Summary

Sasuke doesn't exactly do relationships. Naruto's currently in a relationship and has been since high school, albeit unhappy. Conflict ensues.
"Also, make sure that you go to Ichiraku for that meeting I set up for you," Itachi reminded Sasuke, his eyes teasing his younger brother's.

Sasuke sat across from his older brother, arms crossed. His brother arranged what he had assumed to be a blind date, insisting that Sasuke go out and venture into the dating world. The only real issue with this is that Sasuke didn't do dating. Period. He had tried getting out of it, but had no such luck. Itachi seemed bent on tormenting him, and was relentless about it, too.

"No promises," he replied, before getting up out of his somewhat uncomfortable chair.

"It wasn't a request," Itachi calmly told him, his hands intertwined with each other, his elbows propped up on his desk. He watched Sasuke carefully with his dark, charcoal eyes as they teased him.

Sasuke rolled his eyes before walking off, closing the door behind him. Really, he had absolutely no interest in dating, but according to Itachi, he seemed lonely and in need of a companion. The thought alone made him laugh, and he found it to be ridiculous. In his past relationships (if you could even really call them that), people had always been too clingy and dependent on him. They stepped over their boundaries too quickly, without warning as if just because Sasuke had slept with them, that meant anything. They would smoke in his car, or leave trash around, or try and do things like bring Sasuke to social events so that they could show him off. It was tedious and he opted out of it all. It was too much upkeep, and he didn't have time to waste.

He didn't exactly "date" people at this point, rather, having one night stands here and there, with a handful of them lasting more than a week. Therefore, he had never done anything like brought someone home for Christmas, or had to really introduce them to anyone significant in his life. And that's the way he'd like things to be. Clean cut, no emotional baggage. It wasn't much to ask for, really.

All this being said, however, he was still going to be attending this "meeting". Itachi had taken care of the expenses to sweeten the pot, and it wasn't like Sasuke had any other plans. He would go to the restaurant, eat, tune out his date, then leave. It was just a meal at some local restaurant he had never bothered looking into; nothing could actually happen. Simple.

"Are you ready to order, sir?" the waitress asked for the umpteenth time, as she moved a stray hair out of her face, a black pen poised to write his meal down on her white pad in her right hand. At first, she had been all over Sasuke, flirting, aka the regular act, but after a while she started to get antsy and annoyed that he hadn't ordered a single thing to eat yet.

"Not yet, my date should be here soon," Sasuke answered, equally annoyed that this wasn't the first time he had told her this. His date was over half an hour late, and by now, he looked like an idiot, sitting by himself. At this point, Sasuke was surprised they hadn't kicked him out or moved him somewhere else, due to the fact he had only ordered a single glass of water for himself in the half hour he had been there. Then again, it was just a Tuesday night, and the place wasn't exactly packed. He wasn't sure what he was going to do, however.

Sasuke took out his phone, texting Itachi once more. He hadn't responded or answered any of Sasuke's calls. He wanted to know where his date was, but only Itachi had her number, so his only
means of communication was through Itachi. However, he was never the one to ignore his phone for the sake of ignoring it, so Sasuke assumed he was probably doing something important or working. Or, maybe this was all just some elaborate prank to irritate Sasuke, and Itachi was just around the corner, waiting to see what would transpire.

He set his phone down, sighing. His water glass was nearly empty, and he was starving. Was thirty minutes long enough to wait before giving up on the other person? Sasuke would have been finished with his meal most likely if he ordered when he arrived. Pictures of food taunted him as he sat alone. He could smell a variety of smells coming from all around him, the sounds of slurping, chewing, and swallowing food coming from every corner of the restaurant.

He could be at home right now. Not doing much, really. Probably making himself some food, maybe some rice balls, and catching up on his reading. Relaxing in his pajamas, minding his own business in the comfort of his own, albeit tiny, apartment. Plus, he had some paperwork that would be due soon, and needed to start it soon. At this point, anywhere would be better than this stupid restaurant.

"So, looks like you got stood up, huh?"

Sasuke heard a rough voice speak out in his direction, surprised anyone actually had the balls to talk to him in such a casual manner. He turned his head to meet a pair of bright blue eyes, over-flowing with curiosity. He had bright blond hair that almost hurt to look at, really, and appeared to be in his early to mid twenties, the same as Sasuke. He was dressed in a waiter's outfit, but it was messy and the top button on his shirt was undone.

"Tch. It wasn't a date," Sasuke lied, not knowing why he even bothered responding. At this point, he was probably just tired of saying his date was on her way and was dying to say anything but. "It was a work-related meeting and nothing more."

"Either way, they're not here," the boy replied, putting his hands behind his head and interlocking his fingers. He didn't seem to want to get in Sasuke's pants the way nearly everyone wanted to, so Sasuke didn't really have a reason to immediately hate him besides the mere fact he was talking to him. "What were you planning on ordering, if your date did show up?"

"At this point, I'm planning on going home," Sasuke answered, crossing his arms. Shouldn't he be working right now? What kind of nerve did he have, marching up to Sasuke as if they were friends? Sasuke knew he was being harsh, that he was taking it out on this person. Really, he was just hungry and crabby, and that was that, and it wasn't this person's fault.

"And pass up a free meal? Tell me what you want."

His persistance was irritating, but Sasuke didn't entirely mind it since it was out of the goodness of his heart, or whatever. He didn't seem to be pitying Sasuke, so that was a plus. "I was going to have hakate style ramen."

The blond grinned, before telling Sasuke, "I'll be back, so don't leave, okay?" Sasuke watched as he walked off, before realizing he didn't even know his name.

"Oi, Dobe," Sasuke called out. "What's your name?"

He turned around, and grinned, seeming almost satisfied and overjoyed that he had bothered asking. "Naruto Uzumaki!"

Sasuke had found out a variety of things about Naruto. Firstly, Naruto loved ramen. This was no
small statement. He ate, slept, and breathed ramen. When he actually got the job working at Ichiraku, he became so overwhelmed with the opportunity of free ramen that he got so overjoyed, he started to jump around, excited, and tripped on his untied shoelace and nearly got a concussion when he slammed his head on the ground.

Secondly, despite being so young, he already had a family to support.

"Oh man, Hinata's great," Naruto smiled, thin smile lines appearing on his face. "We have two kids: Boruto and Himawari. Himawari's just a baby, so I can't really do much with her yet besides cuddle her and give her kisses. But she's super cute, just like her mom, and both of them have my blue eyes, which is pretty I think."

"How long have you been with your wife?" Sasuke asked, inbetween slurps. He wasn't too interested, but they had to make conversation, and it would be impolite to ignore someone who had gotten him a free meal.

"Oh, we aren't married. But we've been together since we were in high school," Naruto answered. "Really, I didn't really think this would be my life when I dated her back then, but here we are."

"Oh?" Sasuke looked at Naruto, tilting his head slightly to the side. "What do you mean?"

Naruto paused, holding his chopsticks in his hands. "I didn't think that we'd really last past high school, y'know? It's not like I don't like her or whatever. I just didn't put much thought into it. Then, before I knew it, we had a kid," he shrugged. "It's not a bad life. Just not what I imagined."

"What did you imagine, then?"

Naruto grinned sheepishly, before rubbing the back of his head with his left hand. "I didn't think I'd be halfway through my twenties and still working as a waiter, if that's what you're asking. Don't get me wrong, I love my job! But, it's just not what I had envisioned. I had a sea of posibilities and this is how I ended up." He paused, before taking another bite of his ramen. "I have a lot of hobbies that I wish I could have seriously persued instead. Like, er... I like photography, y'know? It would've been cool to be a photographer, and encapsulate important moments in people's lives, or document the breathtaking sights of the world. Instead, I serve people food."

"It's not a bad job," Sasuke told him. There was something about Naruto that made Sasuke.. open up? A bit soft? Ordinarily he would have simply nodded and let whoever keep rambling, but for some reason he felt the need to say something. It was only five words, but it impressed him that he even bothered to say them.

"Yeah?" Naruto asked, smiling as if he knew Sasuke would say this and comfort him.

"Sure. You get free food from a decent restaurant, so I can't imagine it being all that bad," Sasuke shrugged, before slurping up some more noodles, then dabbing at his mouth delicately with his napkin.

"So, what's your job?" Naruto asked.

"Police officer," Sasuke answered, before seeing Naruto's bright blues widen with excitement.

"Really?" he asked. "That's so cool! Man, I was always wanted to be a cop when I was in like elementary school, but I was always kinda scared of getting hurt, y'know? I mean, I heal quick, but you never know what could happen to you." He paused, before meeting Sasuke's hard, coal eyes. "That must mean you're like a super badass."
It wasn't the first adjective Sasuke would think of, but nevertheless it fit the bill. "Some could view me as that, I suppose."

"Why did you choose to become one, though? Didya always wanna be one when you were little?" Naruto asked, curious.

"It's somewhat of a family business type ordeal. My father and various other family members are all police officers, so it just seemed natural for me to be one as well." Sasuke answered.

The two continued chatting a bit, to the point where both finished their food and got re-fills on their water. However, it wasn't until Itachi called Sasuke's cell that the two of them realized that they should probably both head home.

"I have to take this," Sasuke told Naruto, "And I should get going. I have some paperwork to do that'll pile up if I just let it sit around,"

Naruto nodded, shocked that the time had just slipped away from them. Hinata was probably worried as to where Naruto was, and he was surprised she hadn't called to make sure he was alright. Although, she probably just assumed he stayed late or something along the lines of that. "I'll see you around, Sasuke," he grinned, before putting on his orange zip-up jacket and walking out to the parking lot, as Sasuke sat in the booth.

He answered his phone, with a simple, "Itachi."

"Hello, Sasuke. It seems that your date had an emergency come up, and didn't bother contacting me until now. I was unable to call you until now due to the fact I left my phone in the living room while I worked in my study. Have you eaten yet?" Itachi asked him, somewhat sympathetic that he had wasted Sasuke's time.

Sasuke looked at the door that Naruto had exited out of. "Yes, I just finished," he answered. "I'm heading home to do some paperwork. I'll see you tomorrow,"

"Alright, Sasuke. See you then."

