

Evening Feelings

Von Atemue

Kapitel 2:

Title: Evening Feelings

Part: 2/2

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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: OK, this is my first Naruto story, and because we don't have many manga chapters here in Germany, I am not that up-to-date with the storyline. So please forgive me my mistakes.

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 make any money with it and write only for fun and to get better in English writing. ^__^

And not to forget, much thanks to Deb and XXX for betareading.

"..." = Speaking

/.../ = Thoughts

#flashback#

Translations:

Genin = under class ninja (Cadets)

Chuunin = middle class ninja (Commoners)

Jounin = full ninja (Elite)

Kyuubi = Ninetail

To eat peacefully at a nice stand together was something Sasuke and Naruto had not experienced for quite a while. Kakashi and Iruka also seemed to enjoy the friendly atmosphere they shared during the meal.

After the four finished, which took them a while, Naruto suggested to walk around and look at the various stands at the festival. Nobody seemed opposed to his idea because none of them had any special plans for the evening anyway.

During the slow walk, Sasuke was surprised to find himself enjoying the festival after all. He had never been visiting a festival again after his clan's murder because he did not allow himself to have fun. After all these years, he never felt like taking a break and enjoying a night of simple happiness.

He still did not feel like going to celebrate when Kakashi told them about the plans for the night, but Naruto that stubborn, crazy idiot, somehow left him with no other choice than to agree to go to the feast. Now he was happy that he decided to go because in front of him was a 'girl' who stormed from one stand to the next and looked at the things laid out there with a look of excitement he had never seen in the eyes of his team-mate before.

Naruto, though older and a little more mature, still preferred to play the clown in peaceful times. Although the dark haired ninja already noticed that the mask the blond one used to wear when something bad affected him, was no longer as steady as it had been before. When he thought about it, Naruto started to change the day after the Genin exams.

/Maybe this shouldn't surprise me,/ the Chuunin thought while watching the beautiful, blond girl with awkward eyes. /After all the things we went through these past three years. Sakura, Naruto and I underwent so many fights and horrors and all these events glued us together, made us the best friends ever. I learned to trust my friends and to not allow my thirst for revenge to rule my life any longer. Naruto taught me this. That was a surprise after all. Sakura also grew a lot. She accepted that I am not interested in her and she realized there is more to Naruto than the simple fool he liked to play for us all the time./

He stopped in his thoughts when his eyes squeezed a little more, to concentrate on Naruto only.

/And Naruto, he matured a lot and he allowed us to look behind his mask. I saw him cry, I saw him deeply afraid for his friends, I saw him desperate, I saw him showing a real smile during hard times and I saw him brooding in his loneliness. If the events we had to go through did not happen, none of us would have opened up so much to the others and maybe Naruto would still be trying to get the peoples attention by painting the stone faces of the past Hokages or stealing something very important./

Yes, Sasuke had been aware of all of these facts for some time now; but there was still

something he did not notice in all those years before. It was Naruto's obvious dislike for going to the festival without a disguise.

Why did he hide himself behind a girl's face? Why did he bother to put so much time into creating a whole new look as girl just to be sure that nobody would recognize him? After all, most of the people knew Naruto's usual girl-form of his Sexy No Jutsu very well. He used it way too often to fool around with the men's minds.

Somehow Sasuke had the feeling that the reason why his team-mate acted this way was because of the adults in the village. During these past three years he started to learn a lot about the blond, loud ninja. It surprised him a little when Naruto at his official introduction stated that his dream was to become next Hokage and to impress everyone in the village. He knew from the time when he lost his own family that the boy grew up without parents, an orphan just like he himself had become.

Later he discovered that this was not the only bad thing in the life of that 'idiot'. Naruto was not welcome anywhere. Most of the adults looked at him with ice and hate in their eyes and Sasuke was sure that so much hate could not exist just because of Naruto's silly pranks. He already guessed this before, when he explained to Sakura that the way Naruto acted was because he was lonely and wanted to be noticed in any way possible.

And now, at this festival, Sasuke was able to see this barrier of hate between Naruto and the village people clearly. Naruto's entire behavior was like he had never been to a feast like this before or, at least, had not been given the chance to enjoy the happy events. The dark haired ninja remembered that his team-mate had said something about 'not wanting to experience the same things as the last two times'.

