

Certain Destiny

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Submitted: October 27, 2007

Updated: October 27, 2007

The KH story with a twist, taking place from the Organizations point of view, but also Kairi's, and and OC.

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1 - Memories

Kairi sat watching the sun slip down the horizon on the deserted beach. She remembered when Sora was here, and Riku too. They used to sit on the island where Tidus practiced and talked between themselves about exploring to other worlds. Now, they were both gone, and she was left to dream about meeting them again. A dark, blue - violet sky replaced that of a ruby red one of a few minutes ago. The shadowed palm trees swayed in the slight breeze of the summer night as she walked towards the secret place. Kairi pushed aside the leafy vines and ambled down the dirt hallway, running her fingers along the cool earthy sides as she did so. Memories swept over her as she entered the cavern; only a month ago had she arrived back on her island as Sora drifted away into the darkness. She remembered his promise to her, "I will always be with you", as they were parted, Kairi on her island, Sora... where? She had been determined to learn that ever since.

As she stood in the center of the cave and turned, her eyes scanned all of the etched rock drawings. Only one caught her eye, the sketch that was there when Kairi and her friends' adventures started, and was there when she returned. The one that showed Sora and her sharing the paupou fruit, drawn so long ago. Her eyes blurred, and she realized several tears were dripping on the floor. She turned her gaze from the wall and wandered over to the wooden door with no handle. She kicked it with all her might, "This stupid door started it all!" she thought angrily, "If it wasn't for this thing, none of these things would have ever happened! I wish I had listened to Wakka and Tidus, and never even thought about leaving this island..." But her thoughts were interrupted when the door gave a low moan. She stared at it, and backed away; a door that never opened, slightly cracking open now was not a good thing, Kairi imagined. She wheeled towards the door, poised to sprint back to the safety of the sun, but instead ran straight into a person. She stepped back slightly winded; whoever it was hadn't budged an inch. Kairi looked up at the darkly cloaked, hooded figure, eyes wide. She backed up a few more paces and stuttered, "Go - Go away! I don't like you! Now - now just go!" Although Kairi couldn't see its face, the tone of its voice suggested a smirk.

"And what exactly do you plan to do if I don't? You never stood up for Sora when he was in danger. The most you could do was kick a door and hope he would come back. Look at yourself, covered in tears, wallowing in your own grief while Sora is fighting to the limits of his heart, searching for the door that will enable him to come back to you. I bet you haven't even looked for any trace of where he'd gone. I have been watching you.... You come here everyday and stare at those useless scribbles - "

"They're not scribbles!" Kairi shouted, feeling tears prick the corners of her eyes once again. "They happen to be nothing you know about, and I think you should just shut up about Sora. You don't know anything about him, creep!"

"- Instead of trying to open that door." The dark figure appeared to have not noticed her outburst. "Have you even given a thought about what lies behind that thin layer of wood?"

"Well, I have actually, for your information!" Kairi stated matter-of-factly, "I think that behind that door is the heart of this world!" The figure laughed slightly. It muttered something she couldn't hear, but she did hear the door creak open even wider, although her back was still turned to it.

“ You can run back to your childish companions if you wish, take the cowards way out. Continue to live on old memories of the old times. That is all I would expect of you. But, if you dare to turn your face once again towards the door, you will see the road that leads to your true friends. Take care in choosing, for once you step on the path, your long avoided destiny will catch up with you.

She whirled around and saw a dirt pathway leading into the sunset. Kairi stepped forward slowly, as if to make sure this wasn't just a dream and she hadn't fallen asleep in the cave. But everything was real; the world didn't disappear to her touch. Birds chirped happily in strange new trees she had never seen, tree frogs began to peep in the distance and for a moment – not even a moment – she thought she heard the laughter of her two best friends – Sora and Riku. As she ventured to walk down the trodden dirt path, she glanced behind her to see the wooden door had vanished, yet the figure's voice echoed through her mind, “ Take care in choosing, for once you step on the path, your long avoided destiny will catch up with you....”

2 - Dream

A cold, wet...something was licking Kairi's face. She opened her eyes and stood in alarm. A large comical looking dog was staring her straight in the eyes, almost as if it was telling her something. She was in the secret place, wait, so was all of that a dream? She must have fallen asleep. But what about the dirt path? And the birds? All of that never happened? It all seemed so real. She shot a glance at the door; maybe she still would have a chance. But no, it was jammed shut, as same as it had ever been

Now a different thought crossed her mind. The dog. She had never seen anything like it. It was an orangey-yellow color, with a green collar. And it had taken quite a liking to her as well. It was running around, barking playfully.

"So what. Maybe that was a dream," she thought, "It just gave me all the answers to what I need to do! Well, except for the door..."

Everyday that Kairi had come into the cave, a wave of memories washed over her. She remembered the time she came back after Sora had disappeared, and she could have sworn that she saw Sora tying the hearts of their little etching of them together. But as soon as she reached out to touch him, he flashed that smile that she died for and disappeared. The weird thing was, the line that tied them together stayed there. So was Sora really here? Kairi wanted to see him, and she was willing to go on a quest as long as he did to do so. But how could a door be holding back her strength? Okay, this was it. She was going to open that door, and she was going to find Sora.

She stared at the dog that was now growling at the door, which was opening, and said, "I am sick of being the damsel in distress! I am going to find my friends, and I am going to bring them back here, and everything will be normal!"

For some reason, saying that out loud, even though she was talking to a dog, it gave her an unknown confidence that seemed to come straight from her heart. The power was overwhelming; she was ready. No more waiting. She held her breath, and stepped through the door.

3 - Mansion Battle

As soon as Kairi stepped onto the path, a warm, almost melancholy emotion found its way into her body. She stared behind her. The door was gone! What was there was an old, dilapidated mansion, protected by a 20 foot cream colored stone wall, and a rusty gate entangled by lush green vines. She marveled at the sight. There was nothing like this at Destiny Islands. The most they had was a small beach house off of the islet that she played on. She imagined the rooms that were in it, it must be amazing! Between the mansion and the gate was a lawn that needed clipping and about a dozen statues of figures she had never seen before, some looking like gravestones. Behind her was a wood. It looked pretty safe, and since she could see there was no way of seeing any hospitality in the mansion, Kairi thought she might as well go through the wood and see what was on the other side. It couldn't be that large because she could see a clock tower above the fringes of the leaves.

She headed towards the shadows of the emerald green leaves, at first walking, but then running. For some reason the mansion scared her, and she had this feeling that someone would be waiting for her on the other side of this wood. Someone she could trust. Someone that would tell her what was going on here, and where Riku and Sora were. Just as she touched the cool shadows of the wood, a black-cloaked figure materialized from what seemed to be a portal of darkness.

"You!" Kairi shouted, "It's you! That man who was in my dream."

"Quite the opposite, my dear." He replied, "That was no dream. Yet you were foolish enough to believe it. Maybe you aren't the one," he shrugged, "I propose there is only one way to find out..."

A large blade appeared in his hands. Kairi was stunned.

"Am I supposed to fight him?" she thought, "well, if it helps me save Sor-"

"Have no hope of defeating me, or saving Sora. I was sent by Organization XIII to eliminate you if you are truly the Keyblade's fourth wielder, but they gave me the option to dispose of you anyway, if you are not. So far, chances of you surviving are grim."

Kairi gasped. The fourth Keyblade wielder? Isn't that the weapon Sora used to defeat that man before they were separated? Well anyway, she wasn't going to let this man from Organization XIII slow her down from saving her friends, and living!

