

Don't run! Stay with me!

By Byakugan_Sharingan

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Neji and Tenten story. This is my second attempt writing a girlboy story. This is for a friend of mine, Stephanie Yon. Take a look at this, Stephanie!!!!

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1 - Neji's Too Slow

It was raining. But the brown-haired kunoichi didn't notice. Even though the rain soaked through her thin clothes, and poured down her neck, she didn't feel it. Her destination was anywhere except Konoha. She just stood there, in the middle of the lane, looking up at the ashen sky. She heard footsteps behind her, and she whipped around quickly, holding a kunai.

"Tenten! Easy!"

"Neji?"

"Yeah. It's me. Why did you run?"

His long hair was soaked, so was he. The sight of her teammate made her want to tell him the truth, why she had really run. Up to now, she hadn't told anyone. But she felt she could confide in Neji. Then again, she reminded herself, she couldn't really trust anyone anymore. But before she knew it, the words were coming out of her mouth faster than the lightning struck. "I was afraid," she said. "I didn't know what to do. The Konohans accused me of a crime I didn't commit. I didn't want to leave you, Neji. I really didn't. But I had to go, or I would've been killed. That's why..." she gulped, "why I had to run."

Neji stood there in shock, poring over the astonishing words he had just heard. The fact that was going around town was that someone, a girl, had been accused for Shino's accidental murder. But he didn't know it would be his own teammate, Tenten. If he had known, he probably wouldn't have tried to cover up for the Aburame. By the time he found his voice again, Tenten was off and running. She wasn't running too fast, so Neji could easily catch up to her. But he didn't run. He didn't try to catch his teammate. It seemed as though he was glued to the spot. Then he finally found enough strength to yell, "Wait, Tenten!" His effort was worthless. It was too late. The running girl was nowhere to be seen.

2 - Baka Konohans...

Neji trudged back to Konoha in the rain, dejected. The Byakugan wouldn't work because the rain washed away all the fresh traces of chakra. As he passed by a strolling Konohan...he had an idea. He would ask one of the Konohans to tell him where they had forced Tenten to run off to. He turned around, and ran back to the Konohan. In the politest voice he could manage, he asked, "Where did Tenten go?" "What, you mean the murderer?" "Yes...her." Neji had to pretend Tenten was the murderer so he could find out where she had gone to. "Weren't you at her sentence?" Neji shook his head. "Well, we sent her off, telling her never to return to Konoha again. We don't know where she went. We just told her to get out of Konoha."

Well, Neji's efforts had been in vain. He had tried to be polite, but honestly, they had crossed the line this time! He gave the Konohan a good punch in the face, and then went back home, acting as though he had never punched anyone. He decided he would go on a journey to find his innocent teammate and bring her back home. Once he got to his house, he started packing stuff he would need on his journey. He could find food for himself. He had done it during the Chuunin exams. He decided he would just make his pouch light, he only brought a change of clothes and some medicine in case he got sick. He left the Hyuuga manor in a dark mood. The Konohans weren't even worthy of being called Konohans! They accused an innocent girl for a murder she didn't commit. I mean, yeah sure, Tenten's got the most weapons and the most skill in the village, and there was a kunai lying on the floor near the victim. But that doesn't mean it had to be Tenten!

As it was getting dark, Neji started to scout for rations. He found 4 apples and 5 pears. He packed them away, eating 1 pear only. He would need to apples and pears for his journey. He camped out under a rock ledge where it was safe and dry and warm. It wasn't raining hard anymore. It was just a drizzle. In a puddle outside the rock ledge, Neji traced the water with a stick. He wasn't doing anything in particular. But as he glanced down at the puddle, a flash of lightning struck, and for a moment he could see Tenten's face in the puddle. He could even hear Tenten's voice saying,

"Help me, Neji. Bring me back to Konoha. Prove to them that they're wrong..." But after the moment had passed, nothing else supernatural happened. Now, Neji's Byakugan couldn't see into the future, but he knew that that horoscope was real. He just had a feeling. He would set out in the morning, so he lay down for a good night's rest. He would need it.

