Traversing the Twilight

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Traversing the Twilight

by Caesura_Selluvian

Summary

Two people whose destinies are intertwined in the most obvious cliché. One afflicted with a love for travel and new things, and the other wanting a place to call home. When they swap places to sate their desires, they may find themselves dragged into something larger than either of them could have imagined, and they might just find the things they never knew they needed.

OR: A story with a prince and the pauper feeling (Roxas & Sora) with a lot of clichés thrown in and eventual plotline.
Roxas stared out the window of the small cafe, mindlessly fiddling with his red and white striped straw. His eyes wandered around the few small shops that he could recall by heart, nothing new in the windows since earlier this winter, while his mind imagined the tall skyscrapers of the city, looming against the light blue sky like they were trying to reach the sun. A bit of silver locks caught by the sun's rays stole his attention and he trailed the town's most recent interest as he walked across the other side of the street.

“Roxas?” Kairi nudged him with a french fry, snapping him out of his daze and turning his attention toward the girl.

“Hm?” He took another sip of his cola.

“Where ya runnin' off to? Were you watching the new kid? He's definitely your type.” She teased, giving him a knowing smirk.

“Wh- No! I was just...Hey Kairi...Do ya ever imagine what it'd be like to live in the city?”

“That was random. Not trying to change the subject are you?” She gave him a suspicious look, but answered his question anyways.

“I dunno. I never thought about it much, but I think it's too noisy. There aren't any well behaved animals, there's so much smoke and pollution, and I've heard it's dangerous 'round the streets at night. Like, really dangerous. I'd prefer to stay out here.” She nibbled her french fries in thought. Roxas had to suppose that was what he expected from her. She always had a way with animals, and liked them a lot, too. There was no way she'd want to give that up so easily.

“Were you thinkin' about it again?”

“Yeah...I just...I don't know. I feel so trapped here. It's the same thing every day, with nothing new happening. I mean look at this! Our most entertainin' thing around here is the random new guy that's only here on vacation!” His eyebrows furrowed in a very distinctly Roxas way, Kairi thought. She knew that his sense of wanderlust had been growing painfully strong in recent weeks due to one of
their old highschool friends recently returning from college. He told them all about the adventures he had in the city, and the various places he's visited, reigniting Roxas' need for freedom. Kairi made a thoughtful noise as she finished the last of her meal, standing to clean up the table before leaving.

“T’im sorry, Roxas. I know you want to leave the place...” The rest of her words hung heavy in the air, unspoken, but obvious. Roxas' family needed him to help run the farm, and without him they’d likely have to shut it down. Ventus used to be around to help, but his own wanderlust finally got the better of him and he had left a couple years back. Roxas had convinced him they were fine without him, and not to worry about it, but honestly it was getting tiring to lie to him like that.

“It’s fine. I’ll get over it,” he helped her collect their trash before they both headed home.

Roxas returned home, the small russell terrier dog wiggling its way to the door to meet him. He greeted the dog and smooshed its face a little, kissing it on the head and scratching it behind the ears, earning an even faster tail wag than before.

“Siruuuuus! Did’ja miss me? Who’s a good boy, yes it's youuuuu, you know it is! What a good puppo, yesss lookit.” He paused and stood up suddenly, hearing footsteps creaking the floorboards from upstairs. Giving Sirius one last pat on the snout, Roxas dumped his keys, wallet and phone out of his pockets and onto the side table by the door. He debated sleeping in the barn rafters tonight, but figured it was going to get chilly tonight. Usual routine finished quickly, he made his way to his room to get in some reading before he had to sleep, and get up for another day of the same scenery, the same people, the same everything. He sighed. He really had to stop depressing himself.

**Twilight City, 16:00 Saturday Local Time, 16:00 Saturday World Time**

Sora faceplanted himself into his homework, groaning as his study materials scatter around him. Xion leans down next to him to pick up a fallen pencil, returning it to the messy pile of writing utensils.

“What's wrong, Sora?”

“It's tooooo noiiisyyyy! I can't concentrate like this!”

“Are you sure that's not just an excuse to not study?” Kuri shoved Sora's mess back over to his side of the table.
“You know what we should do!?” He suddenly stood up, attracting the attention of many people around them.

“We should take a trip to one of those cafes out in the middle of nowhere to study!”

