

Garnet and Onyx

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Submitted: December 31, 2008

Updated: October 10, 2010

When a girl with a mysterious past and the sand symbol burned into her right forearm appears just outside Sunagakure, seeming an Akatsuki dump-off, how does the Kazekage handle it?

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1 - What You Can Remember

Author: Okay, I KNOW this has been long in coming, but I've had the worst case of writer's block that has ever plagued my mind recently. I apologize for those who have already come here looking for a story, and found nothing. Now, if you come back, I thank you for being patient with a very upset and mentally disturbed writer.

FOR YOU LEGAL PEOPLE: Naruto does not belong to me, though I intend to stalk Gaara until he wishes he did. VEEEP.

However, Annabella does and I'd rather you not screw with her. She SCARES me... >.<
-rapid eye twitches-

- I remember everything since the day I turned five years old. Every day was so carefully etched into my memory, burned with ferocity into the very corridors of my mind. Such vivid, bright, bloody, morbid pictures that I can't close my eyes without seeing. They are painful, yes, but I learned oh-so long ago to ignore pain of every kind. I can't scan my images without emotion, no, but I can hide it. And, I can not break down. I look at them with the cruel, cold eyes of a stranger, because I could not function otherwise. Or I would curl up in the tightest of fetal positions, incapable of words, incapable of any deed except wracking sobs that would shake my slight frame for hours, days, until my limbs separated from my torso, my eyes dried in their sockets, until I fell into the blissful pit of eternity that we call death.

My first memory finds me sitting cross-legged on a mat, eyes staring dreamily out the window of the small shack we lived in. I remember not the name of the village I lived in, merely because I was never allowed out of the house. Father was a controlling man, a cruel man. My eyes only rarely saw the sunlight, and then it was only through the window. I used to stand beside the small portal, onyx eyes focused on the outside with some sort of worship. I imagined the world a beautiful place from my prison. The breeze that used to come through the almost-door was always so dry, sandy, but I loved it. I loved the dry place.

Five, I was, and my mother was brushing my hair. My mother was a beautiful woman, slight with an almost delicate build. She was strong, I knew, but it did not show. Her hair was the most beautiful raven black, it cascaded down her back. I had inherited that feature from my mother, thankfully. Her eyes were a sparkling jade green, her skin pale as a spirit's, with color at her cheeks and lips. She was my goddess, a sweet parent, caring. I loved her.

My father burst in, obviously drunk again. He went after my mother and I scuttled out of the way. He started in on his usual beating and I slumped in the corner, watching with terrified eyes. It still scared me, even though it was so common a thing. My father, with his eyes the color of ponds so poisoned they were black, his hair a dirty blonde. I hated him, with a passion I have not matched since.

I could feel this time was different. My veins were filled with some sort of raging fire. It was a torrent that swept away my childish fear and my calm, rational thought. It only left the anger, such an animalistic rage that it would have scared me had I been in my right mind. A voice in my head screeched 'KILL!' over and over again and I agreed. Murder seemed like such a wonderful option, a way to punish the demon that harmed my goddess of a mother.

I swpet my arm out through thin air and what looked like the pure shadows of my fury knocked my father against the far wall of our small hut. The items on the shelves rattled. My mother was unconscious and it only pressed my madness further. The shadows wrapped around my father, crushing, squeezing, destroying, killing. I would wipe him from the face of this earth, I would free myself and my mother. I would decimate him. Just a little more power... A shout stopped me from killing the man.

***"Annabella! Akita Annabella, stop this now! You will lose control."** The voice was easy to recognize. Cauchemar, my mother's talking cat. I froze, then turned enblazened eyes upon the small black cat, watching me with intelligent eyes. He knew something I didn't, he knew where this power came from, this flaming burst of energy that had me so strong. A tiny voice whispered not to stop until my father's blood decorate the floor and myself, until it poured like rain. However, my next thought stopped me. I wanted to kill Cauche, murder him as well. That was so much not my thought, I halted myself and slowly, my reason returned to me. I slumped to the ground, panting, suddenly so tired I could barely move and so frightened of myself. My father was dazed, almost unconscious, and he stumbled to his feet and out the door, muttering something about too much alcohol.*

Cauchemar stepped gracefully over to me, looking up into my face and studying. In the glare of a little light off of his eyes, I could see my own pale, scared features. Finally, the feline sat back and appeared torn. He knew I wanted an answer, a reason for the scenario mere seconds ago. He also knew he needed my mother's permission, I guess.