"Yeah well," she began, "I guess you don't know me very well because I think the chances of you surviving are grim! I am here to save my friends, and you aren't going to get in the way of that. Nice try mister, but I think you should leave right about now!"

"Your heart is strong Kairi, maybe I have misjudged you. But still, you will just be a nuisance to the Organization, so I might as well dispose of you anyway. That only leaves three wielders left! My, my, it seems as if in no time all of you, the king, Riku, and – let's see, what was that other one's name? – Oh yes, Sora will be out of our way." The figure pulled down his hood, and smirked, "My name is Xemnas,

and here I am. Are you ready, Kairi?"

Xemnas stood in battle form. That blade looked awful sharp.

"I don't think I can do this..." Kairi thought to herself.

"You creep! This is it, you're going down!" she muttered. Xemnas lunged at her, and Kairi put her arms in front of her for protection, and heard the clashing of what seemed to be metal against metal. How was that possible? Right now she should be dead, with the force that Xemnas came at her with. Kairi opened one eye; Xemnas was a few feet in front of her, mouth open, and in her hand was a Keyblade. The shock only lasted a split second because Xemnas recovered, smirked, and headed at her again. Perfect timing – for him. Kairi was still stunned by the fact of the blade in her hand. Xemnas lunged at her, and Kairi put her arms in front of her for protection, and heard the clashing of what seemed to be metal against metal. How was that possible? Right now she should be dead, with the force that Xemnas came at her with. Kairi opened one eye; Xemnas was a few feet in front of her, mouth open, and in her hand was a Keyblade. The shock only lasted a split second because Xemnas recovered, smirked, and headed at her again. Perfect timing – for him. Kairi was still stunned by the fact of the blade in her hand. Xemnas lunged forward, knocking the keyblade out of Kairi's hands, and the dazed look off of her face. The keyblade was spun across the grass, hitting the wall of the mansion. Seeing his chance of attack, Xemnas ran towards Kairi again, there was obviously no chance of survival this time. Kairi stood poised to fight, even without a keyblade, Tidus and Wakka had taught her a couple things, but they would probably do no damage to someone this strong. In her hand a sparkly feeling occurred, the same hand that had just held the keyblade. Not only was the feeling in her, it was on her, her hand. The keyblade was materializing in her hand! She charged towards Xemnas, but as she struck, the blade just went straight through him, and he disappeared, but his voice echoed through the twilight sky.

"So you have decided to save your friends, eh, Kairi? What a foolish girl you are. This path is has not been trod by many, and by the look of you, I don't think you will make it past the first ditch. You think your heart is strong, but you are just blind to the truth. Will you never see, that even though your heart is full of light now, it will just give in to the darkness. Everything returns to darkness. The worlds, the people, and their hearts. So I suggest giving up now, and prevent the suffering that you will put your friends through. Give up, Kairi, and return to the darkness, like everyone else." The voice died away and left the words only to echo the twilit sky.

"Yeah! Is that what you think?" she felt kind of stupid for yelling at the sky, but she knew that Xemnas was there still, "I'll show you, you big bully! I'll save Riku and Sora, and then we will defeat you all together. You just wait!"

4 - Too Much

Kairi was breathing hard. She had never felt like this. A strange feeling of confidence was cemented into her mind. She could do this. She knew she could. Xemnas was gone now, and she had the chance to study the blade in her hand. The handle had a leafy feeling to it, and the blade, which she thought at first was just serrated, was actually just metal cut to the form of palm trees.

Certain Destiny...

A voice said in her mind.

"Certain Destiny you are then!" Kairi felt even stupider talking to a keyblade, but before she could think of anything else, it vanished. "Now to get on with life. Come on dog! Let's find out where we are!" Sure enough, the orange-yellow dog was shaking behind a bush on the border of the wood. As soon as it saw the coast was clear, and Kairi was okay, it bounded up to her and knocked her down onto the ground, slobbering all over her. Laughing, Kairi stood and headed towards the wood for the second time, with hopefully no interference. The dog trotted loyally behind her, and she talked to it among the way.

The wood was cool and lush, and the walk through only lasted about 10 minutes. There was another large wall, only this one rose to about the top of the leaves on the trees. Kairi couldn't actually see where it ended, but that is where she guessed it did. The opening to the end of the wood was small, and she had to duck to pass through, but what was on the other side was amazing. Kairi stood with the dog by her side, and stared. Buildings towered above her. It seemed the whole place was cast by warm sunset shadows, from the burnt orange sun that was setting in the distance. A trolley ran its track around the town, stopping for passengers from time to time. Kairi took a step forward, and the dog followed.

"We should try to find someone who knows the place here, to tell us where we are. What do you think dog, do you like it here?"

The dog barked in reply.

"I will take that as a yes."

So the two wandered around the town aimlessly looking for someone or something to tell them where they were. They tried to take a ride on the trolley, but there was a strict no pets allowed rule. Kairi pleaded that the dog wasn't technically her pet, it had just found her, but they still wouldn't allow it. So the dog just raced after while she traveled around town. She got off at an accessory shop and looked around, the dog panting from trying to keep up with the trolley. They followed a ramp up to a place that was more active. A grandstander was performing for a small group that had gathered around him, seeing how many times he could hit a white ball and keep it airborne. Kairi decided this was quite boring to watch and instead looked around more. There were many shops here, but the place was pretty deserted other than the group that was watching the white ball. Maybe everyone was somewhere else? Oh well.

"Looking for someone?" a voice said from behind her.

She whirled around. A blonde almost white haired boy stood there, along with a brown haired girl in capris and another boy in a red jersey.

"Um...no." she replied, "But can I ask you something?"

"Shoot."

"Where is...well, here?"

The boy snickered and said,

"Twilight Town. Why?"

Twilight Town.

"Twilight Town? That explains the sunset."

Maybe Sora was here. Kairi thought that she had come a long way from who she used to be. Now she wasn't waiting, she was searching. Just as Sora had done for her. If only he could see her now...She remembered things now, hot summer days, racing on the beach. The nights with swaying palm trees blowing soft salty breezes, brushing against her hair. The warm mornings sitting on the shore watching the seagulls rise from the water, the waves washing up and down the beach. She remembered Riku. He always seemed so quiet and strong, but he was best friends with Sora, loud and somewhat clumsy. But then strange things started happening. Uncharted storms where there wasn't enough time to get off the islet, and they all had to huddle together in the secret place, all terrified of what might happen. That's when most of the etchings were drawn. The storms would lag on for hours, and Sora, Kairi, and Riku would sit there and imagine things and draw them on the stone.

Before only about a week ago for some reason, Kairi couldn't even remember Sora's name, or half the things that she used to do. She actually forgot Riku. But one day they started coming back. First it was that she knew a boy, but she couldn't remember his name. Slowly but surely, everything returned. But the one thing she couldn't figure out, was where Sora was. She remembered him slipping off into the neon blue eclipse in the sky. Was there a memory in where she knew where he was, but it was never recovered. She could have made a promise to Sora, that she would meet him. The whole thing seemed like it was wrapped up in some fog that she couldn't get too. Almost as if she could see parts of it in the back of her mind. She knew it was there. It was like trying to remember the name of her favorite song, she knew it was there. She knew...if only she could find it...

Kairi was getting dizzy, and the last thing she heard was Sora's voice:

A far off memory that's like a scattered dream, a scattered dream that's like a far off memory...I want to line the pieces up, yours and mine..