“What the hell.” Kuri stated moreso than questioned, not taking his friend very seriously.

“Sora...That's just not reasonable.” Xion pointed out, making Sora frown and deflate yet again. They managed to get little studying done that night, Sora having completely zeroed in on the idea of taking a trip out to God-knows-where to study, which quite frankly, he probably wouldn't want to do when they got there.

“Hmmmmmm but I think it'd be nice. You could see all the stars, 'cause there's no city lights, and there would be a lot of animals, and there'd be so much space! And real horses! Mom and Dad have traveled a lot before, but I've never been to someplace outside a city!”

“That was too many 'and's” Kuri pointed out, causing a small giggle from Xion. Sora frowned at his friends once more. He was well aware that Kuri wasn't taking him seriously, and although Xion probably was, she was more practical and knew there wasn't a way to do it reasonably. At least that's what they all thought. Come Monday morning, you can imagine the surprise when their cultural studies teacher explained they would be going on a trip next week.

“Now, I know it seems a bit sudden, but there was some trouble getting things ready. That's why we didn't have as much time to prepare.” The majority of the class seemed to care little about the trip, a select few either very happy or very disappointed over it.

“We're going to be traveling out to a small country town, and the locals have agreed to show you all around so you can learn how life is outside of the city. We'll be there for five days and six nights, so make sure you have enough packed. Let me give you all the arrangements and-”

Sora had stopped listening and turned to Xion, whispering excitedly about the trip and how lucky they were and how cool it would be. Xion smiled and they exchanged excited whispers about what the town might be like, and what kind of people live there. The rest of the week simultaneously flew by in a flash and seemed to be the most agonizingly slow five days he had ever experienced. Saturday finally arrived, finding Sora and his friends freezing in the badly heated bus at five A.M., many of them still half-asleep. The long road trip began, and Sora had no intention of falling asleep and missing any of the sights he might see.
Roxas led his horse back to the stable, whispering gentle words as it snorted at him. He was halfway through finishing up on checking the gate latches before Kairi poked her head into the stable doorway.

“Hey, Roxas? Are ya ready for the college tour? They should be here in a couple hours.”

“Oh. I had forgotten about that.” He said in a monotone voice, patting a white-brown spotted horse on the snout before checking the door and the nameplate reading 'Reizoku'.

“I thought you'd be happier about this?”

“I thought so, too. I guess I just don't want'ta get it thrown in my face that I can't leave,” he attempted a nonchalant smile and shrugged as Kairi shook her head.

“Try to be positive! You never know, some pretty amazin' things could happen.” She helped him straighten the last of the locks before they headed off from the stables.

“You're right, Kairi, I know that bein' down about it won't get me anywhere. I'm gonna ask all about the city and gather as much information as I can!” He grinned at her, earning a small giggle back.

“Let's head to town and help prepare for everyone. Your dad and aunt said they would take a few of the students, right?”

“Yep. I just hope we got enough room.”

“Naminé and I thought we could maybe keep a couple of the girls company. We have the one spare bedroom an' the pullout couch...” She pondered and counted who would be staying where as they made their way to town. Roxas just had to hope he wouldn't get stuck with a bunch of lazy cityfolk or people who would scare the animals.
Xion shook Sora's arm, calling his name as he slowly drifted back from the realm of sleep.

“Wha-? Are we there already?” He yawned and stretched, sprawling over the now empty seat next to him.

“C’mon sleepyhead, most everyone is already off the buses.” She handed him his backpack and pulled her own bag's strap over her head. Sora gave one last sleepy sigh before glancing out the window at his surroundings. He saw a small station near where the buses were parked, and a banner strung across the posts reading 'Welcome, Students!’ The buildings were small, and you could see more of the sky than Sora ever thought was possible to see at once. He rushed out of the bus to take in the rest of the sights. The colors of the bright blue sky edged the fields of gold and green, the sunlight showing off the glisten of freshly watered crops.

“Whooooah...” he nudged the sandy road with his shoes, checking out the peeling paint on the wood of the train signs and the deck.

“It looks really well taken care of, despite the age.” Xion pointed out, giving a gentle pat to the railing.

“It's sooo cool!!”

