

Understanding Shikamaru

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Ok, first time writing Naruto fiction so the characters may be a little OOC. Especially Shikamaru.

Yaoi. Naruto is bored. He finally finds someone to hang with, and he's not interested in any of Naturo's activity ideas. Insistent on Shikamaru's company he decides to try and find out what the other boy likes to do in his spare time. Resulting in an interesting game of shogi, episode references, Asuma quotes and a very confused duo.

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1 - Understanding Shikamaru

Disclaimer: I don't own Naruto, any of the characters or, well anything to do with it really. Minus this fan story.

Warnings: YAOI. Nothing much, just affection (One sided??? Maybe...) and a kiss.

A/N: First time writing Naruto in general, in reflection this also means first time writing the characters. So they all may be a bit off. Especially Shikamaru. This will hopefully improve with time.

Set: After Sasuke's betrayal. Chuunin!Shikamaru for all.

Understanding Shikamaru

Naruto was bored. Nothing unusual there, well usually he would go and train, but he needed to work on the basics which meant a sparring partner. He had been unable to find anyone free or willing to spend a whole day training with him, this meant he had to find something else to do for a change, so he had made his way to the ramen stand.

``Kuso..."

Even Naruto couldn't spend an entire day eating, he lowered his head and twirled the chopsticks round the 8th empty bowl in front of him, maybe Kakashi...no he was on a mission and wouldn't be back for days. Sakura? Training with the Hokage. He couldn't imagine the rest of the teams wanting to spend time with him, after all they may have warmed to him a little, but only Hinata seemed to really take any interest in his activities outside of his ability.

``Yo. Oh hey, it's you Naruto."

Naruto raised his head in alarm, someone had managed to slip onto the stool next to his without him even noticing...was he really that bothered about being bored? ``Hey, ah...are you all right?" Naruto lowered his forehead to the counter.

``I'm fine, Shikamaru, I'm just so bored is all. What about you, I thought you didn't like ramen?" Naruto hadn't thought about that until he'd voiced it out loud, but now, it seemed a little odd, he turned questioning eyes on the other boy.

``I don't. I'm here to...ah...I'm trying to avoid, does it matter?" Shikamaru turned his head away from Naruto gaze and sighed.

``Your trying to avoid Ino aren't you?" Naruto felt a grin cover his face and his eyes narrowed in glee, ``Your such a baka, Shikamaru! If she's interested why don't you go out with her?!" Naruto emphasised his point by slamming a hand down on the ramen counter and standing up abruptly.

``Because, I don't *like* her! You're the baka! Are you saying you would settle down with *any* girl who liked you even if they are a total dog?" Shikamaru almost instinctively covered his mouth and looked back and forth, as if expecting Ino to materialize in front of him and beat the living hell out of him. Naruto laughed and pointed at him, Shikamaru raised an eyebrow.

``Well...ok, I'll help you! You can hang around with me until she stops following you around!" Shikamaru sighed and looked away again, ``We can race, or pull pranks on people...or-"

``Naruto, I hate to put a dampener on those plans but, I don't race and I don't pull pranks on people. Your so troublesome..." With that Shikamaru stood up and walked off in the direction of the village gate, though he didn't seem to be heading out of the village, he was properly off to

find some tree to sit in. Naruto lowered his hand after a minute of staring after the other boy, he then sat back on his stool half-heartedly and huffed to himself. Shikamaru...he'd almost had a sparring partner, or at least some company, but he'd blown it.

``Kuso...if only I knew what Shikamaru liked to do...then maybe he would have stayed with me." Naruto crossed his arms on the counter and lay his head on them, it was a few minutes before an idea struck him, ``THAT'S IT! One of his team must know what he likes to do! Ino and Chouji hmmm...well sitting here all day isn't going to help and at least it will give me something to do." With that the blonde hopped off his stool and made his way back to his house.

Ino was pissed off, she had been having a nice day off from her job at the flower store and she didn't have any training considering she'd worked herself pretty hard the day before. Yet now...now she had Naruto asking her odd questions and not very quietly at that.

``Well Ino, you must know, you've been his team mate for..." Naruto paused to try and work it out, ``...since forever!" the boy waved his arms around in the air causing Ino to glare at him in response. But then she noticed the blonde's desperate expression, what on earth...Naruto was acting really odd.

``Well, I don't know much about him, he's very quiet..." Ino got a dreamy look on her face and Naruto suppressed a snort of laughter, ``...but he does like to watch the clouds. I remember him saying something like that once."

