

Why?



I still questioned my sanity that day. The day I decided that I could go on without him. But I should have known that I couldn't. I stared at him through the sleeting rain as he simply stared out at the village I had abandoned. The village that I should have known was my only home due to the fact that he resided here. But I was stupid and idiotic. I left him because I thought I could last without him, in all truth, I was just scared. Scared that even with him, my goal would not have come to past. It did, but at a costly price. I don't think he could sense me. He was too occupied with letting the rain wash his face and plaster his perfect body.

He was thinking about something I could tell. He must have been thinking about what led him here tonight. I had left a note on his pillow, with a white rose. It had taken me a moment to get through all the traps he had set in his place. I assumed it was only because the villagers were known to torture him. But I had gotten past his defenses and placed my mark there. I even prayed over the items that he would obey and come to me.

He did not disappoint me.

But another option of what was going through his mind came to me...four years ago, when I asked him to let me go. Even if I had meant it, even if I had wanted it, it still plagued me **why** he did it. **Why** would he let me go even if it hurt him? I thought back to that moment, to that fateful day.

It was snowing. The bright white substance blended in with my own pale complexion almost perfectly. I had been running through the forest trying to blow some steam and my trail had led me back to the place where I had left him again...

"Sasuke..."

I froze. My hand went to my katana knowing that someone was out there. I crouched on a tree limb and looked a little more through the blinding snow. I saw a shock of blond hair and I hissed. He was coming after me again. I didn't understand how he could be so damn stubborn about all of this? Didn't he understand that I wanted to be left alone? I did not want his company, nor did I need it. I just wanted to complete my mission and fade into the background.

Before he could get close I took off. My speed increased as I tried to get away from him, but I knew it was stupid to run. He would catch up to me whether or not I tried as hard as I could. But still I ran. This was not the first time I had run from him. I knew he was searching for me. I knew he was following leads and running after me whenever he caught sight of me. And every time I ran like a scared helpless child. I made myself disappear so that he would just give up. But my Dobe would never give up. He was strong and fearless; he was bull headed and an unstoppable force.

A smile crossed my lips as I continued to run. He was my Dobe and he always would be.

I looked up as the valley of the end came into view. Before I could cross its huge waterfall I stopped. My breathing was heavy and my mind was going everywhere at once. I had no idea that it bothered me so much that he would catch me. I looked down into the raging waters. The banks would overflow soon.

Another smile crossed my lips as I realized why I was going on so erratically. It was the thrill of the chase. The thrill of being chased by him. I had a good run but he was going to catch me now.

"Sasuke?" His voice was different, like he had just used in a very long time. It made me wonder...what else was different, because that did not sound like my Dobe.

"You never give up do you?" I loved that part of him. I knew he would never give up on me. I turned to him and I was struck. That was not my dobe. He was too thin, too pale, he looked so sick. He looked so helpless. His ribs I could see through his Anbu shirt, his pants were nearly falling off of his hips. What

was Tsunade thinking by sending him out like this? I kept my surprise about his condition and disgust for the Hokage from my face and voice. I would not let him know it was killing me to see him like this.

A smile lit his face. "Not when it comes to you." His shoulders slouched a little as what looked like relief ran through his blood. He stepped toward me then, and my hand twitched. I was not used to people coming up to me anymore. And I knew that on reaction I would lash out at him. When he stopped and stepped back instead of forward I silently thanked whatever gods were out there for that.

"You've gone up in the ranks..." Where was his mask? "But... you've let yourself...you're not the same." That was an understatement he wasn't just not the same. He wasn't the Naruto I knew. I suddenly felt the need to go to him. To hold him in my arms and make sure he did not freeze to death. "Your half the person you were years ago. What have you done to yourself?"

His eyes hit the ground and I knew what happened. He had been so focused on me. He had been so focused on bringing me back that he had forgotten to take care of himself. That was not fair to him. He should not have to worry about me. He should bring himself to the edge of death for me. I kept myself from yelling at him for this by biting down on my lips. He didn't need that now.

"I...I just, I just kept thinking about you."

I couldn't hold my instincts back. I went to him then. His eyes widened for a moment. He must not have realized I was there. Silently I cursed my stealth training. I tilted his chin up so I could see into his eyes. I was hoping that they had stayed the same. But they weren't the same. They were dull, nearly lifeless.

"Even your eyes have lost their shine. What am I going to do with you Naruto?" What was I going to do with him? He was dying. And he didn't even realize it.