So, this all meant that Naruto really enjoyed his first visit to a festival of Konohagakure and he only had the chance to enjoy it because there were at least people around who liked and cared for him; and because nobody recognized the girl as Uzumaki Naruto.

All the sudden, obvious facts surprised the dark eyed Chuunin a lot and he felt an odd glimmer of happiness for his team-mate. Tonight at least he seemed to enjoy the celebrations so much. Sasuke liked to watch how Naruto ran from one stand to the next, begging Iruka and Kakashi to buy him something and still being the little, joking freak he had to be. Naruto, it seemed, could not resist using his really cute girl's form to play up to the other people, acting as if Kakashi and Iruka were mean and not nice to a sweet, innocent, young lady.

The dark haired boy could not help but smirk a little when he saw the embarrassed, fuming faces of the two teachers who were trying not to look bad without blowing Naruto's cover. After all, they knew very well what it meant for their student if he was recognized by the people. And although both men were not happy with how Naruto obviously took advantage of the situation, they didn't want to destroy the evening for him.

Finally, to the secret sorrow of Sasuke and the relief of the two teachers, Naruto

became tired of running around all day and it started to become dark. This meant that the dance floor would be opened soon and people had the chance to sit around the dancing area, either for a little drink or just to catch one's breath from dancing.

Kakashi suggested they sit down at one of the free table right in front of the dance floor. No one complained. Everyone was ready for a break. Kakashi and Iruka immediately started to chat after they received their drinks. Sasuke, being a ninja, looked around, using his very well trained senses to make sure that no danger was in sight. After all, experience taught him to look out for trouble every second.

Naruto, on the other hand, seemed not to care. He was looking at the dance floor, but after a while the dark haired Chuunin was sure that he did not really take notice of the people because he never recognized Sakura, although she came straight in their direction.

When she finally arrived at their table, all Naruto was able to do was waving absentmindedly and give a half smile. Sakura was surprised at that. She still clearly remembered the energetic and glowing girl from their first meeting, but Sasuke only shrugged his shoulders when her questioning glance met his eyes.

"Sasuke, would you like to dance with me?" the girl finally asked, unsure after they looked at each other for a little while. The sound of her voice told the dark eyed Chuunin that it was only meant as a gesture of friendship but still he refused her request politely. He had never danced before in his life and he was not willing to give it a try now.

The girl seemed to guess his reasons because she nodded in understanding and smiled. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on which way you looked at it, Sakura scored a willing dancer after all.

Rock Lee, a boy one year older than Sakura and her team-mates, showed up at her side suddenly. The slightly strange looking boy had been in love with the girl since the day they met at their first Chuunin Exam. And after all these years he still had not given up. He visited the festival to see her, hoping for a chance to finally get a date.

Sakura was not enthusiastic, but she silently could not help but admire the stubbornness of the boy who still had not given up on her, unlike Naruto obviously had. Finally giving in, at least for this night, she sighed and gave him a little friendly smile. After all, even though Lee did not possess the good looks of an Uchiha, she still regarded him as a great friend with a strong and beautiful heart. She waved goodbye to her friends and former teachers and allowed Lee to lead her proudly to the dance floor.

Naruto absentmindedly watched her leave, his mind still far away. He was back in the time when he experienced the first two celebrations. Since that time, so much changed and while he did not understand the strange feelings he experienced at that time and the behavior of the people, he understood now.

The strange thing had been that, back then, he felt anger and hate so deep and so

much that he was nearly afraid of himself. He had never hated anything up to that point. When he was very small, he had to decide between hate and trying to fight for attention in every capable way. The decision had been for the second option. He simply was not the type for hate, never had been.

And although the strange behavior of the village during that first celebration had broken his five year young heart, he never understood how he could hate so much. During the kabuki, when they showed the sealing of the Kyuubi, he heard people talk about the demon in a very disgusting and snobby way. And as the eyes full of hatred and amusement met with his own, all he could feel was immense hate and the inner scream for revenge. Naruto was afraid of himself during that time, very afraid.