“Alright class, there's a number of arrangements for all of you to stay here, but you're adults now. This isn't a highschool field trip, so I expect you all to take care of yourselves when not engaging in class activities. Ask around with the locals and find out where you'll be staying. We'll meet up in the plaza at six.” With a chorus of agreements, the class dispersed, many of them heading straight to ask around town, and some of them allowing fate to land them wherever and choosing to wander instead. Xion led Sora to find a place to stay, before letting him escape elsewhere.

Sora was practically skipping by the time they found a small group that seemed to still be welcoming people.

“Oh, you two! Do you still need a place to stay?” Kairi beckoned to the two students.

“Yeah! Got any ideas?” Sora grinned, the painfully obvious answer so close that Xion could practically see it written out in the air.
“You...” Kairi looked Sora up and down, glancing behind her before looking back.

“You kinda look a lot like Roxas.”

“Roxas?”

“Yeah, he's the guy who'll be takin' care of ya. Name's Kairi, by the way.” She offered her hand, Xion taking it and smiling back at her.

“I'm Xion, and this is Sora. Nice to meet you.”

“You guys, too! Okay, Xion, you can stay with Namine and I at our place, and Sora, you can stay with Roxas and his family.” She explained the arrangements as they made their way to where Roxas was conversing with another student. Their conversation finished as the others approached, and Roxas gave a warm smile to the other two.

“Howdy. Are they with us, Kairi?”

“Yup. This is Sora, and this is Xion.” she pointed to each of them respectively.

“Hiya! I'm Sora. You're Roxas, right?” Sora reintroduced himself. Roxas nodded at him before pointing off away from the station.

“My place is a bit far from the station, but the horses are ready if you are.”

“Horses!?” Xion and Sora beamed with excitement, startling the other two.

“Uh, yeah. Try to...try not to spook them and you should be fine, okay?” They nodded quickly. Not even a half minute of walking brought them to the edge of town, their eyes drawn to the two horses near the fences. One of them was tied to a post, munching on grass and wiggling around the fence, while the other was drawing a small cart behind it, obediently waiting for its master to return. Kairi led the other two to the cart, while Roxas deftly untied and mounted the single horse. In between the
'ooh's and 'aah's of the two in the cart, the four exchanged some more details about themselves, quickly learning they had a lot more in common than one might've thought. Eventually, they came into view of the small farmhouse, with many other building dotted around it as if it were its own small town.

“Alright, I'm gonna go get Xion settled in at my place, you two have fun!” Kairi winked at Roxas before turning her attention back to her conversation with Xion. Roxas scowled a little at her as Sora waved wildly at the leaving cart. He wasn't even his type!

“See you guys at the square!!” Sora skipped after Roxas, following him to the stable and petting the horse as they went. They looped back around to the front door, giving Sora ample time to question just about everything he could see on the farm.

"You should come with us tonight, Roxas!" Sora beamed happily as he set down his duffle.

"Oh, uhh...No, that's- I'm okay, thanks.” He waved his hands defensively. Sora frowned at him.

"But we're friends now. And I want you to meet some of my other friends. And you can show me arou-!"

"Okay, okay, I get it! I'll come with you." Roxas smiled as Sora threw his fist in the air.

"Come on though, I need to show you around the house first."

Traversal Town, 17:45 Saturday Local Time, 13:45 Saturday World Time

Roxas took a seat on a far bench in the square. Sora had already run off somewhere, so he figured he could watch from here. He watched as students gaped at the old benches, bales of hay turned seats and neatly stacked barrels scattered around the square. A podium that Roxas knew to be borrowed from the little church to the west of town stood propped up on a few crates, above the rest of the furnishings. He smirked to himself as one of the students attempted stupid stunts on a rickety barrel, trying not to laugh when they finally fell off.

"Roxas!" Sora called out to him, dragging two people by the hand through the crowd. The person to his left was a thin man, taller than Sora and clearly distraught by the energy in the air. His light lilac hair was swept neatly to one side, with his brows furrowed something fierce, even by Roxas' standards. To his right was a man much more willing to be dragged through the crowd, his blonde hair slicked up on his head, with the bottom portion nearly shaved. He looked like a delinquent from those old New York centric movies Ven used to make him watch, but instead of an evil scowl, he had a grin that was almost enough to put Sora's to shame. He caught sight of Roxas and waved enthusiastically at him.
"These are two of the friends I wanted you to meet!" Two of? How many friends can one kid have?