5 - Hotel

"Hey girl, are you okay?" A boys voice said.

Kairi opened her eyes. Three people were standing above her, all about the same age as her, and all with worried expressions on their faces. Where am I? She was instantly bombarded with a swarm of questions. Who were are those kids? Was she on the ground? Who was that dog over there? What was her name? What was her name...?

"Oh no," she thought, "I think this has happened to me before!"

She stood and stumbled, but with the help of the people around her, she managed to walk over to a torn up couch and sit down. She thought carefully on what to say. Who knows if she could trust these kids? Well, she might as well because they obviously helped her from, what exactly?

"Are you okay?" The boy repeated.

"I don't know," sighed Kairi.

The boy thought a second and said,

"So who are you anyway, and where'd you come from?"

"I think," Kairi was puzzled by these questions, "I think my name is Kari. And I think I come from somewhere. An island maybe? I'm not sure."

"Well, I'm Hayner, this is Pence," Hayner gestured towards a boy in a red jersey, "and Olette." He pointed to a brunette girl in tan capris. "And like I said before, this is Twilight Town."

"Twilight Town...that seems familiar."

"What happened? How long have I been here?" Kairi questioned.

"Um well, you were talking to us and then you just got kind of quiet and passed out. You've been out for about an hour. We carried you here, the Usual Place."

"I - I passed out?" Stammered Kairi, surprised.

"Yeah, you fell before we could catch you, so you might have a headache, sorry." Hayner almost seemed embarrassed.

Now that he had mentioned it, her head was throbbing. The questions were too much, and she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. Everything was confusion her, and words and colors were just blending together. Nothing was right. She just wanted to run away, far away. Run to someone who could tell her

who she is and where she came from. Kairi hated feeling helpless. So she did exactly what her heart told her to do, she ran. Just plain got up and ran, leaving her surprised rescuers behind her, right out into the street. Stumbling and wobbling along the way, she found her way to a train station.

"Maybe I can go back to where I live from here. Maybe..."

Kairi just got to the station when she collapsed - right on top of somebody. She was too tired to do anything about it, or even mutter an "excuse me". Doubtful thoughts filled her head.

"What do I think I'm doing here? I should have never run here. I should have never left Destiny Islands...Destiny Islands! That's where I came from! I remember now!"

"Uh," a voice said, "You kinda fell on me. Are you okay?"

What's wrong with me?

Kairi mustered up what breath she had left to manage to whisper,

"Kairi, my name. Destiny Islands..." Her voice trailed off with the mixed up words that she had just said, and she passed out again. The boy, who the voice belonged to, just stood there, wondering what to do.

"Roxas!" Hayner yelled as he, Pence, and Olette raced up the ramp to the station, "You found Kari!"

"Kairi," Roxas stated, without even glancing up at the group, "Her name is Kairi."

"Well she told us that is was Kari." Hayner protested.

"It's Kairi. Just trust me." Roxas looked up, "I've seen this girl before,"

"Really? She's been here before?" Olette asked.

Roxas paused for a moment and said,

"No. I don't think so. I've seen her in those weird dreams that I had been telling you guys about."

"Ooh," taunted Hayner, "Looks like Roxas has a dream girl - literally!"

"Shut up Hayner. I am serious. I don't think she's okay. Let's get her to the hotel or something."

Roxas slung Kairi over his shoulder, and the group tagged along behind to see if she woke up. They arrived at the local hotel, Harmony Hotel, and rented a room for Kairi, receiving many a shifty look from the people there. Eventually the receptionist spoke up, stating that Kairi should be taken to the hospital and get medical attention immediately, but the group protested back that the hospital is in the bigger cities where stuff like this happens, and it's better for her just to take a rest. The receptionist reluctantly gave the group a room, Room 109 to be exact, the one that was decorated with the palm trees and oceans. Roxas laid Kairi down on the bed and left a note on the night stand for her to read when she woke up. Then they left the room and wandered down to the sandlot to take a look at the struggle battle

charts.

Kairi opened her eyes to blue skies and palm trees.

"I'm back on Destiny Islands!" she thought, but then noticed that the waves weren't moving and the seagulls weren't cawing, there were bells ringing. Then everything snapped into position. She was in a room. Her eyes scanned the layout. Bed, bathroom, microwave, closet. Maybe it was a hotel room, the basic things were here.

"How about a little trivia" she said out loud, as she sat up, "My name is Kairi. I live on Destiny Islands, but have not lived there my whole life. I don't remember where I was born. On Destiny Islands I used to hang out with Riku and..." Something wasn't fitting, "...and some one."

Who was that other person? He was a boy, right? Things were getting frustrating, and just when tears were about to roll down her cheeks, she thought to herself, "Come on. Suck it up. Gonna let a little memory loss slow you down from..." What was she doing again?

"Oh who am I kidding?" Kairi sobbed, "I don't even know my half my past, and I don't even know my future, and who knows? Maybe I am not even in a hotel room. Why me? I wish I could just be on my island with Riku and whoever that other boy was."

Kairi laid back down and looked at the ceiling, painted blue with wispy clouds and a bright yellow sun. She pictured Destiny Islands: the tree house, the island, and watching Tidus and Wakka fighting with their wooden blades.

"Blade..." she thought. That pulsed a memory that was pushed in the back of her mind, just out of reach, "Blade...Keyblade! That boy had a Keyblade...but didn't I have one too? And Riku?" All at once, just like realizing where a puzzle piece goes, part of her memory snapped together. Kairi remembered that she got here, and there was a mansion, and she fought...well someone, and during that battle she found a Keyblade! "Okay, but what happened after that...?"

The only thing that she couldn't figure out was where she was and how to get out of here. She didn't want to just leave out the front door, what if this wasn't a hotel, and she was in that mansion? There room could be a suite or something. Rolled over on the bed to think about what to do next, and her eyes caught a piece of paper. Kairi picked it up and unfolded it. The handwriting was messy, but she could still read it.

Kairi, this might sound kind of weird but just trust me. I need you to meet me at the crack in the wall by the mansion at like, one AM. I can tell you things about Destiny Islands. Important.

Signed, Roxas.

"What time is it now?" she wondered, "And who's Roxas? Oh no, even more confusion."

With nothing else to do, and with the hope of meeting someone from Destiny Islands, she figured that she might as well go. But now she had to focus on how to get out of here. A window, the perfect escape! She hopped off the bed, she wasn't as clumsy now, and walked over to the window. Kairi reached up

for the latch and pushed the panes open, just as she heard a knock on the door.

“Who is it?” Kairi called; ready to push herself through the window.

“Room service, ma’m.” a voice said from the other side of the door.

“Well I’m leaving,” thought Kairi, “so I don’t think I am going to need room service!”

“Just a minute,” Kairi called in a singsong voice. She put her left foot on the wall of the hotel and grabbed the bottom of the window, then pushed he self through it onto the roof on the other side. “Come iiiiin.” She yelled, and ran to the end of the roof and positioned herself to climb down the gutter on the side. But if she had stayed to watch the “room service” she would have noticed that the maid turned into a slinky standing silver figure, which took the note off of the bed stand and leaped across the room to the window, and headed off to the mansion, just as Kairi hit the ground.

6 - Riku?