"I don't know. I just...you know me...I can lose it sometimes." He shivered now. And I knew it was because I was so close. He wanted to hold me. He wanted to pull me to him and share in my own body

heat. I had to admit. I wanted to as well. I wanted to protect him from the cold. I wanted to pull him into my arms and fly him back to the gates of Konoha where I knew he would be taken care of. But I couldn't.

"You need to go back to the village. You need rest, and you need to recuperate." I stepped away from him then to end the small torture. My voice nearly broke. But it was what he needed to do. He needed to go back and get better. I could not take him with me. Lord only knew what Orochimaru would do with him then.

He seemed to lose more of himself then. He shook his head wildly. His voice breaking twice. I don't think he even realized that. "Not without you." His arms reached for me then. I couldn't go to them. No matter how much I ached to.

He was a stubborn idiot.

I was doing this for his own good. I realized then that the only way to make him better was to hurt him. Make him go back. It was the only way. I sneered at him then. He didn't deserve it though. "You don't **get** it do you? I'm never going back. **I can't**. The sooner you get **that** through your head the faster you can move on." I was so sorry I said that.

I saw a million emotions flicker over his features. Some of them good, others bad. He was thinking about why he did not want to go back, why he did not want to leave me. He was addicted to me like I was him. It was a viscous cycle that would only lead to both of our destruction. "Sasuke...I can't without you. You know this. What has happened to me, it's because I need you. You don't understand-..."

I didn't want to hurt him further, but I had to. "I don't want to. I want you to go back to the village and live out your dream. I want you to be a good little dobe and just **let me go**." I said the last part slow. Some of my cold façade melted. I didn't want him to let me go. I couldn't let him go.

"Let you go..." If his voice could kill, that killed me. He sounded defeated and destroyed. "I can't. I can't Sasuke." I wanted to tell him it was all a joke. That he didn't half to. That I wanted him just as much as

he wanted me. But the look of him. The unhealthy persona he was presenting told me otherwise. He had to leave. He had to get better. I wouldn't be able to stand it if he died like this because of me.

"Yes you can Naruto. I know you made a promise, but now is the time to let this one drop." When he dropped to his knees I had to turn away. I could not see him so hurt and damaged. It was my fault I realized then, but I had to pretend that I did not care. A tear slipped down my cheek then. It hurt worse than the day we nearly killed one another. It hurt worse than the day I first left him. It hurt so bad that I could hardly take it.

"Would that make you happy, if I let you go?"

God I wanted to say no. I wanted to so bad. But his suffering would only continue if I said no. "Yes." More tears fell.

"Then go..." Damn him for being so selfless. I nearly let out a sob. Something opened up in my heart then. It hurt like hell. But I ignored the pain. "Go, I won't be a bother to you anymore." He wasn't a bother. He was my soul.

I wanted to say that we could be together no matter what. That I would return soon. But even I knew that that was never going to happen. I turned back to him. It was more like a move out of relief. I went to him and kneeled in front of him. I wiped the tears away so he would not notice. "Thank you. I'm sorry." And I was. I did not want to leave him. But it was for his own good. Why did I keep using that lie? I wanted him to stay with me. I didn't care that he was sick. I didn't care. I just wanted him to be with me. "I can't go back, not until I finished what I have to do. Just go back to the village and get better Naruto. I don't ever want to see you like this again." If I ever saw him like this again it would break my heart. It would shatter it more than it was already shattered. Gently I pressed my lips to his forehead. I tried to keep my sadness under control.

“I know. I love you so much... But even after everything is said and done...you won't come back to me. I know you won't. So go, please, my team is probably searching for me.” I wanted to say it back I wanted to tell him that I loved him as well. That I loved with my whole soul. But if I did he would not give up. The second part of his sentence destroyed me. He knew I could not return to him. He knew I never would. I loved him so much. So I pressed my lips to the same spot one more time. I wanted to kiss him everywhere else. Not there though. It was so much more impersonal. Then I left him. I jumped across the river and disappeared into the forest.

Then a shattered, broken, destroyed sound pierced the air. And like a knife, it went right through my heart. Before I could do anything, I fell. My heart burned, it sputtered and it choked sporadically. I knew that sound had come from Naruto and it had sliced cleanly through. Hot tears fell down my face and my blood began to run cold.

“Sasuke?”

That was not the voice I wanted to hear. It was that of my teammates.

“What happened?”

I couldn't speak. The pain was immeasurable.