My mother awoke about two hours later, her eyes were met by the sight of our torn shack and Cauchemar trying to stare me down. My mother sat up and took me into her arms, smelling like she often did of lavender and blood. Another bone-heating flow of rage slipped through me, but I quelled it. I could hurt my mother or Cauche, neither of which I was willing to do. Safe in my mother's arms, a fortress to me, I listened to her weave a tale of a sick, dying baby, an uncaring father and a mysterious woman with a cure. My mother, desperate for any help, accepted the woman's aid. She immediately noticed a difference, as the baby, I, grew stronger. She noticed early I had a bit of control over what seemed to be nothingness, the shadows of the world and inside people. With the help of our strange little cat, managed to lock my strange abilities away.

***"They are open now."** My mother said, of the doors to my mind, that obviously were no longer shut tightly and locked, as they should be. I frowned and shook my head. This was too confusing for a mere five year old, though I grasped more than I believed I did.*

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*The next memory I have is of a massacre. My mother sat at the window, my father passed out in the big chair in the living room. I played with dolls in a corner, seven years of age. The peaceful scene erupted into violence as the front door burst open. Shadow washed through my mind, feeling the poisoned consciousness of those who entered in riotous, raucous insanity. My father went first, as blades erupted throughout his flesh, thrown by the tall, bulky men who owned those corrupted minds. They all wore black, though it varied between them. Some wore red bands, other white. It was confusing.*

*Next was my precious mother. They slaughtered her, up close. She did nothing to protect herself. I felt the insanity deep within me tear lose at that.*

***"Kill them all..."***

*I cannot...*

*The once tiny voice roared now, but it scared me. I hit my knees, receding into a corner. One of them found me amongst my shadows and pulled me out of the corner. They debated what to do with me and, unwillingly, I spoke. **"Do not kill me. I will live amongst you, I will become a power and give it all to you. I can do so much, and I am merely seven years of age. Spare me, and I will owe you all my powers, all my abilities."***

*I decided them. They took me with them. As well as Cauchemar.*

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*I refuse to write what occurred those next eight years and six months. I cannot, I will not.*

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*The final memory I relay is when I was traded. The members of another group came to meet the Blood Rain, those who killed my family and who I owed my life, however broken. They threatened, so they could have me. I was given up without much fight and I lost Cauchemar.*

*The tests and such they put me through were horrible. They rendered me helpless, stripped away my defenses. They nearly killed me, always searching for what they called a demon. I told them, so many times, you cannot remove insanity. It a mental thing. The idiots, I possess no demon. Just my insanity. They did not cease. They finally deduced that I had no demon and decided to dump me off.*

*They did so in the midst of the desert, where I rest now. I look around and see all of the sand, the blatant emptiness, and I almost weep. Almost. This is my end, because I had been sapped of strength and nearly broken. I owe allegiance to no one, I have no purpose. I am useless without, alone. Without even Cauchemar.*

*My only blessing is the fact that they granted me the paper on which to write this. And the knife. My life has been pressed down into words and maybe, I will not be forgotten. Perhaps someone will find this and I will live on in a faint memory. It is all I ask.*

The dark haired girl sighed as she pressed the last drop of blood onto the paper. She gripped the pages, that the blonde, feminine man had given her. Her last hope, to keep whatever existence she had led almost alive. She collapsed onto her side, still holding onto the paper, her life, until her breathing became shallow. Her body lay there amongst the sand and reptile creatures, until the pages fluttered in hands that no longer held, and sand swept around a small girl who no longer moved.

## 2 - Girl With No Name

The Kazekage sat at his desk, staring down at a pile of papers he was tapping with his pen. He couldn't think and he felt a little stir-crazy. He glanced up with insomnia-lined eyes, out a window, at the darkness outside. He stood and put the candle on his desk out with the grip of sand, then exited his home.

He started out into the wild land of the Wind, wandering once again. He had, so many times before, but he knew more now. More than the killing. Thanks to Uzumaki Naruto, he understood that killing was not a purpose, not just mindless killing.