3 - Bluebells

Neji set out early the next morning, earlier than the sunrise. He hiked along a mountain trail, oblivious to all the beauty surrounding him. He activated his Byakugan and used it. After about an hour or so, just when he was about to give up, his Byakugan detected a fresh chakra flow. A closer inspection told him that it was indeed Tenten's chakra. He hurried along his way, following the fresh imprints of chakra Tenten had left on the face of the mountain.

When he was going down the mountain, however, he lost the trail of chakra. But still, he kept on going. Neji was not one to just give up when the clues ended. He continued down the mountainside and finally found some evidence that Tenten had indeed been going that way. He found a piece of lined paper lying face down in a field of yellow poppies. He flipped the paper over and saw a poem Tenten had written on her journey. The chakra was fresh, so that meant that she had written it just recently. He read it in shocked silence. He knew it was about him, because Tenten seemed to have a liking for him. Here is what it said:

I don't wanna live the life I lead
Oh no
I wanna lead
A life like yours you know
I wanna see what your life's like
At your house
That is all
My flame will be doused
Because I also can see
That your protests are deft
But I can't feel them
Because I've already left

But Neji knew Tenten hadn't "already left". She was here, someplace. He scouted the area, and came upon a rock ledge. Knowing Tenten, she had probably stayed there the night. He crept around to the other side of the ledge, where it showed a view of the valley below. Sure enough there was Tenten. She had changed out of her wet clothes, and now she was in front of him, sleeping, with nothing else on but bra, underwear, and stockings. He couldn't help but notice how her bra and underwear were patterned with bluebells. She was shivering too. Her

wet hair had dripped onto her shoulders and the cold probably seeped through, he thought. Now Neji was not a cruel person, especially not to his teammates. He took off his jacket and wrapped Tenten in it. She stopped shivering instantly, and she opened her beautiful hazel brown eyes at the warmth. Her gaze looked upwards to Neji, who was standing over her, white eyes laughing, yet face serious. Neji never noticed how beautiful her eyes were. Now as he got the full beauty of them, he couldn't help noticing that she had the thickest and darkest eyelashes he had ever seen. They were beautiful. Tenten closed her eyes again, muttering something about it being a dream. Neji knew that Tenten was still sleepy, so he gently picked her up in his jacket, and carried her back to the poppy field, where he knew it was warm. Tenten and he would get back to the village once she woke up.

4 - Chocolate Eyes

Tenten woke up in the late evening just as the sun was setting. She sat up to admire the beautiful colors of the horizon as the sky went down into the earth to sleep. The clouds in the sky above turned first red, then orange, then finally purple as the sky dimmed. Just when the light was very dim, Tenten realized that the Neji she had met earlier wasn't just a dream. It was reality. She knew this because 1. she was sitting in the poppy field, not under the rock ledge, and 2. She had Neji's beige jacket wrapped around her like a makeshift cloak. She fumbled around in the darkness for her special kunai. She found it in a hollow amongst the poppies. Then out of the shadows, Tenten heard a voice. It said, "Finally awake, I see."

Tenten peered cautiously into the evening gloom. "Who's there?" she asked.

"It's me, Neji." Then Tenten saw Neji's figure coming into view, his white eyes staring through the darkness at her. "Let's get some light here, shall we?" he asked. Tenten nodded, especially since she was cold. Neji ignited a pile of firewood Tenten hadn't noticed before with his signature Fireball Technique. Tenten scooted closer to the flickering flames, feeling the full effect of the warmth. When it became too warm, she took off Neji's jacket, then quickly put it back around her because she realized that she was only in bra and underwear. She blushed furiously. Neji only smiled at her. He had seen, she thought. And he wasn't embarrassed. But she sure was. She scooted away from the flames a bit, so she wouldn't feel the full effect and she wouldn't have to show her undergarments again. At that moment her stomach growled. "Hungry?" he asked in a casual tone. Tenten slowly nodded her head. It wasn't like her to admit defeat, Neji knew, and she was ashamed because she had. Then she doubled over in pain. It

wasn't a stomach ache, he knew. It wasn't hunger either. She cried out in pain, crystal clear tears running down her cheeks. He knew that she had caught cold because of the rain, but he didn't know what sickness she had. She started coughing, but it wasn't regular coughing. She was coughing up blood. Neji quickly ran over to her, and realized that there was a spot on his jacket that was bleeding through. He quickly took off the jacket and spotted the wound immediately.

