

Neverending Naruto novel

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*I dunno... look at my profile for the main character info!
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.... PLEASE COMMENT....

1. the arrival

It was a beautiful spring day. The sun was shining brightly and there was a gentle breezy blowing through the trees. The path rounded to a hill top. Below in the valley was a peaceful village. Kiya turned to Tora and said "This will be our new home...at least for a time." They both knew they never stayed to long in one place. They just couldn't, they had to stay on the move.

Kiya "So should we continue down or wait until morning?"

Tora "If I have to sleep on the hard ground one more night I think will start crying!"

Kiya let a soft chuckle escape and said "I agree...besides I could really go for a hot bath and meal someone else can cook!"

Laughing together they walked down the hill towards the gates of Konoha.

As they got to the gates they were greeted by two men sitting in a booth. "Welcome to Konoha!" They said. One had a bandage on his nose and the other was wearing a bandana with his hair covering the right side of his face. Kiya and Tora introduced themselves and asked where they could find a nice inn for the evening. The pair then introduced themselves to them. The one with the bandage was Kotetsu and the other was Izumo. They suggested a couple of places around the village. Trying as best they could to describe where the places where located. Seeing the looks of confusion on the girls faces they realized that they had definitely never been to this village before.

Izumo "Our relief should be here in about 20minutes if you would like to wait we can show you were to go."

Kiya looked at Tora. Tora just shrugged her shoulders and continued looking around at the village and activity around her. It had been a couple of months since they had seen a village of this size. Tora really loved the forest but she was truly at home among the crowds!

Kiya smiled sweetly at Izumo. "That would be really great...if you don't mind."

Izumo smiled back. "It would be my..er..our pleasure!"

Kotetsu laughed and agreed.

Kiya "Thank you very much. We will just wander into those shops for a bit. Let us know when you are ready."

Kiya waved at them as Tora started to drag her towards the shops. The girls wandered through the shops. Picking up a few needed things and a couple of trinkets for Tora.

Tora "SHAKIRA AND KARA WOULD LOVE THESE!" She exclaimed looking at the steaks sitting in the butchers window.

Kiya "You know we can't bring them into the village yet."

Tora "I know...but they have to eat too."

Kiya "Yes they do and they will find enough in the forest."

Glancing back towards the gate they noticed that the relief had come for their escorts. So they decided that they better head over before they leave and they are left to find there own way around. As they approached them the guys smiled.

Izumo "Are you ready?"

Kiya "Yes we are. We really do appreciate you taking a couple of strangers around the village. I am sure you have better things to do."

Kotetsu "Actually we didn't have any plans. Except to go get some dinner."

Izumo "I don't suppose we could get the two of you to join us?"

Tora "THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!!!"

Izumo and Kotetsu looked at Tora in surprise. They didn't expect such a large voice to come from such a small person.

Kiya laughingly "Don't worry she can surprise the best of people."

Izumo chuckling "So about dinner....."

Kiya "Tora said it...it sounds like fun."

Tora "SERIOUSLY WHY DOES EVERYBODY IGNORE ME?? NOW YOU KNOW WHY I YELL!!!!"

Izumo blushing "Sorry I didn't mean anything by it."

Tora "FINE!"

Tora started talking Kotetsu's ear off. Asking as many questions as she could. Trying to find out everything about the village that she could. She talked so fast that he couldn't keep up. He would start to answer one question and she would already be three questions ahead. Despite the fact that normally someone like her would be extremely annoying he enjoyed her enthusiasm. It was almost contagious! Kotetsu thought she really was a sweet girl even if it seemed like she had a limitless supply of energy.

This of course left Izumo to escort Kiya. He pointed out interesting things to her and she asked a few questions trying to get a feel for the village and where they would start their new lives. She told him that she wanted to open a small restaurant and of course they need a place to live. He told her he knew of a few places that just might perfect for them. Soon they came to a small ramen shop where they stopped to eat.

Kotetsu "The inn is just around the corner."

Izumo "It should work for you until you are able to find a place of your own."

Kiya "Thank you so much you two. You don't know how much I appreciate your kindness."

Izumo "We are at your disposal."

Tora *rolling eyes* "MEN ARE ALL A LIKE!"

Kiya and Kotetsu laughed and Izumo blushed chuckling. Tora's exclamation caught the attention of the few other diners in the restaurant. Mostly they chuckled but one blonde hair ninja in an orange jumpsuit really took notice.

Blonde boy "IZUMO! KOTETSU! ARE YOU GUYS OUT ON A DATE?"

Kotetsu "It's not like that Naruto."

Tora "DO I LOOK LIKE I WOULD DATE ONE OF THEM?!" She said glaring at the blonde boy.

Kiya "Tora be nice." She warned. She couldn't have Tora starting fights already!

Izumo "We are just showing some nice young ladies to an inn and they were nice enough to join us for dinner."

Blonde boy "Yeah I bet you were."

Kotetsu "By the way Kiya, Tora this is Naruto. Or as his sensei would call him...The Number One Hyper-Active Knucklehead Ninja of Konoha." He exclaimed with a laugh.

Kiya had to chuckle...it sounded like something she would say about Tora!

Kiya "I think you may have some competition now Tora. It is very nice to meet you Naruto."

Tora "YEAH RIGHT KIYA!" She said ignoring Naruto completely.

Naruto "Do you ever not yell?"

Tora "I CAN GET EVEN LOUDER IF YOU WANT!"

Kiya "Please not now Tora. Lets try to make friends with people at least...not enemies."

Tora "HE STARTED IT!"

Naruto "I DID NOT!"

Izumo "Now she got him started."

Kiya rubbed her eyes "Can we please finish dinner so we can get to the inn I really would like to get settled in. We have a busy day tomorrow."

Izumo "Speaking of which...we are off tomorrow if you would like us to show you those places I mentioned."

Kiya "That would be wonderful. I really would appreciate that."

Naruto "THAT DEFINATLY SOUNDS LIKE A DATE!"

Izumo "Naruto I am going to beat your @\$\$!"

Kiya "You know what would be great...if you wouldn't mind Naruto could you show Tora around the village tomorrow? I am sure she would find going with us pretty boring."

Naruto and Tora "WHAT??!!!"

Kotetsu "I am sure Kakashi wouldn't mind. That is what ninjas do."

Izumo "So Naruto does it sound like a date?"

Naruto and Tora blushed while the others started laughing.

Naruto "Yeah I guess so. It might be fun actually! I can introduce you to everybody else!"

Tora "REALLY? THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!"

Kotetsu "We are taking them to stay at The Green Leaf Inn around the corner. Why don't you pick her up there in the morning."

Naruto "SURE! What time?"

Izumo looking at Kiya "Is 9 o'clock okay?"

Kiya "Sounds good to me."

Tora "PERFECT!"

Naruto "Okay I will see you tomorrow morning!" He said as he ran off.

Kiya "I never thought I would ever meet someone with as much energy as Tora."

Kotetsu "Yeah he causes a lot of trouble around here."

Izumo "He is a good kid though."

Kiya "He seems sweet."

Tora "HE BETTER SHOW UP!"

Kotetsu laughing "He'll be there don't worry."

They finished their dinner and Izumo quickly paid. They walked the short distance to the inn and Kiya got their room.

Kiya "Thank you so much for the wonderful meal and the great company. It is always so hard to meet people when you go somewhere new."

Izumo "Your very welcome. And, don't worry we are very friendly here in Konoha."

Kotetsu "Besides now that you met Naruto...you will soon meet the whole village!"

Kiya "Well we are going to get settled in. We will see you at nine?"

Izumo "Yep! We'll see you in the morning."

Kiya and Tora waved to the two men as they walked off. They gathered their things and headed to there room. Their room was comfortable. Though nothing special. When you have stayed in as many inns as they have they all start to look the same. Two twin beds, a table, a lamp, and a bathroom. Nothing special but it beat sleeping on the hard ground. Kiya immediately went and opened the window. After the life she had lived she had to have fresh air around her at all times. She couldn't stand a completely closed in area. They quickly took their showers and went to bed. They were asleep almost before their heads hit the pillows. "I think we are going to like it here." They both thought as they drifted off to sleep. It had been a long couple of weeks of traveling.

2. Getting to know people

CHAPTER 2

They awoke to the buzzing alarm clock. It was 8 o'clock. They had an hour to get ready before the guys showed up.

Tora "I hate mornings."

Kiya "I love mornings...it is the only time you don't yell." She said with a smirk dodging the pillow Tora threw at her. "Come on sleepy head. By the sounds of it you are going to have a busy day."

Tora "THAT'S RIGHT I ALMOST FORGOT!" She exclaimed jumping out of bed and running for the bathroom.

Kiya shaking her head "Glad to see nothing changes."

The girls quickly got dressed and headed down the stairs just in time to see Naruto running into Kotetsu almost knocking him off his feet.

Kotetsu "NARUTO will you ever watch where your going?"

Naruto "I didn't want to be late!"

Izumo laughing "Well don't worry your not."

Kiya and Tora walked outside just in time to witness the exchange. Naruto stood there blushing and scratching the back of his head. Izumo and Kotetsu were just shaking there head at the blonde ninja.

Kotetsu "He is very enthusiastic about his duties."

Kiya laughing "Don't worry I know someone else that is the same way." she said earning a glare from Tora.

Naruto "Are you ready to go Tora?"

Tora "YEP!" she said jumping down the few steps. She barely got to street level before Naruto grabbed her hand and they started running.