He shoved the phone in his pocket, before throwing a ten on the table. His waitress hadn't actually done anything except bring him water, but he supposed he should still give her a tip seeing as how he probably cut into her tips. He put his jacket on, and exited the restaurant, getting into his black BMW and quickly driving home. It was when he was pulling into the driveway that it dawned on him he hadn't exchanged numbers with Naruto, or anything of the sort, meaning he most likely wouldn't see him again unless he went back to Ichiraku.

"No point in worrying about it now," he thought to himself. The blond seemed to be somewhat of the opposite of Sasuke, but he hadn't exactly hated his presence, so that was a plus and also a surprise to him. He rarely let people into his life, finding most of them intolerable. Sure, Naruto was a bit loud, and seemed way too happy all the time, but it seemed almost... refreshing.

Sasuke shook his head, wondering why he was so hung up on the idea. He unlocked his apartment, taking off his shoes and then his clothes, hopping into a hot shower, deciding that the night wasn't all too bad, and could have gone worse.
Chapter Summary

Somewhat of a flashback chapter to shed some light on Naruto's past.

After coming home from work, Naruto made his way inside his house, quietly, knowing everyone was sleeping. Or they should be, at least. He took off his shoes, then made his way upstairs, the old, wooden stairs creaking as he did so, with his back and feet aching from work. He grabbed a towel and some pajamas from his bedroom, and then hopped into a steaming hot shower.

Naruto had an abundance of friends. It was a talent of his, really. He could befriend anyone and everyone, and usually did so. But there was something about Sasuke he really enjoyed; perhaps the fact they seemed to be near opposites, with Sasuke's dark eyes and hair, and pale skin, compared to Naruto's bright blond hair and blue eyes and tanned skin. Sasuke was also very reserved, and didn't speak much, but what he did say... mattered. Naruto knew he had only had one conversation with the guy, and hell, they didn't even have each other's numbers and most likely wouldn't see each other again unless he came to Ichiraku when Naruto was working, but something about them meshed well. Their chemistry was as if they had been friends for years.

Thinking back on it now, Naruto cursed at himself for not getting his number. He wasn't even sure what the two would do together, but just being able to talk to him was a nice thought. He couldn't picture Sasuke going out and doing much except maybe going out to eat. He laughed to himself imagining Sasuke doing something like playing mini golf, or going out to the movies. All he could picture was an awkward, annoyed Sasuke in both instances. On top of that, he seemed to take his work very seriously, and it clearly extended past his work hours.

As Naruto thought all of this, he washed his hair, then scrubbed his body vigorously, letting the water pour over him. He loved keeping the window and door closed, letting the steam build up and make the bathroom incredibly hot, even though Hinata had scolded him due to the fact it caused mold to grow. His favorite thing was coming home after a long day and taking a long, hot shower, feeling all of the stress building up in him seem to dissolve away the more the water hit him.

"Daddy?" he heard a small voice call out, coming from the bathroom doorway. He peeked out from the shower curtain, and saw Boruto standing in his frog themed pajamas, his messy bedhead sticking up in all directions. "You just got back from work?"

"Yes, Boruto," he answered, before flicking off the water. He got out, wrapping a towel around his tanned waist, then walked over to his son. "I had a late shift. Sorry that I couldn't read you and Himawari a bedtime story,"

"Mommy had to read it to me instead," he frowned. "Why didn't you call home? She was worried, y'know," Boruto informed Naruto, his arms crossed. As much as Naruto loved his son, he seemed to grill Naruto for every little thing despite being so tiny and young.

"I didn't have the time to," Naruto lied. "But I'm here now. Let me get you to bed,"

Boruto wasn't happy about it, but held Naruto's hand as they walked down the hallway. He opened the bedroom door, a single light still on that Naruto turned off on his way out, after tucking Boruto
After, he went back to the bathroom, getting dressed and drying off his hair with a fluffy orange towel. He turned off the light and walked into his own bedroom, tiptoeing into bed and curling up under his blankets next to Hinata.

The moonlight shone over her petite body, the outline of their curtains framing the light. It poured down, highlighting her beautiful hair, showing the way her body curved in such a delicate, yet voluptuous way. Naruto sighed contentedly, loving looking at her every chance that he got. Her porcelain skin was illuminated, almost as if the moon shone just to show Naruto how perfect it was.

However, even with the sight of this, his mind couldn't get off the conversation he had with Sasuke. Naruto said too much about Hinata and his family; he made it seem like he didn't love them. Really, that's not what he meant. It's just simply the fact none of this was planned, but it's not like he could get mad at Hinata or Boruto or Himawari for how things turned out.

Naruto closed his eyes, and a flood of memories from high school flowed in, gently encroaching on his thoughts.

Shikamaru had just scolded him for his performance on his last test.

"How did you even mess up that badly?" he asked, sighing. He held up Naruto's test in the artificial light, almost as if he kept looking at it something would change.

Naruto sheepishly smiled, scratching his head before replying, "I'm just really bad at taking tests... I can never really focus, y'know?"

"I know that you can't focus during class. I mean, all you do is bounce in your seat and randomly blurt out things. But this is a test, Naruto," Shikamaru told him. "You need to do well on these."

"I know," Naruto frowned. "But I'm doing the makeup test. Hopefully my mom doesn't find out."

Thoughts of Kushina finding out that Naruto got such a low score terrified him. "You'll help me study, right?"

Shikamaru sighed for so long that Naruto was slightly concerned, before answering, "Yeah, whatever."

"Thanks! Maybe we can get a study group for everyone who failed and-"

"No, because I know you. You'd get distracted the second I take my eyes off of you," Shikamaru replied. "Don't you remember the last time that we had a study group?"

Naruto pondered, before answering, "You mean when we broke Neji's window? He said it's fine and it's all fixed now. It was an accident, really."

Shikamaru shook his head. "We were supposed to be studying. Studying, Naruto. How do you go from studying from a book to smashing a window?"

"You have to take study breaks, obviously," he shook his head. "And it happened during said study break."

"You're hopeless."

Naruto continued eating lunch, chatting with his friends before the bell rang and he started packing up to leave and go back to class. Right as he put on his backpack, his girlfriend walked up to him.
Hinata usually sat with her friends, a few tables away from Naruto, but the two always walked to class together.

"Oh, uhm, Naruto... After school, could we walk home together? I have something important to talk to you about..." Hinata trailed off. She stood in front of Naruto, clearly bothered by something. The cafeteria was bustling with kids getting ready to leave, all of them talking loudly to their friends, so no one overheard Hinata.

"Sure!" Naruto replied, smiling, before taking her hand and walking down the crowded hallways. He wondered what it could be; she seemed tense, but Naruto wouldn't doubt that she was fretting over nothing, the way she typically did.

The two of them met up after school ended, and started walking home, with no one else around them. Naruto was rambling on about how he didn't do well on a test, but Shikamaru promised to help him study when he got the chance. He kept rambling on until he realized that Hinata wasn't exactly responding. "Hinata...?" he asked. "Is something the matter?"

"Well... um... I was going to wait till we got to your house to tell you..." she replied, looking upset.

"Tell me what?" Naruto asked. His brow furrowed as he tried thinking about what it was. Was she upset that he ate the last pack of ramen at her house? No, it wouldn't be that. Hinata didn't even eat it that much. Was she upset that he forgot their six month? It hadn't been six months yet, right? That was in a few days. No, it couldn't possibly be that.

"I'm pregnant."

Naruto stopped walking, stunned. "Eh... you're joking, right?"

"No, I'm not."

Naruto paused, deep in thought. "But..." he started, but trailed off again. "You're serious?"

"Yes, Naruto. I found out this morning," Hinata answered.

"Um... what do we do then?" he asked. "Do you want the kid?"

"Don't you?" she asked.

Naruto looked at her as a few cars passed by, before answering, "Hinata, it's not like I don't like kids. One day, I want to have a really big family! But for now, I mean... we're still in high school. We're kids ourselves, y'know? I don't know if right now is the right time,"

"Maybe it's not the right time, but it is happening," Hinata answered. "I wouldn't want to give it up..."

Naruto cringed visibly, before sighing. "Let's get home and talk about this more, then. We're going to have to tell both of our parents, and then we'll have to just..."

Naruto snapped back to the present. Hinata laid at his side, warmth radiating from her. Naruto ran a hand through her hair, sighing. What it all came down to was that she wanted the kid right there and then, and wasn't willing to get rid of it or wait, and Naruto didn't want to convince her otherwise. Or rather, he couldn't without seeming rude and oppressive. Neither of their parents were in love with the idea, but saw that Hinata was serious about it and couldn't convince her otherwise of it.

"Are you really about to have a kid?" Shikamaru had asked him when the news broke. "It just seems
like... I don't know. It's not the right time."

Naruto sighed, as the two of them sat on Naruto's couch, playing video games. "That's what I said, too. But it's not exactly my decision, I guess."

"Hm..." Shikamaru trailed off, deep in thought. "It's not exactly my place to say this, but you should try to voice your opinion more. A kid is serious business. If you don't speak up now, things could only get worse for you."

"It's already been decided, though," Naruto frowned. "It's not like I don't want this kid. I would love a mini-me running around. It's just, because of this, I don't think I can even go to college now. I'll have to go to work and try supporting Hinata at the same time. It's not a good idea to have a kid now,"

Shikamaru sighed. "What a drag."

Sakura, on the other hand, had the same reaction, except with more yelling and hitting. Typical.

"You idiot!" Sakura shouted at nearly the top of her lungs. "What were you thinking, Naruto? Let me guess! You weren't thinking at all?"

"Sakura, please," Naruto tried calming her down. "You're getting too worked up over this-"

Sakura hit him again, in shock. "I'm getting too worked up over this? You're having a kid, Naruto! A kid! And you act as if I'm the one overreacting? You're about to sacrifice the rest of your life to some baby that you could just eliminate now. No one said you don't ever have to have kids, but what in your stupid mind makes you think that you have to have one now?"