/But now I finally understand/ the blond Chuunin though while looking out to the dance floor. /This hate was not my own feeling. That was the feeling of Kyuubi. Am I right, stupid fox? You were the one who hated every single villager so much at that moment, didn't you? Because they were celebrating their victory over you. Because they laughed about you being trapped in the body of an idiot boy. Because they still look at you with so much hate. And because they dared to not fear you anymore./

He sighed a little and his eyes wandered from the dancing ground to the sky, which was clear and full of blinking stars.

/But you know,/ he continued with his inner talk to the fox demon that, he was sure, could understand him very well. /You should try to accept it instead of brooding here within me. I mean, you can't blame them, really. The celebration here is nothing more than what the joy of fighting and killing humans has been for you. You made the life of humans a living hell, so you really can't blame them when they tried to pay it back to you. And now they celebrate like you had done all these years with their blood. It's only fair./

/And you shouldn't try to see all the negative events around you. Why don't you try to enjoy at least a little of the things I do? Really, I can have fun when I want to and if you would allow it yourself, you could also enjoy the fun and the happy feelings with me. This makes you more powerful and will help you to feel much better than any kind of hate can do. I can show you this, shall I?/

Naruto suddenly grinned wide. He just decided to show his inner demon the joy of happiness and fun and the first thing that came to his mind was to dance!

The boy in girl's disguise glanced unnoticed at his three companions. Since he was a girl, it was only right he danced with a boy, was it not? And of course it would be more fun if he danced with someone who knew he was not really a girl.

Although Naruto watched the three candidates for a while, the Chuunin had already long decided who would have the bad luck. He just waited for the right moment - which came when Sasuke made the mistake of looking in the wrong direction. Naruto grinned and jumped out of his seat.

Before the dark haired Chuunin realized what was happening, a blond whirlwind

grabbed his hand and dragged him out onto the dance floor.

"Na... Nuriko!?" the normal stoic and calm boy asked in surprise and disbelief.

"What is it, Sasuke?" the blond girl questioned and looked as innocent as possible. But it was difficult to oversee the half hidden grin the girl's features showed.

"Come on, Sasuke. Dance with me!" Naruto pleaded and started to swing around the dark haired boy without releasing their hands. Sasuke scowled.

"You. Are. So. Dead," he whispered as quiet as he could manage for Naruto to still hear the threat over the music.

"You wish," Naruto shouted back good naturedly. "And now move! Allow yourself at least a little bit fun, come on!"

He grinned again and Sasuke had no other choice but to join his crazy team-mate in his dancing moves.

"Naruto, you 'will' pay for this!" the dark eyed boy promised one last time. The blonde Chuunin simply grinned.

"I think I'll pay the price."

And he slowly forced Sasuke lead the dance, because he was officially the male one of the two of them. And because Naruto knew it made Sasuke inwardly squirm even more.

/See?/ he told his inner demon. /This is fun. This is how life's supposed to be./

To their own surprise, Sasuke and Naruto stayed on the dance floor longer than they intended to. In the beginning Naruto's intentions really had been to joke around with his team-mate, and Sasuke had been determined to leave after the actual song ended. But now, both of them enjoyed dancing together. Without even realizing, they danced to the next song and the next and the next. They danced until it was nearly midnight, the time where the fireworks were planned to start.

When the last song ended, the boy and the seemingly girl, smiled at each other.

"Would you like to accompany me?" Naruto asked the dark haired boy softly, while they left the dance floor. Sasuke nodded and slowly they left the dancing area behind, walking away from the festival. They didn't stop until they reached a hill from where they were able to enjoy a good view of the fireworks.

Naruto sat down in the grass. Sasuke followed his example. Neither spoke a word for a long time. Silently they watched the glowing lamplights of the festival.

"Naruto?" Sasuke finally tore his eyes away from the lights to face his team-mate who was still in his girl's form.

"Hn?" was the absentminded answer.

"Why do you hate the Kyuubi celebration so much?"

"What?" Naruto awoke quickly from his daydreaming state and stared into the deep black eyes, his own sky-blue orbs slightly widened.

"It's obvious," Sasuke went on, "you said you don't want to experience the same as you have the last two times, and your eyes were filled with disagreement. Why didn't you want to go to the feast? Why do you hate it so much?"