“Shit, he's going unconscious, let's get him out of the open space and back to base.”

I was lifted into Juugo's arms and I was quickly carried back to Oto. But that was not where I wanted to be. The pain became worse in a matter of hours. I blacked out as more and more of it choked my entire body.

“What is going on Kabuto? What the hell is wrong with him?”

I woke to the sound of my new master and his right hand going at it. The snake must have been upset that his new vessel was undergoing something that could jeopardize his new body. I no longer cared. If he did do the transfer maybe it would end the pain. My mind flashed back to that moment and I felt tears roll down my cheeks. Then the pain came back all over again. I arched off the table and screamed. My body went into more convulsions as I continued to scream. Orochimaru and Kabuto rushed to my side and pinned me down. I felt the sharp end of a needle sting my arm and a fog began to settled over me. I stopped my erratic screaming and settled back down. I was out before I knew what was going on...

“This better not be life threatening.” His voice was a cold hiss.

“I don’t know. I have never seen anything like it. There is nothing wrong with and yet he is in pain like he was burned alive. It’s a mysterious illness. Almost like Kimimaro. But much more potent. This might be the end of Sasuke. You might have to find a new vessel Master.”

“No! I will not. You will figure this out or I’ll kill you right here right now.” The sound of skin hitting skin resounded through the air then.

I grimaced at the sound.

He always thought of himself.

Could he not see that because I was thinking of someone else that I was dying? I knew I was dying. It was the only way to explain what was happening. I was dying because I left my entire being back with my blonde. I should have stayed with him. I should have stayed with him and him only. I should have run away with him. I should have stayed...I should have stayed...

I was in and out for the rest of the day. When I finally came to I was lying in my room on my bed. The pain was still there, in fact it was so painful that tears prickled my eyes. But I saw no point in screaming. I saw no point in making a fuss about it. I would block it out, because I could not go back to him. Not after I had hurt him so bad. I wished the pain would just kill me. It would reconcile for what I had done to him.

But then again...

If I did die and he found out he would follow soon after. Because we could not live without one another.

That was what brought me back to this point. I looked down at him happy that his tan and healthy body structure was back. He looked absolutely beautiful. But he was still not the same. The air around him was too cold. It was too dangerous. I must have sucked the last bit of his soul out that day. I never meant to, but if I hadn't he would have left me behind.

Carefully I climbed out from the tree I had been standing in and landed on my feet. Without much effort jumped down to stand right behind him. I knew he felt me. He straightened his back and then let his muscles relax when he realized I was here in peace. I noticed his Kodachi at his side and a little disappointment flashed through me. But I deserved it. He had no way of knowing if I was there in peace or not. It could have easily have been a trick.

"Do you still love me Naruto?" I desperately wanted know. This decision would be easier if he did. Deep down I know he did, but I still wanted to hear it. Even if I know I didn't deserve his love.

He turned then, almost angrily. He leapt away from me to the cliff above. He didn't want to answer the question. I was guessing it had something to do with the personality change I had sensed earlier. But I still had to follow him. I had to know if he loved me. If he didn't I could easily take myself away from him so I didn't cause him pain. But if he did...I could ease both of our pain. It would be simple and we would both be happy.

So I chased him. Just like did me. I kept my distance, but I stayed on his heels enough that finally he realized it was pointless. He stopped and turned on me then. And I was struck by something even more horrid than what he looked like four years ago. His eyes were cold, emotionless, and dead. I had killed him far worse than I had known.

“Leave, or the last thing you will feel is my blade going through your heart.” He should. I have caused him nothing but pain. I have caused him a death worse than the actual act of dying. He should ram his sword through my heart. I deserved it.

But that was not what I had come for. “My heart has already been stabbed through. I realized...about eight years too late that I was stupid to leave you. I should be run through for everything I have done to you.” And I did. I was stupid to leave. If I hadn’t left maybe things would be different. More than likely on his sixteenth birthday I would have made sure we became lovers. And by now I would have made sure my name was his. I would have made sure we had children; I would have made sure we were together forever. But I let it all go down the drain. It was my stupid mistake, it was my fault and I was going to make it right.

As my arms lifted he backed away from me. I deserved that refusal as well. “Please leave Sasuke; I will only ask you one more time.” He could not make me. Not without him.