Kiya "TRY TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE TORA!"

Tora "OKAY!"

Kiya shaking her head and smiling "You can always expect the unexpected with my sister. I hope she doesn't get into to much trouble."

Izumo "Don't worry. They may get into trouble but he will keep her safe."

Kotetsu "As long as Iruka or Kakashi don't catch them in the act!"

Izumo and Kotetsu start laughing as Kiya looks at them a little confused.

Izumo "Oh sorry...a little joke around here. Iruka and Kakashi are Naruto's sensei. They try to keep him in line as much as they possibly can."

Kiya chuckling "Sounds like I need to introduce them to Tora. Maybe they could put her into line for me."

Kotetsu "Don't worry I think she will meet them sometime today."

Izumo "Shall we go? I know of a couple of places that have an apartment upstairs and a small shop downstairs."

Kiya "That sounds exactly like what I am looking for."

The three of them proceeded to go look at a few of the places that were available. There weren't many but Kiya wasn't picky. After all the place wasn't going to be a permanent home. They made small talk. Mainly talking about the village and it's

inhabitants. Every time the conversation turned to Kiya and Tora she quickly changed the subject with out being to obvious. On there way to view the second place on the small list that they had. Kiya saw Kotetsu wave at a pair of men walking in there direction. They both were wearing backpacks. The taller of the two had on a green spandex jumpsuit with a green vest over it. He had black hair in a bowl cut and probably the biggest eyebrows Kiya had ever seen.

The other had wind swept silver hair. He wore a head band over his left eye and a mask over most of his face. Both his shirt and pants were a dark blue. He also wore the same vest that Kiya had seen on some of the people in the village.

Kotetsu "How did the mission go?"

The one in the green jump suit answered "It was just your basic A-rank mission!" he said giving a thumbs up and a gleaming smile.

"Who is your youthful friend" the green jumpsuit asked.

Izumo "Oh...I'm sorry. Kiya this is Kakashi and Gai." he said pointing first to the man with the mask and then the one wearing the green jumpsuit.

Kotetsu "Kiya is new to the village and we were showing her some places that have opened up."

Gai "It is so very nice to meet such a youthful person!" he said holding out his hand to Kiya.

Kiya "It is a pleasure to meet you too Gai."

Kakashi "Nice to meet you Kiya."

Kiya "Nice to meet you too Kakashi....wait....Kakashi...OH! Your Naruto's sensei!"

Kakashi sighing "What did he do now?"

Kiya smiling "Oh nothing. He is showing my sister Tora around the village."

Kotetsu "Yeah....and she is just like him!"

Kakashi's and Gai's eyes got big. And they both say "Not possible!"

Kiya laughing "Oh I'll bet she is even worse. You haven't gotten to know her yet!"

Gai "Sounds like I should introduce her to my Lee!"

Kiya "She definitely loves to meet new people. She would probably enjoy that immensely."

Kakashi "Not to cut this short but we need to report to the Hokage."

Gai "Why don't you two bring Kiya to meet us at the ramen shop for dinner tonight. A bunch of us youthful lotuses and of course Kakashi are meeting up there."

Izumo "Sound okay?"

Kiya nodding "Sounds good to me...but Tora...."

Kakashi "Trust me. If she is with Naruto she will end up at the ramen shop."

Kiya "Okay that sounds great. I will see you tonight. Nice to meet you two!"

Kakashi "Alrighty then ready Gai?"

Gai "Lead on Kakashi!"

Kakashi and Gai walked away listening to Kiya's laughter. To them it sounded like silver bells. They needed some new faces around the village and hers was a nice one.

Naruto sprinted down the street dragging Tora behind him. Normally she would out run him but he took her by surprise. They ran up one street and down another. The shops and building were a blur to her. If he left her she wouldn't have a clue where she was.

Tora "WAIT NARUTO! STOP!" she said panting.

Naruto "Tired already?"

Tora "NO! I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING!"

Naruto "Oh sorry! We are heading to the training grounds. That is where most people would be right now."

Tora "TRAINING GROUNDS?"

Naruto "Yeah...you know where ninja's train!"

Tora "OH!"

Naruto "Come on! Hurry up!" he said grabbing her hand and taking off again.

It wasn't to much longer and Tora could make out some people up ahead. A couple of them hitting on what looked like straw dummies. One looked to be staring intensely at the trunk of a tree. There was a dog sitting quietly. "WOW" she though "He is almost as big as Shakira!" In front of the dog sat a boy with a sketch book with another boy looking over his shoulder. As they got closer Naruto slowed dropping Tora's hand.

Naruto "HEY GUYS!" he yelled. "I HAVE SOMEONE HERE I WANT YOU TO MEET!"

The pink haired girl "Geeze Naruto! Your such an idiot! Why did you have to yell!"

Naruto blushing "Sorry Sakura...I was just excited to introduce you to Tora."

At the mention of Tora's name they all looked at her. Naruto began pointing out the people and introducing Tora.

Naruto "This is Tora. She just got here and I am showing her around!"

Naruto "That is Sakura." he said pointing to the girl that yelled at him. She had pink hair and wore a red shirt.

Sakura "Hello."

Naruto "This is Hinata." gesturing toward the girl standing shyly to the side. She wore an oversized coat and her hair was the darkest blue.

Hinata "N-nice to m-meet you."

He then looked toward the boy staring at the trees. You could barely see anything about him. He had a hood over his head and dark glasses acrossed his eyes. "That bug boy there is Shino."

Shino nodded quietly looking at Tora.

Naruto turned then to the two in front of the dog.

Naruto "The one sketching is Sai and the other is Kiba."

Sai nodded politely. He sat cross legged on the ground. He had black hair and a short shirt. He was cradling his sketch book.

Kiba "Don't forget Akamaru you idiot!" he said gesturing toward the big dog. He had messy hair and red on both cheeks.

Tora "I AM SO GLAD TO MEET YOU ALL!"

The others all looked quickly at Tora.

Kiba "WOW Naruto! Where did you find this one!"

Sakura "She is definatly enthusiastic!"

Naruto "I know isn't she great? Just like me! BELIEVE IT!"

Sakura "Your such a baka Naruto."

Naruto gave Tora a sheepish grin. He explained about squads. Sakura and Sai were on his and the other three were on a different one.

Naruto "Come on guys help me show Tora Konoha!"

They all looked to Tora and agreed.

Naruto "Then afterward we can go get Ramen!"

Kiba "We are suppose to meet the sensei there anyway, so it sounds good to me!"

Hinata "O-okay."

Sai and Shino just sighed gathering their stuff.

Sakura "You are gonna like it here Tora. Konoha is a great place."

Tora "I ALREADY DO! WHERE TO NEXT?!"

They all began walking back towards the village. Sakura and Kiba began telling Tora about the Hokage stone monument. Tora was running at the mouth once again. They all laughed and smiled at her. Sai began sketching again as he walked. Shino and Hinata followed quietly.

This was the first time that Tora thought "Maybe I will make some good friends." Normally she wouldn't waste the time or the effort to get to know anybody very well. But, for some

reason.....this time felt different. Almost like she had come home.

3. Dinner anyone?

CHAPTER 3

Kiya and the two men arrived at the second place on the list. It was a two bedroom apartment above a small open aired restaurant. The nicest thing about it was the fact that it came completely furnished. They had money but not a lot.

Kiya "This is perfect!"

Izumo "I thought you would really like this one."

Kotetsu "The owner is over there. Why don't you talk to him?"

Kiya went over and talked to the owner of the property. After a few minutes they agreed on a price and the owner said they could move in immediately. Kiya was very excited. Things were going so well. It was the perfect situation. She began to wonder why. Things never went this smoothly. She told Izumo and Kotetsu that she took the place and she needed to get their things and collect Tora.

Kotetsu "Well she is with Naruto so it is no telling where they are right now."

Izumo "Besides we are suppose to meet up with everybody at the ramen shop."

Kiya "Oh...I almost forgot about that!"

Izumo "Actually we might as well head over there right now. It is back on the other side of the village so everyone should be getting there when we do."

Kotetsu "I bet Tora will be there by then too."

Kiya "Okay sounds good."

The three of them started back toward the ramen shop. Kiya hadn't realized that it was as late as it was. The time went by pretty fast talking with friends. It had been so long since she had made friends she had forgotten what a normal conversation sounded like. She smiled at the two men and enjoyed the rest of the walk.

They were almost to the ramen shop now. Kiya couldn't believe the crowd of people that swarmed the place. She looked among the faces. She saw Gai and Kakashi...."Ah there is the familiar green head" she thought to herself.

Tora "KIYA!!!" she yelled waving excitedly.

Everybody's head turned at her exclamation. Kiya blushed lightly.

Kiya mumbling "One of these days I will get her to talk a little quieter."

Kotetsu "You know...I may have just met her....but I don't think that is possible."

Kiya blushed not realizing she had been heard. Izumo and Kotetsu both laughed.

Tora "DID YOU FIND A PLACE KIYA?? CAN WE STAY??"

Kiya "Yes Tora I found the perfect place. We can move in tonight actually."

Tora "YAY!" she yelled turning back to the group of teenagers sitting around her.

Gai "I am glad to hear Konoha has two more youthful people residing in it walls!" he stated standing and walking over to Kiya.

Kiya "Thank you." she smiled standing on her tip toes giving Gai a light kiss on the cheek. He blushed darkly. This caused many of the patrons to turn in shock. One person spoke saying.