Naruto did not dare to look at Sasuke anymore. Instead he found something interesting in the dark grass and kept his eyes fixed on that place. For a long time there was not a word spoken. Sasuke watched Naruto, waited patiently for an answer. Finally the girl gave a sigh.

"It's because..." he started hesitantly, his eyes never leaving the ground, "because of their hate."

There was silence again for a short time.

"Why, Naruto? Why do they hate you so much? You aren't that bad. You make pranks and fool around, but still that is no reason to have such great dislike of you."

"Yeah, maybe it's not," Naruto replied silently.

"Naruto?"

The blond boy in girl's form felt the light touch on his left arm but did not dare to look up at the boy who spoke so unusual softly.

"Since when have people hated you? There has to be a beginning."

Naruto chuckled silently. It was not his usual cheerful chuckle but one full of bitterness.

"Well," he started, "I can't remember myself, but I guess just after the time I was born."

The blond watched from the very corner of his eyes how the eyes of the dark-haired widened in utter disbelief.

"Why?" he croaked out. "A baby! You were an innocent baby!"

Again this dark chuckle.

"Well not that innocent, I can tell you. I was as innocent as you became during the Chuunin Exam."

This answer made Sasuke only more confused than he was before.

"I don't understand," he said silently. Naruto looked up, a strange sparkle obvious in his eyes. He slowly bent forward and stroked a part of the kimono away from Sasuke's neck to reveal the mark of the curse, which had been put onto the dark haired teen during the Chuunin Exam.

For some time Naruto softly touched the mark, followed the design with his finger. Sasuke could not do anything other than watch the blond girl from the corner of his eyes while feeling the touch of warm, calloused fingers on his skin. He was frozen and somehow not able to think clearly.

Just as suddenly as Naruto started to play with the cursed mark on Sasuke's neck he stopped his actions. His hands fell to his side carelessly and the blond stared up to the sky again.

"Did you know," he suddenly started to speak again, "that the Fourth never really killed Kyuubi?"

Clear, blue eyes, just slightly darkened in the soft light of stars and a half moon, looked back into deep black. Sasuke softly shook his head and Naruto continued.

"Then let me tell you a slightly different ending of the kabuki play we watched this evening." He took a deep breath before continuing. "When the Hokage joined the fight, he soon realized that he would not be able to kill the demon. But he wanted to save his village so badly that he came to the only conclusion left. He had to seal the soul of Kyuubi into a human body. To accomplish his goal, he needed a newborn baby, its umbilical cord just cut. The baby was found, the ceremony prepared and with all the strength he had, Hokage the fourth sent Kyuubi to his cage inside a little human body. After finishing the ceremony, the Fourth died. But the village was saved. 'Happy End'."

Sasuke lifted an eyebrow after the sarcastic closing of the story. For a second, a lot of emotions crossed over the blue eyed girl's face before a sigh escaped the full, rosy lips.

"This happened today, exactly 15 years ago," Naruto finally added looking back at his team mate.

"And the baby?" Sasuke ask openly curious.

"Well," Naruto smiled sadly, "Sasuke, did I ever tell you guys when my birthday is?"

Surprised by this sudden question, the black haired teen shook his head.

"You never told us. Sakura always wondered but as you may remember yourself, every time she tried to get it out of you, you found a way to distract her from that topic. Even Kakashi refused to give us the date, stating it's your decision to tell us or not."

"Oh, I remember," Naruto admitted quietly. "Though, I also remember that you never asked."

The other rolled his eyes in an attempt to lighten up the mood a little. He already had a nagging feeling in what direction this all was going, but he decided to play the game for now for the sake of his team-mate.

"So, when is your birthday, usuratonkachi?" the Uchiha heir casually asked. Naruto did not react to the friendly insult this time as he usually did. Instead there was suddenly a loud plopping noise and the blond girl vanished behind white smoke.

When the view became clear again, instead of a girl, there was a boy sitting in the same red kimono with black leaves. Naruto was back to his true form and he was looking at Sasuke with an unusual melancholy face.

"Today," the blond teen whispered, a sad smile playing around his lips. Suddenly everything made sense. The hate of the adults, Naruto's loneliness, his dislike for the festival in honor of the Fourth, the strange chakra Naruto sometimes called up, hell even the fact that the blond had come up with a fox form during his fight against Gaara.