Naruto rubbed his arm, still in pain. "I don't want to, Sakura, but I can't say no! She already made up her mind. It's like I don't even have a voice in any of this,"

"Then speak up already! What're you gonna do, hurt her feelings?" Sakura was fuming, clearly pissed, and with good reason.

"I just really like her, and I don't think-" Naruto started, but was interrupted.

"Naruto, unless you really like her enough to spend the rest of your life with her, then I don't want to hear it! You're a kid yourself, and you're trying to start a family? Do you realize how ridiculous you sound?" Sakura asked him. "Well? Do you? You need Hinata to give this kid up. She needs a reality check if she thinks having a kid so young is a good idea."

"Well, uhm, her family is going to help us, so that's good at least," Naruto told her.

"Why don't they just raise the damn baby while they're at it! God. What a spoiled rich kid," Sakura grimaced. Although she didn't mind Hinata, she hated seeing how privileged she was all the time. How pristine and perfect her life seemed. Like she never had to lift a finger for much.

"It took a lot of convincing for her parents to allow it-"

"Ah, but that's where your argument ends. They still allowed it," Sakura pointed out. "Listen, Naruto. You aren't going to college. You're going to end up working a job you hate for long hours and little pay, when you have the opportunity to do so much more. And for what? Because Hinata wanted a kid? Because she wants to be a stay at home mom? She's just some high school crush and we both know it. You'd be over her next month if it wasn't for this baby. So stop just letting this happen and actually do something about it."
Naruto would mull over her words, but never do much about it. When he did try to bring it up to Hinata, he was promptly shut down in a matter of seconds it seemed. And so, Boruto was born. Hinata wanted a second child shortly after, and convinced Naruto of it. And now they lived, renting a house, all four of them together. And something about it didn't sit right with Naruto.

Maybe some truth did hold in those words said so many years ago.
Sasuke sat in his car, yawning. He was currently on the look out for people speeding, but everyone was going at somewhat of an acceptable speed, meaning that Sasuke would just have to sit and wait. He was in the middle of eating a quick snack (a simple granola bar and a bottle of water from home), and was counting down the minutes till he could leave and eventually go home. He knew he'd have to pull over a few people, but perhaps the spot he picked was too obvious. On the other hand, he disliked when police officers hid, out of sight till the last minute, meaning practically an instant ticket.

It was a slow day so far, and he was in the mood to go drink some wine and read a book. Maybe even take a hot bath instead of taking a long, hot shower. The idea of the hot steam coming up, the smell of some lavender from the body wash he used, and some quiet music playing in the background sounded like heaven. He could almost imagine himself there right now.

He stretched his legs, snapping back to reality. He started looking away from the road and off to the side, where a forest began. Even watching a slight breeze blow some leaves around was better than looking for someone to ticket. Trees rose up from the ground, tall and thin, their branches and leaves swaying with the breeze. A few, somewhat unkempt bushes created a border between the road and the forest. Sasuke saw a small, brown bunny hopping around, before hiding behind said bushes and disappearing from sight. It rustled a few leaves as it did so, but then everything went back to normal. Sasuke proceeded to glance back at the road, when he saw it.

An orange car going about 20 miles over the speed limit, clearly in a hurry, or just a reckless driver. This is who Sasuke would pull over. He turned on his lights and sirens, and started following the car until they pulled off to the side, coming to a complete stop. Sasuke got out of his car, turning the sirens and lights off beforehand.

He walked over to the driver's side of the car, walking confidentially. He grimaced at the color of the car alone; it was an obnoxious orange, and practically hurt Sasuke's eyes to look at the eyesore. He didn't know why companies even bothered manufacturing cars odd colors, or why people even bothered buying them to begin with. They must regret it, right? To be the owner of such an ugly car? He shook the thought from his mind before halting next to the driver's door, leaning down, and asking, "Do you know why I pulled you over?" before locking eyes with who he had pulled over.

"Oh man," Naruto grinned, running a hand through his brightly colored hair. It was no surprise to Sasuke that everything in his life was obnoxiously colored. He would wonder if it was all planned, if it weren't for the fact Naruto had no say in his genetics. "This is awkward, isn't it? Sorry, I know I was goin' a lil' fast. I know you're probably not in the mood to hear any excuse, it's just that I needed to get gas before I went to work, and the time slipped away from me, so I had to rush."

"Naruto?" Sasuke asked, a bit stunned and taken off guard, half hearing the words coming out of Naruto's mouth.

"Wish I could say nice to see you. It's been like a month, where have you been?" he asked, as if they weren't a civilian and police officer, but rather two friends.

"What, trying to get your way out of a ticket by sweet talking me, dobe?" Sasuke teased as he crossed his arms over his uniform, his head tilting to the side. "You're going to have to work a lot harder than that."

"Oh, please. If I really wanted to get out of this ticket, and if I was also single, I'd be down on my knees right now with you in front of me," Naruto snorted. "You'd be getting the blow job of your
life. You know, I can't resist a man in uniform."

Sasuke's heart rate increased as he became flustered, and he could feel his face get hot as he thought about it, but he snapped out of it. "You talk big, but I doubt it seeing as how you've been with just about one girl, ever, loser. Continuing, I don't eat out often, so chances are I won't see you often."

"You won't see me often unless you pull me over and threaten me with a ticket, I see," Naruto shook his head. "Really, though. We're friends, so I can get you discounts, y'know. Just ask for me next time you come to Ichiraku."

Friends? Sasuke thought to himself. It startled him. He never willingly talked to anyone unless he really had to, the only company he had being Itachi. Even the few friends he had, he never really saw. The last time that he even spent time with Deidara or Sasori was last Christmas, when he was forced against his will. Even then, he ended up leaving early.

He liked being detached from society, being private and secluded, and yet here Naruto was, seeming to force his way into everything.

"That sounds like you're bribing me. Continuing, don't go so fast over the speed limit, dobe," Sasuke warned him, his arms still crossed. "I'm giving you a warning, but if I have to pull you over again, I won't hesitate to give you a ticket."

Naruto grinned, before replying. "No promises. See you around, Sasuke."

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Sasuke stretched as he stood, taking in the relief of clocking out of work. He could picture it now: hot bath, wine, a good book, some cheese. He'd even do his laundry, and fall asleep on fresh, crisp sheets. A perfect night to a not so perfect day. It was in his grasps, so near he could almost feel the water rushing over him, with its smooth, methodical way. The texture of the pages rubbing against his fingertips as he gently turned each page in the bathtub. Lavender smelling up the bathroom in conjunction with the wine.

He put on his jacket, taking his keys out of his pocket and walking out of the building. He was almost at the door when he someone stood in front of him, and he met eyes with his mentor.

Sasuke would be stuck there for at least another ten minutes.

"Kakashi," he nodded politely.

"Ah, Sasuke, there you are," Kakashi nodded. "I haven't gotten the chance to speak to you lately. Are you busy right now?"

"Not exactly."

"How about some coffee?"

And so, Sasuke's plans were pushed into the future. The two of them went to a local coffee place down the road, Sasuke getting a black coffee with a splash of milk. Kakashi and him talked for a bit about work, before finally, Kakashi spoke up.

"You seem out of it today. I called your name three times earlier and you didn't even hear me," Kakashi noted.

Sasuke cringed, not noticing his mental absence. "I was assessing my plans for later. I was
distracted."

Kakashi eyed him down, before replying, "Oh? That seems unlike you. There isn't anything you're withholding from me, I assume."

"What would I be withholding?" Sasuke was quick to retort. Too quick.

"Ah. So there is something unnerving the great Sasuke Uchiha. Now, do I get the privilege of just finding out what it is, or do I have to go on the hunt to find out what's bothering you?" Kakashi asked. His black eyes teased Sasuke, the only facial feature actually visible on his face, meaning that every emotion was either conveyed through his voice or eyes. A doctor's mask covered his mouth and nose, meaning that everything he drank was typically from a straw, or just out of sight of the public. It was an odd habit that Sasuke never understood, but didn't bother questioning.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Sasuke tried casually replying. "Nothing is new in my life."

Kakashi was quiet for a moment, sipping on his coffee, before replying, "So I'm going to have to hunt down this new information?"

"If you think there is new information, then go ahead."

- -

"Table for two. Could I request a waiter?"

It was half an hour till closing time. Sasuke gave up on his dreams of a hot bath; at this point, he'd fall asleep in the tub before he even got the chance to crack open his book or take a sip of wine. He didn't want to take his chances in the off chance he passed out and drowned, so he opted to not do it. It was a disappointment, but perhaps tomorrow he would. In the meantime, he knew he was hungry, and decided to take Naruto up on his offer.

And so, he found himself standing in the entryway of Ichiraku, hoping Naruto was there so he didn't look stupid.

"Request a waiter?" The hostess asked, slightly confused. "It is a slow night, after all... did you have someone in mind?"

"Is Naruto Uzumaki here?"

The hostess smiled, flashing her pearly whites at him before replying, "Ah, you're friends with Naruto? He's so much fun to be around! He has a free table, so right this way,"

Sasuke followed her, sitting down in a booth. She placed a menu in front of him, and told him Naruto would be with him in a minute.

Was this a regret? Should he just leave now? Sasuke pondered this as he glanced at the menu, although he felt as though he had it memorized from the last time he ate there. He hoped that no one from his last visit to Ichiraku would see him and take pity on him; with two menus on the table, but only him alone, it felt as though it was a re-run of the last time. At the same time, he knew he was over thinking all of this. No one would care if he was here alone to begin with. What were the odds anyone remembered him to begin with, besides the waitress who kept asking him if he was ready to order?

"Sasuke!"
His head turned, only to see Naruto barreling towards him. He was like a hyperactive puppy, always excited about this thing or the next. It exhausted Sasuke to see Naruto even look so full of energy, bouncing up and down like he was a little kid.

"I assume you get out soon?" Sasuke asked him, closing his menu.

"Yep! It closes in less than half an hour. I'm doing a closing shift, so it might be a bit more than that. You down for dinner after?"

"Fine by me. I'll be waiting here. Same meal as last time."

"Alright, cool, I'll try and make it quick."

