

A Pair of Painted Hearts

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*Say you need me with you, now and always
promise me that all you say is true
that's all I ask of you
Sakura Gaara*

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1 - Red and Pink

A Pair of Painted Hearts

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No more talk of darkness,
Forget these wide-eyed fears.
I'm here,
nothing can harm you -
my words will warm and calm you.

Let me be your freedom,
let daylight dry -your tears.
I'm here,
with you, beside you,
to guard you and to guide you . . .

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Gaara kicked his feet back and forth joyously bouncing bit in his seat on his swing waiting for his green eyed female friend. A soft desert wind played through his short crimson locks blowing them across his sea foam green eyes ringed with black. He hummed a bit smiling to himself thinking about Sakura. Just thinking about her clear crystal green eyes and her soft addicting smile made his face heat up. It was early morning still shrouded in the lingering grasp of darkness waiting for the sun to rise when he reached his swing. Slowly and gradually the sun ascended the sky bring birth to the breathtaking ginger crimson dawn. Sunrises in the desert were always a sight to behold and the red haired sand lover was fortunate to see them every day.

Everyday around this time Gaara would come out and sit on his swing or in the sandbox and wait for Sakura to meet him. He used to come out this early all the time before he met Sakura but on those days he was always alone. Except for his floppy little teddy bear but his teddy bear couldn't talk to him or make him laugh like Sakura could. After they started to hang out together Gaara started to leave his bear at home. He wasn't alone anymore.

"Gaara kun!"

His head jerked up when the said boy heard his name called. His smile increased tenfold when he saw the young girl that filled his thoughts night and day. Today he had something special to ask her.

"Sakura chan!" He cried in reply jumping down from his swing and waiting for the cherry haired girl to catch up to him. "Good morning."

"Good morning to you too Garra kun. How are you doing today?" She asked sweetly flashing him one of her bright smiles.

"I'm fine Sakura chan. Um...h...how are you doing today? You didn't come yesterday and I was worried about you. Is everything okay with you?"

"Um yeah about that...sorry to have worried you but my dad just wanted me to stay home and help him with some stuff. But I'm free today so what do you want to do?"

Hearing the last part Gaara blushed and looked down at his feet. "Wel...well today there is this festival for Valentine's day. I've never gone but my uncle gave me some money for it and I thought it would be a shame to waste it since I wouldn't use it anywhere else so I was thinking...would you go with me!"

Sakura blinked once in confusion. "Valentine's day? I never heard of it. Sure Gaara kun I would love that! When is it?"

Gaara smiled brightly thrilled that she said yes. "It's this evening, It doesn't start till...umm I think it was around five or maybe six o'clock...I can't remember, but I think it's six."

"Okay then. I have to check in with my dad around four so I'll meet you at the fair grounds at six."

Sakura asked tapping her chin and striking a cute thinking pose. "Is that okay with you Gaara kun?"

"Sure Sakura chan!" Gaara chirped happily with a bright smile. "But can you play with me until then?"

"Of course Gaara kun. Come on!" Sakura cried grabbing him by the hand and dragging him in the direction of the park, her favorite place to play.

Sakura let go of the green eyed boy's hand and grabbed onto one of the slide's railings ascending the steps Gaara was right behind her. Reaching the top she stopped and sat down on the landing, waiting for her friend to reach her so they could go down together like they always did.

"Hey Garra kun, can I ask you something?"

"Of course Sakura chan. What is it?" Gaara asked reaching the top of the slide and sitting down behind the rose haired child.

"What's Valentine's day?"

Gaara paused thinking to himself for a while and didn't respond. Sakura frowned and turned her head to see her good friend deep in thought. After a while he finally decided to speak up.

"I don't really know that much about it but I think it's a holiday when people um...celebrate," the small boy replied.

"What do they celebrate? They have to celebrate something, they wouldn't have a festival if there wasn't anything to celebrate." Sakura asked coxing her head to the side letting her cherry pink locks fall across her face prettily.

"W...well my uncle told me that Valentine's day is when people celebrate...um." Gaara blushed heavily looking down. "...When...when people celebrate...affection."

"Oh... Gaara kun what's affection?" Sakura asked making the young boy's blush go up ten fold as his fidgeting became uncontrollable.

"C...c...can w...we go d...down the slide n...now S...Sakura c...chan?" He asked stuttering looking down a bit embarrassed. The truth was that he really didn't know and he didn't want to look ignorant in front of her so he decided to ignore the question. Sakura chuckled seeing his red face and nodded.

"Sure thing. Hold on Garra kun we're going down now!"

