

# Samurai and Kunoichi

By nextguardian

Submitted: December 1, 2012

Updated: December 1, 2012

*A brief love story between my OC, Yuji, and Sakura. Their love comes about in a very different way than my previous fics. Please comment and enjoy!*

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/nextguardian/59813/Samurai-and-Kunoichi>

**Chapter 1 - "Diplomatic Courtesy"**

**2**

## 1 - "Diplomatic Courtesy"

Sakura didn't mind traveling with Tsunade much. Granted, a lot of time was spent drinking, and then dealing with the consequences of that drinking. But Tsunade had a lot of interesting stories and plenty of wisdom. So it was all worthwhile, especially with Shizune there to practice with.

Today they were traveling to the Land of Iron. Sakura had never seen samurai before, and certainly none that could use chakra the way these did. She couldn't help but stare in awe at their practice. It was fundamental combat, the same as the shinobi worked on, but performed much differently.

There was one boy in particular whom Sakura noticed. He wasn't among the tallest, nor did he have the fanciest sword. It was, perhaps, his sheer solemn nature that attracted Sakura. Or maybe it was that she could feel no chakra coming from him at all.

The boy was surrounded by practice partners, each holding a wooden sword. It was four against one. Sakura stopped walking to watch. Tsunade stopped with her, nodding to the samurai leader.

"That boy seems to have caught her interest, Mifune."

Mifune smiled slightly, watching the boy act as though his attackers were irrelevant. "He is something of an interesting one. He refuses to use chakra in all but the most dire situations. He is among the youngest of us, but he certainly is worth watching."

The attackers moved. The boy in the center turned and hit one across the midsection, acting as though he had drawn a sheathed sword. He thrust the butt of his sword into the midsection of an oncoming attacker, moving surprisingly quickly. He parried a third strike and 'cut' up through the attacker's chest. The last attacker drew his 'sword' and tried to slash the boy in the center.

### **His block is too late- !**

The sword moved by the boy in the center, as he dodged backward. Before the sword could return, the boy had knocked it away with the back of his own sword. He then held his sword at his opponent's neck, showing victory. Then he withdrew his sword and bowed in turn to each of his practice partners. Not a hint of a smile crossed his face. He remained solemn as he put replaced his wooden sword with a sharp one and began to practice drawing it from its sheath.

--

"That was amazing!" Sakura was saying at dinner that night. "That boy was incredible!"

Mifune, Shizune, and Tsunade smiled to themselves. Sakura typically only observed quietly. To hear her become so excited was a rare pleasure. God knew the girl had been fixated on Sasuke for too long.

Looking at Sakura, Tsunade wondered if maybe a romantic fling was just what she needed. The boy was her type- serious, neat, and dark in nature. Who knew what kind of romance could sprout from this?

There had to be a way to make this work.

“Mifune, a word?” Tsunade requested, glancing meaningfully at Sakura.

Mifune moved back from the table and followed Tsunade a distance away. Once they were out of earshot, Tsunade outlined her idea.

“Mifune, Sakura is interested in that boy from earlier. Is there some way he could meet her? Maybe get them to spend some time together? Certainly my apprentice could learn a great deal of your culture from him, leading to better diplomatic relations...”

A smile crossed Mifune’s face. “The boy- Yuji is his name, by the way- is far too introverted for someone of his age and skill. Even the most serious among us has had at least a minor interest in the opposite sex. An aide of mine told me that Yuji seemed equally interested in your Sakura. The boy understands duty, if nothing else. Please leave the arrangements to me; I will see to it that they meet.”

--  
-

Tsunade, Shizune, and Sakura stood at the center of the village. Approaching from the other side of town was Mifune, an aide named Takeshi, and Yuji. The samurai group bowed to the women from the Hidden Leaf, holding their bows to show respect. Upon standing up, Yuji moved to Sakura, then bowed to her before sinking onto one knee, his right fist on the ground.

“Ojousama, I am Yuji Itou. If it pleases you, I would be honored to be your cultural attaché during your visit.”

Sakura was thankful that Tsunade had told her how to react to this diplomatically. She certainly didn’t have boys bowing to her on bended knee back home. She had practiced this all last night, and wanted to be sure to get it right.