"Stupid!" Sasuke whispered after he was over the first shock of realization. Naruto just shrugged his shoulders. Then the dark haired teen did something he had never done before, something he did not even know he was capable of.

He hugged the blond. Naruto was too surprised to react in any way. Frozen in shock he allowed his team mate to gather him in his arms, to stroke over his back soothingly and to reassure him without words that nothing would change the current relationship they had.

After a time which felt like eternity, Naruto's body finally relaxed and without thinking he rested his chin on the other's shoulder. It was such a rare thing that the blond was granted the soothing sensation of human contact. He did not want to leave the embrace, not yet.

Also, Sasuke was not willing to let go of the body he held. He was not really able to explain why, but to hold his team-mate like this felt - right. He felt warmth and comfort, a feeling he had not felt for a long, long time.

Therefore, instead of releasing the blond, he just pressed the body a little closer against his own. For a long moment silence again engulfed the two young men. This was until Sasuke decided to break the silence once more.

"What I still wonder," he started without moving from their current position, "is why it seems as if only the adults know about the truth. I mean, I can not remember that anyone of our team mates ever hinted they knew."

"That's because they don't," Naruto answered quietly. "Just after Kyuubi was sealed,

the Third created a rule that no one was supposed to ever say that Uzumaki Naruto is in truth the nine tailed demon that once nearly destroyed our village. In fact, beside the adults you and I are the only other ones of our age who know. Oh, and Sakura. I told her when we were on a mission some time before we got you back. It seemed the right moment to tell her, back then."

"And how did you find out?" Sasuke asked with just barely voiced curiosity, for now dismissing the reminder that there had been a time he had been absent in Konohagakure. Naruto grinned a little. Even though it was not one of the best days in his life, he still felt some amusement remembering how he beat that stupid Mizuki into a bloody pulp. Also it was the day he found out about Iruka really acknowledging him, and the day he finally became a Genin.

Feeling a bit better with those memories in mind, he started to tell Sasuke all about his unusual way of graduating. So far none of their former classmates had ever found out how Naruto managed to pass as a Genin after having failed the official test before.

The dark haired Chuunin listened quietly without breaking the storytelling once. Though, when Naruto was done, he could not help but chuckle lightly.

"That really sounds like the twelve year old idiot I knew," he stated mildly and grinned when Naruto threw him a mock hurt glance and a raspberry.

"But at least now I also finally understand why you were able to perform kagebunshin, a Jonin technique," he added with a small smile. "You've always been an impressive idiot."

"Bah, thanks so much, Sasuke," Naruto replied sarcastically and turned his back to his team mate to pout. For some seconds there was silence before the blond Chuunin suddenly became serious again. He turned his head slightly to glance at the dark haired Uchiha heir.

"You speak so lightly with me right now," he wondered softly. "Don't you care about Kyuubi at all? I host a demon inside of me, shouldn't you be scared? Or at least on guard?"

Sasuke just raised an eyebrow before swatting his team mate lightly over the head.

"Idiot!" he scolded mildly. "Naruto is Naruto! Just because I found out that Kyuubi has been sealed into your body doesn't suddenly change who you are. I always have to be on guard when I am around you. After all, you still like to play pranks sometimes. I've already found that out the hard way tonight, haven't I? I didn't plan to dance, especially not with my former team-mate. I have to admit, you caught me by surprise."

Naruto just grinned at this, but his eyes openly showed how thankful and relieved he truly was that Sasuke would continue to treat him as a friend. But when the dark haired Chuunin suddenly started to smirk, the blond could not help the dark, uneasy feeling in his stomach.

"Speaking of dancing," Sasuke started slowly. "I promised to get back at you, didn't I?"

Before Naruto had a chance to react, even with his skillful ninja reflexes, he found himself pinned to the ground with the Uchiha heir right on top of him. Twitching a little uneasily, the blond Chuunin looked up at his companion, grimacing.

"Oh, yes, that...," he trailed off. "Uhm and... eh, what exactly are you planning now? And if you are thinking of killing me, could you wait until after I've watched the fireworks?"