Sasuke slurped the thick noodles, splashing a bit of the broth onto the table as he did so. Naruto's coworkers insisted he go eat with Sasuke, so the two sat across from each other, enjoying a late night dinner. The sounds of everyone bustling around, trying to get the place ready to leave filled the restaurant, some music playing loudly.

"So, anything new with you?" Naruto asked Sasuke in-between bites. His outfit was disheveled and unbuttoned, a few tiny stains here and there.

Sasuke barely had to think about his answer. "Not exactly."

"Ah, a man of few words. Really? Is nothing different?" Naruto questioned.

"I was going to have wine, read, and take a bath tonight but I was sidetracked by my mentor, so I ended up coming here. So, you can have him to thank."

"A bath, huh? I wish I could take one of those and relax. Boruto and Himawari like to splash and make a mess, so it's a quick in and out with them," Naruto remarked.

"You know, if you don't seem to be too happy, why are you even with them?"

Naruto paused eating, before looking uncomfortable. "What do you mean by not too happy? I love my girlfriend and our kids, really."

"It just feels like every time you mention them, it's a complaint," Sasuke replied.

Naruto laughed a bit, but Sasuke knew it was somewhat of a fake laugh. "That's just part of being a dad, though. Sure, sometimes they'll get on my nerves or bother me a bit, but I still love them with all my heart. If I were to love them all the time, then that wouldn't be realistic."

Sasuke was quiet for a minute, before telling him, "I don't exactly mesh well with people. If something I said bothered you, then it wasn't my intention. I'm-"

"Sasuke, you don't have to apologize for speaking your mind." Naruto told him. "Really. I appreciate you telling me your honest opinion, even if it's something I don't agree with. It'd be boring if you just agreed with everything I tell you."

Sasuke didn't say much, still eating his ramen. There was an awkward tension to the air, even though Naruto tried to remedy it. Eventually, he replied, "If you say so."

Sasuke proceeded to distract Naruto, telling him about his police work. "The other day, one of my coworkers, Neji-"
"Hyuga?" Naruto finished, eyes bright.

"Yes, actually. Do you know him?" Sasuke asked, surprised.

Naruto nodded. "That's Hinata's cousin. We're super close with him! I should've made the connection and realized that the two of you work together,"

The two of them continued to talk over their food until they finished and had to leave. They walked outside to their cars, about to say their goodbyes before Naruto exclaimed, "Wait! Before I forget, I need your number."

"Who said I wanted to give it to you?" Sasuke asked.

"Just open up your contacts and add me already," Naruto half whined. "I want to go home, but also not have to suffer through wondering when's the next time that fate's gonna bring us together, y'know?"

"Fate, huh?" Sasuke mused. "Fine, whatever."

The two exchanged numbers, before Naruto looked at the time, and exclaimed, "Is it that late already? Hinata expected me home almost an hour ago,"

"You should probably go, then." Sasuke replied. "Also, don't text me anything unnecessary."

"No promises," he answered, before hopping into his orange car. Sasuke got into his BMW and headed off, trying his best to keep his eyes open. He struggled, knowing the second he got home he'd most likely pass out. He knew he still had to shower and change his clothes, however, as well as throw his clothes in the laundry. He groaned, as he gripped the steering wheel tighter, wishing he had left earlier, even though he knew that wasn't exactly a possibility.

That night, as he drifted off to sleep, he received one message. Thirteen emojis, ranging from hearts to heart eyes to kissy faces. In the middle of it all, the words, "Goodnight Sasuke!!! Sleep well!!".
Chapter 4

Sasuke sat at his house on a Saturday night, already in his pajamas. A loose tee and some old knee length shorts adorned his body in a casual manner, exposing his pale skin. Surprisingly, for once, he didn't have much to do, meaning that he was currently sitting in front of the TV. Bored.

He didn't have any book to read, nor paperwork to do. It would be a waste to cook, seeing as how he had enough food already made in the fridge. He was restless, unsure of what to do, really. Itachi was most likely busy, and the two didn't do much to begin with besides eat and go out for a few hours tops. Sasuke sat, disgruntled, trying to figure it out, when his savior happened to call him.

"Sasuke! What're you up to?" Naruto asked, loudly. Sasuke ripped the phone away from his ear, before turning the volume down to accommodate for Naruto's yelling.

What could he be up to? Sasuke pondered, before replying, "Not particularly much."

"Great! My friends just asked me if I wanted to go out to dinner, maybe do something afterwards? I know it's going to take a lot to get you to come along, so before you say no, let me offer a deal-"

"I'm in."

The phone was silent for a few moments. Sasuke actually turned the volume back up, wondering what was wrong. Naruto finally responded with, "Seriously? Am I talking to Sasuke? Sasuke Uchiha? Hair that looks like it has half a container of hair gel in it at all times, black eyes that could pierce someone's soul? That Sasuke?"

"The one and only, dobe. I said I'm in. Is there something wrong with my answer?"

"No, not at all! Um, I just wasn't expecting you to agree so quickly. That's all! Here, we're going to be meeting at the restaurant off of Chamberlain Street. It's on the corner of Chamberlain and Main, with the green neon sign. Do you know which one I'm talking about?"

"Yes, I know where it is. What time should I arrive?" Sasuke asked, as he started to stand up, knowing he could never go out in his pajamas. Although they were comfortable and breathable, he'd need something more appropriate.

"Roughly an hour from now, at 6? Is that an alright time?" Naruto sounded like he was still at his house, the sounds of Boruto yelling in the background coming over the phone and into Sasuke's ear.

"It's fine. Should I pick you up since your house is on the way?"

"I think you're just saying that because you wanna show off with your fancy car," Naruto remarked. Sasuke could nearly feel Naruto's stupid smile over the phone.

Sasuke smirked, before replying, "Or, I don't want anyone to be forced to see that hideous rusty orange color you thought is an acceptable color for a car."

"Fine, fine, say what you want. If you're going to insist so much about it, then fine, pick me up. But I pick the music," Naruto declared.

"You can pick one song, Naruto. No blasting it above 20, either. We're on a strict 15 and under volume limit here."
"Only 15? It's like you're trying to punish me!"

"Yeah, yeah. See you in an hour, dobe."

"See ya! Thanks!"

Sasuke ended the call, walking into his bedroom and tossing his phone onto the bed gently. He didn't know how fancy or casual to dress; if it was just a gathering of friends at some average restaurant off of Main Street, then nothing upscale would be necessary. He rummaged through his closet, pulling out what he deemed to be acceptable.

50 minutes later, he pulled into Naruto's driveway, giving a single honk of his horn to alert Naruto and inform him that he was there. Naruto flashed the porch light, indicating he heard it, leaving Sasuke to wait for him. He was sporting some sleek, black pants, along with a black hoodie tied around his waist and a gray long sleeve button up. He deemed it acceptable, and felt it the perfect showcase of casual.

Naruto sprinted out of the house a few minutes later. Sasuke only really saw him in his waiter's outfit, so this would be his first time seeing Naruto in real clothes. Sasuke saw in the headlights he picked out some dark pants, a gray cardigan, and a white undershirt. It was... normal. He was expecting something odd, but Naruto's outfit was as neutral as Sasuke's.

"Hey, sorry for taking so long," Naruto apologized as he opened the car door. "Boruto kept pulling on me, trying to get me to stay, even though I told him like a week in advance that I'd be going out tonight."

"Hn," Sasuke started reversing out of the driveway. "So what made you invite me?"

Naruto was quiet for a moment, his head tilted to the side, before he answered, "You're never doing anything, so I thought you would've gotten lonely. I know you'd never invite yourself anywhere, so I asked you to come to dinner with me and some friends."

"But why ask me now, an hour before it begins?" Sasuke wanted to know, looking over to Naruto as they sat at a red light. "I could have easily said no, dobe."

"Well, if I asked you in advance, you woulda had all that time to cancel on me. If I asked you the day of, chances were you'd say yes," Naruto pointed out. "And look, you did."

Was he really that predictable? Could Naruto see through him that easy after such a short period of time? Sasuke looked over to Naruto, but he didn't seem particularly interested in the conversation, currently setting up his phone to play a song. "Nothing too loud," he reminded him.

"Yeah, yeah grandma, I got it," Naruto replied, scrolling through his phone, before finally clicking on something. Music started coming through the speakers; some drums and a guitar in a rather plain fashion. It took Sasuke a moment, but eventually he asked, "Red Hot Chili Peppers? Really?"

"Give It Away is a classic! You can't tell me you don't like it," Naruto objected, before turning the volume up to 14. Right on the border of acceptable, Sasuke noted.

The two of them drove, chatting about this thing and the next; however, it was a short ride down to the restaurant. Naruto's house wasn't too far away from the city center, and Sasuke pulled into the parking lot right as the song was ending. He cut the engine on nearly the final few seconds, getting out with Naruto and walking to the entrance.

The sun was going down, almost completely gone at this point. Street lamps twinkled, the reds and
greens from street lights coming in here and there. Sasuke was glad he brought his hoodie; he could see his breath, despite it not being winter just yet. A cold snap was beginning, he assumed.

"Sakura! Sakura!" Naruto called out as they got to the front of the restaurant. A pink haired girl turned around and met eyes with Naruto, smiling a bit. She walked over to Sasuke and Naruto, eyeing Sasuke as she did so. She wore a tight red dress, with white trimming here and there, as well as some heels that clacked and echoed out into the parking lot as she walked over. "Where's Shikamaru?"

"He texted me and said that he'd be a minute late," she answered. "I'm surprised you even managed to make it on time. Who's this?" Sakura asked, making eye contact with Sasuke. She looked to be the same age as both Sasuke and Naruto.

"This is my friend, Sasuke! He's joining us tonight," Naruto replied. "Sasuke, Sakura. Sakura, Sasuke," he quickly introduced the two.

"Nice to meet you," Sakura told him.

"Likewise."

"Let's go get a table while we wait," Sakura told them. They all walked into the restaurant, getting a booth. Sasuke and Naruto sat next to each other, with Sakura across from them. The host laid down four sets of utensils, alongside the menu, and said she'd be back with four cups of water.