“It does indeed please me, Yuji. Please stand up, and allow us to dispense with such formality. You need not bow so deeply to an ally.”

Yuji rose at her command, bowed again, then walked backward toward Takeshi. He bowed to Takeshi, who then handed him a sword. Yuji bowed to the sword, took it from Takeshi, and tucked it into his belt. Dressed in his full hakama, he now looked the part of the warrior he was supposed to be.

“Yuji, Tsunade and I will be discussing business. Takeshi has been assigned to Shizune. Therefore, please give Sakura a tour of our home and answer any questions she has.”

Yuji bowed again, crisply adding “Understood!” After he said that, he looked to Sakura. For the first time, his face betrayed emotion through a red blush on his cheeks. He was clearly pleased with his duty and what it entailed.

“This way, Ojousama...” he said, gesturing respectfully as he began to walk, making sure to walk evenly with her, allowing himself to direct her without walking in front, so he in no way showed superiority.

--

Sakura pointed out things of interest as she moved through the village, and Yuji answered all her questions. Sakura had to giggle to herself- God, but this boy was uptight.

**I can tell he's into me. But he's so duty oriented that he can't just say so. Or maybe not just that. I get the feeling he's also girl shy. I haven't seen any other girls around his age around. He might not know how to behave. But he's being so polite it's charming all by itself.**

Yuji seemed to know just what Sakura was thinking. Blushing even more, he told her: "Ojousama, forgive me. I have never had an...assignment like this before. I am not entirely certain how to behave..." "This is your first 'assignment' like this?" Sakura asked, something between shocked and expecting. She couldn't resist teasing him a little. "Is such as an assignment not to your liking?"

Yuji managed his first smile Sakura had seen. "There has not been an opportunity for such an...assignment. Certainly not one so pleasant...Please forgive any awkwardness this conversation has caused. It was not my intent..."

Sakura cut Yuji off. "Listen, just relax. I'm just a girl; you're just a boy. We both happen to be warriors. So we have something in common. If nothing else, we can talk about that and learn about each other that way. We may have more in common than you'd imagine."

Yuji seemed to understand that. "Then, perhaps a suitable place to speak, Ojousama? I could suggest a venue..."

Sakura smiled, managing not to shake her head in exasperation/laughter. "That would be most appropriate."

-

As it turned out, the two had a good deal to talk about. Their conversation began superficially, relating to various training techniques and fighting styles. As it turned out, Yuji had been watching the chunin exams when Sakura participated and was promoted.

"Your match was very impressive. Your counterattack was masterful."

Sakura leaned forward on the table, chin propped up on one fist. "Mmm. My opponent was over-aggressive. But what can you expect from best friends? That was a rematch, too. You should've seen our match a couple years before."

"I wish I had. It would've been an excellent match. I wish I could have participated in an exhibition match against some of the champions who were fighting. That would've been great!"

Sakura smiled, finally seeing a glimmer of hope for Yuji. "Finally, you stopped using the polite speech with me! We're finally talking. Really talking."

Yuji clapped a hand to his mouth, face red yet again. "Forgive me, Ojousama, I--"

Sakura cut him off again, this time grabbing his hand across the table. "Yuji, this is a date. We're both interested in each other. Duty is duty; pleasure is pleasure. If you need to be formal in front of the others, fine. But with me, just be yourself. And if that isn't good enough, I'll make it a diplomatic request."

Yuji seemed to think about that. Then, slowly, he replied. "I understand. I'm very happy to be here. I've never done this...that is, dated...before. Kind of lame for my age, I know. So maybe my request isn't necessary, but...may I call you 'Sakura', when it's just us?"

"That IS my name. Unless you want me to start calling you by...whatever formal title it is that suits you. But that would make conversation a bit cumbersome, I think. Don't you?"

Sakura leaned in closer to Yuji, smiling brightly. Yuji also leaned in, turning his hand over so he could hold hers.

--

That evening had been great. Yuji was a gentleman, as Sakura had suspected. They were walking back to her hotel when Yuji suddenly stopped. Sakura felt it, too, but didn't know what 'it' meant. There was a tension in the air. Sakura saw Yuji's hand flash to his sword handle as he spun around, standing in front of her in a deep stance.