He had sparred with her the day just before she ran away, and he had wounded her in the stomach. By accident of course. He had thrown a kunai, knowing Tenten would dodge it, but he was wrong that time. She didn't dodge it, but she quickly got up claiming it was ok. He had still made her go to the hospital to get stitches. But, he now realized, the stitches must have broken when she was running. It was closed when I saw her in the rock ledge. But maybe me carrying her upset the wound and caused it to break through the stitches. He felt really guilty because he had given Tenten that wound, and now it was happening all over again. And since he wasn't that great a healer, he didn't know what to do. But he did know that he should clean the wound because it might've been infected and that he should try to stop the blood flow. He carried the still sobbing Tenten over to a nearby river, whose water was clean. He knew the water was clean because he had thoroughly scanned it with his Byakugan. There were no traces of

pollution. He used a cloth he had packed with him when he left the Hyuuga Manor. The wound was very deep, he knew. He dipped the white cloth into the cold river water, squeezed the excess out, and lay it on Tenten's exposed stomach. He knew the water would sting, but he had to clean the wound. When the cloth touched Tenten's wound with purified water, it really stung. She just cried even more. At this point she was crying buckets. Her sobbing filled Neji with extreme pain. He knew it hurt, but there was nothing

he could do about the pain. As he took the cloth to dip it in the water again, he noted it was stained all over with Tenten's blood. This had been Hanabi's. Neji really hoped his cousin would forgive him. But this was urgent, and Hanabi would understand, he knew. As he laid the cloth back across Tenten's stomach, he could literally feel the pain he was inflicting. He felt like crying too. Pretty soon one tear then another was dripping onto the ground. As he leaned over Tenten's wound with the wet rag to place it there again, one of his tears dripped off his cheek and landed in Tenten's wound. "Oh cr*p!" he said, knowing that salt water would just make the wound sting even more than the regular water. It did. Tenten gasped suddenly at the salty teardrop, then screamed out in pain. Neji hoped no one had heard her. The outskirts of Konoha weren't exactly the safest place at night. But maybe, just maybe, he thought, Tenten had screamed loud enough to bring help from Konoha village. But somehow, he knew, it wouldn't help. Tenten was the "murderer", and everyone recognized her voice. They wouldn't come running, maybe not at all. The blood was still escaping from Tenten's wound. She literally lay in a pool of her own blood. There was nothing else for it. Neji ripped his one and only jacket into a bandage, and tied it securely around Tenten's stomach, where the injury was. It was still bleeding, but he knew he had to bandage it. She was still sobbing in pain, but not as much as before. Tears squeezed out from under the thick, beautiful, eyelashes that had once held chocolate eyes that shone with excitement and happiness. They now held open chocolate eyes that had pain and pleading, and he couldn't do anything about it. Tenten had been judged falsely, he knew that, but he still couldn't do anything to help support his teammate. Then Neji had a brilliant idea, as only Hyuuga geniuses do. Tenten had been with him that night when the murder had occurred. It was private, so no one apart from him and Tenten knew the truth. He would carry Tenten back to the village, and stick up for her. They both knew that Tenten hadn't done it, but none of the villagers would hear a word of it. But since Neji was not exactly a cruel person, he wouldn't go telling Shino off. He would just ask what evidence the court had, and then that would be the end of that. He didn't feel like he should move Tenten anymore, because the bleeding would just be more than it was now. Her breathing had gotten much slower and even, but there was still traces of a sob or two under that beautiful soft voice. Neji lay down beside her, in a dry patch of grass, and gazed up at the stars. They would start in the morning.