"So, what do you do?" Sakura asked Sasuke, as she adjusted herself in her seat.

"Police officer." Sasuke answered as he cracked open his menu. "And you?"

"Sakura's the coolest! She's a nurse!" Naruto answered for her, not touching his menu yet. "She's the best at her job!"

"Naruto, I'm just a nurse," Sakura replied, smiling slightly. Her face became slightly red as she blushed at the compliment. "I don't know if I'm the best,"

"Party already started?" Shikamaru asked, before sitting down next to Sakura. "Did you guys order yet?"

"No, not yet. Here are the drinks, though," Sakura replied, as four glasses of ice water were placed in front of them.

"My name's Krystal, and I'll be your waitress for tonight. Do you need some more time to decide what to order?" The waitress asked, smiling at all of them. Everyone nodded, prompting her to say, "Alright, no problem! Take your time,"

"Just ice water? No drinks?" Shikamaru joked, before Sakura rolled her eyes.

"If you want to drink like we're seventeen again, then do it. Just don't come running to me when you have the worst hangover of your life," she told Shikamaru. "Some of us are over that period in our lives,"

"Hmph... Oh, yeah, I forgot to ask. Naruto, I assume that this your friend?" Shikamaru asked, gesturing to Sasuke.

"Yep! Shikamaru, this is Sasuke. He's a cop and has no friends, so I decided to invite him out," Naruto replied.
"I have friends," Sasuke answered coolly, flipping through the menu.

Naruto tilted his head. "Where are they, then?"

"Just because we're friends doesn't mean I like them." Sasuke answered. "Anyways, you better know what you want to eat. I don't want to sit here starving because you spent your time questioning me instead of looking at the menu."

Shikamaru and Sakura laughed as Naruto grumbled, looking at his menu, flipping through the pages in a hurried fashion.

The rest of the dinner went smoothly; Sasuke enjoyed the company of Shikamaru and Sakura. Shikamaru was intelligent, respectful, and funny. Sakura was loud, passionate, and overall nice to be around. They both welcomed Sasuke into the group like he had been there for years, seamlessly. The table ordered drinks, although Sasuke wasn't too up for drinking much, seeing as how he had to drive himself and Naruto home. Meaning that Naruto drank as much as he pleased all thanks to Sasuke. It was agreed Sasuke would also drive Sakura and Shikamaru home, so the three could drink.

"I gotta go use the bathroom; I'll be right back," Naruto told them. He got up and walked off towards the bathroom, a tiny bit of a stumble forming as he walked off.

"So, how did you meet Naruto?" Sakura asked Sasuke, her finger tracing the edge of a cocktail glass.

We met at Ichiraku's," Sasuke answered. "He ordered me food, and we ate together. Since then, I haven't been able to get him off me."

"Sounds like Naruto," Shikamaru noted, laughing. "I didn't expect Naruto to invite anyone else out."

"I didn't even think he'd be able to come out tonight," Sakura rolled her eyes. "All that time with Boruto, Himawari and Hinata is overwhelming him."

Sasuke noted her reaction, but said nothing. "He's a dad, though. We've been dealing with this since high school," Shikamaru pointed out. "Sometimes he just can't go out."

"Yeah, except as of late it feels like she's keeping him on a shorter and shorter leash. He's cancelled plans with us two times in a row now because of Hinata," Sakura told Sasuke. "Do you know her?"

"I know of her." Sasuke answered. "Naruto likes to rant about his family life."

Shikamaru looked at him quizically, before asking, "Really? Every time he mentions her, it's always how great his life with her is. I don't think I've heard him complain too much about her, or his life in general."

"That's probably because he's known us since they got together," Sakura rolled her eyes again. "He knows we're not here for him to complain about a situation he created for himself."

"How did he manage to create this problem for himself?" Sasuke asked, curious.

Shikamaru looked off to the side, groaning. "Alright, since you didn't know Naruto and Hinata in high school, the short story is they were nothing serious. At all. Just a fling that turned into her getting pregnant. We all told him not to have the kid, but she fought for it, and hard. I think she guilted him into it," he explained. "And Naruto, being the nice guy he is, was alright with this and became fixated on the idea it was equally their faults, so he should own up to it."
"Except then it turned into her having a baby and Naruto working the same job since high school," Sakura explained. "Really; he was too nice and Hinata took advantage of it. But you didn't hear it from me,"

"Interesting. I told Naruto if he's so miserable, why not separate from her, and that's when he began to get extremely defensive," Sasuke informed them.

"It just really sucks to see someone you care about so much in such a shitty situation," Shikamaru shrugged. "I wish there was something we could do about it."

Sasuke silently agreed with this sentiment; to see Naruto like this was vaguely upsetting, but if Naruto didn't want to stand up for himself, what was Sasuke to do?

"Back!" Naruto called out, throwing himself down next to Sasuke. He picked up his water glass and chugged it, balancing the alcohol he drank with water, as per Sakura's request. "What'd you talk about while I was gone?"

"Wouldn't you like to know," Sakura joked.

Sasuke looked around, seeing everyone was just about done eating. "So, is that it for tonight? Should we get the bill and go?" he asked.

"Hmm, I'm still thinking about dessert," Naruto replied, sloppily taking the dessert menu from the center of the booth.

The group talked for a bit more, Naruto ordering some cheesecake for dessert. Sasuke was starting to get a bit tired, due to the fact this was the most social event he had been to in a while. Just talking this much wore him out, which he thought was downright pathetic.

Sakura and Naruto were in the middle of arguing over a petty detail to a childhood story when a piece of cake was placed down in front of Sasuke. "What's this for?" he asked, but looked up only to see several employee's crowding around him, smiles on their face.

Naruto sat across from him at the table, grinning. Sasuke opened his mouth to say something, but was interrupted by the crowd of employees suddenly singing happy birthday to him rather loudly. They all clapped at the end, telling him happy birthday, before quickly running off to get back to work.

"Happy birthday, man," Naruto laughed. "It's everything you wanted, right?"

"You're dead, Naruto." Sasuke glared at him, his eyes narrowing. "You're a dead man walking."

"Yeah, yeah. Say what you want, but I just got you free cake. If you don't want it that badly, then give it over here and I'll eat it," Naruto told him.

"So this was all a ploy for you to get free cake?" Sasuke asked, as Sakura and Shikamaru couldn't help but burst out laughing from across the table.

"It's for you, but if you don't want it that badly..." Naruto trailed off, before snatching it away from Sasuke. "Thanks, man!" He shoved his face with cake, making a mess as he did so.

Sasuke debated on crashing the car and killing all four of them, but the idea of sleeping in on a Sunday appealed to him more. Just slightly.
It all began over a text.

Sasuke's phone sat atop of Itachi's desk, while Sasuke himself sat across from Itachi, only half comfortable in the cheap seat. It was a typical week day. The two were at the station, having a casual conversation about work, intertwined with bits and pieces of personal affairs. The sun was pouring into the office, hurting Sasuke's eyes, as per usual. It was then that he heard his phone buzz, and saw Itachi glance down at it, curious.

"Ah. Who's this Naruto?" he asked, his midnight eyes peering at the phone's text. "You haven't mentioned him."

"No one," Sasuke answered, reaching for his phone, but Itachi was quicker, picking it up and reading off the text out loud, bemused.

"Hey slut :* <3 you want to come join me for dinner tonight? ;") Itachi read off, unable to keep a straight face while he did so.

"It's not what it looks like. He's a straight main with a girlfriend and kids."

"Oh, so you're a home wrecker?" Itachi asked, amused. "Cute."

Sasuke was going to throttle Naruto.

"He thinks we're gay for each other?" Naruto asked later the same day, over a bowl of ramen. The two sat at their usual booth, slurping their usual orders. Sasuke felt that it only got better and better each time he had it, which to him, sounded like stockholm syndrome. "That's hilarious! God, do you even like anyone or anything to begin with? I can't imagine you with anyone."

"Not particularly," Sasuke answered. "Relationships are more effort than they're worth. People are annoying and selfish."

"Have you ever been with anyone?" Naruto asked.

"People come and go, but I wouldn't say that I've dated. If you're asking if I've ever initiated a date, then no, I haven't. I don't particularly enjoy others and their desire to show me off like I'm some sort of trophy or award."

"Come and go?" Naruto asked, hung up on the first few words, looking slightly upset.

Sasuke looked up, seeing Naruto look down into his ramen. Did he think he was included in this idea? "I wish you'd come and go already, but you've latched yourself into my life and I can't figure out how to get you to leave."

"Can't get rid of me that easy," Naruto smiled, bouncing back rather easily.

That was the thing with Naruto: he got it. Sasuke didn't have a filter around him particularly. Naruto was a stranger that he just ended up meeting due to a certain set of circumstances, and because of this, Sasuke didn't have any image to upkeep. He could tell Naruto about how work was going and
be brutally honest about it. How he was fed up with his neighbors at his apartment, and was half convinced to mess with them dressed in uniform. How he saw the cutest kitten in the world the other day and managed to snap a picture. Or, even how Sasuke's older brother thought the two of them were gay for each other.

In return, Naruto would laugh and talk to Sasuke about his issues, as well as be brutally honest about his life as well. How tired he was all the time it felt as of late, and how his body was aching. How Boruto and Himawari were doing (Boruto was frustrating to deal with, Himawari was as cute as could be. This was all from Naruto's genes, of course). How he was tired of coming home and Hinata not doing something like save him enough food for dinner, or not sweep the floors after the kids had played outside all day so the house was messy and disorganized. How he was thinking about buying a new camera but also had to set aside money for things like Christmas and birthdays, as well as bills of course.

Sometimes they wouldn't talk for a few days. Sometimes all they could do was text each other back and forth about god knows what for hours at a time. Sasuke's favorite was when they ate dinner together, however, face to face at Ichiraku. The conversations came easy, with no awkward silences, really. The two simply enjoyed each other's company, and would both head home to their own places at the end of the night.

There's no way that Sasuke could ever be in love with Naruto. They were just... friends.