"Well I never thought I would see the day that a women actually kissed Gai!" said a man that wore a bandana on backwards and chewing on a long toothpick.

Gai "Women can't resist the Green Beast of Konoha!" This earned many a laugh from

the surrounding people.

Kakashi shaking head "Since nobody else seems interested in doing it let me introduce you to everybody." he said coolly standing up and walking over to Kiya.

Kiya "Tora have you met everybody?" she asked so Kakashi didn't have to do introductions more than once.

Tora "DON'T WORRY KIYA...."

"Trust me...she made herself well known already....she is so loud it is a drag...." said a young man with a pony tail. He was dressed similar to many of the men in the shop.

Tora "WELL MAYBE IF YOU PAID ATTENTION INSTEAD OF DAYDREAMING AND LOOKING AT THE CLOUDS I WOULDNT HAVE TO YELL AT YOU!"

"So troublesome...." the young man muttered.

Kakashi "That would be Shikamaru."

Kakashi "On his right is Choji." he said pointing to the chubby guy with long spiky hair and red swirls on his cheeks.

"I'm Ino!" said the blonde sitting on Shikamaru's left.

"Shut up Ino Pig! He wasn't talking to you!" said the pink haired girl.

"You shut up Billboard Brow!" Ino replied.

Tora "YOU TWO EVEN GIVE ME A HEADACHE!!"

Kiya "Glad to see your making friends Tora."

Tora "THE OTHER ONE IS SAKURA!" she exclaimed giving both the girls glares.

Kakashi "Uh....of course you know Naruto...the one under the hood is Shino." Shino nods to Kiya.

Kakashi "The one sketching is Sai." He flicks his pencil barely acknowledging Kiya.

Kakashi "The smirking one with red on his face is Kiba and Hinata is sitting on his right."

Kiba "HIYA!" Hinata gives a shy smile. The introductions were barely done before the teenagers went back to talking.

Gai "We may have taught them many things but manners weren't one of them!"

Kiya laughing "That's all right."

Kakashi "The man with the toothpick is Genma and the one next to him is Raido." They both smile and give small waves.

Gai "The tall silent one is Ibiki." he said pointing to the man with the long jacket.

Kakashi "This is Kurenai." as he gestured to the woman with red eyes. "She is Kiba, Shino, and Hinata's sensei."

Gai "The woman holding the pig is Shizune."

Shizune "This is Ton-Ton." she said lifting the pig.

Kakashi "The one smoking is Asuma." Asuma raised the hand holding the cigarette. "He is the sensei for Ino, Shikamaru, and Choji."

Gai "This is Iruka...he teaches the kids at the academy." he gestured to the man with the scar acrossed his nose. He smiled gently at Kiya.

Kiya looked around smiling at everyone "It is definatly a pleasure to meet you all."

Kakashi and Gai walk back to the seats. Gesturing towards the chair between them.

Gai "Please Kiya have a seat and join us for some delicious ramen!"

Kiya sits between the two leaving Izumo and Kotetsu to scavenge for any available empty seats in the shop. Conversation is light and fun as the many people enjoy the evening meal. Kiya listens to the camaraderie between the different ninjas. Discovering that many of them have been on missions and had only just recently returned. Suddenly the quiet camaraderie was broken....

Tora "NARUTO STOP STEALING MY FOOD!"

Naruto "BUT I'M STILL HUNGRY!"

Tora "WELL GET SOME MORE FOOD INSTEAD OF TAKING MINE!"

Naruto "I DON'T HAVE ANYMORE MONEY!"

Tora "CHOJI! NOT YOU TOO!" Choji had stolen some of Tora's BBQ Pork while she was distracted by Naruto.

Choji "But...it was the last piece! Nobody gets the last piece but me!"

Kiya signaled to the man behind the counter gesturing to the three now arguing.

Kiya "Don't worry it's on me." she stated trying to avoid a bigger confrontation.

As the man placed more ramen and BBQ Pork in front of the trio.

Naruto "Really? WOW! Thanks!"

Choji "Yeah, Thanks!"

Ino "DID YOU HAVE TO ENCOURAGE THEM KIYA? NOW THEY WILL DO IT EVERY TIME!"

Kiya "Sorry I just can't watch anybody go hungry! I guess that is why I like owning my own restaurant."

Naruto "Your opening a restaurant?"

Tora "YEP! AND SHE IS A REALLY GREAT COOK!"

Choji "Really?"

Tora "THIS RAMEN IS GOOD! BUT WAIT UNTIL YOU TRY KIYA'S!"

Kiba "When are you opening up?"

Kiya "I don't know....a couple of days....a week at the most."

Tora "WE SHOULD HAVE A GRAND OPENING PARTY!"

Genma "That sounds like fun." he said and many others agreed.

Gai "Do you need any help setting up the restaurant?"

Kiya "I think Tora and I can probably manage." Gai's face fell as his offer was refused.

Kiya "But, I could use someone to help me get the supplies I need." she said quickly afraid to offend the man that was being so nice.

Gai "I can do that!" he exclaimed giving a thumbs up.

Kakashi mumbles "A perfect job for Gai....maybe I can relax a little tomorrow."

Just as most of the people were finishing their meals, leaning back relaxing, and enjoying the conversation Gai jumped up.

Gai "Finally my youthful lotuses are approaching!"

"Great he is in rare form tonight." mumbled the young man with long hair.

"DON'T INSULT GAI-SENSEI HE IS THE BEST MAN IN THE WORLD!" said the guy who bore a striking resemblance to the man sitting next to Kiya.

"You two have been at it all day. Let it rest! PLEASE!" stated the girl with the buns in her hair.

Gai "Hurry up you three I have a couple of people I want you to meet! I have been waiting all evening to introduce them to the fastest team in Konoha!" he said as they slowly approached.

This earned many chuckles from the surrounding sensei. The finally stood standing near guy.

Gai "Kiya, Tora I would like you to meet my team! NEJI, TENTEN, and ROCK LEE!" Neji, the boy with long hair, looked humiliated while Tenten looked only slightly embarrassed. Rock Lee on the other hand was just beaming!

Kiya smiled kindly "It is so nice to finally meet you."

Tora blushing a dark pink "I....uh.....yeah...."she said not taking her eyes of the young man in the green jumpsuit. People were flabbergasted at Tora's quietness they may not have known her very long but this is definitely something new! Kiya's smile faltered as she looked at her young companion. "Maybe she is just tired." she thought to herself. As that thought crossed her mind she realized just how tired she was. It had been a long day full of excitement. She then stifled a yawn. Kotetsu noticed Kiya's yawn.

Kotetsu "I know it has been an eventful day for the two of you. Why don't we get your stuff and walk you to your new home. It is only a couple of blocks from our place."

Izumo "Good idea. It is right on our way."

Kiya "I think your right....Thank you. Tora are you ready?"

Tora "I....uh....yeah...." still staring at Lee.

Kiya mumbling "She must be really tired."

Kiya started to pay but Kakashi quickly paid for her and Tora's meals. Along with the extra ramen and BBQ pork for Naruto and Choji.

Kakashi "We were the ones to invite you so it is only polite that we pay."

Kiya "Thank you. Please be sure to stop by my restaurant and I will return the favor." she stated smiling sweetly at the man in the mask. She then realized she never did see him take a bite though his bowl was empty.

Kiya "It was so nice to meet everyone."

Tora "Yeah...." still staring at the boy with large eyebrows.

Genma "Don't forget about the Grand Opening Party Tora mentioned!"

Kiya "Don't worry I won't....we will make it officially one week from today."

Everyone said it sounded good and they would be sure to be there. Kiya and Tora waved as they walked off with Izumo and Kotetsu leading the way. The ninja remaining at the shop watched the small group walking away. They had a strong feeling that things in Konoha were about to get very interesting.

4. Setting Up Shop

The day dawned bright and sunny. Kiya has always been an early riser. She thought through the many things they had to do as she laid in bed looking out the window. The only thing they hated worse than leaving was starting over yet again. She sighed as she got out of bed realizing she hadn't bought any tea or coffee. "Oh well." she thought. "I guess that goes on the top of my list." As she walked to Tora's door.

Kiya "Are you going to get up today?"

Tora "Just because you get up before the birds doesn't mean I have to...." she mumbled rolling over.

Kiya "We have a lot of stuff to do before we can open the shop....besides you need to go get Shakira and Kara."

Tora "They waited this long they can wait another hour or two..."she grumbled putting the pillow over her head.

Kiya "Besides Gai is suppose to take us to the market and I don't know when he is suppose to get here." she said. Then she thought of something. "Maybe he will even bring the young man in the green jumpsuit with him."

Tora "YOU THINK HE WILL?" Now that was the Tora Kiya knew.

Kiya "Maybe..." At that Tora jumped up and ran for the bathroom. "Hhhmmmm..." Kiya wondered.

They both took showers and decided they better go look at the shop and get their list ready. As they were coming down the stairs they saw not one but two men in green jumpsuits coming their way. At this Tora missed the last step of the stairs completely.

Kiya "I know you can be klutzy Tora but this is a little worse than normal." she said looking down at the green haired girl.

Lee "Are you okay?" he asked putting his hand out to help Tora up. Kiya couldn't believe the amazing speed in which he had moved. He was even faster than Tora who at times could be a blur.

Tora was blushing "I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!" she exclaimed pushing his hand away. Causing Lee to blush. "At least she has her voice back." Kiya thought.

