of Sasuke, Nuriko? Well nice to meet you, I am Haruno Sakura, one of Sasuke's team-mates."

They both smiled at each other, but suddenly, Sakura's face became confused again.

"Speaking of team-mates," she started and faced Sasuke again, "where's Naruto? I thought you two are supposed to be together the whole day with Kakashi-sensei and Iruka-sensei. Don't tell me that Kakashi-sensei is supposed to pick him up from home. Knowing our dearest sensei he will arrive just before the whole act ends."

Sasuke was silent for a moment, but this time it was Naruto's turn to explain things.

"Oh yeah that guy", he said and giggled with his girlish voice, "he's already here, somewhere around. I am sure he will join us again in some time, just be patient."

He looked at Sasuke, who shot him a glance. Naruto lifted an eyebrow in answer and gave him a 'what-do-you-want-I-told-her-the-truth'-glance back.

But before both boys were thrown into another bad situation, Sakura's mother called them to take their seats, because the theatre was supposed to start any minute. The teens followed the order and soon everyone's attention was with the actors on stage.

And just after the end of the first act, Kakashi finally arrived at their side as well. Sasuke, Iruka and Naruto send him some annoyed glares, while Sakura only chuckled. She was too busy with adoring her cousin on stage to care about her sensei being late as usual. At last it was not her, who missed the whole first act of the play.

"You are late!" Iruka and the female Naruto reproached at the same time. Kakashi sent the girl a strange look, who was busy with silently cursing and nudging her ribs, which Sasuke hit just seconds ago.

/Actually, why do I care if this idiot blows himself up or not?/ the dark haired Chuunin wondered silently. However his thoughts were interrupted, then the show on stage continued. The last thing he noticed with a sideglance was the understanding showing in the visible eye of their mentor. This meant that Kakashi already recognized the girl as Naruto and it seemed he was amused by the fact that one of his students ran around as a girl.

After the Jounin sat down besides Iruka the younger teacher started to whisper silently at the older. Sasuke was sure that their former teacher explained the situation.

During the rest of the play there was silence. Everyone watched more or less anxiously the final where the fox demon was killed by Hokage the fourth.

Of course they play did not reveal the fact that the ninetail fox demon had been sealed into the navel of a new-born child. If they had shown, they would have broken the rule Hokage the third created just after the fourth Hokage's death.

The adults of course knew it, but from all the children and teens, Naruto was surely the only one who was left with a sullen feeling. It was as if he watched how a part of

him had been created. Still not a nice experience and feeling for the boy.

After they all left the theatre, Naruto planned to distract himself with other things. Actually there was something he was still fuming over. But first he said goodbye to Sakura and her family who planned to visit her cousin behind stage now. To his surprise, the family of his team-mate treated him very nice instead of the angry looks he usually received. But after all, for them he was Nuriko, a friend of Uchiha Sasuke, not the horrible demon Uzumaki Naruto, was he not?

"It was nice to meet you, Nuriko," Sakura said and shook hands with him. Naruto smiled.

"Same with me," he told her. "I hope you will have a nice evening on the festival."

"Yeah, I am sure I will," Sakura replied and turned around to Sasuke. "Well, see you tomorrow for mission report then, ne? Have a nice evening, Sasuke!"

She smiled and he gave her a little smile back. The girl waved a short goodbye to her teachers and asked them to say 'hi' to Naruto from her when he showed up. And then she was gone with the rest of her family. As soon as the girl was out of sight, Naruto turned around and glared at his former teacher.

"I was told that 'EVERYONE' on this feast has to wear a kimono", he started, "so can you tell my why in hell you are the only one still wearing his uniform?"

Kakashi sent the girl an innocent look.

"Who said 'everyone is supposed to wear one'?" he asked back. "I only said that you should wear your best kimonos. By the way, you look lovely in this Kimono Naru... uhm Nuriko-chan."

There was definitely a light snicker in the voice of the Jounin when he finished the last sentence. Naruto's face was immediately covered with a steadily darkening shade of red, before he finally tried to attack his caretaker.

If Iruka had not grabbed him by the arms to hold him back, there would have been a fight that no one knew when it would have ended.

"Don't do it, Nar... uhm Nuriko-chan," the former teacher pleaded. "How about... going to eat something now? This whole kabuki play made me very hungry."

This got Naruto's attention, just like Iruka hoped for. Although the boy, who matured a lot in the last years, did not fall immediately for it, in the end he was willing to allow his growling stomach to declare victory over the wish to punch his devilish former instructor.

To no ones surprise he was, of course, demanding to get some ramen.

/Some things will never change/ Sasuke noticed amused when he followed his now

lightened up team-mate to the next best ramen stand.

TBC...