

They headed outside to Santa's backyard and he showed them a very large frozen lake, perfect for ice-skating. "So, how do we ice-skate?" asked Sakura, looking at the frozen pond curiously. Jack scratched the top of his skull.

"Well first we need skates..." Zephyr said, looking at the ice. It was a perfect spot for skating. "Skates are basically shoes with a blade on the bottom. We use them to move on the ice and have control over our movements rather than helplessly sliding." Hitomi listened, the concept seemed very familiar even though she never heard of it.

Glacies looked around for some skates and saw them on the shelves outside. "Here they are, guys!" she cried. She took up a pair of skates that were her size off the shelf. Then she kicked off her boots, so that she could put on the ice-skates. Once they were on, the snowgirl went on the frozen lake and started skating around for a bit before she did a graceful spin on the tip of her toe to demonstrate ice-skating. Then she stopped and said to Sakura and Jack, "Since you're both new to this, you're just going to have to take baby steps or slides for some time until you get used to ice-skating. You can also take my hand and skate with me, if you want."

The demon got a pair of skates and headed out onto the ice. She wobbled a bit, but she took a few baby steps and a few slides, easily getting the hang of it. She beamed, "Hey, this is easy as long as you keep your balance!"

"Speak for yourself!" frowned Jack as his old bones were wobbling all over the place. His long and thin frame was not really built for skating.

Glacies giggled in amusement before she skated over to Jack and said, "Here, let me help you." She took one of his hands and said, "Hold on to me, we're going to practice skating for a bit until you're used to moving around on ice." Then the girl slid her feet slowly on the ice at first, before she increased speed by a little. Zephyr got skates for him and Hitomi, putting his on first before helping the child with hers. After they were both laced up, he led the younger girl to the ice. He went on and started to skate a lap. Hitomi went on the ice, she was shaky at first but a few seconds later that was all gone; she felt that she knew exactly what to do. She moved forward picking up speed before jumping in the air and spinning twice before landing and skating backwards. Glacies looked to the reindeer boy and asked, "Hey Zephyr, having fun?"

"Yup!" Zephyr called looking over at Hitomi, who turned herself around so that she was skating forwards again. Picking up some speed, she did a perfect triple axel on the first try. It was kind of odd that her muscles knew exactly what to do when she never did or see any of this stuff before. "Whoa!" the boy said in surprise at seeing how well a little girl who never went ice-skating before was doing.

Glacies cried out in amazement, "Wow, Hitomi! That was amazing! Where did you learn to do that?"

Still skating in her backwards landing position, the child answered, "I don't know... I just know how to do

it. I can't quite explain it, but it feels like I've done this many times before."

"I see..." Glacies murmured as she watched the younger girl do a spin and a half spin so that she was skating forwards again.

Sakura already had the hang of skating, but Jack was still having trouble, even though Glacies was helping him. He exclaimed, "Geez, this ice-skating thing is hard!!!"

The demon told him, "It's just your tall size, Jack. Your body isn't exactly built for slippery surfaces."

The snowgirl looked at his long legs and thought, *'I can see why.'* It was like trying to walk with stilts on ice.

The skeleton smiled confidently, "I'll just have to practice more!"

"Haha, that's the spirit!" The two laughed as Sakura practically skated circles around the bone man.

Glacies said, "Yeah, it may take a while, but you'll eventually be smooth on ice."

Sakura nodded, "Yeah, it'll take a lot of practice, but I think you can do it." She giggled, "Come on, I'll help ya, tall man." Sakura took his bony hand in hers and skated around the pond with him. "It's not so hard once you get some practice in, ol' buddy!"

Now it was three people, Jack with a girl on each side, together skating around. Glacies started to think back on her memories of her try at first ice-skating. She recalled her fond memory and thought, *'This brings back so many memories of my first day when I skated on ice. When I was five, I had a lot of trouble trying to maintain balance on ice. I slipped many times as the other kids laughed at me. I felt so clumsy and pathetic that I was on the verge of giving up, but then my mom and my friend, Nemo, came and helped me. We held hands together and skated around the ice a few times until I was ready to try on my own. When that time I came, I was still kinda slippery, but not as much as the first times. My mom gave me a few tips on what to do as she watched me. I followed her advice and practiced them until I was getting good at this. My confidence was regained and for the rest of the day and throughout the snow days, I would skate happily on the ice rink without any slip-ups or crashes. That was how ice-skating became my favorite sport.'* As they kept on skating, she looked at the tall & slim skeleton man and asked, "So Jack, are you getting the hang of this now?"

Jack nodded, "Yup! I think I got it!"

Sakura grinned at him and let go, "Well, let's see if you can do it on your own then." She skated backwards away from the group to watch.

Jack let go of Glacies's hand and skated a bit on his own. He was not exactly perfect but he did not fall

down anymore. "Hey, this is kinda fun!!! Woohoo!"

The snowgirl smiled at him and said, "I knew you would get the hang of it, Jack. You just gotta believe in yourself." After all that ice-skating for some time, Glacies got bored and went off the ice rink to go sit at the bench, where she took off her ice skates and put on back her boots. She looked at the others and asked, "So guys, what do you all want to do next?"