5 - Kunais Taken

Neji didn't sleep at all well during the night. He stayed awake watching the sleeping kunoichi toss and turn. As the dawn light crept through the surrounding trees, Neji took off the blood drenched bandage and wrapped a new clean one around the girl's stomach. Her chocolate eyes opened, and he knew it was time to go. He wrapped Tenten in the remains of his coat. Then he picked up the kunoichi and her now dry clothes. He set off down the mountainside, at a slow pace so as not to jolt the girl in his arms. He glanced at Tenten. Her breathing was even, and her chocolate eyes were closed. Her head snuggled deeper into Neji's forearm. The feeling felt good, but Neji had never been this close to a girl in his entire life. She smelled like fresh roses, with a hint of lemon. Her tan arms hung down limply at her sides, one hand clutching her special kunai. Even in the realms of slumber, she held the most precious she owned. Soon they had passed the poppy field, then Konoha Lake. They weren't in the outskirts of Konoha anymore. They were nearly to Konoha village. Neji could tell because he could see the Hokage faces set in stone through the trees. As they neared the village, he heard the sounds of children playing and adults scolding. As he walked down the familiar dusty lane, the children stopped their game of ball, and turned and pointed and yelled, "The traitor is back!" and "Mom! Dad! The murderer is here again!"

Some of the braver kids even picked up pebbles and threw them at Neji and Tenten. Neji blocked most of the rocks, but one hit Tenten's limp hand, knocking the kunai out of her grasp. It landed point-down in the lane, quivering. The kunoichi didn't even stir. Neji knelt down to pick the blade up, but he never got the chance. A child, a little boy, had snatched out the weapon from under Neji's searching hand. The child ran off with Tenten's kunai, and pretty soon, he was just a moving speck in the distance. He was tempted to run after the thief and use the Jyuuken on him, but remembered the girl in his arms. He couldn't leave her here, because the Konohans would literally destroy her. And he couldn't bring her, because the wound would just bleed more than it was now. So he sighed a sigh of defeat and continued on his way. Then he felt something warm and wet drip onto his hand and shirt. He looked down, and discovered, with horror, that Tenten's wound was bleeding even more. The bandage was not only drenched, it

was SOAKED. She had returned from the realms of slumber, and was coughing. A little blood appeared at the side of her mouth, and Neji wiped it away with a the cloth he had borrowed from Hanabi. Tenten clenched her hand and unclenched it, and her chocolate eyes opened wide with wonder and horror.

"Where is it?" she asked weakly.

"Where is what?" Neji asked, knowing perfectly well what 'it' was.

"My special kunai. The one you gave me."

"Um..." Neji said, not knowing how to begin.

"Did I drop it on the trail?"

"No..."

"What happened to it then?"

"OK...these kids were throwing rocks at us and..." But Neji never got to finish her sentence. Tenten had leapt from his arms with agility amazing for someone who had recently been injured, but when she landed on her feet, her knees buckled and she fell to her knees in the dusty lane. Neji ran over to her. Tears were running down her cheeks once again. He realized that the bandage had come off in her hurry, and the blood was seeping through the coat onto the lane. He picked her up once again, and carried her off...ignoring the looks of disgust and indifference the people were giving them. He also tried

really hard to ignore the mutters that passed them. But he couldn't. The words were repeating over and over in his head. "The murderer and her friend." "Off with her head! She killed that boy, Hianda!" "But maybe we should give her one more chance." "No...we shouldn't! She's killed someone!!! Are you mad? Do you want to be her next victim." Neji ran away as fast as he could while carrying Tenten. Tenten's wound was bleeding so much at this point, that if she wasn't put under medication soon, she would die! He knew the hospital wouldn't help, because in their eyes, Tenten was the traitor and murderer that didn't deserve to be cared for. But he knew people who would. He rushed into Hyuuga Manor, not even stopping to wipe his feet or knock. Everyone came rushing into the front hall to see what the commotion was. When they saw Neji, most of them left, not seeing the girl in his arms. But two small girls stayed to say hello to their nii-san. They were Hanabi and Hinata. "Nii-san!" they both yelled at the same time. Then they saw the girl in Neji's arms. "Nii-san, what happened to Tenten?" asked Hinata, cocking her head curiously, her brows furrowing in worriedness. "Hanabi, Hinata, I have to ask you two a favor." "Yes, Nii-san?"

"I need you to take care of Tenten for me. The hospital won't help."

"Where are you going, nii-san?" asked Hinata, running fingers through her blue hair.

"I'm going to argue the case."

"So that means, Tenten's not guilty?" asked Hanabi, head rising suddenly, spurred on by a ray of hope.