“This is most excellent. You are dismissed.” Xemnas pushed away the silver figure into a darkness portal. “That girl is so dull.” He said. Xemnas was currently making his home in a floating castle in The World That Never Was. Collecting hearts was getting easier and easier, especially with four keybladers now. Soon Kingdom Hearts would be his. The silver figure that was called a Nobody, just like Xemnas himself, had brought him a note that was meant for Kairi. Having control over nobodies took a long time, but once you mastered it, they would bow down to any order, no matter the cost. The only thing was that menacing child, Sora. Xemnas walked over to several computer screens and skillfully hit a few keys on a strange looking keyboard. A revolving picture of Sora came up on one of the screens, and on another a few paragraphs of text. Then a computer toned voice blipped,

“Sora. Age fifteen. Wields: Kingdom Key. Location: Memory Pod number one.”

Xemnas hit few more buttons. The voice sounded again,

“Kairi. Age fifteen. Wields: Certain Destiny. Location: Twilight Town.” A few more buttons and a screen showed a loading bar.

“Loading progress: sixteen percent.” Said the voice.

“Damn it!” Xemnas curled his hands into fists and brought them down upon the keyboard, only causing him more annoyance when the computer tone said, “Shutting down due to unknown problems in ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.” The whirring of the computer stopped, and the only thing that could be heard was the deep breathing of Xemnas.

Kairi reached the ground and observed the town around her. It was gorgeous. There were burnt-orange colored cobblestone streets and warm shadows that were cast by the same colored brick apartments. She wondered if it ever turned any other kind of day here, but maybe everyone who lived here was just used to the everlasting twilight. Kairi was getting too caught up in herself. She needed to concentrate on remembering things, and meeting that Roxas kid tonight. She wandered. That seemed to be the only thing she did these days. It was hard though, with her memories being lost, coming back, and being lost...again. She didn't know what day it was, or how long she had been away from Destiny Islands. It was just too confusing, and even though she tried so hard, the memories would just linger in the back of her mind, just reaching its thin little fingers over the line that divided her new memories from her old ones, so that she could only struggle and rack her mind endlessly. Kairi was torn away from her thoughts when she noticed a clock tower.

“I saw that one! When I was leaving the mansion!” she exclaimed. She started sprinting up the ramp that lead in the direction of the tower, and reached a flat cobblestone surface with a sign above it that read, SUNSET STATION. Kairi looked up and her eyes caught a massive clock tower, with a clock face to match. She was completely stunned; it hadn't looked this big from the distance! Then she noticed.

Eight feet were dangling over one of the ornate ledges of the tower, meaning four people! Wasn't that kind of dangerous? Then one of them stood up, stumbled, and fell!

"Oh my god!" Kairi screamed. Then everything seemed to go in slow motion. The person, who now Kairi could see was a boy – was falling straight down the side of the tower, headfirst. Then a voice crept into her head.

"Hey Kairi!" It was the boy, the other one that she couldn't remember.

"You! I remember you! What's your name?" she thought.

"Oh thanks Kai! We were best friends and you can't even remember my name? Well, I'll give you a hint, it starts with an S!"

The boy was still falling, but falling even slower and slower.

While the falling boy was just about six feet above the cobblestone where he would fall, the "S" boy appeared and caught him, right before he landed, set him down, and disappeared. Kairi reached out her hand for the "S" boy as she remembered his name,

"Sora! Don't leave me!" she shouted, but it was too late. He was already gone. She turned around and faced the boy.

"Kairi!" he said.

"Who are you? And are you okay?" she questioned, confused.

"Oh...I didn't think that you would remember. I'm Roxas; I was the one that left the note for you in the hotel. Yeah, I'm fine. That was really weird. I am up there almost everyday and that's never happened before." Roxas replied, a little shakily.

"That was quite the fall you took. Do you know Sora?" she blurted. He probably didn't, but it was worth an ask.

"Sora...Yeah, I know him. Well, kind of. He has a Keyblade, right?"

"I...I don't know..." Kairi wasn't quite sure. She knew what a Keyblade was, but she wasn't sure about who else had one. She glanced up at the ClockTower again. The other people who were there were gone. They had probably left to see if Roxas was okay. "So, you wanted to meet me somewhere?"

"Yeah, but later tonight, when everyone is asleep. Let's go to the Usual Spot and tell my buds that I am okay."

Roxas grabbed Kairi's hand and ran down the ramp to the "Usual Spot". He led her to what looked like an alleyway. Roxas ran ahead of Kairi over to three other people.

“Hayner! Pence! Olette! Guys! I’m okay. Did you see that?” Roxas was calling to them, but they didn’t even turn around. He walked up to one of the boys and put his hand on his shoulder, but it went right through.

“Roxas?” Kairi was a little scared. What Roxas a ghost? “What just happened?”

Hayner, Olette, and Pence were flipping through a pile of pictures, finished, turned around and ran, right through Kairi, and Roxas. It seemed that they didn’t even know two other people were there! Roxas was studying his hand, turning it over and over, as if it had an extremely exiting story on it.

“Roxas,” Kairi started a little warily, “Let’s go.”

“Yeah...let’s go...”

They wandered around the town the whole rest of the day. When they walked past someone, they didn’t even notice, and sometimes, they just walked right through them. Kairi was realizing that things weren’t quite going as well as she had planned. But it was too late to turn back now. She was on a journey, and she had to finish it. Finding Sora would be the key – the key to having a normal life. Back on the Islands, Selphie thought that Kairi was going crazy, talking about “these two boys that used to be here”. Then, being Selphie, she had talked to their school councilor, and now Kairi had weekly visits to some expensive psychologist. Often though, Kairi “came home too late” to make it in time to the appointment. Now she knew though. There was a boy. Sora. She loved him, and she was pretty sure he loved her too, but what would she do when she met him? Would he recognize who she was? Then she got an idea.

“Roxas, will you help me find Sora?”

They both stopped walking. They were near a crack in a twenty-foot cream-colored wall. Roxas stared at her with a pathetic look on his face.

“The truth is...” he hesitated, “I don’t know. To be honest, this person told me – Namine – that I – me, Roxas – was never supposed to exist. What if I am disappearing right now? What if ...” he stopped and took a breath, then started again in a softer, wavering voice, “What if, I die?”

“Roxas...” Kairi leaned around him and hugged him. She knew what it was like to be confused, “I promise I wont let you die...” But she wasn’t sure. Actually, Kairi wasn’t sure of anything that happened anymore. Roxas pulled back and looked at her. A single tear rolled down his face, but he wiped it away and laughed, plastering a fake smile on his face.

“Sorry about that. Getting too emotional.” He fake laughed again.

“Come on, I will tell you the whole story.”

Roxas led Kairi to the crack in the wall and walked through. On this side was a forest, which was very familiar. Then all of a sudden, the bush nearest to Kairi rustled, and a dog came out, which ran out of the crack and into Twilight Town. Kairi raced after it.

“Kairi! Wait up,” he stumbled after her.

When the two were back into the town, they saw three (were they ducks?) chasing after the dog yelling,

“Pluto! Come back!”

Kairi gave a sharp whistle and shouted,

“Pluto! Com’ere boy!” The dog bounded towards her, and sat at her command. The three ducks, panting, approached her, all with the same, “thank you!”. Thus began the conversation of who each other were, and where they came from. Kairi didn't understand how these three could see her and hear her, and the others couldn't. She decided not to fill her mind with questions like this anymore, as the result often turned out for the worst. After a while into the conversation, the group met on common ground.

“You know Sora?” Hewey exclaimed, “So do we! Well, kinda. We are looking for our uncle, Donald. He is traveling with Sora, but we have some big news, so we need to find him!” he turned to Pluto, “Pluto! I am ashamed at you. You should have found us sooner if you met Kairi.”