Gai "Are we ready to go to the market my lotuses?" he asked

Kiya looking away from Tora and up at Gai "Not quite...I need to look at the kitchen and finish my list. It will only take a minute."

Gai "We will wait right here for you!"

As Kiya walked away Tora stood glaring at Lee. He returned her gaze looking very confused wondering what he could have possibly done. Gai walked over to the tables and chairs stacked against the wall.

Gai "Why don't we set these up while she is in the kitchen?"

Tora "FINE!"

Tora gave Lee one last glare and walked over to move the chairs. Lee then watching Tora out of the corner of his eye helped Gai move the tables around. As Kiya walked out of the kitchen they put the last chair in place.

Kiya "Thank you! That is one thing crossed off my many lists!"

Gai "Your welcome! We shall clean them when we get back. Are you ready?"

Kiya "One last thing.....Okay." she said glancing at the shelves behind the counter.

They all walked to the market. Gai and Kiya were having an easy conversation but every

time Lee spoke to Tora he would only get a glare in response. Kiya was relieved to see the market was not very far from the shop. They wandered around the market getting the many things they would need to set up not only the restaurant but their home. Many of the vendors agreed to deliver the parcels they had purchased so they didn't have to carry much back to their place. Luckily enough the shop had come furnished with glasses, plates, and the like. She again thought of what a perfect place it was and how lucky they had been to find it. As they arrived back at the shop they put the bags on the counter. Kiya found the bag with the cleaning supplies in it and started placing them on the counter. She watched the faces of the two teenagers and realized they didn't want to help with this part. "Who can blame them." She thought. So she came up with an idea.

Kiya "Tora why don't you take Lee and go and get the girls."

Tora "I DON'T NEED HIM A LONG. BESIDES HE WOULD ONLY BE SCARED OF THEM!"

At that comment both men looked at Tora.

Lee "I AM NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING!" he stated acting as proud as possible.

Tora "OH YOU WILL BE AFRAID OF THEM!"

Kiya "Why must you make everything so difficult? Just take him and go. You need help carrying back the stuff anyway."

At the look of confusion on Gai's face Kiya explained that they had left their two companions and a few things in the forest. Just in case this wasn't the right place for them. Gai understood completely.

Gai worriedly "The forest isn't a very safe place for people to stay by themselves at night!"

Kiya "Oh don't worry...these two can take really good care of themselves. I have the up most faith that they and our stuff are perfectly safe." At this comment Tora glared at Lee and started walking away.

Lee "Wait up! I am coming too!"

Gai "PROTECT HER MY LEE!"

Lee "YES GAI-SENSEI!" Kiya chuckled and Tora rolled her eyes.

Tora "YOU BETTER KEEP UP!" she stated as she took off at an unbelievable speed.

Unfortunately for Tora, Lee stayed right with her.

Kiya "And there off!" she chuckled along with Gai.

It didn't take very long for Gai and Kiya to have the shop cleaned. The owner had taken very good care of the place. As they started to unpack their purchases they began to hear squeals and exclamations from many different people.

Gai "I should go see what that is in case we are under attack!"

Kiya "Oh...I think we are fine. In fact I have a feeling our young friends will be coming around the corner any second." she said with a smirk.

At this a very horrified looking Lee came rushing around the corner. His eyes were twice the size they normally are.

Lee "GAI-SENSEI! YOU WON'T BELIEVE.....IT'S SO BIG!!!"

Gai "What are you talking about Lee?! Why do you look scared?! Your never scared!!" he exclaimed looking confusingly at Lee.

Kiya mumbles while rubbing her eyes "Tora please tell me you didn't...." she said shaking her head and sighing.

At this Tora and her two companions came around the corner. Tora was smirking and chuckling as Lee slammed his back against the wall dropping the bags he had been carrying and Gai jumped on the counter. Tora and Kiya found this very amusing.

Kiya "Tora you didn't purposely scare Lee did you?"

Tora "IT WAS ONLY A GROWL!"

Kiya sighing "You know damn well how loud her growl is!" she lectured Tora as she went up to Shakira and Kara.

Tora "THEY'RE HARMLESS!"

Kiya "They don't know that!"

Tora "FINE!"

Kiya "Gai, Lee this is Shakira and Kara." she gestured first towards one of the largest black and white striped tigers they had ever seen and then to the solid black cub. Shakira purred gently as Kiya reached down and stroked her head while Kara playfully bit Tora's ankle. Lee stayed near the wall but Gai slowly climbed down from the counter.

Gai shakily "That explains those big pillows you put on the floor behind the counter."

Kiya "Yep...they really are sweet. And, they are very good protection."

Gai "I can see that!"

They all began putting away the purchases. Though Gai and Lee kept a close eye on where they walked in relation to where the tigers were laying. Lee and Tora took the household supplies upstairs while Kiya directed Gai on the organization of the shop. Soon deliveries started to show and were easily dealt with. It didn't take very long before everything was put away and organized.

Kiya "WOW! With your help things got done much faster than I thought!"

Gai "I am glad we could be of assistance to a couple of fair damsels." he said with a gleaming smile.

Tora "WE DIDN'T NEED ANY HELP! WE COULD HAVE DONE EVERYTHING BY OURSELVES LIKE WE NORMALLY DO!"

Kiya "Tora be nice." she said wondering what had gotten into Tora. She never acts so mean.

Kiya "In exchange for your help today how about I cook you guys some dinner?"

Gai "I am sure your tired....you don't need to go through all that trouble."

Kiya "I have to cook dinner for Tora and I anyway. Besides I always make way to much food."

At that moment you could hear both Tora and Lee's stomachs give a rumbling sound. Kiya laughing "Well I guess that confirms it." she smiled while heading for the kitchen in the back of the shop. Just as she reached the door Izumo and Kotetsu came around the corner. Izumo "Hey Kiya! We just wanted to see how you were settling in." he nods to Gai, Lee, and Tora.

Kotetsu "Looks like you are settling in pretty quickly."

Kiya "Hi Guys! Actually we are completely done. Thanks to Gai and Lee's help."

Tora "EVEN THOUGH WE DIDN'T NEED IT!" she stated glaring at Lee.

Kiya sighing "I was just going to fix some dinner would you guys like to stay?"

Izumo "That would be great if you don't mind."

Kotetsu "Yeah I am kinda curious about your cooking the way Tora was bragging yesterday."

Kiya smiling "Great I will go get started. Tora can you come help me please?"

Kiya and Tora walked into the kitchen getting out the food they would need to prepare dinner.

Kiya "Tora what has gotten into you? I have never seen you treat someone so badly."

Tora in a loud whisper "WELL IT'S NOT MY FAULT!"

Kiya rolling her eyes "Just knock it off will you. They were nice enough to help us. The least you can do is be nice!"

Tora "FINE!"

Just then they heard a few new voices in the front. They quickly looked through the serving window. They saw Naruto, Sakura, Sai and Kakashi talking to the others.

Kiya "Hey guys!" she said coming out of the kitchen. "Your just in time for dinner. I hope you haven't eaten yet."

Naruto "NO WAY! WE HAVEN'T EATEN ALL DAY!" he said as his stomach gave off a growling sound causing him to blush and rub the back of his head.

Kakashi "Naruto....I am sure she has better things to do then feed us." he said looking at Kiya.

Kiya "Actually I was cooking for the six of us adding four more wouldn't be any trouble at all."

Sakura "That would be great Kiya, thank you."

Sai just nodded and retrieved his sketchbook while sitting at one of the tables. Naruto and Sakura quickly sat at the counter next to the other four.

Kakashi sighed "Well I guess you can count us in too."

Kiya smiled "Great! There is no better advertising then word of mouth!" she said walking back into the kitchen.

Soon the small shop was filled with wonderful aromas making the ninjas' mouths water as they sat talking amongst themselves.

Naruto "If it tastes half as good as it smells this is gonna be great!"

Tora began bringing the food out in big bowls.

Kiya bringing out the last of the food. "Normally it would be on individual plates but since this is informal I figured you guys wouldn't mind if we served it this way."

Gai "This is fine Kiya. You didn't even have to do this much."

Tora "THEY SHOULD JUST BE GLAD THEIR GETTING ANYTHING AT ALL!" At Tora's exclamation everyone began to hear a very low rumbling sound. At the noise Gai and Lee both jumped up and ran to the other side of the shop. Kiya began to laugh and Tora blushed. The other ninjas there wondered what the noise was and why had the green fearless wonders put so much distance between themselves and the counter.

Kakashi looking at Gai and Lee "What has gotten into the two you?"

Gai "I-I would back away from the counter very quickly right about now." Lee just stood next to Gai with his eyes as big as saucers.

Kiya "See Tora even Shakira says you need to be a little nicer."

At the mention of her name Shakira stood up and stretched. Her head reached above the counter. Giving the remaining ninja a very good view of what had made the noise. They all very quickly backed away.

Tora "SO MUCH FOR A BUNCH OF POWERFUL NINJA! THEY ARE SCARED OF A CAT!" she laughed so hard tears fell from her eyes.

Kiya stroking Shakira's head "Don't worry. She is very friendly. She wouldn't hurt anybody."

Naruto "THAT IS NO CAT!"

Sakura "I don't think you should have that thing wandering around the village."

Tora "SHE IS NOT A THING! AND SHE IS NOT WANDERING AROUND THE VILLAGE!"