"Nice to meet ya', I'm-"

"Roxas right? Hey, don't look so surprised, Sora's told us all about you!" The blonde spoke up, throwing his hand out towards Roxas.

"The name's Myde, and the grumpy looking one there is Ienzo!" He gestured towards the other person with them, not really giving Roxas any time to shake his hand properly. Ienzo nodded politely at him, then shot a glare at Myde.

“Not grumpy, there's just too many people here.” His voice was quiet and composed, but there was an obvious tension beneath it. Huh. Roxas had no idea cityfolk could be introverts. Ienzo returned his attention to Roxas, offering his hand.

“It's good to meet you, Roxas.”

“Uh...Likewise.” He took his hand, forcing a smile despite being surrounded by this many bizarre people. Just his luck he'd get stuck with the weird group. Sora opened his mouth to say something before getting cut off by a loud, mocking laugh from behind him. They turned to look at the new group, seeing a few clearly not friendly people. The man in the front walked up to the others and stared straight past them at Roxas, smirk plastered on his face.

“Wouldja' lookie here. Looks like Roxas has found someone else to sink his dirty lil' fangs into, huh?” A few laughs from the others. Roxas rolls his eyes and looks elsewhere—anywhere but at the people in front of him. Ienzo sighs as Myde and Sora both chime at the same time.

“What?”

“Oh Lord, I guess he wouldn't have shown his true colors that fast.”

“Will ya leave them alone? They jus' got here and their group speech is about ta' start.” Roxas hissed, accent showing through a little more than he would have liked. Another man steps up from the group, looking over the three students.

“Not his type, guys. We all know Rox's the submissive, just lookit him!” Another resounding chorus of laughs. Myde audibly inhales, offended by at least two things that were just implied. Ienzo crosses
his arms and steps closer to Roxas, helping Sora cut off their path to him.

“I don't really know what's going on, but it sounds like you're bullying him, so stop!” Sora growled, although Roxas felt that was less threatening than when granny Sohma used to chase the kids off her lawn with a small whisk.

“So stop! What a joke.” The first man laughed, mocking Sora.

“Guys, just ignore 'em, they ain't hurtin' anybody,” Roxas said in his most nonchalant voice he could muster. Myde shook his head.

“Uh-uh, they're hurting our friend and that's not okay by me.”

“Oh God, please don't get into another fight on another trip.” Ienzo pinched the bridge of his nose, already feeling a headache just from the sheer thought. Sora laughed.

“No guys, he's right.” The other two looked at him, shocked.

“I mean, what the heck? What are they even insulting?” He pointed out, receiving two simultaneous replies.

“They're insinuating he's gay.”

“They said I'm a submissive!!” Sora paused momentarily, processing what they had said.

“Ooooh!” He exclaimed excitedly, happy to be in the loop. Roxas let a small laugh slip, luckily lost in the moment.

“Well what's the problem with that?”

“He's gonna try to kiss ya!” One of the bullies crooned, and Sora made a thoughtful expression.
“That's not how gay people work.” Myde pointed out, taking Sora's hand and pulling him close.

“Whoah!”

“This is how gay people work.” He grinned, pulling Sora in for a quick kiss.

“You idiot. You just went a full three hundred-sixty degrees and proved their point.” Ienzo sighed in exasperation.

“Oh. Hm, yeah I did.” Myde let Sora go, the smaller one shaking his head to rid himself of the stunned feeling of getting suddenly kissed.

“Aw well, it doesn't matter.” Sora unhelpfully claimed. The other bullies gawked in horror, giving Roxas a heavy dose of guilty satisfaction from the looks on their faces.

“Whatever. Let's go do somethin' else, I'm done with these losers.” The gang headed off, leaving the rest of them feeling rather satisfied.

“You okay, Roxas?” Sora turned to him, worried expression laced through his furrowed brows. He stared at the group for a moment before letting out a small chuckle, quickly escalating into a full on fit of laughter.

“Th-that was amazin', what the actual hell? What is wrong with you guys?” He laughed harder, trying to gather his breath and calm himself down. Sora grinned and pulled his hand behind his head, a proud look of accomplishment painted on his face as Myde joined in on the laughter. Ienzo smiled at them, feeling relieved that nothing went too horribly wrong.