The next day, Sasuke slept in a bit. It was a lazy day, and he didn't have to go to work. He turned on the radio quietly before doing a few chores around the house. He finished right before dinner, nothing particularly on his mind, besides what he would have to eat.

Sasuke had entirely forgot about the conversation him and Itachi had until the moment that there was a knock at his apartment door. Kakashi and Itachi stood, waiting.

"Good evening, Sasuke," Itachi greeted him. "Would you like to join Kakashi and I? We're going to the bar."

"Fine," Sasuke replied, knowing that he couldn't say no. "Give me a minute."

"Take your time," Itachi responded.

And so, Sasuke found himself sitting between Itachi and Kakashi at the bar, a glass of beer in front of him. Kakashi and Itachi were making small talk, before Kakashi asked, "So, who's this Naruto?"

"What about him?" Sasuke asked, leaning back.

"I'm just curious about him. You know, I heard that you're becoming somewhat of a home wrecker."

"When will that title go away?" Sasuke asked, before taking a sip of his beer.

"Well, when you're this vague about a situation, then people tend to draw conclusions on their own," Kakashi pointed out. "So, how about you go ahead and enlighten us on the situation?"

"Fine, if it gets the two of you to shut up," Sasuke replied, before taking a deep breath. He decided on telling them the truth, for there was no reason to lie about who Naruto was. However, he had a feeling the two of them wouldn't be satisfied with the answer. "We met the night my date stood me up. He works as a waiter and got me a free meal. We have dinner every once and a while. That's all."

It was quiet for a moment, and Sasuke felt as though he could almost feel the two of them thinking.
"Sounds like you're withholding details," Itachi prodded. "So what you're saying is he's not your gay lover?"

"I told you. He's practically married. We're not dating, we're just simply fri-" Sasuke stopped himself, before realizing what he was about to say, in front of Itachi and Kakashi no less. If he had finished his sentence, god knows when they would ever let it down. "We're nothing," he quickly corrected himself, but he knew he wasn't fooling anyone.

"Friends?" Kakashi questioned. "You have a friend?"

"No, I don't. We aren't friends. He's a nuisance who won't leave me alone." Sasuke answered, shooting Kakashi a dirty look.

"If I recall, he asked you out to dinner last night, and you happily accepted it. Do you even like ramen?" Itachi asked. "I don't remember you particularly enjoying it."

"How did you know that I even went out?" Sasuke questioned. "And I do enjoy the ramen from Ichiraku."

"I know because you just told me." Itachi answered. "To think, my little brother has a crush on someone."

"A crush?" Sasuke choked. "I don't have a crush on him. Why would I like someone so stupid? So happy all the time, with a stupid smile on his face at all times? Honestly, he's like a damn puppy. It's like dealing with a damn golden retriever. He's so kind and sweet that it's sickening. I don't know how I even spend time in the same room as him."

Without missing a beat, Kakashi chimed in. "Sounds like someone has a crush."

* * *

"Table for two, please." Sasuke asked, Itachi next to him. A feeling of dread was building up in Sasuke, and had been building up ever since Itachi insisted that they go out to eat. Itachi suggested Ichiraku, and Sasuke couldn't deny the idea due to the fact it would seem as though he was trying to purposefully avoid Naruto. Maybe he shouldn't have told Kakashi and Itachi where they had met, however, it was part of the story of the two meeting, so he couldn't leave the detail out.

"Oh, Sasuke! So nice to see you! Would you like a table with Naruto? He's free, and I'm sure he'd be overjoyed to see you," the hostess smiled. Sasuke cringed internally, but nodded, knowing it wasn't her fault that she was just digging Sasuke's grave even deeper.

"Alright, right this way," she lead them to a booth in the corner, before telling them that Naruto would be right over.

"I see that they know you by name," Itachi nodded as he took everything in. "How cute."

"Just don't embarrass me," Sasuke rolled his eyes, not even opening his menu.

"Now, why would I do that?" Itachi smiled, teasing him.

Sasuke started getting uncomfortable; this wasn't the best idea. What would Itachi think of him? Fortunately, he didn't have to stay curious for too long. His favorite waiter came barrelling over, that dumb smile pasted across his face.
"Sasuke!!" Naruto exclaimed loudly, excited, getting a few looks from those nearby. "I didn't know that you'd be coming!" He looked over to Itachi, before tilting his head and asking, "There's another one of you?"

"This is my brother, Itachi." Sasuke introduced him.

"Pleasure to meet you," Itachi told Naruto, bemused.

"Oh man! It's so nice to meet you! I've heard a lot about you. All good things, though! Sasuke really likes you and never shuts up about you, y'know?" He told Itachi, before Sasuke shot him a death glare making him shut up. "Do you know what you guys want?"

"I do, Itachi probably needs a minute, however," Sasuke answered.

"I'll be back, then! Take your time!" Naruto smiled, before running off to his other tables.

Once he was out of earshot, Itachi couldn't help but chuckle. "So, this is him? You fell for him? He seems like an overgrown child."

"Just hurry up and decide what you want already."

Itachi scanned the menu, before silently deciding what he wanted. He closed his menu, before asking Sasuke, "So, I assume that you haven't met his girlfriend, is it?"

"No, I haven't, nor do I have any desire to." Sasuke answered.

"Very spiteful and bitter I see." Itachi pointed out. "She's your rival, so I can understand why."

Sasuke opened his mouth to retort what Itachi said, but was interrupted by Naruto coming back around to the table. "Do you still need more time?" he asked. Itachi shook his head no, and the Uchiha brothers ordered their food. Naruto said he'd get it out ASAP, before once again rushing off. Sasuke could see Itachi was curious, and was enjoying tormenting him way more than he should be.

"As you were saying?"

Sasuke would most likely be in handcuffs for attempting to murder Itachi by the end of the night.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it ends off like this, consider this kinda like a part 1 of this chapter.. I didn't have time to finish it due to school so I ended it here instead of not posting.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Early chapter because:

1. the last chapter was split in half due to the fact I didn't have time to finish it
2. a lot of y'all wanted to see the rest of it (also tysm for all the comments!!! they rly make me happy and help me a lot and make me more motivated to write)
3. I posted the first chapter on Naruto's birthday, 10/10/17, and today is 11/10/17 so it's a bit of an anniversary I guess...?
4. It's a bit of a thank you for all the support I've gotten <3
5. I've been writing like crazy for this, so I have a lot to post in case I don't have time to write in the future

anyways im gonna shut up hope u enjoy :*

"I've never met Hinata, but I don't exactly care for her." Sasuke told Itachi, as he made sure to talk quietly. His obsidian eyes flickered around the room, making sure that Naruto wasn't near them as he spoke. It seemed as though his opinion on Hinata was one that he couldn't be honest about in front of Naruto. Either that, or it was never brought up. Either or. "Based off of what Naruto has told me, I came to my own conclusions. It seems as if she guilted him into a family when they were in high school."

"What makes you say that?" Itachi asked, raising an eyebrow. "That's a bold accusation for someone who's only heard one side of the story. Naruto also has never explicitly said that, I presume."

"It's the way he talks about it all. He says that this isn't what he imagined when he was in high school, and that he barely thought of Hinata as more than a simple high school girlfriend. They hadn't even been together for more than half a year when she informed him that she was pregnant. She insisted on having the kid, and her parents relented after a bit. Naruto said that he objected to the idea, but in the end decided to stay with her since it was both of their faults," Sasuke explained. "His argument was that they were just in high school, and a child would put a hindrance on them. I'm not exactly what she said in return. Possibly just that she wanted to have the child, and if he didn't, then that would be fine and she would raise it by herself? I'm unsure."

"He should have put up more of a fight. It's clear that he's tricked himself into feeling happy. If he initially put up a fight, then it's evident he wasn't too keen on the idea of having a child. Furthermore, I can't imagine supporting so many people on a waiter's job is an easy task," Itachi frowned. "It seems selfish of her, to bring a life into this world like that. Knowing you, you most likely mentioned this. Am I correct?"

Sasuke nodded slightly, not exactly surprised that Itachi suggested this; after all, he most likely knew Sasuke better than anyone. "I told him every time he mentions his family, it seems to be a bit of a complaint. I asked why he was even still around, since he doesn't seem all that happy with how his life is going currently. He got defensive, saying that that was just part of being a parent, and he does genuinely love them. I'm not sure how true that is, but since neither of us are parents, I don't believe we can argue with that reasoning. I tried apologizing, but he insisted that it was not a problem and he appreciated me being honest with him."
"I can't blame him for getting defensive," Itachi replied. "But you? Apologizing?"

Sasuke proceeded to roll his eyes, not surprised that his brother was nit picking every single detail. Typical Itachi. "Continuing. I'm not the only one that thinks this,"

"I now see that you're not only becoming an apologetic person, but also somewhat of a gossipmonger. Who are these new friends that you keep finding?" Itachi asked, half teasing Sasuke. "The last time that I checked, I don't recall you to be one to gossip about something as miniscule such as this."

"I don't have friends," Sasuke objected. "Naruto invited me out to eat with his friends. Emphasis on his."

"And you accepted?"

"Stop acting as if this is surprising," Sasuke told Itachi.

"How can I not? I've never seen you this social. I do wish that Kakashi came so he could hear this," Itachi replied. "He won't believe me when I tell him in person. If I call you when I see him next, will you confirm over the phone?"

"Who's the gossipmonger now?" Sasuke retorted.

"Continue, tell me about your little dinner with all of your friends." Itachi brushed off the question, wanting to hear more details about the night.

"We went out to eat, and when he went off to the bathroom near the end of the night, his friends Sakura and Shikamaru asked me how we met. The topic of Hinata came up, and that's when Shikamaru told me how they were nothing serious. Sakura added how Naruto's simply too nice, and that Hinata took advantage of it, guilting him into the idea of having a family together." Sasuke recapped.

"It's not too unheard of," Itachi replied, "For a couple to get pregnant and stay together over the simple fact they're bringing a child into the world. I know you might not want to hear this, but Naruto might have fallen in love with Hinata over the course of their relationship. After all, they're still together now."