A deep voice taunted them from the darkness. "I didn't think you could read chakra so well, Yuji Itou! I'm guilty of underestimating you!"

Yuji didn't move; he only stared in the direction of the voice. "My name is Yuji Itou, though you seem to know that much already. I would ask your name, as well as your business."

The voice could now be put to a silhouette. A tall man, wearing two swords, one long and one short and a straw hat owned the voice. "My name is Hideki, and my business is with the Ojousama from the Village Hidden in the Leaves."

"I am Ojousama's escort; any business you may have with her may be settled with me." Yuji's voice held an edge. He glanced back to Sakura. "Ojousama, please stay behind me. I will explain this later. Please forgive this intrusion."

Yuji drew his sword. "I wield this blade in defense of Ojousama! Challenger, answer with your own blade or withdraw!"

The sound of nothing reached Yuji's ears. The absence of sound- a blade! Deftly, Yuji moved backward, his own sword arching out from its case to meet its opponent. The two swords clashed with an audible 'clang' of metal on metal. Yuji dropped his shoulder, testing his opponent's strength. He felt the strength give way. Only experience taught him to move again, because his opponent had pulled back his sword and tried another strike, this one neck-height.

As he dodged, Yuji swung his sword into the back of his opponent's sword, knocking it away. Moving quickly, he stepped in and punched with the hand holding the sword, knocking his opponent's returning sword askew. As Hideki tripped backwards, Yuji thrust his sword into the man's chest. He then moved backward, standing in front of a very stunned Sakura. He held his sword in front of him in a defensive posture, allowing Hideki to breathe his last with no further disgrace. Once Hideki stopped breathing, Yuji snapped his sword out to the side, sending a shower of blood off to the side, and returned it to its sheath.

"Sakura, we have to move quickly. There will be more. Please, come with me!"

Sakura allowed herself to be towed away, barely noticing that Yuji's hand had grabbed hers as they ran. She looked back at Hideki, realizing that she could have done nothing. Worse, she wondered: How could such a sweet boy kill so easily?

--  
-

Yuji led Sakura to a small house, isolated in a bamboo grove. They ran inside, then closed and barricaded the door. When that was done, Yuji turned to Sakura, speaking almost sheepishly. "I...know that I owe you an explanation."

"I'll say! You butchered that man without a second thought! What the hell kind of savage are you?!" Sakura half-shouted, taking a step backward from Yuji. She nearly stopped when she saw his emotions betray him and a look of pure pain came across his face.

"I know that things are different in the Leaf Village. Here, there is a group that opposes our involvement in shinobi affairs. We learned of this group only last night, and did not have time to hunt anyone down. As a result, the leaders planned to give all of you an escort, as a diplomatic courtesy. Someone else was originally going to guard you. But then you kindly showed an interest in me, and I was allowed to take the role."

Sakura knelt down on the floor, while Yuji immediately produced a cushion for her and offered her tea. She vaguely said 'yes', more interested in asking questions than having tea.

"Why did you kill him? Isn't he worth more alive? For information or something?"

Yuji nodded as he made tea. "Yes. But there are others who are more skilled protecting your leader who may take prisoners. My job is your safety, and to that end I swore to do anything. Even if it made you hate me..."

Yuji set the tea down in front of her, bowing as he did. "...but that's not what I want. I've only known you for a short time, but you are important to me in a way that has nothing to do with duty."

Yuji was blushing, and he tried to turn away. Sakura would have none of that, however, and crawled forward, reaching out to gently take Yuji's head in her hands. She forced him to look at her, their foreheads practically touching.

"I understand. You had no choice, and I shouldn't have judged you," Sakura said finally. "But please, next time, tell me about something like this sooner!"

Yuji blushed even harder, again averting his eyes. "I...didn't want to bring it up while we were...you know...out on a date."

**He has good instincts, even if he's never bothered with girls before**, Sakura decided. That sort of conversation was not first date material, to be sure.