Sakura and Jack got off the ice and took their own skates off. The demon suggested, "How about we go down to the Town Square in Halloween Town? Maybe we can all say hi to the mayor."

The skeleton nodded, "Sounds good to me!"

"Sure! What is the mayor like?" asked Zephyr as he was taking off his skates. After he took off his skates, he helped Hitomi with hers and helped put her elf shoes back on.

Glacies said, "Me too, I wonder what the mayor or your town is like."

Sakura nodded and described, "He's a little pudgy and he can't make up his own mind without Jack. He's not much of a mayor without Jack at all."

Jack added, "Yeah, but he is quite a funny man and very nice."

Glacies replied, "I can't wait to see him. It might be a pleasure to meet him."

Zephyr stood back up and said, "We're ready!" They made their way back to the tree with the pumpkin door. Once they reached the door, the monsters went through first and they all landed back in the forest of Halloween Town, which was home-sweet-home for the monsters.

After leaving the woods and going through the graveyard, they came to the central square, where a silver-haired werewolf and a familiar-looking black-haired neko were at. The werewolf made a small grin, "Well if it isn't Glacies, Zephyr, and Hitomi, I'd never thought I'd meet you guys in town."

Glacies recognized his voice and asked, "Chase, Kumo, is that you guys?" Even though Kumo looked a bit sinister with his claws, fangs, and black hair, ears & tail; Glacies still thought he was cute as the first time she saw him.

Zephyr beamed, "Wow! Long time no see!"

"Hello..." Hitomi said, looking at them. She did not feel uncomfortable as she just was not a talkative person.

Chase asked, "Yep! Looks like we all got changed when we stepped into this world. So how have you all

been?"

The skeleton boy answered, "We've been doing alright. Nothing much happened."

Sakura answered, "Same with me."

Kumo bubbled, "Hey guys, look what I got!" He held up his demon skeleton puppet to show everyone.

The demon commented about the toy, "Wow, that looks awesome!" Looking to the werewolf, she asked, "So Chase, who's the new kid?"

Glacies answered for him, "Sakura, Jack, this is Kumo, Master Chase's apprentice."

The Pumpkin King greeted the two, "Hi there, youngsters! I'm Jack Skellington!" As usual, Jack was being overly friendly and smiling at him with his skeleton grin.

Chase made a small smile and responded, "Hey."

Kumo smiled bigger and greeted, "Hi, Mr. Skeleton man!"

Jack smiled, "A friend of theirs is a friend of mine! Welcome to Halloween Town!"

Then Sakura asked, "You guys seen a pudgy man with two faces and a large top hat around here?"

The werewolf shook his head. "No, I can't say we have. Who is he anyway?" he asked.

Sakura answered, "Well, he's the mayor of Halloween Town. Anyway, we need to go find him." She turned to the Pumpkin King and asked, "You think Zero can help us?"

Jack marveled, "Of course, why didn't I think of that?"

The demon joked, "Probably because you're literally brainless."

Jack laughed at the joke and whistled for Zero. The ghost dog barked and flew over to Jack. "All right, Zero, go find the mayor." Zero barked and floated off in search for the mayor.

Zephyr asked Chase with a smile, "So what brings you two here?"

The werewolf answered, "Well let's just say Kumo here had to help someone out with a little test to do."

"A test?" Glacies asked.

Kumo nodded and said, "Yeah, Juliet had to--"

Before the neko boy could finish what he was saying, a portal suddenly opened and a blood-stained Juliet tumbled out. She looked to the portal with pure fear, before collapsing. The portal closed without another word. Everyone was alarmed as Glacies and Kumo gasped in shock, while Chase ran over to her and cried, "Juliet!" He knelt down to pick her up.

The blonde girl strained to open one eye, but failed. "C-Chase?" She muttered, barely audible. "L-LimeX... She, she's gone evil." Then she collapsed.

Chase had a stunned expression on his face and said, "What?!"

"Huh?" asked Kumo, whose cat ears overhead.

Glacies placed her dominant left hand to her forehead and sighed, "Oh boy, here we go again."

Sakura grumbled in agreement, "You said it, girl." LimeX had been trouble the first time she went berserk. Now she was causing trouble again for some reason. The demon summoned Shadow Heart and raised it cast a Curaga spell on Juliet's wounds, healing them all completely.

The werewolf asked the wounded girl, "Juliet, what happened?"

Zephyr was just as shocked as everyone else about the news. He worried, "Chase... I thought you got rid of all of Xander's darkness inside of her..."

Looking at the form of Juliet, Hitomi asked, "Who is Xander...? The name sounds so...familiar..." She was able to see the outline of her body, but none of the injuries.

Kumo had a puzzled expression on his face. He scratched his head with a clawed finger and said, "I think I know him too, but I don't know who he is."

