

Lost love

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*Riku, in an alternate setting, loosing his best friend forever....
Maybe more, maybe not- if I get even ONE comment, I'll make more.*

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Chapter 1 - Lost

2

1 - Lost

Riku loved the ocean.

His infatuation had taken root when he was just an infant- mom, dad and baby Riku would all toddle down to the ocean after dinner (why not? They lived right on the coast) and Riku, dressed in sunny yellow bathers, would splash in the shallow waves, shrieking with delight. Sometimes his best friend Sora would come too, and they would build terrible sandcastles together, giggling and crying as they grew taller only to collapse as regiments of white, foamy waves bombarded the crude towers.

The sandcastles grew stronger with the two boys- Every day after elementary school they would race to the beach, diving into great piles of white sand with squealy, prepubescent laughs, then spend hours hunting for chunks of driftwood and shells to barricade their castles from the unforgiving sea's wrath. Once, as Riku was putting the finishing touches on the towers drawbridge, Sora had amazed him by dragging a massive log along the beach and dumping it in front of the castle. When Riku asked why he had hefted the great chunk of wood so far, Sora had panted out, "So the sea won't wreak your tower!".

Even years after, when the two boys were at junior high, Riku still smiled at that.

They didn't make sandcastles anymore, but they still went to the beach every day. They pounded along the sand, racing each other to the ocean while stripping clothes off- last one in had to gather their stuff together and stash it under the paopu tree before gaining access to the refreshing waves. Riku always won- his tall, scrawny body crowned with a shaggy mop of silver hair belied coils of steel muscle. But Sora never gave up, he just laughed and filled Riku's shoes with sand before joining him in the sky blue water. The teens would splash around until the sunlight died before emerging, cold, wet and exhausted to return to their homes where they ate, slept and dreamt of their days in the sparkling sea.

Today was different, though.

Riku sat mutely on the sand, staring aimlessly over the chilly grey ocean. Tiny tears dripped down his face as he reminisced- Today, there was no bouncy, brown haired boy packing sand into his sneakers, no crumbled ruins of mighty castles.

Why, why did he have to go?

Sora had been so excited when he found out he had been accepted into the Besaid boarding school. Riku had been happy for him- he kept his own rejection letter stuffed down the side of his bed. No need to wipe that happy grin off Sora's face just yet- let him plan their time together for a little while longer before breaking the news to him. Riku knew Sora would be heartbroken, just like he was. No more long days lazing on the beach, filled with secret smiles, tiny touches... soft, sweet kisses in the ocean... Riku had shook his head and mentally stuffed those thoughts down the side of his bed, along with the humiliating rejection letter that he still hadn't shown his parents. He danced with Sora, drowning himself in the boys elation. And he never told him he hadn't been accepted to Besaid. Riku hadn't really expected to be- his grades were atrocious. He would have been better off applying to Balamb academy, 'home' for jocks and sports freaks. First in his track team, he was guaranteed entry, but he couldn't

resist the way Sora's lip had quivered when he had mentioned going to a different school. God, he had looked so sad when Riku suggested it. Goddamn him.

Too soon, Sora had packed his bags to leave. The night before he boarded his train and disappeared, Riku told him he wouldn't be sitting beside him this time. For a while, Sora didn't understand why Riku was crying- "You can just catch the next train, right? Don't be sad, I'll meet you there!" but soon he was sobbing too, finally understanding that he was going to be leaving his best friend far behind tomorrow. Salty, grief-filled kisses were exchanged, along with whispered promises.

"Don't you ever kiss any other boys than me!"

"I promise, Sora."

Riku cried as the train pulled away from the platform, Sora's wild brown hair being tangled in the wind as he leaned out the carriage, waving goodbye for the last time, howls of loss nearly drowned in the bestial grunt of the steam trains chugging. Riku raced alongside the coach, reached out for one last touch, missed, and the train whisked his friend and love from his life forever.

That year, Riku attended the Shinra Public Collage alone.

An awkward, lonely student, he was admired for his athletic ability and shunned by all. Riku didn't care- all of them were pricks anyway. In classes he sat by himself, zombie-like, copying notes off the chalkboard. At lunch, he chewed his food then went to the running track. There, he ran- feet pounding on the hard earth, heart pounding with them, he fled his pain, lost himself in his desire to run forever. Around and around that 300 meter track he fled, stopping only when the bell rang and snapped him back to reality. Panting, he would slowly trudge to his English class. And always, after school, he went to the beach. Riku was older now. Sixteen...Sora had been gone for two years. Riku wondered if Sora still thought of him, as his calloused feet pushed him down the beach. In two years, he had never had a letter from him- maybe if Riku would write first? But he was afraid to talk to Sora again. Would he still care about that silly, whispered promise they had made, and sealed with a kiss? Did Sora have a boyfriend? A girlfriend? So many questions that Riku never wanted to ask.

Pausing in his running, he dug his hand into his pocket and pulled out his red mp3 player. Jamming the ear buds in and flicking the volume up to full, he tore mindlessly down the beach, sand flicking up like dust at his heels.