``Watch...clouds?" Naruto blinked, that sounded really boring, but if Shikamaru liked to watch clouds, then Naruto would watch clouds. ``Great! Thanks Ino-chan!" Naruto ran off to find his next informant, the ever hungry Chouji.

``What a strange guy. I wonder why he wants to know about Shikamaru..." Ino blinked, then a strange expression appeared on her face as an image filled her mind, a blush crossed her cheeks and she shook her head wildly, ``WHAT AM I THINKING!? I MUST BE GOING MAD!" She grit her teeth and stormed off up the street, great, her perfect day ruined by Naruto...and he wasn't around her for 5 minutes.

``Chooooouji!" Naruto was leaning across the table in the BBQ house staring directly into the other boy's face, Chouji seemed unperturbed, ``Are you even listening to me?! Hey!" Chouji looked up but he wasn't looking at Naruto, rather over his shoulder.

``Shikamaru! Did you come to buy me BBQ?" Naruto froze, his eyes narrowed and he developed a twitch in one. *Oh crap...he didn't hear me asking about him did he...kuso....KUSO!'*

``No, sorry Chouji. I'm looking for Asuma." Shikamaru let his gaze fall on Naruto, *'That's odd...he usually goes to the ramen stand if he's hungry...did he finally get bored of it?'*

``I haven't seen him, maybe Naruto has?" Chouji returned his gaze to Naruto and his eyes widened at the blonde's expression, he looked as if he were having trouble breathing.

``No it's ok, I'll just ask Hokage-sama, he may be doing something important. I only wanted a game of Shogi anyways." With a final quick glance at Naruto the brunette left, soon after Naruto collapsed face first onto the table and groaned.

``That was close..." he mumbled into the table, Chouji blinked at him then decided he could tell Naruto what he wanted to know, for a price.

``Naruto, I'll tell you something about Shikamaru-"

``REALLY!?"

``-if you buy me all you can eat BBQ." Naruto's eyes widened several sizes and he slammed his hands down on the table.

``I DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH MONEY! JU-" Naruto blinked, wait a minute...what had Shikamaru said before leaving ?`I *only wanted a game of Shogi.*' Naruto stared at the ceiling for a bit, his brain thinking things over slowly. ``So...he likes watching the clouds...and playing Shogi." He lowered his gaze back to Chouji, ``You have a boring team mate," He cracked his knuckles and jumped up, ``well, I'm off to try and find Asuma, he's your sensei right? He's bound to know something about Shikamaru!"

``Huh..." Chouji watched as Naruto spouted all of this out and then disappeared in a flash, it took him a few minutes to comprehend what had happened. He sighed, it looked like he wasn't getting any BBQ...

Naruto was getting tired of looking for Asuma, the jounin was no where to be found and he'd looked *everywhere*. He was now running down the street towards the Hokage's, Tsunade was his last resort and he was pretty desperate, when he ran into someone sending himself flying backwards. He yelled out slightly and then grimaced as his back came into contact with the floor.

``I...itai..." He scrunched his eyes shut and hissed in pain as he tried to move, ``WHY DON'T YOU LOOK WHERE YOUR GOING BAAAAKA!"

``Me, it was you who ran into me. Not the other way around," Naruto looked up to see Shikamaru staring down at him with a look of boredom, he held out a hand to the blonde who took it reluctantly, ``besides, where were you going in such a rush?" Shikamaru berated himself almost immediately, he didn't care...he didn't *care*.

``Oh...I was, going to see Tsunade baa-chan." Naruto brushed off his clothes and checked himself over slowly, Shikamaru looked away from him and turned his gaze on the sky.

``Really." Naruto blinked, that sounded more like Shikamaru, the other boy never asked questions...all the same...he was disappointed. ``Well, I'm going. See you round Naruto-no-baka." Shikamaru cast a slightly, *slightly*, amused look his way before walking off again...for the third time that day. Naruto clenched his fists, he *would* find out what Shikamaru liked. He *would* get the other to pay attention to him for more than a minute.

Naruto charged down the street once more, filled with renewed determination, he was getting close to the Hokage's residence when he plowed into someone for the second time. Only this time, the person hit back.

``NARUTO YOU BAKA! WATCH WHERE YOUR GOING!" `Sakura-chan' Naruto had time to think, before a fist slammed over his head and he hit the ground again, this time his face made the acquaintance of the floor.

``Itaaaaaaaaaaaaai!" Naruto sat up and rubbed his head gingerly, wincing as his fingers grazed a large lump, he looked up at Sakura and pouted.

