

Golden Paopu

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Submitted: August 3, 2008

Updated: August 4, 2008

Remake of "You Truly are Heartless". Name may change over time. Summary inside

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0 - Summary/Disclaimer

Drake grew up in Radiant Garden her whole life. She had it all - Best friends who were like family, a perfect daily routine, and plenty of Heartless butt to kick. But as time passed, she started feeling an empty hole in her heart. Each day, it got bigger and bigger. She knew what needed to be done - she had to leave her home, and find the missing peice of her heart. So, she moved to the quaint Twilight Town, ready to begin her search. What she didn't know was that she was about to get more than she bargained for...

I only own this story and Drake. I don't own Kingdom Hearts or anyone in it (If I did, I'd be working on the next game, wouldn't I?)

This story is in an AU.

This story is CharacterXOC. Don't like it? Don't read it.

1 - Prolouge - The girl in the Castle (Leon's POV)

Prolouge - The girl in the Castle

Leon's POV

Radiant Garden. This beautiful place we call home is nearly in ruins. It's our job as the Restoration Committee to get this place back to its original state. But, sometimes – a lot recently, I'll admit – I honestly feel like we'll never accomplish that goal. With the number of heartless growing rapidly, I doubt the Claymore (Fact: In the KH II Manga, the Hollow Bastion/Radiant Garden's defense system was called "Claymore" – A lot more interesting to write in five paragraphs than "Town Defense System" huh? :D ~Drake) could keep them at bay for long.

The townspeople... we have to protect the townspeople. To do that, we need to rebuild the town. And to do that, we need to find a way to decrease – maybe stop altogether – the number of heartless. It's never a single easy job, is it?

Wait, why was I letting myself get carried away with this? I needed to focus on that day's job; Exploring What's Left Of The Old Castle (Which, for me, was most likely going to change to "Get Yuffie's Hand Out Of The Crack She Stuck It In" by the end of the day.). At least I wasn't doing it alone. We even got Cid off the computer long enough to drag him along. Of course he complained. Yuffie's always eager to explore around the area, so she came along with no problems. Aeries stayed behind with Merlin at the house, as usual, ready to alert us if we need to come back for any reason. As for Tifa... she's still looking for Cloud, so she won't be able to help us out.

And then there's me, the leader of the group.

"Leon? Could you, uh, help me out please?"

What did I say in the third paragraph?

I sighed, put down the rubble I was already holding, and walked over to the wall by the area where Yuffie was searching. I moved the brown hair from in front of my eyes, gently grabbed her hand, and tugged it out from the crevice she somehow wedged it into.

"I swear, Yuffie," I crossed my arms and shook my head. "Sometimes I think you get yourself stuck on purpose."

"What? No way." She denied.

"I don't even know what you were thinking when you put your hand in there." I said, examining the narrow crack in the wall.

"I saw something shinny in there!" She exclaimed.

She was kidding, right?

“Hey! Leon!” Cid’s voice called from farther within the castle’s dungeon. “You better come take a look at this!”

I ran in the direction Cid had called from, Yuffie following close behind. She may get annoying sometimes, but she really is a good person. She just happens to have a motor mouth and, apparently, a knack for getting stuck.

We found Cid in one of the deeper cells. There were rocks everywhere, and a pipeline was broken somewhere so water flowed down the uneven stone ground. The wall on my right was bare, another wall had bars, and the third wall on my left had a huge crack in it.

“What is it, Cid?” I asked him. “This room looks empty to me.”

“Does this look like it’s supposed to be here?” He replied, holding up a lantern. “I sure as hell didn’t bring this with me!”

“Are you sure it’s not just another artifact? Maybe Ansem the Wise used it.” Yuffie pondered out loud.

“I don’t think so.” I said. I took the lantern and opened it. “Look, see that Yuffie?”

She peered over my arm, examining the contents inside - oil and a wick. “Is... there something suspicious about the oil?” She asked skeptically.

“No,” I explained, “but there is something suspicious about the wick.” I removed the ropelike-lantern piece. “First off, we know from looking in Ansem’s study that he used lamps more than lanterns. Secondly, examine it a little more closely.” I held the lamp up, level to my head. “By the look of the condition it’s in, it would’ve been pretty lucky to survive the cave-in that took place in these dungeons. Lastly, the wick-“ I held it out so they could see, “- is brand-new, and hasn’t been used since it was placed in the lantern. Which, my guess, was only hours ago.”

It took a short minute for the reality of what I was saying to sink into them. Yuffie was the first to realize, her eyes growing wide and big (Like they could get any bigger) and letting out a loud gasp.

“You mean, someone’s here?!” She blurted out. Typical Yuffie.

“Yes.” I answered calmly.

“Someone controllin’ the heartless?” Cid asked.

“I’m not sure.” I said, setting the lantern down. “It could be anybody... or anything.” I added. “But seeing how Ansem the Wise worked here, it’s likely someone who wants to use the technology for their own reasons, whether he or she’s controlling the heartless or not. Let’s look around for more clues.”

We found a lot of things – a half-empty jug of lamp oil, a bag of assorted small candles, a box of

matches, a pack filled with clothing, a small box quarter-filled with dry foods – it clearly told us someone was here, but nothing that told us what they were planning.

“Leon! Cid!” Yuffie called us. She was standing by two piles of rocks, a look of surprise and wonder on her face. “You should really see this...”

We rushed over to her, and she pointed in-between the rock piles. I looked, and...

I was shocked.

Lying on her side on a small, worn-out red blanket, in tan patched-up clothing, was a young girl with short caramel-colored hair. One odd feature was a bit of her hair in the front was black, sticking out kind of awkwardly. Her eyes were closed, her stomach area slowly expanding and contracting. She was sleeping... but she didn't look very comfortable.