Gaara nodded grabbing on to Sakura and squeezing his eyes shut as she used her arms to push them off the landing. Squeals of laughter and joy rippled through the wind as the pair flew down the slide landing in a huddle at the bottom, a complete mess of giggles and laughter. Since Gaara was behind Sakura he ended up falling on top of her when she lost her balance at the end falling off the slide.

"Gaara kun, he he, can you get off of me please, you're kind of heavy for me." The small five year old

girl asked through a fit of giggles.

"I'm sorry Sakura chan are you okay?" He asked happily rolling off her back. A small smile resting on his small round face.

"Nah I'm fine. Do you want to go again Gaara kun?" She asked standing up and offering him her hand. "Yeah!" He exclaimed taking her hand in his own and running with her up to the slide's steps. The two played like that the rest of the day moving from slide to swing to jungle gym, until the time for Sakura to leave rolled around. With the promise of her return she skipped away in the direction on her apartment.

Gaara stood fidgeting with his fingers underneath the entry arch where he stood waiting. The arch was painted white with roses stenciled down the sides in red and yellow. Underneath it was a banner that read: Happy Valentine's day! All down the street booths and stands were assembled and a few of them were already running, selling their wares and displaying their possessions.

He had thought about dressing up but decided not to since Sakura said she wouldn't. The only thing different about him was his messy red hair that was now combed back neatly by his uncle.

When Gaara asked his uncle why he needed his hair combed back his uncle told him it was a nice way to impress his girlfriend for valentine's day. His poor uncle, when the older man went to pull his hair back with the comb he couldn't tell where his hair started and where it stopped, Gaara's face was so red.

He patted his smooth neat hair that was usually wild and messy, he liked his hair like that but it was okay for one night if Sakura didn't mind.

His thoughts of Sakura were soon cut short when the small green eyed girl came running up to him with a bright smile adorning her pretty porcelain face.

"Hey there Gaara kun!" She chirped stopping to catch her breath at his side. Her cheeks were a little flushed from the run but other than that and the panting you really couldn't tell she had been running.

"Hello to you to Sakura chan," the happy boy greeted latching on her in a tight bear hug she returned.

Blinking his eyes open he noticed something he hadn't before. "Sakura your wearing your hair down." Sakura smiled a little embarrassed and tugged on a stray curly lock. Her elbow length hair was loose in a mass of curls framing her face. It was a shade darker since it was still a little bit damp, though not enough to soak her red long sleeved shirt. It made her look so different since she almost always had her hair up in a pony tail or a tight braid.

"Yeah, my dad said I had to take a bath before I came here and my hair didn't completely finish drying when I left the house. I didn't have time to braid it or pull it back 'cause it was still wet so I decided to leave it. Is that okay Gaara kun?"

"Oh yes, yes, of course it's alright. It was just...well I've never seen you with your hair down and it looks really pretty, that's all," he answered with a slight stutter as his cheeks turned pink.

"What about you? What's the story behind your hair Gaara kun?" She giggled brushing a lock out of his eyes.

"My...my uncle...he...combed it...for me," he stuttered looking down while playing with his feet.

"You look so cute and mature with it combed back. It's nice, but I still like you the way you were. Please don't ever change."

Gaara giggled as she ruffled his hair back to the way it was. "I won't Sakura chan. I liked it that way too."

Sakura smiled bright and latched onto his arm. "Good now let's go Gaara kun. They already started some of the events without us."

Gaara blushed again when she grabbed his arm but walked with her regardless. He liked having someone with him and hoped it never went away. Sakura and Gaara saw couples walk holding each other's hands and stop in front at an occasional booth to enjoy themselves. They were all smiling happily

and seemed to be enjoying the cool desert night. There were paper lights lining the streets were the booths were giving off a pale rosy glow.

A few couples pointed to the two not recognizing Gaara and smiled at the cute pair. Sakura blushed a bit as she tightened her hold on her best friend. Gaara blushed as well and looked down at his sandals. Waking along the booths they saw puppetries put on a show for children their age and younger with life size puppets on almost invisible string making it look like the wooden people really were dancing by themselves. Sakura giggled as they passed over that booth and moved on to the next one.

Gaara stopped at one of the smaller booths with a pond next to it. There children as well as adults were trying to catch the fish that were in the pond without breaking their net. If they could catch a fish without it breaking their small nets they could keep the small golden fish as a prize.

He was about to ask Sakura if she wanted to try when a low growl rumbling from his stomach stopped him from saying anything.

“Gaara are you hungry?” The small five year old child asked.

