

# **An Easy Thing**

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*A night of contemplation; a serious, introspective piece. A shinobi ponders life and death at the edge of the abyss. Rated PG-13 for contemplations of suicide and potentially disturbing and macabre imagery. One-shot. (1100-ish words)*

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# 1 - An Easy Thing

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**Author's Notes:** A... character study, perhaps? I'm not quite sure how to define this, but I like it, and everyone I showed it to so far thinks it is good, so here goes. ^\_^ My plotbunny took a vacay on me, so it took me a while to finish this despite being only just over a thousand words.

## An Easy Thing

//“It seemed an easy thing, to step into the nothingness, to fall, to die... //

He stood on the precipice, staring out into the endless sea of gold, red, orange, and ever-darkening violet that was the sunset. The wind threaded playfully through his hair and the treetops, inviting both to dance. The leaves waved jauntily as they turned from green to crimson to green and back in the fading light, glistening like so many drops of blood.

He took no pleasure in the sight or smell of blood, though he knew the townsfolk would laugh should he say so. As far as they were concerned, he was a bloodthirsty animal; a demon living in the skin and bones and sinew of a human, not worth the air he breathed.

He didn't know why he remained. An easy thing would be to simply take a step forwards, to walk off the edge. With such a long drop, he was sure to be killed, had no way to survive. He looked dispassionately down, gazing into the growing gloom at the bottom of the sheer cliff. A slow river ran along the base, flowing quietly, glowing as if on fire.

There were some swimmers in the water; though they looked like bugs from such a height. Shino's bugs, perhaps, or ants. It would be an easy thing to let his demon loose to do what it would. They were bound to drive him out of town eventually, why delay the inevitable? But he didn't enjoy the suffering of others, not in the least. He'd had too much suffering in his own short life to enjoy someone else's. He understood.

He watched the swimmers collect their things and head off, presumably back to the village. The last vestiges of sunlight dipped below the horizon and the stars winked into existence. The night was clear, and cooling quickly; he took out a kunai and began tossing it, watching it flash in the moonlight and catching it on its way down.

A miscalculation, and a cut appeared on his palm as the kunai slipped through his grasping hand, bouncing off a rock and over the edge of the precipice into the darkness. He held his hand up, the blood turning silvery-red in the light, and followed it as it drip-drip-dripped onto the ground under his feet.

It wasn't very deep and the bleeding soon stopped. It would be an easy thing to cut deeper; to let the crimson flow until his body was cold and pale. It would be some time before they bothered to look for him, even longer until they found his body.

An owl left a nearby tree, off to hunt for the night, and he stared after it as it flapped silently away, riding the wind. How free it would feel to fly away into the night and escape his cage. But he couldn't; jumping through the trees was the closest he could come. He enjoyed it, but it just wasn't the same.

Turning, he approached the nearest tree and climbed up high into its branches. There was something satisfying about climbing a tree with just his own strength, without jumping or chakra. The tree was huge and ancient, rough-barked and many-limbed, hung about with vines and covered with moss on its north side. He gave a vine a strong tug; it held fast.

It would be an easy thing, to loop one round his neck. Simple, to then leap from the branch on which he stood and hang from this old tree. Dangle from a high limb like some macabre decoration. He laid a hand on the trunk of the tree, watching his breath mist silver in the air between them, then pressed his forehead to the rough bark. He remained that way for some time.

A rustle of leaves below him, and he looked down. For a split second, he saw familiar pale eyes, a sadness like his own buried deep under their surface. Then he blinked and the eyes were those of a tanuki looking up at the human in the tree, before bolting off into the underbrush. He climbed down from the tree and returned to the edge of the precipice, standing in his own blood.

Looking behind him to the east, the world was murky in the pre-dawn light; if he was going to leave, it would have to be fairly soon to make it back in time. He hadn't decided for certain what he would do, but many options, easy and not, were available to him. All that awaited him at `home' in the village was pain and heartache, but....

He wasn't the only person who lived with pain, he knew; others did as well. But he wondered sometimes how many lives would be happier should he die. Most of the village, for certain, would be quite content if he did what seemed easy and stepped into the nothingness.

But there were a few in his village who would be sad, or at least disappointed in him, should he do that. And there was one other... for that one, doing the easy thing would be a betrayal of the worst kind. He'd taught that person how to live—thought it took beating the hell out of him to do it—and showed him there was more to life than loving oneself.

The sun was coming up now. Standing on his tiptoes facing the emptiness on the edge of the cliff, he spread his arms and leaned over slightly, stretching his fingertips to the wind. He balanced for an eternal instant on the edge of the abyss; weightless yet weighty, oblivious and attuned at the same time. A smile flickered across his face as he leaned out a little further.

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Uzumaki Naruto lowered his arms. He turned towards the forest path lit with the rising sun and walked steadily forwards into another new day.

He had never been one to do the easy thing.

// ...But then I saw it, eyes filled with endless sorrow, and I turned back to face my pain."//

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*fin*

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So, there you have it.Â Â My little ficlet-character study-thingy.

Reviews and opinions of all types are appreciated and valued, from concrit to flames. If you liked it, tell me why. ^\_^ If you didn't, I'd love to hear what could have made it more appealing to you.