“We get that a lot!” Sora beamed proudly, before the screeching sound of the mic being connected cast silence over the crowd. They all sat down to listen to the speech, exchanging small whispers and giggles in between the long, droning words of the professor. Before they knew it, the speech was over and few students were left in the square. Many of the townsfolk were hauling off the makeshift seats as everyone headed off for the night.

“So Ienzo and Myde are staying with-who is THAT??” Sora pointed suddenly out the window of the small diner the group had crowded into. Xion had to sit up to see past Myde's mess of hair, her attention being caught by what was likely the person Sora was referring to. He was talking with one
of the local shopkeeps, his gentle smile seeming so welcome. The late night breeze tussled his silver hair, blowing the front part of it into his bangs. He reached up and tucked the stray strands behind his ear, catching Sora's eyes with his own as he did so. It seemed like an eternity to Sora that their eyes were locked. His aqua-green eyes reminded Sora of the ocean. It felt like low tide in the sunlight, and he could feel the contrast of the cold water rushing against his feet as the sun beat down on him from above. Sora was brought back to reality as he heard the loud clattering of chairs and a soft swear from Ienzo.

“What are you doing!? ” Ienzo hissed, whispering regardless.

“Hiding!” Myde explained, having ducked beneath the table and dragged both Ienzo and Xion with him. Kairi and Roxas had both ducked behind the booth, out of the line of sight with the silver-haired man. Sora panicked, looking around at the empty booth. He glanced back outside and his eyes met with the stranger's again. He made a high pitched squeak before panicking more and ducking under the table with the others.

“Why are we hiding?” Xion asked, brows furrowed in confusion.

“Because...uh...” Everyone looked around at each other before realizing how silly their actions were.

“Well we can't get up now, it'll be even more embarrassin'” Kairi pointed out and everyone agreed.

“But who is he?” Myde questioned, curiosity trumping survival instincts.

“He's new, just like y'all. Don't know where he came from.” Roxas provided what little they knew about him.

“Well who's gonna see if he's still there then?” Sora asked. Everyone pondered this question for a moment. The same lightbulb clicked on in everyone's head except (Sora's) and there was a hushed chorus of 'You do it, Sora!' and 'Sora should go' and 'You're the one that caused the problem in the first place.' Sora sighed and, realizing he couldn't get out of this one, crawled out from under the table. He supposed it would be better to check from a different table, just in case he was still there. He skedaddled on all fours to a table near the entrance, glancing back at his friends who urged him on expectantly. He frowned at them, gingerly poking his head above the table. He looked around the lamppost where they first saw the man-then to the right of the street, then to the left. No sign of him. He sighed in relief and stood up, looking over to his friends who-weren't there?
“Guys?”

“Hey-”

“AAAAAHHH!” Sora screeched, the hand on his shoulder spooking him and sending him flying under the table again.

“Oh, shit-uh” The voice from above the table swore softly and the man attached to the voice leaned down so he was level with the table. Sora's heart was racing as he looked up at the same silver-haired mystery man he saw on the street, and he was pretty sure his heart came to a sudden stop.

“Sorry, didn't mean to scare you. You okay?” He asked, his voice deep and smooth as he offers Sora his hand. Sora's body went numb as his face heated up with embarrassment.

“Uh-um, y-yeah. I'm...I'm okay!” He laughed sheepishly, bolting upright to stand- THWACK

“OW! Owowowowowow!” He cringed, collapsing back to the floor again and holding his head in his hands where he had collided with the underside of the table.

“...Are you sure?” The other man looked at him with some concern and probably amusement. Sora nodded with tears in his eyes, taking the other man's offer to help him up this time.

“I'm tough, I'll be...fine.” His determination didn't do much to mask the fact he was clearly in a lot of pain.

“Um, okay. If you're-” Xion called from the doorway, Sora mentally noting how they had all used him as a distraction to get that far.

“Sora! We need to go! Right now! It is very important.” She winked at him.

“Imperative.” Ienzo chimed in, with a vigorous nod from Myde.

“Oh, uh, right. Okay. Gottagobye!” He grinned at the stranger before bolting out the door with his
friends, being quickly dragged all the way to the cart and horses before stopping.

The strange man stared out at the empty doorway, a thoughtful look as he murmured that name again to himself.