A comical bark was all that the group got as an answer. While Roxas and the three were laughing and talking, Kairi stared at the forest entrance. It was oozing dark swirls. She reached out to touch it, but pulled back. Then she got mad. What if Sora was on the other side of the wall? She wouldn't just let this dark stuff seal her only entrance to that side of the wall off! Kairi glanced behind her and saw that the four were still chattering away. She closed her eyes and thought,

“Certain destiny...”

She waited until she felt the familiar tingling in her hand and opened her eyes. The Keyblade was there. She struck the wall and the oozing stopped for about four seconds, but then the swirling stuff rushed out and smothered the scream that Kairi let loose. She was on her knees, and around her was swirling purples, whites, and blacks. She couldn't believe that she was actually being held up by this mass of stuff. Kairi pushed herself onto her feet and looked around, poised with her Keyblade in hand. A black shadow-like thing jumped out of the darkness, heading straight at her. Kairi ran towards it, and slashed it in half, leaving it to dissolve into ground. She looked up. A simple pink crystal heart floated into the swirling sky. Then all of the sudden the ground was shaking, and Kairi was stuck in the darkness, like being stuck in quicksand. The Keyblade was forced out of her hand while she was pushed farther down into the blackness.

“I will be taking this, if you don't mind,” it was a female voice that Kairi did not find familiar. The tone of voice suggested a smirk.

“No!” she cried out. But who ever had taken it was gone, and she was falling. It felt like she was falling in water, but how was she breathing then? Kairi landed on a platform, and hundreds of crows flew out from under her feet.

“What's going on?” she screamed into the blackness, while shielded her face with her arms from the birds. All she had for her reply was the cawing of the crows as they rose and disappeared into the gloom. Kairi looked at the floor that she was standing on now. It was stained glass, but not the nice kind.

There were thirteen twisted figures with black cloaks, with two Keyblades under their feet. On the sides were Riku and Sora, scratched and bloody.

“Sora! Riku!”

Kairi ran over to the warped figures of them and kneeled down.

“Riku...Sora...I'm sorry...” A single teardrop splattered on the floor between her hands.

“Hey Kai, relax!”

Kairi whipped around.

“Riku...?” A black-cloaked person stood in front of her. He raised his finger to his lips. “They don't know I'm here.” Riku ran towards Kairi and lifted her up in his arms. “We have to go.”

“Riku...”

The black hood fell off of Riku's head, and his silver hair flowed silently behind him as he ran. His face was stern and serious.

“Where are we going - ”

“Hush. They don't know I am here.”

“Who?”

“Be quiet.”

Riku took four long strides and leapt off of the platform, only they did not fall. It was as if Riku was running up stairs, and then an orange light emerged from a pinprick in the distance. Riku put Kairi down and said “Kairi, do you see that light?” She nodded. “Run. Run to it.”

“But what if - ” Riku grabbed her shoulders and looked her in the eye.

“I said. Run!” a swarm of the shadow bugs had been following Kairi and him the whole time. Riku turned around and ran into the horde of them. Kairi was running, and when she reached the top of the mysterious stairs she looked back. The only things she saw were the pink crystal hearts floating up into the darkness before she stepped into the light.

7 - New Meeting

“So anyway, we have to tell Uncle D. that we found you guys! Sora has been looking for Kairi for a really long time. It’s about time she showed up!” Hewey, Dewey, And Lewey were still talking, with Roxas at their side. He told the three ducks,

“Well, we should really be going guys, we are going to check out that mansion back there!” Roxas pointed to the crack in the wall. The three nodded and turned around back into the main area. Roxas turned to Kairi, noticing she was staring at her hands. “What’s wrong?”

“The swirling stuffs...the Keyblade...stained glass...crows...Riku... None of it was real?” she looked up, tears staining her cheeks. “Tell me it was real!”

“Kairi...” Roxas had a pained look on his face, “You were here the whole time, and you never left. Come on, let’s go to the mansion.” He took her hand and led her through the crack and into the wood. They walked to the mansion in silence, the only noise coming from the slight sniffing of Kairi. The two reached the gates of the mansion. They were jammed shut, just as they had been when Kairi arrived. “Come on Kairi, were climbing over.”

Kairi stuck her foot between two of the iron bars on the gate and grabbed hold of one of the ones above her. Climbing over onto the other side was the tough part because of the vines that grew along the whole gate. By the time she was on the other side of the gate, Kairi was bruised and banged. Not quite as graceful as she had hoped to be.

Eerie crumbling statues filled the weedy lawn in front of the manor. Roxas and Kairi walked to the front door and opened it. The mansion was not quite as glamorous as she had pictured it. The foyer ceiling was collapsing, letting in spots of sunshine from outside. In the center of the room was a glass box, or at least what used to be glass, which held a small model of something. Two large staircases led to an upstairs. Kairi ran up one and followed a short hallway to a room. Roxas ran up the other one, and down the other hallway to a different room. So now Kairi was by herself. She tried the door, which was unlocked and pushed it open. White, white walls, white curtains, just white, blinded her. Scribbled pictures littered the walls. Kairi walked up to one of them. She could make out a doodle of two black-cloaked figures, hand in hand. One had spiky brown hair, and the other one had blonde hair, not quite as spiky though.

“That’s Roxas and Sora!” exclaimed Kairi.

There were other pictures too. One showed a white haired girl, in a white dress, with a red haired girl next to her.

“Is that supposed to be me?” thought Kairi. But she wondered who the other person was. She reached out and peeled off the tape that held the picture to the wall. After carefully folding it, she put it safely in the pocket of her skirt. Then she took the picture of Sora and Roxas and did the same. Kairi walked to the window and pushed the white curtains aside.

She was startled at what she saw. Colors of orange, pink, white, red, and purple were blending into each other, creating a plane of different shades. Obviously, the mysterious statues and the wood were not there. Kairi whipped the curtain closed and opened it again. The wood and the wall and the clock tower were all in position.

“What was that about?” thought Kairi. She shrugged and sat down in one of the white marble chairs that surrounded a pale marble table. A vase in the center of the table held thirteen red roses. Sketchpads beleaguered the surface of the table, some open, some closed.

“I wonder who drew these.” Kairi leaned over and picked up one of the pads and flipped through the pages. Her eyes caught a picture that was in about the center of the pad. It was more detailed than any of the other doodles. An egg shaped thing was in the center, and the same girl that had been in the picture next to Kairi was there. The walls around them were dark, and looked like metal, though she couldn’t tell because it was just drawing.

Suddenly a feeling of guilt fell upon Kairi. She snapped the pad shut and placed it back on the table. She then stood up and pushed the chair in. Basically she put everything into the same position that it had been in when she entered. Kairi pulled the two drawings out of her pocket unfolded them. She grabbed an almost empty sketchpad and a pack of worn down colored pencils that were on the floor. She pulled out a few colors and began to trace the doodles that she had found. When Kairi was done, she held them up to the light to compare. They were almost the same. Hopefully whoever had drawn them would not notice the difference. Then she took the old tape that had held the original pictures up and taped the new ones up in the spots that they had been in before. Kairi walked to the door, and glanced behind her. Everything looked about the same as when she had first come in. She walked into the hallway and silently closed the door behind her. Then ran down to the other end of it and walked into the same door she had seen Roxas enter. Around Kairi was a library, with hundreds of shelves that must have held thousands of books. She walked to the side of the room to one of the bookshelves and ran her fingers along the titles of them, scanning to find one of interest while she waited for Roxas. Kairi found a peculiarly small book. The binding was practically falling off. She pulled it out of the shelf and searched for a title, yet there wasn’t one. Kairi flicked open the cover. The pages were torn and shabby at the edges. As far as she could see, the whole book was empty. Only on the third page in, there was a worn away title that Kairi could barely read. It said: Simple And Clean.