"I'm not saying it's unheard of. I'm simply stating that if three or more people are all drawing the same conclusions, we can't be getting the evidence from nowhere." Sasuke retorted, before spotting Naruto coming around the corner.

"Alright! Sasuke, here's your food, and Itachi, yours," Naruto called out as he smiled, placing the two bowls delicately in front of the two. "Do you two need anything else? I'll stop by in a second with refills on your water,"

"No, thank you. Take your time," Itachi answered, as he looked up at Naruto, a small smile on his face.

"Okay, will do! Hope you two enjoy!" Naruto told them, before walking off to his other tables. Sasuke's eyes lingered on him a second too long, and Naruto looked over his shoulder to see him staring. Sasuke got flustered, but Naruto simply grinned and waved at him a bit before continuing to walk off. When Sasuke looked up at Itachi, he simply gave him a knowing look.

* * *
Sasuke rounded the corner of the restaurant, going to start up his BMW and wait for Itachi as he used the bathroom. It was then that he overheard Naruto on the phone, sounding relatively tired and worn out.

"I told you that I'm working late tonight, though. I'm confident that I did, honey," Naruto insisted as he held his phone to his ear. "Well, could you put Boruto on the phone so I can say goodnight then...?" A pause. "Hinata. I really think you're blowing this out of proportion... I understand that you're stressed, but... I am sorry! I already said I'm sorry! It's just a miscommunication-" Another pause, this one more painful. Sasuke felt like wincing at the sheer stillness in the air. "...Okay. Fine. Goodnight."

Sasuke saw Naruto slide the phone in his pocket, before sighing and running a few fingers through his hair. He decided that he might as well come out and try to see what the issue was; he was standing a mere few feet away, after all.

"Naruto?" Sasuke gently asked.

Naruto whipped around, startled. "Oh! Um, h-hey Sasuke," he managed to feebly make out, trying to smile but it ultimately came off as relatively fake. " Didn't see you there. What's up? You two leaving now?"

Sasuke sighed for a prolonged period of time, before telling Naruto, "You don't have to put on an act around me. What are you even doing out here? Are you on break?"

Naruto was quiet for a moment, his smile fading, before replying, "I got a few missed calls from Hinata, so I came out here to call her back. I just don't really think that I should bother you with my petty personal issue."

"And yet you bother me with practically every other issue?" Sasuke raised his eyebrow.

Naruto laughed a bit, before replying, "I guess. What're you doing out here? And where's Itachi?"

Sasuke motioned towards the restaurant with a jerk of his head. "Using the bathroom. Also, I'll apologize in advance about the tip. Itachi insisted on it."

"Jeez, you act like getting more money is a bad thing," Naruto told Sasuke.

"If him and I don't leave by the time you go back in and see how much he left, you're going to shove it back at us," Sasuke warned Naruto. "I told him just because we know each other doesn't mean that he needs to leave an exorbitant amount of money as a tip."

"Well man, I appreciate it," Naruto smiled sheepishly.

There was a silence. Sasuke heard the distant, muffled chatter of the restaurant, as well as the sound of cars passing by in the front. He heard Naruto's uneven breathing, in and out again and again, but at an odd pace. He knew he couldn't just... leave him in this kind of state. "I'm not good at comforting people," he quietly began, grabbing Naruto's attention. "But would you care for... something?"

Sasuke could barely get the word something out before Naruto took two quick steps, wrapping his muscular arms around Sasuke and holding him tight, his head on Sasuke's shoulder. Sasuke felt his breathing slow down, becoming more and more even with each breath that he took. At first, he was startled at the sudden embrace. When he asked if Naruto wanted something, he meant a pat on the back or something to eat after work. Maybe grab a drink and have Sasuke drive him home. Instead, he found Naruto embracing him at nine at night in the dimly lit parking lot of Ichiraku's, no one but
them there. He felt tiny as he looked up and saw the night sky, dotted with stars twinkling down at
him. In that moment, it felt as though the universe consisted of them, and them only.

He slowly wrapped his arms around Naruto, not holding him nearly as tight as Naruto held him. He
smelt Naruto's shampoo and laundry detergent creeping up and invading his space, assaulting his
sense of smell. Naruto was extremely soft and delicate in this moment, Sasuke noted. He wasn't sure
if Naruto was going to cry, but assumed that he just craved a shoulder to lean on and nothing more.

It quickly ended, almost too quickly for Sasuke to bear. Naruto broke apart from him, smiling a bit.
"Sorry, sometimes you just really need a hug, y'know?"

"You don't have to apologize," Sasuke told him. "I offered, I suppose."

"I'm surprised you aren't about to deck me," Naruto teased him. "When was the last time you even
hugged someone?"

Sasuke thought back, trying to recall. "Christmas of last year. It was my mother," he answered.

"It wasn't even that much of a hug, if I'm remembering it correctly," a voice rang out, and Sasuke
turned to see Itachi walking towards them. "Did you even wrap your arms around her?"

"Mind your damn business," Sasuke told him. "We'll be going now,"

"Okay! See you around then," Naruto smiled, before waving the two off. Sasuke and Itachi politely
waved back before getting in the car as Naruto walked around the corner to enter the building.

"So, that's him then?" Itachi asked after a few moments of silence.

"Yes, Itachi. That's Naruto."

Itachi was quiet, before telling Sasuke, "You know, I'm very happy for you. I know how you are
when it comes to other people."

"Do you now?" Sasuke asked as he began to pull out of the parking lot. The streets were busy, and
bright headlights nearly blinded Sasuke as he drove.

"Of course. I know how you'd never willingly do anything social, yet here you are eating ramen with
your friend on a weekly basis. You're even doing things such as going out and socializing with other
people on your own free will. I don't ever remember you doing that, really." Itachi replied. "It's
impressive the effect that that boy has on you. I'll have to call mother and tell her all about this."

Sasuke was quiet as he continued to drive, taking the back roads to Itachi's apartment. "I feel like
you're enjoying this more than you should."

Itachi didn't reply, simply smiling slightly before fiddling with the radio. The two sat in silence, as
per usual, a quiet classical song on in the background. A soft, hot breeze blew over Sasuke, as the
car began to heat up.

It wasn't until Itachi was about to leave the car that he finally spoke up and broke the silence. "I'm
glad that you've made a friend that you can talk to so freely, Sasuke. But perhaps it's best to leave it
at just a friend."

"Your point being?"

"Let's move past all these little jokes. If you were to become a genuine home wrecker... well, let's
just say it's not a path that you should go down." Itachi looked over to him, shooting him a look that could only be described as threatening mixed with sympathy. "I don't think the statement needs an explanation, do you?"

"I didn't think that it even needed to be said."

"If you say so. See you at work," Itachi told him, before getting out and walking to his complex. Sasuke watched him until he got inside, then drove home to his own apartment, mulling over what Itachi had said. Why would he even say that in the first place? The two were friends who hung out from time to time. Nothing more and nothing less.

Did Itachi genuinely think that Sasuke was after Naruto?
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

it's been a hot minute. I literally have no excuse for this year and a half long gap. but at least it's here now, right?

do people even remember this? cause I sure fuckin' didn't. if I didn't write down all my notes god only knows what would have happened. for all of you who don't want to go re-read six chapters (and I don't blame ya, fellas) here's a brief summary to jog your memory:

Naruto is a twenty-something-year-old who's dating Hinata, his high school sweetheart and the mother of his two children. Sasuke is a closed off police officer. Their paths keep intertwining (because it's fanfic, there is no way you'd see the same person this many times on accident let's be real) and they end up as friends despite their vastly different personalities.
The two of them draw each other out of their comfort zones. But Naruto is clearly unhappy with his life and Sasuke can see it. It's not his place to say anything, but you know he's gonna fucking say something and start some shit.
And you'll have to keep reading to see how this turns out! (that's if I finish it, woops)
also, lillia, if you're out there, I love you. your lovely comments are forever in my heart. I miss you please come home.

"Let's go out tonight!" Naruto's voice rang out loud and clear over the phone. Sasuke winced as per usual. He still forgot half the time to hold the phone away from his ear whenever Naruto called him. He felt like he shouldn't need to and had told Naruto on several occasions to stop screaming into the phone but nothing changed.

"What's got you so excited?" Sasuke asked, holding the phone to his ear with his shoulder as he washed dishes. He stood at the kitchen sink with not much in particular going on. The rest of his day was planned out with a few more chores followed by a hot shower, a book, then bed. The usual. However, it was flexible.

"Not much, I just wanted to go out drinking with a few friends is all! I keep canceling plans with my other friends so I was thinking of going out tonight since... I guess I have nothing else to do," Naruto answered. Sasuke could tell something was off but decided not to press him for details now. The way he trailed off set off a red flag in his mind but this could be discussed later that night if anything.
"You in?"

"Fine, I'll pick you up," Sasuke answered, rinsing off the last plate and setting it on the rack to dry.
"Just give me a time."

* * *

The bar that Naruto had them drive to was absolutely packed to the brim. Sasuke repeatedly asked if this was where he wanted to go and Naruto insisted on it every time. Sasuke objected to it but Naruto just said how bad could it be? However, the two nearly got separated already and they had barely
been there more than two minutes. They thankfully made it to the bar in one piece, grabbing two seats next to each other.

"Who else is coming?" Sasuke asked after he sat down. The counter was freshly wiped down and he waved the bartender down for water to start the night off.

"Hm... Let's see. Sakura, Shikamaru, Rock Lee, and Gaara," Naruto listed off.

"That many?" Sasuke asked, not exactly thrilled. Who could blame him? He didn't know half of them to begin with. And although he didn't mind Sakura and Shikamaru, he wasn't the type to hang out in groups in the first place.

"Don't worry about Lee and Gaara; I think you'll really like Gaara actually. Lee is kinda exhausting, but he's really nice!" Naruto smiled. "They're all my old high school friends. Don't worry about Lee. If he gets to be too much - which he probably will be, since you two haven't met - I'll take him off your hands. After all, you're my ticket to drink all I want," Naruto grinned.

"Do you even hang out with anyone that's not from high school?"

