

# Flavours

**By misekaketsuki**

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*Late one night, Gaara is buried in paperwork. Sandsib fic, oneshot. Written for LJ's 20 inkspots comm. Not Sandcest, though I love it, just keeping my Inkspots gen.*

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/misekaketsuki/33585/Flavours>

**Chapter 1 - Flavours**

**2**

# 1 - Flavours

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Disclaimer: I do not own in part or full any aspect of Naruto
</title>
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<b>Disclaimer:</b> I do not own in part or full any aspect of Naruto. This is the property of Kishimoto
Masashi-sensei, his relevant partners and subsidiaries. I do own all original aspects of this fanfiction
including but not limited to original characters and plot. This fanfiction has been published at no profit,
purely for the enjoyment of the fans and the collective good of the series.
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Two in the morning, and a light was still on in one room of the house that Sabaku no Gaara shared with his siblings. In said room, the pale redhead sat at the desk in the corner, the wooden top covered in papers. There were mission reports and pages of numbers, complaints, and correspondence of every type. And there was a lot. Things had piled up between the death of the previous Kazekage, his biological father, and his own inauguration as the new Kazekage. Gaara was almost glad he couldn't sleep; if he could, it would have taken at least twice as long to get everything sorted through.

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Just because he couldn't sleep didn't mean he didn't get tired, however, and he was. He had been working on this particular issue since 0600 the previous day. His eyes ached, his fingers were cramped, and he wished he could just burn the damn papers, or throw them out the window, or tear them up. Anything to get them off of his desk!

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With a glare that would send grown men running aimed at the offending papers, Gaara shoved them to the edge of his desk and leaned back in his chair, wincing as stiff muscles protested. He didn't regret accepting the position of Kazekage, especially when the village was in such need of one, but he wished there was less paperwork. He'd certainly be able to survive without the paperwork.

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Quiet footsteps in the hallway had him alert and listening warily, until he recognised them as belonging to Temari. She knocked on his door, which surprised him a bit, and opened it carefully when he called her in, quietly, so as not to wake Kankurou, who slept in the next room. She was dressed in her sleep

clothes and yawning, hair pulled back into a single ponytail for the night.

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“How's your work going?” Temari asked around a yawn.

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He glowered at the papers he had pushed aside. “Tedious.”

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She almost laughed at the way he looked, but contained it with an effort.

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Pale green eyes met her darker ones. "Why are you still up?"

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The blonde looked sheepish. "I was reading and lost track of time." Watching her youngest brother's expression, she was nonplussed to see a faint, tiny smile on his face.

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“What are you working on, anyway?” Temari blurted suddenly.

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Gaara motioned towards the papers on the edge of his desk, eyeing them distastefully. She picked up the top sheet and scanned it quickly.

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The page was covered in numbers and calculations, with notes in the margins and crammed next to lists of printed data, all in a tiny, precise hand. It appeared to be the village's imports and exports, how much they had made from shinobi missions, and the average income per capita, among other things. Flipping through the stack, she raised an eyebrow at what he was expected to do with this.

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“Did the council give you a deadline?”

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“Thursday,” came the soft reply.

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“That’s tomorrow—no, today! ...Do you have any idea what you’re doing here?”

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“No,” Gaara answered hesitantly after a moment’s silence, and when Temari looked at him, he almost seemed embarrassed.

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He sighed, and leaned over his desk, pulling his papers and writing utensils towards him, obviously planning to get back to work. He froze and looked up at his older sister, confused, when she plucked the papers from his grasp.

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“You,” she said sternly, “are going to take a break and get something to eat—I know you skipped supper, because I was there and you weren't—and then we'll tackle this together.”

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Gaara stared at her for a moment, utterly speechless. Temari smiled slightly, and ruffled his hair, then dragged him down to the kitchen. Another half an hour found them back in at his desk with sandwiches and hot chocolate, heads together over his paperwork.

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Eight in the morning, and the redhead sat and stared out the window as the village—<i>his</i> village—came to life. Temari had staggered off to bed at his insistence at about seven, and he'd finished up the work on the last of the calculations. Gaara still didn't understand what had possessed his sister to stay up for five more hours to help him, but he was grateful.

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But she had gone to bed, so he sat in the sun coming through his window and watched the people of his village. His empty plate and mug from their early-morning meal sat on the windowsill, white ceramic almost glowing in the sunlight. He'd never had hot chocolate until that morning, when Temari had showed him how to make it, but he knew he would have it again. It was rather addicting.

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He didn't know if he would ever understand the relationship he now had with his siblings, but he thought that was okay, as long as he got to keep it. He had never realised, before Naruto, just how lonely he truly had been. He laughed softly to himself. Before Naruto. The phrase was turning into a way of separating his then and his now; but definitively separating, not something like a vague "while back," but more like an era in history. Before Naruto and After Naruto.

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After Naruto, everything had changed: his perspective, his attitude, his whole being. Gaara thought Temari had realised it first—Kankurou always seemed like he could only read people in battle—and she had accepted him completely. For some time, he had known that she was still unsure about him, downright scared on occasion, but she had made the effort. Kankurou's effort had followed after it had become clear he wouldn't get crushed in sand if he tried to treat his younger sibling less like someone to be feared and more like a brother.

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It was love; something Gaara had always known existed outside of his own twisted meaning, but had never tried, preferring to stay stable in his instability. In his own world, where he could pretend he had no emotions other than hate and anger and love for himself, and thus avoid the hurt real love could sometimes bring. If you made yourself believe something for long enough, it would become the truth to you, he knew now.

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Real love, he had discovered, was something like hot chocolate. Sweet and warm and addicting, but it could burn, too. Now, though, he didn't really think it was a burn he would mind, as long as he got the flavour and sweetness that went with it. That would make the pain worth it. If love had a flavour, it would probably be hot chocolate.

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“Gaara? You there?” Kankurou's voice came through from the hallway.

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“Yes.”

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The doorknob turned, and a sleep-mussed brown head poked around the door. "I was going to make some pancakes, you want some?"

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Gaara heard his stomach growl, as if answering his brother's question. He nodded.

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"Okay, I'll get them started, come down when you're ready." The disembodied head disappeared and the door closed behind it.  
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Yes, Gaara decided, love would taste like hot chocolate.  
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This is the second fic I completed for the 20 Inkspots community on LiveJournal. This was for One Word Trigger number five in the Light set, "Flavours." I may retile this if I come up with something better than Flavours, but I haven't got anything at the moment. The 20 Inkspots community is located at <a href="http://community.livejournal.com/20\_inkspots"><font color="Blue"><u>http://community.livejournal.com/20\_inks</u></font><font color="Blue"><u>pots</u></font></a> ; you should check it out sometime, there's a ton of good authors and artists, and lots of good fics from many different fandoms and genres.

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Please let me know what you think.

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<!--Section Ends-->

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