"No. Tenten's not guilty, Hanabi. I hope you don't mind that I used your favorite belt to wash Tenten's wound."

"Oh, no. Nii-san, I don't mind. There was a sale and I got a new one!"

Neji smiled warmly at his younger cousin. He knew they would take care of his teammate. But since they weren't exactly first class healers, they wouldn't know how to sew the wound up again. Not like that mattered. All they needed to do was to keep Tenten alive until he could consult Tsunade. She would listen, he knew. He smiled warmly at his two cousins as he went into the bathroom to wash off. He was headed to the courthouse next.

6 - There's No Need for Medicine Now

Neji switched on the hot water and stood there letting the glorious warmth soak through his body, finding every aching bone, every bloodstained spot. He seriously wondered how he was going to argue his teammate's case. Just as his mind was about to push itself to the limit, he heard an earsplitting scream. Completely forgetting any idea whatsoever of Tenten's case, he rushed into the next room, dripping wet and wearing absolutely nothing but a light lavender towel. It was then that he realized, with some relief, that the scream had not been Tenten's, but his cousin, Hinata's. He immediately summed up the situation at hand. Tenten was bleeding so much the red liquid was dripping down onto the tile floor, her head was back, her breathing shallow. Her smooth hand was clutching Hanabi's in an iron grip, while Hanabi stood there torn between trying to comfort the girl and trying to restrain her own tears. It was a no-win situation. Either Tenten would die right here, or he would have to get the 5th Hokage without an appointment.

He chose the second option. He used the Teleport Jutsu to teleport into Tsunade's office. Lucky for the Hyuuga genius, Tsunade was available. Her brown eyes stared up at him. "What is it?" she asked in a calm collective voice, as though nobody had ever teleported into her office and disrupted all the papers/wall hangings with nothing on but a light lavender towel. "I need you to come, quick," he said in an urgent tone. "It's Tenten." The Hokage furrowed her brow as she saw the clear picture forming in Neji's mind. "OK," she said, not even stopping to ask questions. "I just need to get some stuff first." Neji watched her with anxious eyes as she stuffed a roll of bandages, bottles of medicine, and syringes into a blue plastic bag. He was tempted to say to hurry up, but just as the words were forcing their way out of his mouth, she said, "I'm ready. Let's go." They both teleported back into the Hyuuga mansion. Now Hanabi was screaming. It was like a screaming contest in this house, Tsunade thought to herself. They rushed into the room Tenten was located in, and found a very sad sight.

Tenten's tan hand, which before had been clutching Hanabi's, now hung limp at the bedside. Her eyes were open, and the eyes had much pain...and happiness? Hanabi's words, which were incoherent at first, now were as painfully clear as ice. In a sad and mournful tone, she cried out, "Tenten! You can't go yet!" and Neji knew Tenten was dying. Slowly, but surely, dying. Hanabi wouldn't lie, not even if her life depended on it. A faint smile played around Tenten's red lips as her chocolate eyes clashed with Neji's pearly ones in a mixture of pain and regret. "No Hanabi. I have to go. But for Neji-kun, I'll try to stay a little longer," she said in a weak and listless tone. Neji clasped Tenten's brownish hand in his pale one. He stroked it gently, knowing it would be the last this girl would ever see of him.

Tsunade acted quickly. She pulled out a syringe and loaded it with some clear liquid, with swirls of white dancing like wraiths in the mixture. But it was far too late for any medicine. "...admit...defeat," were the painful words that echoed around the stone room as the chocolate eyes closed, revealing a lovely fringe of thick black eyelashes. Neji knew that was the end of it. Tenten...was gone.

7 - Lee and Gai Find Out

At that dreadful moment, a knock was heard on the door. Neji got up to answer it, a look of regret on his sharp features as Tenten's hand left his own. When he had left the room, Tsunade stuck the syringe into Tenten's arm, just in case. Tsunade was not one to give up hope quite so easily.