“Simple and Clean?” thought Kairi, “What kind of title is that?”

Since it was blank, and was so small, she took the book and placed it in her pocket next to the two drawings. Kairi highly doubted that whoever lived here would miss this simple little black book with nothing in it. She pushed the other books into the gap that her mini one had taken up, and made it look even. Then she placed the book in her pocket next to the two pictures and looked around the room. The ceiling curved into a half sphere and was decorated with ornate carvings. Other than that, nothing was of interest. Kairi decided to walk to another shelf and scroll the books there.

“I wonder where Roxas is.” She thought as she read the titles, “I know that he came in this room, I saw him.”

She shrugged. Kairi had come to find that often people disappeared and showed up when you least

expected it, but so far that had not gone for Sora. But it had gone for Riku, where ever and whatever that was...Roxas was probably in the foyer waiting for her or something. She turned around to leave the library, assuming Roxas had found it just as boring as she did and headed for the door, all except that she tripped over a book. Kairi picked it up. Unlike Simple and Clean, this book looked new. The pages were crisp and fresh.

"Kingdom Hearts, huh?" she found a title on the front of the book, and then found an empty space on the bookshelf and shoved the book in between two titles, Finishing Procedure and Forever. Kairi smiled at the placement. It basically said "finishing procedure kingdom hearts forever". Suddenly, the ground fell out from under her feet. Kairi landed with an unpleasant bump and looked up. She had at least fallen six feet. Rubbing her back, she stood up. Half of the library floor was standing, but the other half was replaced with a chrome staircase leading down to the gray metal walls and floor. In front of her was a door, half way open.

Kairi didn't want to get into anymore than she had to, so she decided to turn around and go back to the foyer and wait for Roxas if he wasn't there, or if he was, just leave. The mansion was pretty weird. Whitewashed rooms? A library with a hijacked floor? She didn't plan on coming back here again. Kairi headed for the chrome stairs, and a gray silvery thing appeared. It swayed down the stairs and suddenly sped up and slashed her shoulder, leaving a bleeding scratch.

"Ow you jerk!" she said. Kairi clutched her shoulder, the blood seeping through her fingers. "Come on Certain Destiny, come through for me now..." She closed her eyes and waited for the familiar tickly feeling in her hand, but it never came. Kairi opened her eyes to find her hand without a Keyblade. Then she remembered, hadn't somebody taken the Keyblade from her when she was in the dark world? But Roxas had told her that that never happened...

Another half dozen of the creatures popped out of portals, heading right at her. Kairi looked at her arm, still bleeding from the hit she took before. It hurt badly. She glanced at her empty hand, and up at the approaching monsters.

"I can't do this. Not now." She muttered, and ran inside the half open door she saw before, her only escape. Jamming the door shut, she heard the crash of the monsters hit the outside of the door and flinched. She hoped they were gone... Anyway, she wondered why her Keyblade was gone...things were once again confusing her.

Kairi looked up to the same material walls that were in the library and poor lighting. She was in a small hallway, blue neon streaks of light running down the walls about every six feet in turning patterns. Starting down the hallway she noticed a green glow and heard a strange whirring. Kairi found the container of this sound and glow when she reached the end of the hallway and faced a many monitored computer, and Roxas.

"There you are!" exclaimed Kairi as she ran towards him. He turned around and faced her.

"I don't feel so good." He whispered, and fell down.

"Roxas!" she rushed over to him and kneeled down, shaking his shoulders, "Say something!" He was motionless. Kairi sighed. "I am having really bad luck today." She pushed him into more of a sitting

position and stood up. There were two doors, the one that she had just come through and another one. She didn't want to take the chance of leaving the same way she had come in, just in case she met those monsters again. Maybe that other door was another way out. Kairi walked up to it and tried the handle. It was locked. "Crap."

Instead, she turned around and looked at the computer. There was a strange keyboard and about a dozen screens. Kairi tapped a few buttons at random, having no idea of course what would happen, but she couldn't resist the temptation to play with it. Suddenly, on one of the screens it said, "Memory Pod room opened."

"Memory Pod Room?" She shrugged, but guessed that that meant the door was opened, and walked over to try it. Relief spread over her when she realized it was unlocked. Kairi pushed open the door to a white room with three pods in the middle. She glanced behind her, Roxas still on the floor, only he was almost dissolving into the air.

"The drawings..." she half said, half thought. Then she realized something that she wished she had realized before. A complete wave of memories that she had forgotten rushed into her mind. Everything was together, every puzzle piece that had been missing. Sora, Riku, Malificent, Xemnas...everything. She then noticed something important...if Sora was here...and Roxas disappeared...were they a part of each other? Kairi decided she couldn't clutter her mind with all of these things...she knew that eventually everything would come together, but she wished that it was sooner than later. When she heard a low moan, and noticed one of the white pods was opening, she turned her attention back to the room.

The pod that was in the center was the one that was opening, emitting a blurry fog. When the process was complete, she saw a figure. Blue eyes, brown spikey hair, and red shorts that looked like they were a few years grown out of. "Sora!" Kairi exclaimed. She sprinted into the room, only being stopped by the voice that came from out of nowhere.

"Oh I don't think so Kairi."

Everything happened so fast then. Kairi had stopped for the split second because of the voice, but then kept running. She had closed her eyes to keep any tears from pricking up in her eyes when she met Sora. Someone was hugging her.

"Sora..." She opened her eyes to look at Sora's face, but it wasn't Sora who was there. Kairi pushed away, revolted by the person who held her. Xemnas. "You freak!" she shouted, "What are you doing?"

"Well, I just needed a hug," Xemnas said in a fake whining voice, "because I was just so happy that you fell into my trap! Can I have another one?"

"Ew! NO!" Kairi kicked him in the shin, turned around and ran.

"I don't think you will get very far in here my love." he smirked.

Kairi glanced behind her, seeing Xemnas disappear into a portal. He was right. This world, place, whatever it was, she had never seen before. Actually...She had.

"Riku! Are you here?" she shouted into the void. This place didn't have the stained glass, but had the same swirling blues, purples, whites, and blacks. Was there some small chance that maybe Riku could be here? She stopped running and plopped down on the ground, often like the way children do when they are confused or disappointed. What could she do here? She had herself in a perfectly terrible situation, and didn't even know where she was. She lied down on the surface of the whatever-it-was area and stared at the sky, or ceiling, she wasn't sure.

"I have to think of a plan. All I do is run most of the time. I don't want to be saved, I want to save. It's no fair. Just because Malificent kidnapped me and all that stuff, everyone thinks that I can't do anything by myself anymore. It stinks." she called for Riku one more time, again with no reply. Kairi was still laying on the ground, reminiscing her old memories, when she heard echoing footsteps at a fast pace coming her way. First she was startled, but then relaxed when she heard the tone of voice.

"Kairi! I heard you..I'm here. It's ok."

"Riku! You are back! Where were you? Are you okay? All those monsters..." Kairi shuddered. Those monster things were weird. Riku came up to her and ruffled her hair.

"Don't worry your pretty little head about me Kai, you need to worry about yourself." he smiled and grabbed her hand. "Come on, lets go find Sora."