Just then Kara scampered around the counter heading for the ninja. They barely noticed her keeping there concentration on the big tiger behind the counter. Until Sakura looked down exclaiming

"OH GAWD THEIRS TWO OF THEM!"

Kiya "Please everyone....settle down....there is no reason to get so upset. They are really sweet. Come back to the counter and eat before it gets cold." she said sending Shakira back to her pillow. The ninja approached cautiously and began to fill there plates. Choosing then to sit at the tables rather than the counter. The group began to eat quietly.

Kakashi "That was really delicious Kiya." he stated taking out his book.

Naruto "HOW DOES HE DO THAT!"

Kakashi "Do what?" he said reading his book.

Naruto "HOW DO YOU EAT WITH OUT US SEEING YOUR FACE?"

Kakashi "Hhmm...did you say something?" he said glancing up from his book winking at Kiya.

The gathered people began to laugh at Naruto's frustration. Then complimented Kiya and Tora on the wonderful meal they had prepared. The conversation was light as the group forgot about the tigers laying behind the counter. Eventually the group finished eating leaving very little left in the serving bowls on the counter.

Sakura "Can I help you with the dishes Kiya?"

Kiya "That would be great Sakura thank you. Tora can you please bring us the dishes."

Tora "WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO PICK UP AFTER EVERYONE?"

Lee "DON'T WORRY I WILL HELP YOU!" he said giving a thumbs and a big smile.

Tora glared "LIKE I NEED YOUR HELP!" Lee helped her anyway. The dishes were done very quickly and everyone sat around the tables.

Naruto "So when do you guys officially open?"

Kiya "I guess since we are settled in there is no reason to wait. We will open at noon tomorrow."

Izumo "So what are you going to call the place?"

Tora "THE HAPPY TIGER WHAT ELSE?"

Gai "A TOAST!" he shouted. They all raised their glasses. The younger people had soda and the older group had small glasses of sake.

Kotetsu "To Tora, Kiya, and The Happy Tiger!"

Izumo "May they experience many years of joy and prosperity!"

They all agreed and drank to the toast. They did not see the quick looks of sadness that crossed Tora and Kiya's faces. For the first time they were experiencing joy. Prosperity would come in time. As for the many years....they would move on long before then.

5. Time to Decorate

CHAPTER 5

The next few days were a blur for Tora and Kiya as the shop became very popular with the many shinobi around the village. Many including Izumo, Kotetsu, Gai, Lee, and Naruto came regularly for dinner. The other people they had met came on a regular basis also though not quite as frequently. As Lee came around more Tora lost her edge of meanness and started acting a little more like her normal self around him. Kiya approached Naruto one day asking if he would like to do some work around the shop in return for free meals. He was ecstatic at the opportunity not only for the free food but spending time with his new friends. Eventually the day came for the opening day celebration.

Kiya "Come on sleepy head you need to start decorating."

Tora "Oh come on Kiya....just a few more minutes." She mumbled into her pillow.

Kiya "You're the one that agreed to this party so you need to get up and decorate. I have way to much cooking to do to deal with it." She replied with a sigh.

Tora "Fine...." she replied getting out of bed.

Kiya "Good. Hurry up and get ready I have a list of stuff you need to get."

Tora quickly got dressed snatching the list from Kiya and bolting out the door. She quickly returned as Kiya shook her head holding out the money. Tora gave her a sheepish grin and took off. Tora wasn't to far from the shop when she ran into Naruto.

Naruto "Where are you going in such a hurry? Wait....look who I am talking to....where are you going?"

Tora "I HAVE TO GET THIS STUFF AND START DECORATING!"

Naruto "Oh! I forgot about the party tonight! Did you want any help?"

Tora "SURE! THAT WOULD BE GREAT!" She said as they quickly took off for the market.

They first got the things on Kiya's list. Figuring it was better to get her stuff done so they didn't forget about it. Then they went after the decorations. Tora figured balloons and streamers would be the best bet for the party. Naruto quickly agreed. Unfortunately the colors where a different matter all together.

Tora "I THINK WE SHOULD DO GREEN AND BROWN!"

Naruto "NO WAY! YOU NEED TO DO ORANGE AND BLACK!"

Tora "GREEN AND BROWN!"

Naruto "ORANGE AND BLACK!"

Tora "GREEN AND BROWN!"

Naruto "ORANGE AND BLACK!"

"E-excuse me Tora...Naruto...w-wouldn't white and red be the best?" Said a quiet voice.

"I-I didn't m-mean to listen to your c-conversation but I-I think those would work really well."

Tora and Naruto abruptly stopped there argument and turned to Hinata.

Naruto "I think Hinata is right Tora."

Hinata "T-thank you Naruto."

Tora "I AGREE!" she replied gathering up all of the red and white decorations.

Naruto "Don't get so excited! I don't think we need that many."

Tora looked down realizing how many she just grabbed. She glared at Naruto and put back some of them.

Tora "DO YOU WANT TO HELP US DECORATE HINATA?"

Naruto "Yeah! It would help us get done faster!"

Hinata blushing "S-sure."

Tora "GREAT!"

Tora paid for the stuff and they went back to the shop. They decided that Hinata would hang the streamers while Tora and Naruto began blowing up the balloons. Tora looked evilly at Naruto and began blowing up the balloons faster. Naruto then picked up on what she was doing and began blowing his stack faster. Soon the floor of the shop was covered with balloons! White on one side red on the other. Tora and Naruto laid amongst them panting.

Tora "I...BLEW...UP...MORE!!!"

Naruto "YOU...DID...NOT...I...DID!!!"

Hinata "I t-think there are as many white as red. You guys tied." She laughed.

Tora and Naruto "NNNOOOO!!!!"

Kiya came out of the back at the exclamation of the two. She looked around at the balloons littering the floor of the shop.

Kiya "Well we certainly have enough balloons now. What are you going to do with them?"

Tora "I THINK THEY LOOK FINE WHERE THEY ARE!!" She shouted exhaustedly.

Naruto "I agree!" He said putting his fist in the air then letting it fall back to the ground causing many of the balloons to bounce in the air.

Hinata "I-I think I will h-hang them on the streamers."

Kiya laughed at the two laying on the ground and helped Hinata hang the balloons.

Kiya "Well that looks really nice Hinata. I am so glad you decided to help these two. Otherwise this place may never have gotten decorated." She said glaring at the two still laying on the floor.

Hinata "It was n-no problem Kiya." Kiya smiled at the sweet helpful girl.

Kiya "So are you guys hungry? I got some stuff ready if you want any."

At this Tora and Naruto found some added energy and jumped up running for the counter.

Hinata walked over and sat between the two.

Kiya "That’s what I thought! Sometimes you two are as lazy as Shikamaru!" She said as she started walking into the back of the restaurant.

Shikamaru "What did I do? I wasn’t even here!" He exclaimed walking around the corner followed by Choji and Asuma.

Kiya just laughed shaking her head.

Kiya "Nothing. These two were just trying to get out doing their work. And, unfortunately they succeeded."

Asuma laughing "Yep that sounds like Shikamaru alright!"

Shikamaru "Troublesome woman...." He muttered.

Kiya "Sit you three. I was just getting these guys some lunch. You can join them."

Choji "Right on!"

Shikamaru "Okay..."

Asuma "I could use a bite to eat."

The three ninjas sat at the counter with the others that were already sitting there. They complimented them on the decorations then started talking about the coming party as Kiya finished preparing there meals. A delivery man showed up with several large boxes. Kiya had him put them over on the raised platform. Everyone was eager to find out what was in the boxes but Kiya made them wait until after they finished eating. Once everyone was served they all sat around the counter talking and enjoying their lunch. There wasn’t any other customers as the shop wasn’t opening until the celebration that night. After their meal

the teenagers went over to the boxes that Kiya had the delivery man put on the platform and started to open them.

Naruto "What is all this stuff?"

Tora "I CAN’t BELIEVE YOU ACTUALLY BOUGHT ONE KIYA! THANKS!!!"

Choji "But...what is it?"

Shikamaru "It looks like a pain to put together...."

Asuma looked questioningly at Kiya.

Kiya smiling at Asuma "It is a neat little thing we discovered in a little shop in another village.

Just wait until they get it hooked up. Tora do you remember how things went together?"

Tora "I THINK SO!"

Kiya "You should they way you were looking over it at the other place."

Hinata "I-it looks like a big r-radio."

Tora "IT IS....KINDA!"

They started pulling the big black speakers out of the boxes then came the main unit and a lot of wires. They got out the instructions and start piecing it together. Kiya and Asuma watched them argue about what went where but they stayed out of it. Asuma was smoking and laughing at them. Kiya stole a cigarette or two from him as they enjoyed watching the five of them trying very hard to work peacefully together.

Shikamaru "What a drag.....there that should do it." He said plugging in the last of the wires.

Kiya "It was suppose to come fully loaded."

Naruto "That’s what it says!"

Tora "CAN WE TRY IT OUT NOW?"

Kiya "Sure...you need to make sure you know how to run it before tonight."

Tora "RIGHT ON!!!"

Shikamaru "Are you going to fill us in on what it is or not?"

Choji "Yeah...we did all that work we should know why."

Tora "WATCH!"

They all watched as Tora turned the machine on and music started playing. She than began singing to the music using the microphone and following the words on the monitor.

Naruto "Why didn’t you say it was a Karaoke machine! Those are so much fun!!"

They all started talking about how much fun this was going to be as Tora turned the music down and let it play. Pushing buttons she discovered how to let the voices through in case no one was singing.