``Sorry Sakura-chan, but I'm in a bit of a hurry..." he stood up and brushed his pants off, Sakura's enraged expression turned into one of puzzlement as she watched him start to walk off.

``Naruto! In a hurry for what? You can at least explain yourself after running into me like that!" Naruto looked over his shoulder at her and blinked a few times.

``I need to learn how to play Shogi from Tsunade baa-chan or Asuma-sensei, that's why I'm in a hurry, I heard Shogi is really hard to play and I don't have all day!"

``Shogi? Why do you want to learn to play Shogi? I really don't think it's your type of game Naruto." Sakura placed her hands on her hips and tried staring him down, he was obviously lying.

``I want to learn, Sakura-chan, so that I can play Shikamaru!" Naruto glared at the floor as he said the brunette's name, Sakura blinked at his reaction, the blonde looked back up at her and

shrugged, "I want someone to play with, but Shika doesn't like any of the games I play...so I'm learning how to play a game he likes!" Sakura felt her heart melt, *'Naruto must have no one to hang around with today, and it's a day off...I can't stay with him all day...but I can help him. It's odd that he should want to play Shikamaru...especially after Shikamaru himself told me about....that issue. Maybe I can help both of them AND myself'*.

"Naruto. I know how to play Shogi, how about I teach you to play?" she smiled as Naruto's face lit up with a grin and he cheered loudly.

"ALL RIGHT! THANKS SAKURA-CHAN!" He almost hugged her...almost, Sakura glared at him a little then turned and made her way to her house.

"Wait here, I need to go and get my board." Naruto did as he was told, the only signs of his impatience being his foot tapping and his regular glances at Sakura's house. He didn't have to wait long, Sakura came running up with her Shogi board under one arm and two boxes holding the pieces under the other. She didn't stop though, she motioned for him to follow her, confused but eager Naruto ran after her.

Shikamaru was having a bad day, he had been trying to avoid Naruto all morning, but wherever he went the blonde seemed to show up. The ramen stand, the BBQ house, the street and now...his favorite field. He blinked, however Naruto wasn't alone, he was with Sakura...and they seemed to be playing Go or Shogi.

"Naruto...knows how to play Shogi...?"

Sakura was in the process of explaining 'dropping' pieces to Naruto, who looked confused but determined to learn, when she spotted Shikamaru staring at them. *'Perfect.'* A small smirk crossed her face.

"Sakura-chan? Sakura-chan, come on! I think I'm finally getting this!" Naruto whined impatiently, waving his arms about, Sakura turned back to him and sighed.

"Sorry Naruto. Anyway, like I said. When you capture an opponents pieces they are considered 'in hand', you can drop 'in hand' pieces on your side of the board and then use them as your own," she scratched her head, "um, but you can't promote pieces immediately by dropping them into your opponent's ranks." She reached over to her side and picked up one of Naruto's captured pawns, placing it on her side of the board, Naruto had always said he learned quickly by demonstration and trying things for himself, so she'd played a 'teaching game' with him rather than lecturing him.

"Oh! I get it! I get it!" Naruto yelled loudly, Sakura cast another glance over to Shikamaru but the other boy was gone, *'damn it...'*

"Oh I see, so your teaching him, I had a feeling Naruto wouldn't know how to play Shogi." Sakura snapped her head up and glanced behind her, Naruto jumped up looking round wildly. "Yo, up here." Sakura slowly looked up into the tree they were sitting by and narrowed her eyes.

"Shikamaru! Don't do that!" she lowered her eyes to the Shogi board and blushed, embarrassed at being caught off guard so easily, Naruto was apparently feeling the same as he cast his eyes to the floor before looking back up at the other boy.

"You know, if I were an enemy, you'd both be dead by now," Shikamaru jumped out of the tree landing in a graceful crouch next to the Shogi board, not giving them time to protest he looked down and cocked his head, "aah neither of you have very good strategies going on here...this game could go on forever the way you two are playing. Not because you are good players either..."

"Kuso..." Naruto clenched his fists and glared at Shikamaru, "I was only learning to play so

that you would pay attention to me!"

``Wha-" Shikamaru looked up at the blonde, Naruto's gaze faltered...was that a *blush* on Shikamaru's cheeks...

``You heard me Shika-no-baka, I was learning to play Shogi since you didn't seem to want to do anything /like doing. I was gonna watch clouds too...but I didn't like the idea of doing that myself, seemed boring. AH! No offence!" Naruto held out his hands in defence, Shikamaru stood up and reached out, taking the Shogi piece from the blonde's hand slowly and studying it intently. *'I think...I found the king...Asuma-sensei.'*

``I...see. No offence taken. Also...you would learn a lot quicker...with the right teacher Naruto-kun." Shikamaru cast his gaze over the blonde, his hand tightening over the Shogi piece as he waited for Naruto's reaction to the sentence.