“Sora...Hmm.”
Traverse Town, 07:00 Sunday Local Time, 03:00 Sunday World Time

Sora shivered under his blankets, turning a little and squinting through the darkness. What was all that noise outside? He tried to focus his tired mind on the noise, hearing the clinks of chains and voices from outside his window. The whinny of a horse cut through the random bird noises Sora could only assume came from chickens. He tried to ignore the noise and close his eyes again, the darkness beckoning him back to sleep. THUD.

“Mornin' Sora,” Roxas called as he propped the floor-door open after thunking it loudly against the wall.

“Mnmnmnmno,” was the response he received, followed by the sound of gentle snoring. Roxas sighed, heading back down the ladder. Well, he tried to do it the nice way. Time to do it the mom way. Sora sighed happily, shoving himself further under the blankets to try and ward off the unrelenting cold. He had finally managed to ignore the noises long enough to slip back to the dream world when- CLANG CLANG CLANG. He bolted upright, nearly knocking himself out of the bed as he did so. He made a noise of displeasure when he saw Roxas holding a pot and wooden spoon.

“I didn't know people actually did that,” he complained.

“I didn't know people actually slept past six.” Roxas retorted, knowing full well that was a lie, but it seemed to work to convince Sora out of his nest.

“What do you even do this early?” Sora yawned and stretched, forcing himself out of his warmth with one last longing look towards the blankets.

“Can start by makin' your bed. Then I'll getcha some breakfast.” At the mention of food, Sora practically threw the bed covers onto their places before flying down the ladder. Roxas smiled a little, the reaction to the word breakfast reminding him of Ven. He quickly re-made the haphazardly thrown together bed and followed his guest downstairs. He had a long day ahead of him, and that was without worrying about Sora.
Xion watched the blonde girl in front of her deftly flip cards about the table, neatly stacking them in so fluid a motion, Xion was sure it had to have been magic. She tried to stifle a yawn as she watched the cards being dealt out in seemingly random positions, jetlag hitting her pretty hard.

“So you do this all the time?” Xion inquired, watching the cards flipped over one by one.

“Yes. I mostly use it for Kairi and myself, but sometimes one of the townspeople will come by for a reading,” the girl responded, gently setting down the last card.

“How do you know what they say?”

“I suppose it's intuition. Although luck and the meanings of the cards have a bit to do with it as well.”

“I see...” Xion nods, not entirely understanding it, but figuring she didn't need to.

“Would you like me to read your fate, Xion?”

“Okay. What do I need to do?”

“Nothing, just watch for a moment,” she explained, waiting for Xion's nod of approval before reshuffling the cards. They were quickly laid out again, this time in a different pattern than before.

“You have the power to influence a big decision one of your close friends will make soon. You need to help them make the right choice. I think...whatever you decide will be most beneficial to them if they listen to you.” She pauses as she stares at one particular card, too long for Xion's comfort.

“Something is going to happen soon,” is all she says, gathering up her cards again.

“Well that sounds scary, Naminé.” Kairi comments as she sets down a tray with mugs full of hot, steaming liquid on the table. Xion nods slowly. Naminé takes her mug with a small 'thank you'.
“It doesn't mean it's going to be a bad thing. It might even be a good thing. It's just hard to say at this point.”

“Thank you, miss Naminé, I'll keep that in mind.” Xion nods with determination.

“Just 'Naminé' is fine.” She smiles sweetly at her, and Xion nods again with a small smile.

“So, Xion, you wanna go explore town today? They gave you the day to just get used t' things, right?” Kairi took a seat between the other two.

“Sure. I'll tell Sora that I won't be available for a while.”

“He won't be either, I betcha Roxas is gonna wear him ragged with the farmwork.” Xion had a moment of worry for the noodly person known as Sora. Ah well, she was sure he could handle it. It couldn't be that bad, right?

Daybreak Kingdom, 04:00 Sunday Local Time, 06:00 Sunday World Time

“You must take Ventus and leave this place. I'm afraid that he has started to make his move.” The old wizard spoke gravely to the two guardians standing across from him.

“Now? But then what about-” The brunette began, his voice laced with distress, although he remained calm.

“Terra! We don't have time to worry about it. We need to get him out of here first,” the woman winced at the unintended sharpness of her words.

“I-No, you're right.” And with that, the two of them bowed respectfully before taking their leave.