"Will you tell me why don't you use chakra? I don't mean to pry," Sakura added, realizing what a horribly direct question that was to ask someone so private! **Acting like I know him already! Reign it in, girl!**

Yuji sat down opposite her, a cup of tea in front of both of them now, neither one yet touched. “When I first learned combat, I didn’t know about chakra. In the older, traditional arts, chakra- or, to use the old term, ‘ki’- would be expended outward during an attack, or kept internal for defense. I use chakra in a more traditional way for us. That is, I use it to boost my physical strength, rather than attack with it as though it were a weapon. I’m not sure I described that well...”

Sakura assured him that he had explained just fine. “So that explains you a bit, then. You’re a traditionalist compared to the others?”

Yuji nodded slowly, thinking that over. “I think that may be the best way to describe it. I have no wish to see that part of our culture die out. It’s earned me attention in both good and bad ways, as you might imagine.”

Yuji moved to tend to the fire, so Sakura looked around the room. The room was...comfortable. The floors were made of tatami, with a square cut out as a place for an open fire, which Yuji had used to make tea. The room was dim and very intimate. To Sakura, it seemed almost romantic. A private, dark place like this, with only a fire for light. She was about to ask Yuji if he’d meant to lead her here when she saw it.

“Hey! You’re hurt!”

Yuji grimaced, looking down at his chest. “I had hoped you wouldn’t notice. It’s only a scratch...”

Sakura moved over to Yuji, examining his chest up close. “A scratch made by a blade that could have been dipped in poison, or hasn’t been cleaned since God knows when! You could get an infection!”

“It’s okay, you don’t have to-“

Sakura opened Yuji’s uwagi, getting to his bare chest. “Hold still. This is what I do for a living.”

It was child’s play for Sakura to heal that scratch. She noticed Yuji was uncomfortable, and decided her bedside manner might be useful here. Since she couldn’t get him to talk about himself...

“I’m a medical shinobi. My job is to heal people on the battlefield. I’m used to this kind of thing. Don’t you have medics?”

Yuji shook his head. “Not like you, no. If we get back to our base, yes. But generally, the others wear armor that protects them from any attack that doesn’t kill them outright. I’m pretty much the only one who will fight dressed like this.”

Sakura was done by the time Yuji finished speaking. She felt her hand linger on his chest longer than it needed to. She couldn’t help but feel the tight muscle and the young flesh, wishing it was pressed up against her skin...

With a start, Sakura dropped her hand away, blushing as she did. She noticed Yuji was also blushing. To her surprise, he opened up first.

“I’m...kind of shy...around girls, I mean. Lame, I know...”

Sakura didn't know what to make of that. So she sympathetically smiled and reached for her tea, muttering "that's a shame" as around a sip. Her eyebrows went up. "Good tea, by the way."  
"Thank you. I studied the tea ceremony, too. Not the most masculine thing in the world, but I wanted to steep myself in the culture here- pun intended, by the way. I'm not from here, you see."

Sakura had noticed, of course. Also to be expected, she was too polite to bring it up. But it's true- his skin contained different pigments, given his skin a slightly different tone from the others; a bit more pale she could now see. His hair was also different somehow, not so much in color but in how it grew out. Honestly, Sakura thought it made him look exotic and interesting, and made her more interested in his...friendship.

"You should rest, Ojou-...Sakura. I'll keep an eye on the fire a while longer," suggested Yuji. He dragged a futon out from a closet and laid it out for her. "It will get cold shortly."

Sakura accepted his offer, laying down in the futon after removing her skirt and changing her zippered vest. She wore a white t-shirt with her black shorts to bed when in the field. That didn't seem so smart now, in such a cold place. She shivered once, and immediately felt a weight on top of her. She moved her head enough to look, and saw Yuji's top laying on top of the blanket. It was comforting and warm, so she didn't object. Especially not to the picture of the sword-toting warrior, shirtless, toned body outlined by the moonlight. His face was too serious, she decided. And his eyes were burdened with dark bags beneath them. He probably didn't sleep enough.

"Where will you sleep?" she asked, hoping against hope there would only be one futon. Sure enough, Yuji's face reddened.

"Ojousama, you needn't-"

Sakura rolled her eyes, reached up and seized Yuji's hand, and pulled him down to her level.