Kiya "Do you have it figured out?"

Tora "IT IS KINDA COMPLICATED BUT I SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT!!!"

Kiya "Good then it is your job to deal with that thing from now on. I don’t even want to go near it!"

Asuma laughing "Afraid of a little technology Kiya?"

Kiya rolling eyes and chuckling "That is an understatement!" They all started laughing at this comment. Making the couple of people walking in look at them curiously.

Izumo "Looks like you guys are all set-up for tonight."

Kotetsu "The place looks really good."

Kiya "Thanks to that bunch over there we are all ready."

Izumo "What time does everything start?"

Kiya "Well, we will open up at five."

Kotetsu "Sounds good...that is only a little over an hour from now..."

Kiya "Really? Damn...I better go get ready....I’ll see you guys in a little bit. Tora your in charge!" She said running up the stairs to their apartment. Everybody watched her leave in astonishment. She was never so abrupt.

Tora "THANKS FOR THE WARNING KIYA!"

Asuma "Well I guess that's our cue."

Izumo "Yeah...she didn't wait a second."

Kotetsu chuckling "Maybe she wants to look good for somebody."

Asuma "I guess I better go get ready if I want to be back here when they open."

Izumo "Yep..."

Everybody left saying they would see each other soon. Tora locked up and went up stairs to find out what was wrong with Kiya.

Tora "KIYA WHERE ARE YOU? WHY DID YOU RUN OUT LIKE THAT?"

Kiya "I AM TAKING A BATH! I WANTED TO RELAX BEFORE THE CELEBRATION!"

Tora "YOU DON'T HAVE TO YELL I AM BY THE DOOR!"

Kiya "Sorry I didn't know you were there."

Tora "THAT'S ALL?"

Kiya "Yes...I kinda wanted to look nice since it is our opening day celebration. Maybe you should do the same."

Tora "WHY?!"

Kiya "Maybe you might like to impress someone in particular?" She said fishing for Tora's true feelings about that one ninja.

Tora "IS THAT WHY YOU ARE GETTING DRESSED UP? SOMEBODY YOU WANT TO IMPRESS? WHO IS IT?!!!"

Kiya "Please Tora you know me better than that. I just thought maybe there was someone that caught your eye." She said walking out of the bathroom. She had on her bathrobe and was drying her hair with a towel. She looked Tora up and down searching for a clue that maybe she now understood the feelings that she was having toward the young man in the green jumpsuit.

Kiya sighing "Nope....still clueless." She muttered.

Tora "WHAT DID YOU SAY? I AM NOT CLUELESS!"

Kiya "Trust me you are on this matter." She chuckled walking down the hall to her room.

Tora "MAYBE I WOULDN'T BE IF YOU WOULD TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT!"

Kiya "It doesn't matter. At least go change your clothes. There all dirty from you laying on the floor earlier."

Tora "FINE!!!"

"Why would I want to impress anybody...." She muttered to herself. Not comprehending why the only thing on her mind was the young ninja in the green jumpsuit.

6. It's a party!

The girls came down a little bit before five. Kiya was wearing a green and white silk dress instead of her customary green tank top and black shorts. Tora took Kiya's advice for once and had on a green shirt a little different in color and style from her usual t-shirt with a black skirt. They took special pains in the appearance for such a special night and they looked great! To their surprise a couple of people had already shown up.

Tora "YOUR EARLY!"

Kiya "I hope we didn't make you wait to long."

Gai "WOW my lotuses! You look radiant!"

Kiya "Thank you Gai. It feels nice to get dressed up once in while."

Tora "NO IT DOESN'T!"

Kiya "Oh, knock it off Tora it doesn't hurt to look nice sometimes."

Lee "You really do look nice Tora!" He said with a gleaming smile not taking his eyes off of her.

Making Tora blush deeply.

Gai smiling "I think love may be in the air tonight!" He winked at Kiya.

Kiya smiled glad that she wasn't the only one that had seen something special happening between the two. She walked to the back opening the shop. She went into the kitchen finishing the food she started to prepare earlier in the day leaving the three out front. Tora and Lee just stared at each other blushing and Gai sat down at the counter. Soon, many people started to arrive and Tora started the music playing it low so people could talk. There were a lot of people that came. Everyone they had already met and many more that had been told to come. Kiya prepared the food in big serving bowls and placed them on a table. Tonight people would eat for free. Enjoying a sample of the many foods made at the restaurant. Kiya worked behind the counter serving drinks and Tora stayed up on the platform near the machine. Though Lee was never to far from her.

Izumo "You sure have a big turn out tonight Kiya." He stated sitting at the counter.

Kiya "Yeah...it is really great. It is going to be hard remembering so many names though." She said pouring him a drink.

Izumo "I meant to tell you earlier how wonderful you look....and Tora!" He said blushing a little.

Kiya "Why thank you Izumo." She muttered blushing softly.

"Hey! How about a bottle of Sake for my friend and I!" Exclaimed a beautiful woman with long blonde hair as she pointed at her friend, a man with long white hair.

Kiya "Coming! I will be right there ma'am!" She said "I will be back in a moment Izumo."

Izumo just nodded and watch her walk over to the two people that had just sat down at the end of the counter. Kiya put a bottle of Sake and two glasses on the counter. Smiling at the two people she had never met before.

"About time I am parched." Said the blonde woman.

"Be nice Tsunade!" Exclaimed the man with white hair. "She is really busy and she got to us pretty quickly!"

Kiya smiled at the two and began to turn away.

"Wait! You look familiar....have we met before?" Asked the man sitting at the counter.

Kiya "I don't think so..."

"Oh give it a rest for one night Jiraiya!" Said the woman glaring at him.

"Actually this time I am serious." He said looking over the young woman in front of him.

"Anyway, I am Jiraiya and this is the Lady Hokage Tsunade."

Kiya "It is an honor to meet you Lady Hokage, Jiraiya." She said smiling and nodding to the pair.

Tsunade "About time! A little respect around this village!" She said proudly.

Kiya "I better see to the other customers....If you need anything please let me know." She said sweetly walking away.

"I know I have seen her somewhere before. I would have remembered doing research on someone like her though. I will have to think about this some more." He thought to himself taking a drink and watching the beautiful young woman.

Kiya worked her way back down the counter serving and talking to the many people there. She ended up at the other end of the counter in front of Kakashi.

Kiya "Can I get you a drink?" She asked him.

Kakashi "That would be nice thank you." He said looking at her intensely making her blush. "You look very nice to tonight."

Kiya "Thank you...." She replied blushing and smiling at him. Just then Gai and Genma walked up behind him.

Gai "Are you ever going to come out from behind that counter Kiya?"

Kiya laughing "I am pretty busy back here Gai."

Genma "You need to relax! Everyone is having a great time!"

Kiya sighing "Glad to hear that. I just want to make sure everything is perfect."

Gai "Come on Kiya. Dance with me!" He exclaimed holding out his hand pulling her around the end of the counter and walking with her to the dance floor. Kakashi and Genma turned to watch them walk away listening to Kiya's laughter as Gai whispered something to her.

As the song ended they started walking back to the counter as Tora came running up.

Tora "KIYA!"

Kiya turned toward Tora. "What is it?"

Tora "CAN WE START THE KARAOKE NOW?"

Kiya "Oh yeah! I forgot....Sure!"

Tora "YEAH! OKAY I WILL GO ANNOUNCE IT!"

Kiya laughed at her excitement as she ran up to the platform grabbing the microphone letting everyone know that the karaoke was going to start and they needed to pick some songs. At this several people walked up telling Tora what they wanted to sing. Tora quickly put the requests into the machine hoping she did it right. As their songs popped up people began singing. Tora sat back by the machine not completely trusting it yet and Kiya went back to the counter as more people wanted drinks. When there was a lull in requests Kiya stood talking to Izumo and Kakashi listening to the many voices around her. "People are having a great time." Kiya thought to herself relieved. "Maybe we will make it here for a while." She frowned to herself thinking about taking Tora away from her new found friends. She didn't know if she could do that to the girl. It was the first time that she had become so attached to the people around them. She thought as she watched the green hair girl talking to the people around her with Lee hovering nearby.

Izumo "Why the frown Kiya?"

Kiya "Oh...no reason." she said smiling as she pulled herself away from her thoughts.

Izumo "I think you need to enjoy yourself more." He laughed standing. "Come on lets dance!"

Kiya laughed "Okay sure!"

Kakashi frowned down at the counter as Kiya walked with Izumo to the dance floor. Gai walked up behind Kakashi slapping him on the back. Causing him to spill part of his drink on the counter. He glared up at Gai.

Kakashi "What is it now Gai?"

Gai "Where is our beautiful young waitress? I could really use a drink!" He said looking behind

the counter.

Kakashi "Dancing..." he replied nodding toward the dance floor then staring down at his spilled drink.

Gai "AAHH....youthful love is in the air I think!"

Kakashi "If you like that type..."

Gai "Beautiful, young, and sweet? I think Kakashi if you don't like that type you are the only man in the world that doesn't!" He said laughing and pounding him on the back.

Kakashi didn't respond he just stared down at the mess on the counter around his drink. Kiya soon returned to the counter laughing and refusing other offers to dance knowing she had to tend to the customers.

Gai "There you are my lotus! Can I get a drink from you sweetheart?" He said with a gleaming smile.

Kiya laughing "Sure thing!" she replied pouring his drink.