Daybreak Kingdom, 05:00 Sunday Local Time, 07:00 Sunday World Time

A man cloaked in darkness, his face hidden from view slipped through the shadows, coming up behind a narrow window where the curtains were mostly drawn. He peered in through the slit he could see and, seeing nobody inside, proceeded cautiously through the window. He took one look at
the disheveled bed and haphazardly thrown clothing before bolting back outside, a predatory smirk light on his lips.

*Traverse Town, 12:00 Sunday Local Time, 08:00 Sunday World Time*

“So tired...” Sora mumbled as he thunked his head firmly against the table. Shame. He was still awake. Roxas set two warm drinks on the table, nudging Sora with his before sitting down across from him.

“You do this *every day*?” Sora questions with disbelief, gratefully taking his drink. He was responded to with a noncommittal noise and the sot slurping of hot chocolate.

“Nevermind that, can we talk about somethin' other than the farm?”

“Hmmm, okay. Like what?” Sora pondered his own question in his head for a moment. *Like everything about your life, ever.* Roxas thought to himself, choosing to keep his mouth shut and find a more normal, less stalkerish-sounding topic to discuss.

“Besides the farmwork, how do ya like it here?”

“It's fun! I mean even the farmwork, it's kinda hard and it makes me sleepy, but it's fun, too. I wouldn't mind doing this every day if it meant I got to spend my free time here,” he hummed as he curled his fingers around the mug, absorbing as much warmth from it as he possibly could.

“Why?” Roxas inquired in disbelief. The brunette gave him a questioning look and Roxas continued.

“I mean—it's so boring out here. Nothin' ever happens. It's literally the same thing over and over.” Sora nodded as he listened to him, contemplating his words with a half-awake brain.

“Yeah but...It...seems really nice. I grew up my whole life moving around with my parents a lot, so I never had a place I could call home. It was really hard to make friends, too.” He said it so easily, without a hint of sadness in his voice. Roxas suddenly felt guilty for asking, and selfish for feeling like what he had wasn't enough.
“That...makes sense,” was all he could think to say, an awkward silence settling between them.

“So you wanna see the world, Roxas?” Sora beamed at him, curious to get to know him better. Now, if Roxas knew Sora as well as the rest of Sora's friends knew Sora, Roxas would know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the glimmer in his eyes was dangerous. Scheming. Something that should be avoided at all costs. But since he did not, in fact, know Sora that well, Roxas deemed it polite to answer, and saw no harm in doing so.

“Yeah. I've been here my whole life. I have a twin brother who used to help us out, but he...Well let's just say he followed his heart and I got stuck bein' the responsible one.” Roxas loved Ven, with all his heart, but sometimes there would be a small lick of jealousy in his heart that he couldn't seem to shake. Sora blinked at him as if comprehending the concept of choosing responsibility over your heart. He nodded slowly, the glimmer in his eyes shining with unfortunate intensity.

“Do you wanna see my place then!?”

“Sora-wh-How? I already told you I have to stay here, I can't just go wanderin' off just to sate m'own curiosity-”

“I know! I have an idea though!” Here again, is a place that Roxas would later look back on and realize that the warnings had been there. The shine of Sora's eyes, the way his hands moved as he was explaining with deliberate movement, the focus he had on Roxas, as if trying to gauge his reactions. But for now, he just stared at him, dumbfounded.

“I'm gonna go ask Xion and the others something real quick! Be right back!” And with that, he sped off to his room upstairs to find his phone.

_Traverse Town, 16:00 Sunday Local Time, 12:00 Sunday World Time_

Roxas sighed as he sat down in an open booth near the corner of the small diner. He really didn't like being around lots of people, and he had told Sora that, and yet here he was, waiting to meet even more of Sora's friends for a 'strategy meeting'. Joy.

“You must be Roxas.” A gentle voice belonging to a gentle-looking man with brunette hair spoke up, causing Roxas to cease his scowling for a moment.
“Uh, yeah. Are you guys-?”

“Sora's friends? Yeah. But you could ask that of just about anyone on this trip and they'd say yes.” The female giggled and held out her hand for Roxas.

“My name's Olette. This is Pence-” she gestured to the brunette, who waved and smiled sweetly at him.

“-and this is Hayner.” She held her hand out towards the third member of their group.

“Nice to meet you, Roxas.” Hayner nodded, giving him a solid handshake.