Gaara giggled a bit and nodded his head a bit in embarrassment. “Yeah I’m a little hungry. I only had a quick bit of my uncle’s cooking before I left.”

“Than let’s go find something to eat!” She exclaimed pulling him towards the food booths where the tempting cinnamon aroma flooded the air.

“Sakura chan shouldn’t we have gotten something healthy to eat?” Gaara asked a few minuets later as the small pair sat on a large rock a few feet away from the long line of booths.

Sakura took a small bit of the sticky cinnamon roll Gaara had treated her too and giggled. “Silly, this is healthy for you. It’s good for your soul. And besides it’s a festival you should pig out once in a while.”

Gaara looked over at her and snickered to himself looking away. Sakura saw this and tilted her hear to the side in confusion as his snickers turned to fits of laughter.

“What, what is it? What’s so funny?” She asked confused.

“Gaara quitted down a bit but pointed to her face and managed to squeak out a reply before falling into howls of laughter again. “Your...face. You have icing on your face.”

Sakura touched her cheek and felt a sticky substance clinging to her pale porcine skin. Wiping it off with the back of her hand she chuckled a bit as well. Gaara looked really cute when he laughed.

“Are you going to laugh all night or are you going to finish that sticky bun?” She asked.

Instantly Gaara stopped and drew his cinnamon roll closer to himself. “My pinwheel.” He replied referring to his cinnamon roll.

Sakura and Gaara both had different ways of calling their treats. Sakura preferred sticky bun and Gaara preferred pinwheel. Either way they both agreed that it beat broccoli and carrots any day.

Licking the stray icing off her fingers Sakura raised an eyebrow when she saw her green eyes friend pull out a small box and open the top.

“What’s that Gaara kun?” She asked wiping her wet fingers on a napkin.

“Dessert,” he chirped.

“But didn’t we just have dessert?”

“Nah, that was dinner. You said it was healthy for our souls so it was our dinner and this is our desert.”

Sakura peered over her friend’s shoulder and saw a bunch of pink sticks poking out of the box. Her eyes widened in delight and she squealed in glee. “Is that what I think it is?”

“It’s strawberry Pocky. You like?” He asked pulling one of the pink sticks out and handing it to her.

“Like it? I love Pocky! It’s my favorite desert. How did you know?” She squealed grapping the pink stick and popping it into her mouth sucking the pink icing off her thin vertical pretzel.

“I didn’t, I liked them too and thought you might as well,” he replied taking a stick out for himself.

“You know what Gaara kun?”

Gaara turned towards his friend with two of the stick hanging from his mouth causing his only friend to

snort back a laugh. "What is it Sakura chan?" he asked taking one out and finishing off the other one. "You know, I think this has been positively the absolutely best Valentine's day ever for me."

Gaara smiled at his fiend and nodded. "Me too Sakura chan. This has been the best Valentine's day for me too. But there is still something I wanted to do tonight." He replied reaching over a brushing a stray curl out of her face.

"What's that Gaara kun?"

The red haired sand lover retracted his hand and pulled something out from underneath his small half poncho. "Remember when you gave me your mother's necklace, well I felt bad and I wanted to give you something. This is for you Sakura chan." He said pulling out a long red ribbon of the brightest color. "It's for your hair since you look so cute in red I though this would be perfect for you."

Sakura stared wide eye at the beautiful red ribbon. "Gaara kun it's gorgeous . But I really can't except it, you've been too kind to me already."

"No, you can. Sakura chan you're the one who has been too kind to me. I never had a friend or a reason to smile and you gave me both, I only wish I could do more for you." Gaara replied reaching over and threading the red ribbon underneath her hair and tying it in a bow on the top of her head.

Sakura blushed and smiled shyly looking down, for once at a lost for words. "Gaara kun...",she started but stuttered searching for the right words. "...Thank you."

Gaara smiled softly and leaned placing a soft kiss gently on her cheek. "Your welcome Sakura chan."

Sakura's eyes widened as the blush on her cheeks grew tenfold. With a shaky voice she was about to say something but was interrupted by a loud bang followed by a dazzling display of lights that filled the darkening heavens. Following the first a second and a third firework went off exploding into the sky illuminating the barren desert terrain.

Deciding to let it slid she rested her small head on his shoulder and smiled softly enjoying the fireworks that decorated the night sky with their beauty.

'Happy Valentine's day Gaara kun.'

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Say you love me every
waking moment,
turn my head
with talk of summertime . . .

Say you need me with you,
now and always . . .
promise me that all
you say is true -
that's all I ask of you . . .

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