The wild was calming, with its wind and the passing sand, that felt so alive to him. All of the land was pale... Except that black. He frowned at the mass of black and white that was pointedly obvious in the moonlight and started over to it. Once he had crossed the small distance, he eyed the unconscious female lying there. She appeared oddly fragile... A line of white and red suddenly whipped up from her and his sand rushed to snatch it out of the air. He looked at it and realized it was nothing more than paper, torn up into the air by the strong wind.

He took it and scanned the item, then frowned when he realized that the chosen ink was her own blood. He shook his head with a small sigh of puzzlement, then took the paper and folded it up, on some strange whim. He stuck it in his pocket and his eyes flicked down to the *other* issue. The female.

He sighed again and knelt down, then pressed two fingers to her jugular. He rested there for a moment, focusing. There.

Just barely, but she had a pulse. Not for long, by the looks of her though. She seemed naturally pale, but it went beyond natural here. A sickly white, with flushed cheeks and pale lips. Those lips were slightly parted and she just slightly breathed. He sighed and pulled her up, to drape her arm around his shoulders. She weighed barely anything at all. She seemed a fighter, by the fine play of muscles just under her skin, and she seemed very well proportioned. He sighed. He didn't need a risk in Suna.

But she was hurt.

And, she could help them, if she felt there was a debt there.

He sighed again and continued onto Sunagakure.

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In the end, she was bandaged up, for several wounds, wrapped in a set of Temari's old clothing, in his bed. She was surprisingly small and he had managed to change her from the bloodied, old clothes without scanning her body. It really hadn't been too hard, considering. He didn't usually notice women like that.

She had a pretty face. Open and innocent, heart-shaped, with full lips, a pleasing nose and what he could tell were wide eyes with thick lashes. He had spent several minutes studying her, and questioning his motives. He should have left her there, or killed her. But, he had brought her here.

*I should probably tell Temari or Kankuro, so they can care for her.* He thought, but something in him immediately railed against it. He knew how abrasive Temari was and he could easily see Kankuro shirking it. It was his problem now.

She suddenly shifted and cried out softly, voice weak. He stood up, ready to attack, something, despite an odd stirring in him at the lyrical sonance that had come from her. It was a beautiful sound, oddly enough to him.

She didn't move again. He moved over and he found her conscious, with very odd colored eyes indeed. A deep onyx, very shocking, as deep as the abyss, and slightly glazed. The pain that filled them was sheer mental agony. She found him and he realized the small glaze he saw was fever. She was healing, but her body was reacting badly.

**"W-where am I?"** She said, licking her lips once. He blinked.

**"Sunagakure."** He answered. His voice sounded like the desert wind itself, though she seemed calmed by it.

**"The village hidden in the Sand..."** She murmured, closing her eyes in pain for a moment. **"You wish... to ask me questions? Imprison me? Kill me?"** She inquired quietly. She wasn't very trusting.

**"No, none of those."** He responded. He could see the doubt playing across her features. **"I swear it."** The tension left, she relaxed and seemed to fall once more into unconsciousness.

The seventeen year old Kazekage sighed. He would have to work hard to save this one. She was terribly weakened... He frowned now, noticing something he hadn't before. She had shifted, moving the blanket. He could see the symbol of the sand ninja burned into her arm, an old wound. He brushed his fingers across it and wondered.

He pulled back and sighed. He remembered the papers she had held, as she supposedly fell into death. He pulled those from his pocket now and unfolded them, starting to read the shaky handwriting, scrawled in her own blood. He sat down on the edge of the bed, eyes moving as he absorbed line after line. When he finished, he glanced at the girl, understanding the distrust. He decided there he would help her, because he knew what it was like to be alone. And what it was like to fear being forgotten.  
He knew, he remembered. And he didn't want to see it in anyone else.

### 3 - Trust Me

The next few days were difficult. The Sand was under heavy assault from a group of rogue ninja, looking to conquer. Gaara had to fight to keep those nearest him from knowing about his special charge. He worried, an odd emotion for him, when he was away to help with the fighting, that she would perish while he was gone. She was in such a weak state...

His confusion came, wondering as to why he cared so much for the girl who was only a complete stranger. Yes, the papers, her life story, had bound him mentally to her in an effort to save her from what seemed to be only herself, but it should not inspire such *worry* for the girl. He didn't know what to make of it, or what not to make of it. He was overthinking all of this, he knew it...

He came back after one of the worst slaughters, a lot of losses, but at least it was on both sides. He was a little discouraged, but he had to check on the girl anyway.