8 - Light vs Dark

The heart moon shown dimly through the darkness, casting long eerie shadows across the floor of the room. Everything was deathly silent, the murky sky suggesting another storm. A storm where the nobodies and heartless are killed by the needle sharp raindrops, piercing even the toughest layer of armor. That was one of the reasons for the Organizations' black coats. They had a sealing on it, which prevented the pain a puncture from the drops. Xemnas was still deciphering a way to make a new type of nobody, manipulate them until they could stand the rain. He didn't care for the heartless; they only made his project better, completing Kingdom Hearts. Things were going wonderfully. Sora and Kairi were separated. Riku was still ashamed of himself, for all the mistakes that he let himself make. Soon Sora's hope would be crushed. But then again...that last bit light was always the hardest to snuff out.

Two double doors clashed open at the opposite side of the deserted room. Axel. He wasn't supposed to be here. Oh well. Strolling across to the computer, he stopped and glared out the window. Kingdom Hearts. Maybe he would be human again. Maybe. But they needed Roxas. Badly. How could Roxas have forgotten him? His best friend! Axel approached the computer, and tapped a few keys. A loading bar blipped up. A few more keys, and a rotating picture of Roxas plus a text box figured on the screen. Axel leaned across the keypad and scanned the paragraph.

Roxas. Last seen: Twilight Town.

Current Location: Sora.

"Sora? What?" It made no sense. "Well, looks like I have to go find Sora and see what he can do for me." Axel turned around, heading for the doors. He had to find Namine. Apparently Roxas and she had been in cahoots with each other for a while, until the disappearance. Namine had said too much, Axel had heard from the rumors. He needed to have a little...er...talk. Footsteps came from outside the hallway, approaching the entrance to the room quickly. This was a restricted corridor in the tower, and he couldn't get in any more trouble than he already was. There was one way out. Axel materialized his two fire throwing stars, molded them into one flat star about four feet across, and jumped on it. Using his fire, he lifted himself up and headed through the glass window, thank God for those cloaks, and sped around the other side of the tower, hearing the chinking of glass on the floor far beneath him. Axel landed gracefully on the balcony outside his quarters, and then hopped through the window. It was more fun than a door, plus it was a more fashionable entrance, he figured, even though no one saw. His room has cold white walls, a four-poster bed, along with a personal bathroom. You would see all if this if it weren't completely pitch black. The only light emerged from the moon heart outside. He was safe now. Nope. No one could catch him. No one knew what he was going to do, or did. Axel held a ball of fire in his hands to find his way across his room, but that light was just enough to catch the cat-like glare of Larxene's eyes.

"What the!" Axel jumped backwards, dropping the fireball, hastily picking it up, and snuffing it out. Now the glare in her eyes was reflected off the eerie glow from the moon. It was a deathly silent moment to think things over. He didn't particularly like Larxene. Actually, he didn't particularly like anyone in the Organization, Except Roxas. Larxene, being the only female in the group, stayed somewhat distant,

unless she was flirting with Demyx. She was the exact example of the sexy, seductive, smart, butt-kicking woman that you wanted to stay away from. So he did.

“Where were you?” She simply asked, staring at her newly manicured nails.

“Bathroom.”

“On the balcony?”

“Um, yeah.”

“Climbing through the window?”

“Yup.”

“Liar.” Larxene accused without even looking at Axel. She stood up and waltzed over to him, pointing her finger right on his nose. “You, were Xemnas’s quarters weren’t you. You have a plan to find Sora, and you’re not telling us. ”

Axel shifted his weight to the other leg uneasily. How did she know these things?

“Ahh. Nope. But you are right. I was lying.”

Larxene smiled, actually, it was more of a smirk and a grimace put together.

“You’re lying again. I know what you were doing. You are trying to find Roxas. Searching the only computer in this place.” She backed off and smiled.

Axel thought of something then, “Then that means you were there too, that means you are in just as much trouble as I am.” Larxene gasped. He walked over and poked her shoulder with his finger. “And you know what that means? That means I didn’t see you, which means you were using your invisibility, and if you know I am finding Sora, that means you were mind reading too, all of which are Xemnas’s potions. You are in double the trouble miss.”

“So what? So what if I want to help. I know you want to find Roxas, and I will help. But only if you help me.”

Axel snorted, “First of all, isn’t your middle name like, Idontneedhelp, and if you did need help, why would you come to me, and what kind of help would you need.”

“You have to promise not to tell. If you don’t tell, I wont tell. Deal?”

“Sure, why not. What do you want.”

“After you’re done using Namine, wanna help me get rid of her?”

Axel chuckled.

“Yeah...sure, I'll help.”

The streets were paved with cold cobblestone that made a blizzard feel tropical. Buildings towered overhead with neon blinking signs, buzzing with every flicker on. It was one of those nights. One of those nights where you couldn't tell what was going to happen, where it seemed even the impossible could happen. There wasn't any noise, excepting the hum of the signs, and with all the skyscrapers, along with the clouds, not even the heart moon shone here. It wouldn't have helped anyway; it would have just made everything even more strangely, with the eerie luminescence shining down on the city. Everything looked like a picture; in perfect position, but with so sound, and no movement, except the two cloaked figures strolling across the cobblestones, heading in an alley. Larxene and Axel were the two members of Organization Thirteen that were never seen together. Never.

“I hope you know that if we're found out, we're gone. Just like that?” Axel warned.

“I know.”

“The system said that Roxas was with Sora...and Sora was in the memory pod, and those are in Twilight Town...unless he found a way out.”

Larxene stopped walking.

“I don't think that kid is that smart.”

Axel Laughed.

“That's true. Come on. Over here.”

They turned into an alley, and found the swirling green portal that they knew led to Twilight Town, and stepped through. The room the pair found themselves in a dank metal room. Axel crossed the room and went through a doorway. Larxene not far behind.

“Crap!”

“I agree. I saw that stain before and I was -” Larxene started.

“Haha,” Axel fake laughed, “Look. Sora's gone.”

“I can see.”

Axel replied with a “no duh” look.

“Why don't we head up to town? Maybe we can avoid Namine on the way there. Plus I really need some new nail polish, this stuff chips really easily...”

“Forget about the nail polish! Let's go.”

“Riku, remember when you and Sora had that big race to the star tree to see who would get to name the raft?” Kairi was having a good time reminding Riku of all her newfound memories.

“He he. Yeah, I remember that. I won...didn't I.”

“Only because you cheated!” she accused.

“I did not. Stop lying Kairi. I always knew you lied.”

“I do not lie! Oh you got it coming for ya mister!” Kairi stood up and kicked Riku in the shin. He hopped up, rubbing his leg.

“Ow ow ow! Hey! You didn't have to kick me for that ya know!”

“You completely deserved it.” Kairi remarked smartly, and turned and began to run. “Catch me if you can!” she shouted behind her, sticking out her tongue.

“Hey! Come back here!” After a few more ‘ows’ Riku started after her, gaining quickly. He panicked when he couldn't see her. “Kairi? Where are you?”

“Right here silly!”

Riku turned around to the laughing face of Kairi.

“You scared the crap outta me. I, we, don't wanna loose you again.”

“You don't get it Riku! I'm fine! I'm not some wandering puppy! I am quite capable of learning and living by myself!” Kairi shouted. “Nobody listens to me! Why don't you get it! I wish things were the way they used to be.”