"You're here, aren't you?" Naruto pointed out, before ordering a beer.

"I see you two already made it," Shikamaru called out, his voice barely heard over the noise of the bar. Sasuke looked over his shoulder and nodded as the two locked eyes.

"Impressive that you even managed to find us," Sasuke noted. "How long have you been here?"

Shikamaru shrugged, before replying, "I actually got here a few minutes ago and just got lucky. If it wasn't for Naruto and his obnoxiously colored... everything, I might not have seen you guys so easily. He's like a damn beacon."

"Any word on Sakura, Gaara, or Lee?" Naruto asked.

"Sakura said she's not gonna be able to make it. Rock Lee and Gaara texted me that they were waiting on their Uber, but that was twenty minutes ago so hopefully, by now they're on their way if not already here." Shikamaru responded before calling out to the bartender.

Sasuke looked over to Naruto, who looked bummed. "There will be more times to drink with her. You know that already," Sasuke pointed out.

"Yeah, it's just hard to get everyone under the same roof all at once... but not impossible," Naruto said. "Being an adult sucks ass though. I miss when we could all just do whatever, whenever."

"That just means you can appreciate your time together with others more," Sasuke responded. "Of course, this fact doesn't make it suck any less. I am sorry about Sakura not showing up."

Naruto gave Sasuke a smile before looking over his shoulder and exclaiming, "Lee! Gaara! Good to see you both!" He jumped up out of his chair and embraced two men, blocking Sasuke's view of them. He saw the tiniest bit of red hair on one of them, and black hair on the other. "Meet my friend, Sasuke!" Naruto moved aside and let the three of them interact.

Sasuke met eyes with Rock Lee, before internally groaning at the sight of him.

"You wouldn't happen to be related to Might Guy, would you?" Sasuke asked as he stood up from his stool, making his way over to them.
"That is my father! But how do you know him?" Rock Lee asked, curious. He looked like the spitting image of Might Guy: same haircut, same eyebrows. Different eyes and different facial anatomy, but you could still tell they were related without a doubt. To top it off, he looked to be in top physical condition, just like his father who worked as a personal trainer.

"He's married to one of my co-workers. I've met him on several occasions," Sasuke answered before standing up to shake his hand. "Sasuke Uchiha. A pleasure to meet you."

"Oh! That is so great that you know of my father and his husband! Kakashi is such a great presence in our household!" Rock Lee vigorously shook Sasuke's hand. He couldn't tell if Rock Lee was genuinely that loud all the time, or was just trying to shout over the crowd. From knowing his father, however, he would bet his life on the first option. "You work with Kakashi? That is so cool! He tries to not mention work at home so I have not heard much of you. But that must mean you are related to Itachi! Am I right? I have not met him myself but Kakashi has brought up his name-"

"Let him respond before you continue to talk," Gaara teased gently. "If I don't stop him now, he'll keep going for the rest of the night. You just have to know the right time to cut him off at," he told Sasuke.

"And you are Gaara, then?" Sasuke inquired as he looked over to the redhead, who simply nodded before slowly reaching his hand out. Sasuke shook his hand as well, curious about him. He seemed quiet and reserved and yet was with one of the loudest people Sasuke was aware of.

"Well? Now that introductions are over, can we start drinking already?" Naruto eagerly asked.

"That is why we came out tonight, after all." Gaara agreed before moving his way past Sasuke and ordering for himself.

And so the night officially kicked off.

* * *

It was a project trying to get Naruto into the car. First of all, Naruto had absolutely no balance whatsoever meaning almost all his deadweight was just thrown onto Sasuke. Secondly, everyone else had gone home before the two meaning it was a one-man job.

The two stumbled together in the darkness of the parking lot, a dim street lamp barely even illuminating the area. It was the dead of night and there weren't even that many cars on the road at this point if any. It was a peaceful time to be outside if you were somewhere safe. A bar parking lot was the last place Sasuke wanted to be at three in the morning.

"When we get in the car open the window and lean your seat back a bit. If you throw up in my car you're dead." Sasuke told Naruto. "If you're going to, just tell me so we can pull over somewhere."

Sasuke unlocked the doors and Naruto got in wordlessly, doing as Sasuke instructed. The car came to life and Sasuke started driving slowly out of the parking lot. He was in no rush despite how tired he was and he didn't want to risk Naruto's stomach getting upset.

The two didn't say much. The road was illuminated by a few streetlamps as well as the headlights on the BMW. The moon was hidden behind some clouds and didn't provide much light. Sasuke didn't see another car on the road after he left the bar which was good, meaning no one would get mad at him for driving slowly. He looked over to Naruto who just looked... tired. Sasuke could tell it wasn't just from staying up late and drinking and that there was something tugging at him. But he knew he couldn't bring it up with Naruto about to either throw up or pass out.
It was understood that the two were going to the apartment then immediately crashing. They hadn't explicitly said this earlier in the night, but there was no way that Sasuke was about to drop off a drunken Naruto to his house at three in the morning. The only sounds that filled the space in-between them now were the hum of the engine paired with the quiet breeze of the heat coming from the vents, as well as the breeze coming from Naruto's window.

By the time they arrived at the apartment, Sasuke was surprised he didn't fall asleep at the wheel. He was ready to collapse but knew he just needed to make it upstairs and then he could sleep for the next twenty-four hours if he so desired. The two stumbled once more and finally made it inside. They barely said much, and Naruto fell over onto the couch and was fast asleep before his body even reached the cushions. Sasuke spread out a thin blanket over him before going to his own room, changing into some shorts, and falling onto his own bed. Sleep came almost instantly.

* * *

Sasuke awoke the next morning (or technically the same morning) to the sounds of someone in the kitchen moving about and cooking. He rolled over to see that it was 11:07, meaning that he either slept through his alarm or didn't set it, to begin with. The last thing he remembered from the night before was his body hitting the bed, so probably not.

He threw himself out of bed, tugging on some old t-shirt and walking out into the kitchen. He saw Naruto standing at the stove tending to some bacon while a few pancakes sat in another pan, almost ready to be flipped. When he heard footsteps approaching, Naruto turned around a sheepish smile on his face.

"Sorry for the mess," he told Sasuke, scratching his head a bit. "It's just, uh... I have kind of a hangover, plus, I figured you kinda deserve a nice meal after babysitting me last night. I tried not to make a mess," he insisted.

Sasuke's pristine counters were in disarray, a bit of pancake mix here and there followed by eggshells and a half-open package of bacon. A mixing bowl was dripping batter down the side, and a few paper towels littered the area. However, Sasuke was either too tired to care or just... alright with it.

"As long as you clean up," he responded before walking over to the coffee pot. He saw that Naruto already was brewing some fresh coffee and got himself his favorite mug before filling it to the brim with a splash of milk. "A question, though. Where did you get bacon from?"

"Oh, I walked to the store a few streets over. Kinda necessary in my opinion for a hangover breakfast," Naruto answered. "I didn't expect you to have any, to begin with. But dude, all you have is rice, herbs, tomatoes, and a few other random things. What happens when you... I dunno, get hungry? What meals are you making around here?"

"I eat what's in the fridge," Sasuke answered. "Or in the cabinets. As it turns out, you don't need to eat ramen for every meal."

"Man, you're really lucky to have me as a friend," Naruto shook his head. "Here I am, introducing you to the best food in the world, and here you are, eating tomatoes and rice. What kinda meal even is that?"

"If you're so hungover, how did you even manage to go outside?" Sasuke wanted to know, ignoring Naruto's last statement. "It's eleven in the morning meaning it's blinding outside. I don't remember you having sunglasses with you."

"Ah, but you own sunglasses," Naruto answered before running over to the entryway where a small
table resided. He opened a drawer and popped on some black aviator sunglasses, before asking Sasuke, "Eh? I look good, don't I?"

"Put the damn glasses back and come watch your food," Sasuke told him. "You're the one making breakfast, not me. If anything burns, it's your fault."

"You didn't even look at me!"

"I don't have to. Everyone looks good in them," Sasuke replied, before taking a sip of coffee. Of course, him being in his mid-twenties meant that coffee had little effect on him unless he made it especially strong or drank a lot of it, or a combination of both, so it would take more than just this single cup to wake him up. He placed the cup down on the small, rectangular table that resided off to the side of the open kitchen.

Naruto ran back to the stove, sunglasses off, taking the pancakes off the stove and onto a plate, as well as the bacon. He opened the microwave to reveal some eggs already made and then took out two plates. "Did ya want bacon?" Naruto asked, and Sasuke shook his head. "Would it kill you to live a little?"

"Just give me some damn pancakes and eggs already. And a bowl of rice."

The two ate together while some more bacon sizzled on the stove, grease coming up and hitting the lid of the pan. They chatted while they ate, and both of them had seconds, and then thirds, and then Naruto finished the rest of the bacon off. Sasuke nibbled on a piece or two, but could in no way gorge himself on it the way Naruto did. It was appalling how much his body could just... endure. Sasuke was amazed and disgusted as he watched an entire package of bacon vanish within less than an hour.

Eventually, however, the conversation died down and Sasuke cleared his throat.

"So, what are your plans from here?"

Naruto frowned, looking off to the side. "I really don't know. Hinata and I got into a bit of an argument... and it's just a fight, but something doesn't seem right about it. I don't want to barge in and act like everything's alright, but I also don't want to stay away for too long and leave her alone with the kids, because that's not fair." He paused for a moment, but Sasuke let him continue ranting. "It just feels kinda too soon right this second, but you probably have things to do, so I think I'm just gonna call Shikamaru or Sakura and see if I can crash there until I actually man up enough to go home," Naruto told Sasuke.

"No need," Sasuke told him. "I don't have anything to do."

"Really?" Naruto asked, his eyes becoming bright and shiny just like a child's. "Nothing? At all?"

"The most would be some laundry or a few small errands. As long as you wouldn't mind those, then you can stay for one more night."

"I have one more errand to tack on then," Naruto replied.

Sasuke raised an eyebrow before responding, "And should I ask what that is?"

"We need to go to the supermarket and get you some real damn food. And fast."
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