Sasuke snorted at the last question and just grinned.

"Well, let's see? What should I do with you now?" he suggested. In the distance both young men could hear the sudden screeching sounds of the first firework fired into the night sky. Colors exploded, showering the dark blue sky with lights of red, yellow, green and blue. A silver and golden rain of sparkling light followed seconds later.

For a moment the two lonely Chuunin on the hill forgot about their situation and watched the show.

"Hey Naruto," Sasuke whispered, not taking his eyes away from the lights in the sky.

"Hn?" From his position on the ground, the blond still had a good view to the night sky and he was reluctant to take his eyes from the show.

"Do you remember the time we had our first little fight in the academy?"

"You mean the day of the meeting where we were put into groups of three?" Naruto said. He took a quick glance at Sasuke and chuckled. "How could I not remember? After all, the most embarrassing moment of my life as a twelve year old took place that day."

"The accidental kiss," the black haired Chuunin commented dryly. "Yes, to be kissing me must have been very embarrassing. After all, I am a guy just like you."

"Oh well," Naruto mumbled and he could feel his cheeks heating up. He was just thankful it was too dark for his team-mate to actually see the slight blush which had been spreading over his face.

"It was not exactly the fact that our lips touched, you know," the blond Chuunin admitted. "It was more or less the fact that it had been in front of our whole class and also I was head over heels for Sakura back then. All the girls were in love with you so if I'd said I didn't mind, I would have been even deader than I already was back then. Uhm... not that this means I liked the kiss either, I mean... well... arg Sasuke don't look at me like that!"

Naruto groaned because the smirk became wide and wider with every word he spoke. He finally remembered the position he was in and started to get himself free again.

"You're rambling, usuratonkachi," the dark haired Chuunin stated, not even acknowledging his team-mate's poor attempts to get free.

"Well, it's your fault anyway," Naruto started to whine. "I mean, why did you come up with such a stupid question anyway?"

He stopped struggling against the other body, because suddenly Sasuke's face was so near his own. He could feel the other's warm breath on his nose and the burning, penetrating gaze of those deep, black eyes.

"Sasuke?"

Naruto blinked.

"Well," the dark haired Chuunin murmured. "I am asking because I think I've just found the perfect punishment for your earlier action. You pulled me out onto the dance floor and now we are here all alone, just the two of us. I think I'll just pretend this is a date and unlike all those years ago, I really no longer mind kissing you."

Before Naruto was able to comprehend the words said, he felt warm lips brushing his own in a soft, delicate, and to his surprise much too short kiss.

Wide blue eyes stared up at the dark haired Chuunin, the fireworks in the background long forgotten. Disbelief was openly shown on the face, while Sasuke's only response was a small, soft smile.

"You know, Naruto, another reason why I don't care about Kyuubi is because of all people you have been and always will be the only one who truly understands my soul. You rescued me so many times, and I am not speaking about my mere body. You rescued my soul. You showed me another reason for breathing, not just for revenge. You pulled me out of the darkness which nearly consumed me.

"I won't deny that I will never give up getting my brother back for what he did, but now I also want to spend time with the people I call my friends. I want to enjoy life, not only just exist. And I realized all of this because of what you said to me. Because you never gave up on me, even when everyone else had."

Naruto still stared at the black haired boy, his mind slowly trying to comprehend the whole situation, the actions and words of the other.

"Sasuke," he was finally able to choke out, his heart too touched to allow him to speak more. Tears were slowly gathering in his eyes and he already felt the first drops silently rolling down his cheeks.

"It's all true," Sasuke added seriously. "You understand me, my heart, my soul. You've changed me for the better and you accept me, you always have, with my faults and my darkness. You are strong, strong enough to bear with me. You are my friend, Naruto. My dear friend, my rival and my team-mate. But for my heart, you are also my

soulmate. I just hope you can accept this one more little detail. I don't expect you to feel the same way, but it would be nice if you could at least accept my feelings."

For a long time there was silence. Sasuke watched Naruto's face carefully while the blond's mind seemed to be very, very far away. Then, slowly Naruto's eyes became clear again and he looked up into the sky, watched the firework bodies being shot out into the night.

Sasuke followed the other's gaze and together they watched the last explosions of colors.