"Just lay next to me. Consider it a diplomatic request. It's not like I'm going to just jump you..." **Yet.**

Her tone may have been light, but in Yuji's mind her eyes were very much serious. Obediently, he lay down next to her. Sakura slid closer to him, the sensation of her skin against his now a reality, even if it was only her bare arms. She snuggled into his chest, very comfortable. There was something about a brush with death that made you bond with the person who shared it with you.

**I can tell this boy has been through a lot. I don't know if it's death, or something else, but I can tell he's burdened. I want to lift at least some of that burden from him. Knowing him for only a couple days, though! I guess this much is okay. It's not like we're really sleeping together like *that*.**

For his part, Yuji wasn't quite sure what to make of this. He had always trained to fill the void in his life. And now, here came someone who seemed to complete him. He genuinely wasn't sure how to react. His first thoughts were of wanting to simply hold her, maybe even kiss her. His first 'adult' thought about her was wanting to protect her forever.

**I had never killed before today, and I don't feel as guilty as I should. Is it because I had to kill for the most pure reason? The defense of human life? Or is it more complex than that? Is it defending not just human life, but the life of the woman I love? How could I know that so quickly? I've never been in love before...but this feels like love. Warmth. Safety. Trust.**



Before long, Yuji found himself drifting off to sleep. He fought it at first, but realized how desperately he needed it. His warrior senses would wake him in case of a crisis. For now, it was best- or at least, the most rewarding- to let the girl pushing herself as hard as she could into his bare chest just rest while he enjoyed the sensation.

--

Yuji woke up first the next morning with a start, forgetting that the comfortable weight on him was not a blanket but a female companion. Sakura had some awkward sleeping habits, Yuji mused. During the night she had rolled over so that she was actually pinning him down by laying her chest across his. Her face was nestled into his neck and shoulder, and her arms were thrown around his neck. As he noticed this, Yuji realized that his arms were wrapped tightly around Sakura's trim waist and strong shoulders. He didn't move for fear of disturbing her, though he was honest enough with himself to admit that he didn't want her to move for his own selfish reasons.

**I've always been the 'emotionless warrior'. I've never responded to any other girls this way. Maybe I would be vaguely interested, but that was it. With this one, it feels real. But maybe I also want somebody with me right now because of what I did. I killed another human being. No matter how much you train, no matter how good your cause, you cannot prepare for the sight of seeing somebody's body go limp, and you cannot know how to comprehend that you caused that body to go limp. For now, I can write it off as an occupation hazard. But what about when she leaves and goes back to the Leaf Village? Will I just feel like a criminal? Does this make me a bad person regardless?**

Sakura finally stirred. She gasped lightly at first, surprised as Yuji had been that she was sharing this futon with somebody else, but she quickly settled back down.

"Ah! Still cold. Maybe I'll just stay here..."

Yuji was about to agree with her, but both of them suddenly perked up.

"Oh, damn! She found me already," Sakura moaned, getting out of the futon quickly and getting dressed. "Hey, um, since our masters are here, maybe we should pretend that we've been on guard the whole night? I mean, we both know what happened was completely innocent, but I don't know how Lady Tsunade will react. And I'm not sure she'll listen to the truth anyway..."

Yuji agreed, though he suspected Mifune wouldn't really care. He had protected Sakura, and that was the only thing Mifune would be concerned with. Sometimes, Yuji suspected the old man was rooting for Yuji to find a girl. He'd suggested more than one would make a good wife, but Yuji thought himself too young and too unskilled for that sort of thing. This girl, though...

At that moment, as if fate had planned it, Sakura leaned over and kissed Yuji's lips lightly.

"Thanks again. You saved my life, and you asked nothing in return. You're a real gentleman, Yuji. I hope this trip isn't the last we'll see of each other..."

Yuji bowed, at least partially to hide how much he was blushing. "It is my hope as well, Sakura."

With that, the two went outside to meet their respective masters. Their eyes lingered on each other as Mifune and Tsunade spoke. This caught the eye of the two masters, who shared a smile. It was a

healthy thing for these children to learn to trust each other. In an unstable world in which very little was guaranteed, everyone needed some semblance of normalcy to hang on to. The unforgiving, chaotic world had bent these two children, but had not yet broken them. They would strengthen each other, even if only as friends.