“What the hell? Where'd this come from?” Cid came from nowhere, poking her with a piece of pipe.

The girl's eyes flashed open – they were green, and vibrant with adrenaline energy. She grabbed the pipe Cid was holding, tugged sharply, and held her foot up, catching him in the chest. She pushed Cid using her foot, then jumped up, holding the pipe straightforward at us.

“Who are you?! What do you want from me?!” She shouted, her grip on the metal shaky.

Yuffie tried to calm her down. “It's okay! We don't mean you any harm!”

“That's what you want me to believe!” She glared.

“Holy-!” Cid called from the floor.

The girl aimed the pipe at Cid's head. “Move anymore and I'll shove this pipe up your brain!” She threatened.

“Okay, that's enough.” I sighed. I turned Revolver upward and hit her on the head with the pommel (**For those who don't speak sword, the pommel is at the bottom of the grip on the hilt. [: ~Drake**). She was easily knocked out, the pipe slipped from her grip as she fell forward. Yuffie gently caught her.

“What's she doin' here?” Cid asked as he stood up, cautiously walking past the unconscious girl. Yuffie looked up at me, struggling under the weight of the girl, her eyes asking Cid's question. (How do they honestly think I know these things?)

I stayed silent, asking the question myself. What would a girl be doing here, alone, in a crumbling castle? “Well, I can come up with three options; One: She's here and controlling the heartless. Two: She was abandoned here for who knows how long and has been living here secretly. Three: She's a spy or scout for someone who's looking for Ansem's computer.”

“I hope it's option two.” Yuffie said, a hint of worry in her tone.

Cid groaned. "Well, we're never gonna be sure until she tells us herself!" He started heading out of the dungeons. "Just bring the extra luggage along and have 'er wake up at Merlin's house! Now LET'S GO!" He marched out.

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"You just want to get back to your computer, don't you?"

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Back at Merlin's house, Aeries watch over the girl as she slept on the couch. I tried to keep my focus on the report I was writing, but I couldn't help looking over my shoulder every few minutes to check on her. Aeries caught me one time, but just giggled. "This is unusual for you, Leon." She smiled.

"Yeah." Yuffie added on. "You're acting like a worried mother."

I ignored Yuffie's comment. "I'm just being cautious. She might not be on our side."

Aeries sighed. "What if she's not, Squall? What if she's just a young girl that needs our help?"

I twitched slightly, not liking that she called me "Squall".

A groan from the couch alerted that the girl was waking up. Our attention turned to her as we watched her slowly regain consciousness. Her eyes slowly fluttered until they were half-open, and she slowly propped herself up.

"Where... am I?" She asked softly. Her eyes drifted over to Aeries, when they opened fully in confusion. "A pink angel?"

Aeries smiled softly. "No... but you don't need to worry. You're safe here." She said reassuringly. She picked up a plate with an apple and warm buttered bread, a glass of raspberry lemonade, and offered them to the young girl. "Are you hungry?"

The girl's eyes got wider, and then she grabbed the bread and started scarfing it down.

"Thanks, miss." The girl thanked Aeries between mouthfuls. "I can't remember the last time I had a decent meal."

"You're welcome." Aeries smiled.

The girl looked around, surveying the area. "Where am I, exactly?"

"The Radiant Garden Restoration Committee's secret base!" Yuffie explained enthusiastically, jumping from her seat and bounding over to the girl. She stuck her hand out. "The Great Ninja Yuffie, at your service!"

"I'm Aeries." Aeries introduced herself to the girl while she shook Yuffie's hand. I got up from my seat and walked over to her, holding my hand out towards her.

"Leon." I said simply.

She was hesitant for a second, but gently took my hand and shook it.

"So, what were you doing in that castle?" Yuffie asked.

The girl shrugged and took a bite of her apple. "It seemed like a place no one would find me."

"What do you mean?" I asked, raising an eyebrow.

We listened as she told us her story; She was raised like any normal girl, alone with her mother and without a father. But after a recent accident – She didn't stop to tell us what happened – her mother abandoned her, planning to drop her at an orphanage. Before she let that happen, she ran away.

"I expected that she'd have someone come look for me, so I wanted to stay somewhere that no one would expect a young girl like me to be." She gulped a mouthful of lemonade. "I was afraid someone would take me to the orphanage." She looked up at us. "You aren't gonna take me there, are you?"

We didn't answer her question. It would be a good idea to take her there... but it wouldn't feel right. We spent the rest of the day discussing it as she wandered around Merlin's house. Tifa even stopped by, and hung out with her. It looked like they bonded quickly.

"We could not bother at all, but it would leave a bad taste in my mouth."

"I agree. I have too much heart to do something like that."

"Where's my tea?"

"Cid!"

"What?"

"What if... we kept her with us? We could use another hand with the heartless."

"Yeah! A few weeks of training, and those heartless with have another thing to worry about! If they worry at all, that is..."

Have her stay, and become a member of the group. It seemed like the less painful way to go. When we asked the girl herself, her face lit up in joy. She quickly agreed.

"I'll help out in anyway I can!" She said excitedly.

Due to the size of Merlin's house, Cid not willing to have another person at his place, and not enough space in Aeries, Yuffie and my house, it was decided that she'd stay with Tifa. Tifa didn't seem to mind

at all – I could've sworn that she said something about having a "Search Partner."

It was when they started leaving when I realized the biggest mistake I made.

"Wait!" I stopped them. Tifa and the girl looked over their shoulders. "What's your name?"

She blinked. Then smiled warmly.

"Drake. My name is Drake."