“Hayner, Pence and Olette...” Roxas nodded to each of them, as if trying to cement their names in his mind. Sora practically flew into the diner, nearly running in to Pence as he tried to stop himself.

“You guys are already here! Great! Then let's start the strategy meeting!” He slammed his hand down on the table excitedly, ideas threatening to spill out of his head at any moment. Xion, Kairi, Myde and Ienzo walked calmly into the diner, locating and joining their friends. A few extra chairs and some drink orders later, Sora stood from his chair and cleared his throat, causing everyone to turn their attention to him.

“So, our current problem is-”

“Problem? When did we find another problem, and with what?” Ienzo scowled, clearly having been dragged here against his will.

“Well, if you had let me finish. Ahem. Our current problem is that I don't wanna go back to the city, and Roxas does,” he explained, a few confused looks being passed around the table.

“But! I have a solution to that! See, there's this old story, called, uh....The Princess and the Pauper-”

“The prince and the pauper.” Xion corrected.
“The princess version was the Barbie movie based on that.” Myde chimed in.

“The what?” Hayner questioned, giving him an incredulous look.

“It’s an animated film from America based on The Prince and the Pauper, except it was done for little kids using Barbie dolls as inspiration.” Pence pointed out, earning some understanding nods and even more confused looks.

“And how do you know that?” Ienzo nudged Myde away from him with his elbow, his personal space being far too encroached upon for his liking. Myde just shrugged, turning his attention back to Sora when he cleared his throat yet again.

“Anyways, in that story-”

“I think we all know how the story goes, Sora.” Roxas pointed out, hoping to speed things up a little.

“Okay then, you should get where I'm going with this! Roxas and I look pretty similar, so I think it wouldn't be too hard for us to-”

“Waitwaitwaitwait. No. That's impossible. Can't do it.” Roxas smacked down his idea with such vigor that it stunned the rest of the group into silence for a moment.

“I think I agree with Roxas,” Xion frowned, playing with her straw.

“It's pretty risky, I mean, isn't that technically illegal? Impersonation or something?” Olette pondered out loud.

“Personation. To assume the identity of another person with intent to deceive. Yup, it sure is.” Pence pointed out the Wikipedia article pulled up on his phone.

“Yeah, but if we both agree to it, nobody's gonna try to take us to court or anything.”

“That's not how court works, Sora.”
“C'mon! Nobody will be able to tell the difference anyways! And besides, that's what you guys are here for. You're gonna help Roxas out so nobody will be none the wiser.”

“Nobody will be none the wiser'?”

“This is crazy. We're all going to get arrested for trying this.”

“But it'd be fun! Why not? Besides, I don't wanna leave this place and never see Roxas again, he's a good friend!”

“You've known him for one day! Besides, you have internet, you can talk to him.” And the arguing went on and on, but only in a hushed, normal conversation sort of tone. Nobody wanted anyone to think they were up to something illegal, especially with a bunch of them being city kids. It was almost three P.M. when they finally decided to hold a vote for it, because this wasn't getting them anywhere. Roxas pointed out that it should be up to him as well, but Myde countered with the fact that he wouldn't do it just 'cause he's scared of the city. Which, as intended, swayed Roxas' opinion more in favor of the plan, despite originally being against it.

“Four in favor, two against, and three remaining neutral. Guess we've decided what to do!” Sora chirped happily, shoving the last of his now cold, soggy french fries in his mouth. A mixture of satisfied noises, groans and unsure mutters fell over the table, a few people deciding there were better things to spend their time on at this point. Roxas pulled Kairi to the side and explained quickly to her that this couldn't happen, it was too...too cliché and risky and nonsensical.

“I didn't see you vote against it.”

“But not in favor of it, either.”

“Roxas, listen to me. You're literally going to kill yourself if you keep yourself caged in like this your whole life. This is the perfect chance! The farm will be taken care of, Naminé and I can help Sora out until he's settled in. Besides, it's not permanent. It'll just be for a few months, at most.” She had some very valid points, but Roxas did not want to listen to any of them, because this sounded like a story written by a five year old that didn't know how reality worked. Valid points did nothing to negate that.

“This is not going to end well,” he groaned, already feeling the week-long headache this was going
to give him.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the short chapter! Next chapter will begin with the actual story, so you can think of these first two as a prologue of sorts, to get the party started.

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