I let out more emotion than I ever had in the last four years. My eyes locked on his and I knew this would work. “Please forgive me. All the pain brought to you, all the pain I inflicted on you...I do not deserve you.” I bit my lip as a scream nearly broke through my lips. The pain had come back and it was flooding my veins like lava. “But, I need you, you need me, I love you Naruto, please don’t run from me this time. Don’t make the mistake I did.” Kami knows I need him. He was my life, my soul, my true love, my soul mate, he was my everything, and I needed him more than I needed anything.

He sank to his knees then. It looked like he was in pain. I knew I had not been the only one. But what happened next shattered my world even more. He was coughing violently. His hand over his mouth and I could see red dripping onto the snow. I could see tears falling down his cheeks.

The pain was so horrid then that I could barely stand.

Before I passed out from the intensity I went to him and kneeled in front of him and took his hand. “I did not know it was this bad.” I shouldn’t be allowed to live. I gave him so much heart break. “Why did you not tell me?” He wouldn’t. He was just too good for his own damn good. I didn’t deserve him.

He snatched his hand away from me then. I finally broke through. As he spoke his voice was full of anger. “You would not have listened. You would have gone after your sweet vengeance even if I was dying.” He was right. I more than likely would have. I was so damn stubborn I could be an ass. He looked up then and I was struck with his eyes. The glow that had been there returned. His emotions were running rampant and I knew the answer to my first question. Yes, he loved me. He loved me even though I had killed him.

And I knew I loved him more than he would ever imagine. The pain flared again and I could barely hold back the tears. “I guess you are right, but I did not mean to leave you as I did, my head was clouded and now I’m paying the price, but I cannot let you leave this plain without me.” I let my forehead rest against his. It felt nice to just sit there with him. I smiled. It felt wonderful.

He was crying I soon realized. “But you will, I know you will, you always will.” He was right about that. In the past I would have ended up leaving him. But not this time. Not this time. He put his arms out for me and pulled him to me. We had both wanted this for nearly a decade and I was ashamed of myself for letting it not happen. I looked into his eyes for any sign of forgiveness and I really wished he would forgive me. I needed him to forgive me, luckily...he did. I could tell.

The pain flared even stronger. I wouldn't be able to keep it at bay much longer. "Then let's die together, Right now. That way neither will die without the other." It would ease both our sufferings. It would calm everything. It would solve everything. If we could not be together in life, than we would be in death. There would be no more pain, no more hurt and no more blood. It would just be us, together forever.

He started nodding furiously. He agreed with me. He knew that what I was saying was absolutely right. We could be together that way. It made so much sense. Then I felt something I thought I never would.

He kissed me. It was gentle and chaste, but he kissed me. Before I could help myself I grabbed the back of his neck and brought him to me once more, knowing that this would be our first and last time to ever really be like this. It was almost too good to be true and so bitter sweet. I didn't taste the blood in his mouth, I didn't taste his sadness. All I tasted was pure joy. I tasted his joy as well. I could have survived off of this if we stayed but I knew I would back out if I didn't stop this. Tears fell down my face as I realized what was going to happen; his tears fell and I knew he understood what was going to happen. It was better to die in peace than agony. And I knew he understood this.

I let my hand wander to the hilt of my katana, then without waiting I pulled it out and plunged it deep into his body. But I held onto his lips just a little bit longer. Then I let him go. My tears fell faster and harder. But I smiled despite any of it, because I saw his happy smile. Blood poured from his mouth then, but it was his smile that mattered. "I can't go on anymore without you. I won't let you suffer like this either. So I'll end it...for both of us."

"Sasuke..." He fell forward into my arms and I understood what he was trying to say. He was not cursing me for killing him; he was trying to say that he loved me.

He didn't have to say it. It was my turn to say it. "Shush Naru, I'm here, from now on, I'm here." I pulled my sword from his body then and used it to cut the pale flesh of my wrists. I cut them deep, so that the blood fell faster and I could join him sooner. I loved him so much.

He was fading fast, and he seemed happy about it. So I slowly brought I us both to rest on the forest floor and I put my arms around him. But before he blacked out and went on to meet me in the other world I had to tell him. Just so he knew and understood. "I love you Naruto. And I'll never let you go. Never again."

The darkness took him then and another smile crossed my lips. Even in death he was beautiful and I looked forward to joining him there.

I looked up as a figure loomed over us, and at first I was scared that he would take my love away from me, but when I saw the silver hair that stood up on end, I smiled. He would not take him away from me. He would make sure we remained together. So I closed my eyes as my pain finally subsided. Warmth flowed though me and I knew that I was going to join my love.