Neji slowly made his way down the marble steps, Hanabi's cries ringing in his ears. As he opened the oaken door, he was greeted by an enthusiastic Lee and Gai. "Hey Neji! I heard that Tenten was here and I came to see her!" said Lee, nearly barreling Neji over in his attempts to get through the door. His efforts died down when he saw the expression on Neji's face. "What's wrong, Neji?" he asked. "Nothing..." the long-haired shinobi lied. He silently led Lee and his sensei to the room where Tenten's corpse still lay. Both Lee's and Gai's eyes widened considerably and their jaws dropped. Lee was the first one to burst into tears. He stormed out of the room, slamming the door behind him. Gai didn't make an effort to restrain his student. The Jonin just stood there in a state of panoramic shock. The look on his face would've been comical if it had been for other reasons. Gai slowly and silently made his way to the bloodstained bed, and Neji left the room with Hanabi and Hinata, mumbling something about going to find Lee and comfort him. Tsunade teleported out of the room, with an excuse that she was late for an important appointment.

Gai sat down slowly in the wooden chair that Neji had previously occupied, taking Tenten's hand in his own. "Oh, Tenten," he whispered. "Why couldn't I have been there when you needed me so desperately? Why couldn't you just have asked for help? Why do you always have to do everything on your own?"

To Gai, the blow he felt inside was unlike anything he had ever felt before. Tenten's death cut deeper than any words of blades. In his heart, he knew that every ninja had their time, and they would all end up like this eventually, but why did it have to be Tenten? Why now? I mean, the girl had died before she had become a Chuunin! Gai secretly thought that dying when you were a Genin was highly wrong, and dying by your own teammate too. Gai knew that Neji hadn't meant it, so it wasn't exactly his fault. As the sensei stood up to leave, something unexpected happened. In Gai's bandage-wrapped hand, Tenten's brownish hand...twitched.

8 - Rants and Raves

OK...VERY SORRY! BEFORE THE ANIME CAME OUT, I DID NOT KNOW THAT TENTEN WAS WHITE. SO FROM NOW ON...IGNORE THE TAN THING AND JUST READ IT AS WHITE. OK?

The sensei stood transfixed, frozen by hope. Not that he had ever believed in luck or hope. He believed in hard work, just like Lee. But desperate times called for desperate measures, right?

He rushed out of Hyuuga Manor, past startled Konohans, past every tree and every bush, until he finally got to Training Ground 32. He knew the teens would be there, since that was where they had trained every day before Tenten got injured. Just like he predicted, the two shinobi were there. But there was something wrong. Lee was yelling at Neji, who in turn was yelling back at him. Gai looked closer. It couldn't be. Were those tearstains on Neji's cheeks? Were the glistening drops of water that fell onto the ground Neji's tears? No. No. No. Neji never cried, no matter what. Why would he be crying now? Unless...

Gai got closer, using the art of invisibility. (Is that really an art?) He got close enough to hear the words being hurled around the training arena. It was mainly Lee yelling, since Neji was too busy trying to choke up the sobs wanting to escape from his body. But Neji yelled too. And everyone knows what can happen when a Hyuuga yells...automatic attack.

"Why did you do that to her anyway, Neji?!"

"I don't know Lee. Shut up and go away."

"No. I won't! I can't! You'll have to force me!"

Neji stood silent. Lee kept ranting on and on about how it was so cruel for a teammate to hurt another teammate, especially if it was a girl. He had probably learned that from Gai, Neji guessed correctly. Then his head snapped up, his eyes widened. Lee had just said something about him, but what was it? The look in his pearly eyes allowed Lee to start the rant all over again, but from the point of the sentence about the long-haired shinobi.

"Well...you stupid bastard, you couldn't have done anything worse, could you?"

Neji bowed his head again, willing his anger not to come out, willing the Byakugan to stay inside a little longer. Unbelievably, his emotions obeyed his will. But when he faced Lee once more, the Taijutsu junior master could see anger flashing in his teammate's eyes. He was immediately concerned, and decided to ask Neji what was wrong.

"Neji...are you feeling ok?"

"Maybe I am...maybe I'm not." His voice shook with anger.

"Maybe you should go and cool off somewhere..."

"Maybe you should just shut up and go away!"

Lee sighed in defeat and walked away. Neji turned in the opposite direction, looking right past his sensei. He looked directly at the sunset, his pearly eyes reflecting the gold and purple of the sky. Then he turned away and walked in the opposite direction Lee had left: heading slowly but steadily for the river winding through the village.