"You know," Naruto suddenly murmured, his voice sounding a little far away. "I lied!"

"Hn?" the black haired teen released his gaze from the last exploding firework body and looked at the blond who was still pinned down under him expectantly. But Naruto didn't say anything at first. Instead he watched the last sparkling colors fading away from the night sky. Only when there was just the silver light of stars and the moon left, did he finally turn his eyes away and look straight into the face of the black haired Chuunin.

Deep black, shining orbs meet serious but sparkling sky-blue eyes and a sheepish smile played around the corner of the Kyuubi holder's mouth.

"When I said that I didn't like that kiss back then," he chuckled a little nervously when the dark haired Chuunin raised an eyebrow. "Well, it may have been true when I was twelve, but... when I think back on it now... I guess I liked it. At least, I liked it when you kissed me just a moment ago."

He smiled at Sasuke who, for the first time in ages, broke out into a wide, sincere smile himself. The Uchiha heir felt two hands grab the hem of his kimono and then Naruto was pulling him down until he was inches away from the blond's face.

"You know, I never could understand why all those girls go crazy around you," the Kyuubi holder whispered softy, "but when you smile, I have to admit you really ARE beautiful. You honestly should try to smile like this more often."

Sasuke just rolled his eyes and flicked a finger against the blond's forehead.

"And you should try to stop being a smart-ass more often," he replied playfully, but his eyes were showing quite clearly to the other that the dark haired Chuunin appreciated the compliment.

Naruto struck out his tongue in an equally playful gesture, before becoming serious again.

"You know what, Sasuke?"

"Hn?"

"I also think that you are my soulmate," the blond admitted quietly. "Since I've been small, I have felt a connection between us. There always seemed to be this silent understanding, even when we both pretended to hate each other. You've been everything to me, Sasuke. Everything I've never had. My inspiration, my friend, my team-mate, my brother, my rival, my goal. And now," he carefully and lovingly cupped the face of the dark haired Uchiha heir into his hands, "if you are willing, I would love to try and find out if you could be more than my brother as well. My lover, my family, the person who can accept the dark parts of my life as I can accept his. The person I can share my happiness and sorrow with. Do you want to be this person for me, Uchiha Sasuke?"

The dark haired boy's eyes were shining with unshed tears by now.

"I would love to," he whispered back. "If you are willing to accept the dark parts of my life, if you are willing to continue to teach me the meaning of happiness and if you are willing to take some of my sorrow away with the way you laugh."

Naruto just smiled happily, before starting to grin brightly.

"Urg, Sasuke, I've never though you could be this sappy," he teased. His answer was a loud snort.

"Shut up, usuratonkachi!"

"Make me!" the blond playfully replied and no sooner had the challenge passed his lips, was he silenced by another pair of lips finally closing the small distance left between them. Both teens fell into a long but chaste kiss.

As silence finally settled back over the village, the streets slowly starting to fall into darkness and people leaving the festival to sleep, two young men were left on a hill watching the sky while sometimes breaking their stares to exchange small loving kisses.

They were so absorbed into the beauty of the night and the soothing, warming company of each other, that they didn't even notice the two Konoha teachers checking on their former students from the distance before leaving them alone again, one smiling openly while the other's smile laid hidden behind his mask.

Sasuke and Naruto just stayed there they were, the blond now sitting in his partners lap, his back cuddled against the dark haired teens chest. Soft smiles were playing on both teens' lips as they faced each other for another breathtaking and loving kiss.

And when they parted again, a soft wind ruffled through their hair and with it the quietly spoken words of the Uchiha heir were carried away into the endless night.

"Happy belated birthday, Naruto!"

Owari

Oh and because people tend to ask this question a lot: No there is no update planed for this story. This story is finished with chapter two and that will not change. However, if someone feels inspired by my story, feel free to write a sequel, though it would be more than nice if you would inform me about this first. After all I want to read what kind of stuff others come up with after reading my story.

Also, I thank everyone for their kind feedback. I am happy to hear you loved the story. I also thank those of you who pointed out some mistakes. My English is not perfect, therefore there are mistakes bound to be left and it is always helpful, if people who find them point them out to me so they can be erased. /bows head/