Gai "Oh and our friend here made a mess." He said laughing earning a glare from Kakashi.

Kiya "No problem....would you like another drink Kakashi."

Kakashi "Thanks...no..." He said scowling at her. Kiya wondered what she had done to make him seem so irritated at her. Just then Choji came up dragging Shino.

Choji "Kiya! Shino and I can take over behind the counter pouring drinks if you want to go out and have fun for a little while." He said while Shino nods in agreement.

Kiya "Really? You wouldn't mind?"

Choji "Ya...we got it! Go...go..." He replied pushing her away from the counter.

Kiya "Thanks guys!"

She began walking toward Tora. Talking to people and make sure they didn't need anything as she wandered between the tables.

Kiya "How are things going Tora?"

Tora "GREAT! THIS THING IS PRETTY EASY ONCE YOU GET THE HANG OF IT!!"

Kiya "Good I am glad to hear it."

Tora "PEOPLE ARE REALLY LOVING THIS! I AM SO GLAD YOU DECIDED TO GET ONE!!"

Kiya "Well I had to figure out something that would make us different. Oh before I forget you need to figure out a day to do the Karaoke on."

Tora "I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT ONE! MAYBE I WILL ASK WHAT DAY PEOPLE WOULD PREFER!"

Kiya "That would be a good idea."

Just then Iruka came up asking Kiya for a dance. Before she could answer her he pulled her on the dance floor. Lee took this opportunity to invite Tora out on the floor and to his amazement she accepted. Tora and Lee danced the one dance blushing like crazy and Tora went back to making sure the machine was running fine. She really didn't understand why it felt so good to dance with the man. Kiya seemed to be dancing for a while as she was being passed from one person to the next. Everyone complimented her on the party, food, and entertainment. Until a slow song came on and she was passed off to Kakashi.

Kakashi "I guess it's my turn." He said looking down at her placing his hands on her waist.

Kiya "I-I guess so." She muttered as she placed her hands on his shoulders remembering how she seemed to have irritated him earlier.

Kakashi "Something wrong?" he asked while they danced.

Kiya "No...not at all." She said blushing softly and dropping her eyes.

They danced slowly avoiding each others gazes. As the song died away to be replaced by a faster song his hands lingered on her waist. He looked at her as if he wanted to say something.

But, before he could Gai came up asking Kiya to join him on stage for a toast. Before she

could refuse she realized she was standing on the stage watching Lee drag Tora forward as she tried to turn off the blaring music. Glasses were then shoved into Tora and Kiya's hands. Though Lee wouldn't let go of Tora's empty hand. Gai grabbed the microphone and started to speak.

Gai "I just wanted to say, and I am sure you will all agree, that Konoha is extremely lucky to have two such youthful lotuses residing inside it's gates!" he exclaimed followed by many yells of agreement. Completely embarrassing the two girls standing on the stage. Tora was loving the attention but Kiya was trying to make herself invisible though with Gai's arm around her he was making escape impossible.

Gai "We want to thank you for your hospitality in throwing such a wonderful party for so many people." Again there was many shouts of agreement.

Gai "May the Happy Tiger be blessed with many years of enjoyment and prosperity!" He held up his glass

Along with everyone else and they all drank to the toast.

Kiya "Thank you!" She said blushing deeply and trying to walk off the stage.

Tora "YEAH THANKS! I THINK WE ARE GOING TO LIKE IT HERE!!! NOT LET'S GET BACK TO THE MUSIC!!!!" With that she ran back to the machine and turned it on. She then grabbed the extra microphone and thrust it into Kiya's hand.

Tora "COME ON KIYA!!! YOU KNOW YOU LIKE TO SING!!!"

Kiya "Okay fine...what are we singing?"

Tora "TOGETHER FOREVER!!"

Kiya had to smile at that. That song had special meaning to the two of them. They began to sing. The people couldn't believe how beautiful their voices were. They sat and listened. When the song ended the girls hugged and the party goers applauded. Tora called for the next person and Kiya went back to check on the two young men that had taken over the counter for her.

Lee "That was amazing Tora!" He exclaimed giving her a thumbs up.

Tora laughed "THANKS LEE!" She replied blushing deeply.

Lee "Hey....I was wondering....a bunch of us are training together tomorrow....do you want to come with us?" He said blushing a deep red.

Naruto "Ya that sounds like a good idea. We could teach you a few things!"

Tora smirking "THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN! THOUGH I MAY SURPRISE YOU!"

The teenagers began talking about what kind of training they would do tomorrow and when they should meet up. They were all excited about showing off their skill to someone new. As they talked Kiya went to relieve the two behind the counter.

Kiya "Hey Shino, Choji how is it going?"

Shino "Fine."

Choji "It is going great."

Kiya "Why don't you two go have some fun. I really appreciate the time away but you are our guests you should be having fun not working." She kissed both of them on the cheek as they passed her walking over to where the rest of their group was talking. Kiya watched the two go.

Kiya smiled "Such sweet kids..." She said quietly.

Izumo "Ya they are."

Kiya chuckling "Oh...sorry...I forget there are people around sometimes."

Izumo "It happens to the best of us." He replied with a smile. They talked quietly for a little bit. The crowd was thinning as the hour was getting late and many had missions in the morning. Tora turned the music down and joined Kiya behind the counter. Everyone came up and thanked the two women for the wonderful evening and promised to be back soon. Gai, Lee,

Izumo, and Kotetsu were one of the last few to leave.

Gai "This evening turned out great Kiya!"

Kiya "Thanks Gai...I was a little nervous at first but I think your right it did turn out pretty good."

Tora "GOOD? IT WAS AWESOME!!"

Lee just gave a gleaming smile and a thumbs up.

Izumo "Yeah....but...." He said turning and looking around behind him.

Kiya "OH!"

Tora "UUUGGGHHH!!! WE ARE GOING TO BE UP ALL NIGHT!!!"

The leaf village may have some of the most talented ninja in the world but definitely not the cleanest. Kiya sighed looking at the mess around them "Well come on Tora let's get started..."

Gai "Don't worry my lotuses! We shall help you! Right Lee?"

Lee "YES GAI-SENSEI!!!"

Izumo "We will start on the dishes." He said as Kotetsu nodded in agreement.

Kiya "Oh you guys don't have to do that!"

Kotetsu "It is okay Kiya we don't mind helping."

Tora "GREAT! WE SHOULD GET THIS DONE IN NO TIME!"

Izumo and Kotetsu headed for the back to start on the big stack of dishes as Gai, Lee, and Tora headed to the front. Kiya stayed to straighten up at the counter. She smiled to herself. What a wonderful group of men she thought as she started stacking up the glasses to take into the back.

Tora "I WILL RACE YOU LEE!"

Gai "What a wonderful idea! A competition! Let see who can clean their section fastest!"

Lee "YEAH! Let's start!"

They began cleaning at such a speed they were nothing more than a blur to Kiya as she headed to the kitchen. She had to chuckle when she saw the two men doing the dishes. There were bubbles floating around the kitchen and they were buried in soap.

Kiya "You two don't do this very often do you?" She said with a light chuckle as she leaned a crossed Izumo to put the glasses in the sink. They blushed and laughed.

Kotetsu "No not really."

Kiya "I can tell! It is the thought that counts though!" She said grabbing her apron and tying it behind her.

Kiya "Kotetsu you dry...Izumo you rinse....I will wash." With the three of them the dishes didn't take very long to finish.

Kotetsu "I will go check out front and make sure we didn't forget any." Izumo and Kiya started putting the dishes away as they waited to see if he would come back with any more.

Izumo "This really was a wonderful party Kiya."

Kiya "Thanks. I think it turned out really well."

Izumo "I really enjoyed our dance....maybe we can do it again sometime." He said with a shy smile.

Kiya blushed softly "That sounds like a good idea." She replied with a sweet smile.

Kotetsu "Nope that is all of them!" He said breaking the silence that had fallen. "I think they are done cleaning the front too."

Kiya and Izumo walked out front. It definitely was clean but the three that were cleaning it were no where to be seen. That is until they walked from behind the counter. They were laying on the floor panting. Quietly arguing over who had finished first. They finally decided it was a draw. But, they also chose to do something tomorrow that would declare a winner between the three. They slowly stood figuring it was time to call it a night. They were all tired.

Kiya "Thanks for helping with the dishes you two." She said reaching up first kissing Kotetsu

then Izumo on the cheek. Kotetsu smiled and Izumo blushed.

Kotetsu "As much help as we were."

Kiya laughed remembering the scene she walked in on.

Izumo "We'll see you later!"

Kiya "Bye guys!" The remaining four waved at the pair as they left.

Lee "I guess I will be going too!" He exclaimed running over to Tora and giving her a quick hug.

Lee "I had a great time! Thanks for the dance!" He then ran away blushing deeply.

Tora "I...um....yeah...." She mumbled standing there turning several shades of red.

Gai laughing "Way to go Lee!!" He and Kiya began to laugh at the pairs embarrassment.

Gai "I best be going too." He said giving Kiya a quick hug.

Kiya "Thanks for helping to clean up the place."

Gai "No problem! I will see you later then!" He began to walk away. Then he mentioned as afterthought.

"I almost forgot....Kakashi had to leave early....he wanted me to tell you that it was a great party and thanks for the dance!" He then walked away whistling.

Kiya then locked up the shop as she thought about the ninja.

Kiya "It was a great night wasn't it Tora?"

Tora "Hhhmm....yeah....."