“Well it's your fault! Maybe if you were stronger you wouldn't have been captured in the first place! Huh? Did you ever think of that? It's all your fault that we're in this position in the first place! All you did was laze around on the beach while Sora and me did everything. You're weak, Kairi! Weak!”

The redhead stared at him, tears creeping up in her eyes.

“You jerk!” She screamed and walked away from Riku.

Riku wasn't sure if he felt guilty or proud. It was like different waves of light and dark were playing tug of war, fighting back and forth. It was like have an angel and devil on his shoulders, one saying give in to the darkness...come back, the other saying to turn away from that, fight it. He knew he had a lot of sins that needed to be forgiving, a lot of past that he wanted to be erased. But, it was so easy to give in the dark. It's just...no one there could ever replace Sora...Or Kairi at that. It was going to be hard separating from them. But he couldn't hurt Kairi like he just did. He wasn't ready to come back to the light yet. There were few places where he could concentrate, and try to peel himself away from the darkness, a little bit at a time. Kairi saw Riku looking at her and turned her head, sitting with her arms wrapped around her legs.

“Kairi...I’m sorry.” He sat down beside her. “I didn’t mean any of that...it’s just hard. Coming back to everything like this is rough.”

Kairi looked up, but put her head back down and closed her eyes. She wasn’t sure if it was her tears, but she started to see something. Everything was wavy, like water or something. First it was just a white and blue blob, but it was shaping and turning into something else. More colors added, and she saw Riku. But there were two of him. One had almost a dark aura around him, while the other one was, well normal old Riku. It was weird seeing him like this. Was it possible...what Riku was talking about, was he still stuck in the darkness? It was almost as if the dark Riku was causing the normal Riku pain, dragging him back from walking away, making the light in his heart snuff out slowly. She opened her eyes and looked at Riku.

“No...Riku...I’m sorry. I didn’t know...” Kairi leaned over and hugged him, even though he was stiff and confused. But eventually he wrapped his arms around her, and hugged her back. Kairi closed her eyes again, seeing Riku’s aura get just a little bit brighter.

9 - Bloodthirst

Something warm pulsed inside of Riku. It was strange, but familiar. He hadn't felt it in a long time, but there it was. Warm, like the sand on the island...he closed his eyes as he hugged Kairi. He was back on the island.

"Hey Riku!" Sora called, "I'll race you to the star tree and back!"

"You're on!" he replied, already sprinting up towards the zip line, "Common Sora! You're losing already?" he turned his head around to smirk mockingly at him, but his head was down and he was leaning on his knees, as if he had just been running a mile. Riku's smirk faded into worry. As he cautiously walked back to Sora, just incase it was a prank, he fell down, suddenly bound to the sand by invisible forces. Sora looked up at him with painful pleading eyes, a monstrous heartless towering behind him.

"I'm sorry Riku..." he stated, empty eyes staring blankly back.

"No!" Riku screamed back, but it was too late, Sora disappeared as the heartless attacked from behind. "No..no..no..." he was left repeating helplessly.

Riku snapped open his eyes and pushed away Kairi, and sat on the ground. "NO!!"

"Riku! What's wrong!?" questioned Kairi worriedly.

"Sora..island..heartless.." stammered Riku. Kairi plopped down next to him.

"Riku, listen," she laid her arm around his shoulder comfortingly, "we're gunna get through this." He looked up at her, a few tears falling gently down his cheek, "It's a tough journey, the journey to the light, but once we get there, everything will be perfect. It's gunna take some time, but we'll go together. I promise." She smiled her notable smile and he attempted a sad small smile back. "Now stop it or you're gunna get me all emotional now too." Kairi said, sniffing. A sympathetic tear rolled down her cheek and gently fell on the empty ground, rippling out across the floor. The ripple flowed out away from them, until they couldn't see it anymore. Then a small, shimmering light twinkled radiantly in the distance. "See? Starting this new journey isn't too hard, and by the looks of that light," she said, helping Riku to his feet, "it's already begun."

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"We have to find Sora." Axel remarked, his voice thick with annoyance. Larxene had been procrastinating all morning. They had rented separate hotel rooms last night, and basically nothing more than breakfast and shopping had been accomplished since they woke up.

"Oh come on, give me a break! I never get a chance to go shopping." She Whined as she picked up a blood red nail polish and checked the price, "That's not too bad." She pocketed it while the cashier was

helping another customer.

“Yes, well, we never really get a chance to go on missions without the whole freaking Organization knowing either! And you can’t just steal things like that.” he whispered. If a whisper could ever sound menacing, Axel accomplished it.

“Well it’s not like this world is real or anything.” Larxene replied, chipping some of her old nail polish off. “You can take anything that’s here and they won’t even notice.”

You couldn’t really deny that. The whole town was basically just a figment of imagination of the Organization. The people there never really seemed to notice that they were living in a fake world, completely just pixels and rerun music, almost like a video game. Twilight Town was a simple town, kind of a knockoff of Traverse Town. Everyday here was almost identical to the one before. The only difference was when the Struggle battles came around. Other than that it was just, wake up, work, eat, sleep.

Axel grabbed Larxene’s arm, twisted it behind her back, and dragged her out of the shop.

“Just get out of here.”

“Let – Me – ” Larxene threw her weight and swung her black leather boot around in a skilled ninja kick that landed squarely on Axel’s chest. “Go!” She heard the breath leave him as he staggered back and fell down. She didn’t regret it. As Larxene turned to walk away back into the shop, she felt a burning sensation around her feet. Looking down, she screamed and stamped out the flames engulfing her legs.

“I don’t go down that easy Larxy,” sniggered Axel, shooting a glare that could make a somebody crumble. Nobodies weren’t weak. He grinned and threw an elaborate flock of flaming daggers.

“Stopga!” she shouted. Axel froze, as did the daggers. She quickly turned the daggers away from her and towards him. She waited for the spell to break, only about a few moments. Axel dodged the daggers at last moment, with only a few of them ripping the side of his cloak. He grimaced and opened his mouth like he wanted to say something, but closed it.

“Let’s just go.” Axel turned and walked plainly away, leaving Larxene still in battle stance. She looked around at the other bystanders, brushed off her shoulders, cleared her throat and said,

“Right, well, cheerio then,” with a wave. Then she hurried after Axel. “What was that about?” she asked when she caught up with him. He didn’t look at her.

“It’s no point fighting you, you never give up. I didn’t want to waste my time there all day when we should be finding Sora, and Roxas. Look, we need Sora right? Think about how much praise we’ll get when we hand him over, we could be moved up ranks! I still don’t know how Roxas located in Sora though. We have a lot to learn, so let’s just get started on it.”

Larxene had been listening while they were talking and walking. It didn’t really make an impact on her, but it did make sense. She wasn’t really in it for finding Sora; she wanted to be higher ranked. Being the only female, she didn’t earn a lot of respect from the other members. All they did was flirt with her. If she

could assign them missions and jobs, it would really give her some time to relax and just think about finding a way to become real.

Yeah, that's all she wanted. That was her secret desire. To be a real person. To have feelings other than hate and spite. She wanted to feel happy; Sure, she was happy when they caught somebody, when she won a battle, but that wasn't real happy. She wanted to be happy like how Sora was happy...back on his island with his friends. He couldn't be very happy right now. Being separated from his old life, being alone...cut it out! She thought. You're being a softie. Sora's the one who caused all of this anyway! He doesn't deserve to be happy. You deserve to be happy. Kill Sora, you'll be happy! A new fire was being kindled inside of her.

"Let's go get him Ax," her voice was dripping with a newfound blood thirst.