``K...kun...Shika...no-baka? Are you feeling all right?" Naruto glared at Shikamaru, but a tint of red tinged his cheeks and he too couldn't hold the gaze for long. Sakura watched the two, then slowly back away, it seemed she wasn't needed here anymore. A smirk crossed her face as she walked off, *'you owe me Shikamaru...you too Naruto, even if you don't know it yet you baka.'*

``I'm fine Naruto..., now, you wanted to play Shogi with me, ne?" Shikamaru sat down beside one side of the board and crossed his legs, Naruto slowly and shakily copied him and nodded.

``H-hai..." he took all of the pieces he'd captured from Sakura (which wasn't many) and placed them on Shikamaru's side of the board, Shikamaru handed him his as well and the blonde couldn't help the small squeak he let out when his hand brushed the brunette's.

``Nani?" Shikamaru glanced up from arranging his pieces on the board to see a bright red Naruto shaking his head quickly.

``Nothing! Nothing! Nothing's wrong!" Naruto laughed unconvincingly and ducked his head, Shikamaru raised an eyebrow but sighing, returned to setting up his side of the board. Naruto cursed himself, not only did he just make a total idiot out of himself, he was also finding himself feeling odd...things, for the boy opposite him...AND he had no idea which piece was the Silver General Sakura had mentioned only minutes ago.

``The piece to your left is the Silver General, it goes here," Shikamaru reached across the board and placed it for Naruto, Naruto nodded trying to take it all in again and remember what Sakura had taught him. Shikamaru moved first, Naruto knew the other boy was a so called 'super genius' and a good strategist so he immediately locked onto what Shikamaru did with the piece, it would be good to figure out his tactics as fast as possible. Then Shikamaru spoke, "you know...once when I was playing Asuma, he described me and himself using Shogi pieces."

``Huh...how does that work?" Naruto finally worked up the courage to look at the other boy, Shikamaru didn't look up at all.

``He said I'm like a Knight...I don't have much power," he stopped Naruto as he was about to butt in and protest, "but the Knight has a unique style of movement, which represents my flexibility when it comes to thinking." Shikamaru finally looked up at Naruto who was nodding quickly in understanding, a small smile crossed the brunette's face.

``What about me! Your smart Shikamaru, work out what piece I'm most like!" Naruto blinked as Shikamaru turned his gaze up to the sky, then remembered the boy's fondness for it and smiled.

``Interesting you should ask...Asuma also said something else, he asked me 'do you know who the king is?'" Naruto moved his piece on the board and blinked.

``And...who did you say?" he asked cautiously, watching as Shikamaru moved again, trying to pick out a pattern in the moves.

``I said the Hokage of course," Naruto nodded, "but Asuma said I was wrong..." Naruto

blinked.

``But a Hokage is the most powerful ninja in the village-"

``I know. But I also realise now that I was wrong. Asuma said I would understand one day...I...think I've figured it out." Naruto frowned as Shikamaru took one of his pawns and only vaguely listening , considered his next move.

``Oh? Who is it then?" Shikamaru glanced at Naruto's move and rolled his eyes, he quickly reached down and moved a piece.

``Checkmate in four moves. You need practise." Naruto's eyes widened and he looked up at Shikamaru in slight awe, how had he noticed a weakness in the defence Naruto himself had not?

``Kuso...I'll get better! You just wait! I'll beat you someday no matter how long it takes!" Shikamaru stood up and waited for Naruto to do the same.

``I believe you." He rolled his eyes again and turned to walk off, but he did indeed believe Naruto deep down, he'd seen the boy win fights out of sheer determination and refusal to give in. Naruto would practise himself into a coma if it meant he could beat Shikamaru at Shogi.

``Hey Shikamaru," the brunette stopped and turned his head towards Naruto, ``you never answered me, who's the king?" Naruto jumped over the Shogi board and stood face to face with Shikamaru, he had to look up a little, the other boy was taller than him...nothing new, he'd always been shorter than everyone else. Shikamaru gazed down at him blinking, a blush crossed his face and he closed his eyes, then in a move surprising himself and Naruto he lifted the blonde's head with two fingers and kissed him softly.

``...Someday, you'll understand Naruto-kun."

Heh. Yes, you don't find out Naruto's reaction. Because I'm like that.

Can you tell I was really struggling to write and ending for this? It was a pain.