SasuHina Month Day Nine || Ichi-go Ichi-e

by 365daysofsasuhina

Summary

For so long, moments passed Sasuke by in a blur. Now that life is finally slowing down...maybe he can sit and truly enjoy what he's missed for all these years.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

After everything that's happened, Sasuke has forgotten how to just...slow down. Once the massacre was over and he was released from the hospital, his life was a blur: a rush of training, studying, and barely eating or sleeping. His drive was so all-consuming, that much of his existence simply...passed him by without a thought.

Life slowed a bit when he became a genin, thrown together with his team and sensei. At times, his goals would momentarily be forgotten. But any spare, quiet moment was met with the realization that he was wasting time. He had so much to do, so much yet to accomplish before he could face his brother, and finally attain vengeance…!

The years spent with Orochimaru were much the same: a day to day slog of training, arguing, plotting. Then Hebi...Akatsuki...Taka...the war...and his unintended return to Konoha. Once the council was ousted, his brother pardoned, his cousin returned...Sasuke realized something.

He no longer had a drive. He felt...lost.

Purposeless.

Well...maybe not entirely. Keeping the last shards of his family safe remained the utmost priority.
Never again would the Uchiha be brought any closer to the brink of extinction. Never again would Konoha - or anyone else - threaten them.

...but beyond that? For now...he isn’t sure.

His family advises that, in the interim, he work on something else: on reconnecting with those he left behind. At first, he balks. The wounds between himself and his team are still fresh. He’s in no way ready yet to forgive them: for their controlling behavior, their ignoring his struggles, for insisting he return to Konoha after learning all the village had done...he wouldn’t be able to forget or forgive that. Not yet.

...and yet...

“Perhaps it would be easier to meet in a group,” Itachi advises. “Where the attention would be more divided.”

“...maybe.”

Glancing to his brother, the elder sighs. “...I know this is not easy. It will be difficult for all of us to adjust after so long, and so much. Just ease into it, Sasuke. One step at a time. I promise, someday, you will find yourself feeling at home again.”

...he isn’t so sure, but doesn’t rebuke.

“Sasuke-kun!”

Glancing up from a shop window a few days later, there’s a blink. “...Hyūga.”

Hinata closes the distance at a jog before pouting at him. “Please, c-call me Hinata, ne?”

He just stares at her.

“...a-anyway...I was wondering if you’d like to join a bunch of us for supper...? Most of our class is getting together for some yakiniku q tonight, and...I wanted to invite you!”

...she’s always been the one, since his return, that reaches out. Usually he refuses, but...Sasuke thinks back to his brother’s advice. “...all right. Sure. What time?”

Looking a bit surprised at his agreeing, it takes her a moment to reply. “...six o’clock.”

“Okay. I’ll be there.” A pause. “...thanks for the invite.”

“O...of course!” She gives him a warm smile. “We’ll all be glad to see you, Sasuke-kun.”

Well...he doesn’t fully believe that, but he just nods.

At five before six, he stands outside the entrance. Already he can hear a ruckus of people within, and he’s willing to bet most of it is coming from his classmates. Sighing lightly, he takes another moment to prepare himself for a long, noisy evening.

“...oh!”

Turning, he finds Hinata coming up behind him. “...not late, am I?”

“No, you’re right on time! I had errands to run, so...I’m just now ready. S-shall we go in?”
Another nod.

Their agemates sit around a large table, already laughing and talking. Everyone’s there, even Gai’s team and Sai. As the last pair approach, the festivities quiet for a moment.

Just a hair, Sasuke stiffens.

“Hello everyone!” Hinata offers, clearly trying to diffuse their reaction. “A-are there any seats left?”

Glances are exchanged, and everyone bunches together a little tighter. Hinata sits along one end, opposite Sasuke’s seat beside Lee. For a time, things seem to...idle. But between Naruto, Kiba, and Lee, it’s soon brought back up to a boisterous level.

Mostly just sitting quietly and observing, Sasuke just...takes it in. Part of him still feels uncomfortable, but...there’s also a strange, somber nostalgia.

...how many nights like this has he missed?

The thought reminds him of the old saying: ichi-go, ichi-e. One life, one experience. How each moment is unique, never to be truly repeated again. Maybe he’s missed nights like this before...but he’s here, now.

...maybe someday, he’ll be able to appreciate them fully.

Opposite him, from the corners of her eyes, Hinata watches as Sasuke gets lost in thought. Ever so softly, she smiles. While most of their peers are still wary of him...she’s made it her mission to try to get him back on his feet and branch out. Their clans (and mutual acquaintances) are too intertangled for her to just give up on him.

...she knows too much of what he’s been through to just...leave him alone. Their slate is blank. And with so many connections, they’re bound to keep running into each other. So, for now...she does her best to try to help him adjust.

He deserves to be happy. To finally, after so long...live in the moment, and enjoy it. No more struggling, no more running himself ragged.

And maybe...she’ll be the first stepping stone to getting there.

...if only she could know how far they’ll go.

But, for now...one moment is enough.

End Notes

Well, not...too much to say about today's prompt? I'd never heard of this concept before, and I really like it! I think it applies to this ship a lot. Both are quiet, observant people. Now that Sasuke can step back and enjoy life, I think he'd be very mindful of it. Hinata, too. It's just their natures.
But yeah! That's all for now - thanks for reading!

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