The two of them began walking up the stairs to their home. Both silent lost in their own thoughts.

7. Avoiding Disaster

Kiya awoke listening to the sounds of the birds chirping in the tree outside her window. She smiled thinking about the night before and all the fun they had had. She looked over at the clock not believing she had slept in. "I guess I really was wore out." She thought as she stretched. She got out of bed to begin the daily rituals. She went to Tora's room to wake her. As she opened the door expecting the usual argument she was surprised to see Tora was not in bed.

Kiya "TORA! WHERE ARE YOU?"

Tora "IN HERE!!"

Kiya followed the voice finding Tora sitting at the table eating breakfast and smelling a pot of fresh brewed coffee. Kiya went over and poured herself the coffee that the young woman had made.

Kiya "Alright....fess up....what is going on?"

Tora "NOTHING!"

Kiya "Don't give me that. Your never up this early without an argument." She said sipping on her coffee.

Tora "I-I told the others I would t-train with them today." She mumbled.

Kiya "YOU DID WHAT?!" She exclaimed slamming her coffee cup on the table spilling some of the contents.

Tora "COME ON KIYA PLEASE? I WON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID! I PROMISE!"

Kiya "Tora....." She rubbed her eyes. "You know why we can't do stuff like that. It might give us away."

Tora "OH KIYA! THEY WON'T KNOW! I WILL ONLY PRACTICE THE TAI-JUTSU! I HAVEN'T PRACTICED IN SO LONG. AND, NEVER WITH ANYBODY BUT YOU!! PLEASE!! PLEASE!! PLEASE!!!" She begged with tears glistening in her eyes.

Kiya sighing "Alright fine. Just please no Jutsu's. We can't move on yet. We need to build up our supplies first." She said as she sipped her coffee frowning down at the mess she made.

Tora "THANK YOU KIYA!! I PROMISE I WILL BE VERY CAREFUL." She yelled running and getting a towel for Kiya to clean up the mess.

Kiya "You no damn well I can't refuse you anything..." She muttered as she cleaned up the coffee.

Tora "I WILL BE BACK LATER!" She yelled giving Kiya a hug and running out the door before she could change her mind.

Kiya "Just don't do anything stupid. I don't want to leave yet." She muttered staring at the door the green haired girl had just slammed. "I guess I am on my own today." She thought as she stood up to get in the shower and open the shop.

Tora ran quickly to the spot they had agreed to meet at. It was the place she had went with Naruto when he took her to meet the others. She wasn't the first one there. But, neither was she the last. Lee, Neji, Sakura, Kiba and Akamaru were already there getting ready for their training. Today was unusual in the fact that the Sensei would not be there. That is why the group of teenagers decided to train together.

Shortly after Tora arrived the rest of the young Shinobi arrived for the day of training. A few went to practice their illusionary Gen-jutsu or the release of it when trapped. A couple decided

to work on the new Nin-jutsus they had been taught but most of them decided to work their Tai-jutsus. They decided that two at a time would spar while the rest either watched or worked on their weapons training.

"Come on Tora let me show you a few things!" Naruto exclaimed smiling brightly at her.

"OKAY NARUTO BUT I MAY SURPRISE YOU!!" Tora said smirking at him.

"Ya...whatever..." He said rolling his eyes at her. The others laughed seriously doubting Tora knew anything at all about their "art". Naruto quickly got into a fighting stance while Tora just stood there looking at him. He chuckled at her since she didn't even know how to get prepared for his onslaught. Naruto then decided he would take it very easy on her.

"Alright....Ready.....Set.....Go!" exclaimed Kiba running from between the two looking at each other. Naruto charged Tora very quickly but when he got to where she had been standing there was nothing but a small cloud of dust.

"What the...." Naruto mumbled then he was hit from behind with a very powerful foot to his back. A sweeping motion quickly pulled his feet out from under him and he landed in the dirt completely shocked.

"WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT MANEUVER?!" he exclaimed as he climbed on to his feet. He quickly looked and saw Tora standing in the same starting position but with a large smirk gracing her calm face. The other teenagers standing around the two were in complete and utter shock. Weapons lay forgotten jutsus dying as the hands signs remained only half formed and forgotten. Tora had moved so quickly they barely saw the green blur laying the orange ninja flat on his face.

"I TOLD YOU I WOULD SURPRISE YOU!" She stated with a self satisfied grin now replacing the smirk. She then raised her hand out in front of her flicking her fingers at Naruto daring him to come at her again. He grinned evilly. There was no way he was going to let her show him up in front of everyone like that. "So much for taking it easy on her." he thought to himself. Naruto then once again charged at Tora. Again, she moved with lightning speed easily dodging his attack and landing a barrage of her own. Things continued on in that manner for a while. Naruto would land a punch or a kick once in a while but Tora definitely dominated the match.

Panting and wheezing Naruto finally raised a hand and said "I give!" Quickly reaching into his pouch for a bottle of water. He pulled out two, tossing one to Tora. He was surprised to notice even after all that Tora was barely breathing hard.

"She is amazing!" Lee exclaimed looking at Tora gleaming. The rest of the teenagers surrounding the two quickly agreed with Lee's statement.

"Where did you ever learn that?" asked Kiba still standing stunned at the speed and intensity that Tora had shown.

"Seriously....I would never have thought you would contain speed and agility like that!" said Sakura showing a new appreciation for the green haired girl.

"I thought you two were just shopkeepers!" exclaimed Ino being very impressed with the annoying young women.

"WELL WE HAVE TO PROTECT OURSELVES DON'T WE?!" Tora yelled thinking quickly for once. Knowing that Kiya would be extremely mad at her if she gave anything away. Plus she definitely didn't want to leave yet.

"That was really impressive Tora....but can you use weapons?" Tenten asked.

"I CAN...BUT I PREFER NOT TO!" She stated.

"Well, you have to if you want to be a ninja!" exclaimed Naruto.

"WHO SAID I WANTED TO BE A NINJA! I CAN PROTECT MYSELF WITH OUT WEAPONS SO I AM FINE!" she said starting to panic a little.

"Have you ever tried using nin-jutsu?" asked Naruto becoming excited at possibly teaching somebody something.

"I...UH....I GOT TO GO! I PROMISED KIYA I WOULDN'T BE GONE TO LONG! THANKS FOR THE TRAINING! SEE YA!" Tora exclaimed her panic rising ever higher. She then took off running for the shop, tears in her eyes, hoping she hadn't messed up to bad.

The group of teenagers stared after her. Wondering why she took off so quickly and if they had done something to scare or upset her. Eventually a few shrugged and they all went back to their training most quickly putting the incident to the backs of their minds. Naruto though pondered the incident for most of the day deciding he would talk to her later that night.

Kiya was setting up the shop getting ready for the first customers of the day when she saw Tora streaking towards her. Tora stopped at the bottom of the stairs giving Kiya a quick look before she fled up the stairs. Kiya quickly followed Tora. She noticed the tears running down the young woman's face before she had ran to the apartment. Kiya had a very uneasy feeling in her stomach. As she approached Tora's room she could hear her quiet shuddering sobs. Kiya sighed "This is definitely not good. She was so excited this morning." she thought to herself as she pushed the door open.

"Tora? Are you okay honey? What happened?" she asked as she sat on the bed gently rubbing Tora's back.

"OH KIYA! I HOPE I DIDN'T MESS EVERYTHING UP!" she exclaimed throwing herself into Kiya's arms.

"What happened?" Kiya asked coaxing her to tell her.

Through her sobs she said "I sparred with Naruto. The fight was so...so...easy he barely touched me. Then they wanted to...to...know if I knew weapons. I told them I don't like to...to...use them. But....then they asked about Nin-jutsu! I didn't know what to say! I froze! OH KIYA!!!" she exclaimed again clinging to her sister. "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?!"

Kiya sighed "Did you tell them....or show them any Nin-jutsu?"

"NO!" she said sniffing.

"Then we should be okay. If they ask we will just say that I told you that you had to be back to help me open the shop and you were afraid you would be late. Just tell them I am really mean!"

Kiya said chuckling hoping that it might help cheer her up.

"Okay..." Tora said giggling a little wiping away her tears.

"Go wash your face and then come downstairs and help me. We don't want it to be to big of lie do we?" she smiled as she again went to open the shop.

Tora got up sighing heading for the bathroom to wash her tear stained face. "WHY DO I ALWAYS MESS UP LIKE THIS?!" She exclaimed to no one but her reflection "I like it here so much. Please Kiya don't make us leave!" she thought to herself praying that her mistake wouldn't cost her the friends she had just made.

Tora quickly washed the remains of the tears and dust from her face and made her way down to the shop. She put on the happiest face she possibly could and stepped into the kitchen helping Kiya get the basic preparations done before the customers started coming for lunch.

It was a busy day so the girls quickly forgot about their troubles for the moment as customers began ordering and talking with the pair. Eventually though the group of teenagers had come in to have some dinner after their long day of training. Lucky for the two young women it was one of the busiest days they had experienced so as questions began to form they would have to disappear helping other customers. The more they sat there and talked about what happened the odder and odder Tora's actions seemed. One by one the group left as they could tell they wouldn't be getting any answers that night. Though they were

determined to get the answers they seeked.

Kiya and Tora helped the remaining customers as they watched the group disperse. Hopefully they hadn't offended any of them by ignoring the half formed questions. They just didn't have any answers for them. They wondered, as they closed up shop, had they avoided disaster or just postponed it?