Chase looked to Zephyr and said, "Yes, I did. I destroyed a giant heartless that was the source of Etutu's darkness, thus ridding her heart of that. But this situation, I don't know why she's suddenly turned evil. She did seem nice when I met her today."

Glacies asked, "You saw LimeX today?"

Chase answered, "Yeah, she just had Juliet here as her apprentice. We came to Halloween Town for her to do her assessment. But let's not worry about that now. I'm more concerned about LimeX and what she's up to."

Juliet coughed and laughed, "You only got rid of Etutu's, whoever that is, darkness. You overlooked the

fact that LimeX is a darkblader."

The werewolf rolled his eyes and thought, *'That's what I said. I was only trying to get rid of Etutu's darkness, not all of the darkness in her heart.'* He was not stupid enough to get completely rid of one of the things that were vital to the heart. LimeX should have her own darkness, not Etutu's.

"Now get off me." Juliet pushed the man away and stumbled to her feet. "We were heading back home; we passed people; I don't know. Suddenly, LimeX began to attack me. She told me that I was a disgrace; that I would never be a true darkblader." She looked towards the graveyard. "I lost consciousness. And when I awoke, the town was on fire and there were bodies everywhere. I know I'm a darkblader but...that just doesn't seem right... All those lives gone, why?" She shuddered from shock.

Glacies had an ominous feeling and asked, "Guys, you don't think LimeX is being controlled, do you?"

Chase answered, "I'm not sure, but I wouldn't jump to that conclusion until we see for ourselves. Juliet, what was the name of that world you were in. Maybe I can find LimeX there and find out what's going on with her."

Juliet paused. "I think it was Dusk Meadow, LimeX said she wanted to show me something before I went back."

"Dusk Meadow," Chase murmured the name of the world. Now he knew where to go first. The silverette turned to Kumo and told him, "Kumo, I want you to stay here with Zephyr and the others."

The young cat boy asked, "Where are you going, Master Chase?"

The werewolf answered, "I'm going to go after LimeX; you guys stay here and look after Kumo while I'm gone."

Glacies questioned, "But Chase, LimeX is really fast. How do you intend to beat her all by yourself?"

Chase assured, "Don't worry about me, I've known her for a long time. I know what kinds of moves she has and I know when to avoid them. I can handle myself out there."

Zephyr suggested, "You sure? Hitomi might be able to help. She does still lack a bunch of training but she specializes in binding and slowing spells." It would not be that wise to go by himself. "Also, she might be able to do some other stuff."

"What other stuff?" Hitomi asked the skeleton boy curiously.

The ghost girl offered, "And I can use the Reflect spell to deflect any spells that come at us."

Chase thought about this in consideration; Hitomi and Glacies's techniques sounded quite useful. The child may be able to slow down LimeX enough for him to use his Sleep spell on her. But there was one important thing he needed to know before he could bring them along into danger. "Can you all dodge a speeding laser?"

Zephyr answered, "I'm not sure if Hitomi can...and by speeding laser I believe you're referring to LimeX herself? I can since speed is one of my specialties. But if LimeX uses anything other than magic, darkness or her keyblade as a projectile, Hitomi won't be able to see it."

Glacies spoke, "But I can be Hitomi's bodyguard and protect her from LimeX's attacks using my Reflect spell."

Chase said, "Alright then, if you both think you're useful that way, then prove it to me by demonstrating your skills. Let's see how much you've learned throughout a whole month." He needed to see for himself before he could bring the apprentices along. He summoned Kingdom Key and got into a fence fighting stance. Zephyr summoned Spring Breeze at the same time. The master told his apprentice, "Kumo, get out of the way."

"Okay," said the catboy before he ran off to the side.

With Kumo out of the way, the werewolf looked at Zephyr & Glacies in the eyes and said, "Show me what you've got!" Then he slide-dashed towards Zephyr in the speed of light. The skeleton prepared himself for a counter attack, guessing that Chase was going in for a close-ranged attack. Glacies was amazed at how fast the silverette went; his speed resembled that of LimeX's as if he was that darkblader herself. Once Chase was close to the blonde boy, he swung his keyblade horizontally in a circle as he tried to hit him with his Round Blitz attack. But Zephyr took this chance and used a close-range Fire spell while jumping back.

Chase was hit by the fireball before he could hit him first. As a result, his frontal area was set on fire. "Master Chase!" Kumo screamed out in worry as he was shocked to see his mentor catch on fire.

It was not too worrying for the werewolf as it was for his student because he quickly dropped on the ground and rolled to put the flames out. As he got up, he said, "Very impressive reflex, Zephyr. Now let's see if you can avoid this." He raised up his keyblade and shouted, "Magnera!" A huge metallic orb appeared and attempted to pull the blonde towards it.

Zephyr struggled to resist the pull of the Magnera, it was too strong for him though. He got pulled into the orb, but right before he got sucked into it completely, he raised his keyblade. "WIND!" he called, casting his Aerora to stop Chase from moving. He then got caught fully into the Magnera.

Chase held his ground as the Aerora's winds attempted to push him back. He stayed in his place, but he could not get any near to Zephyr and the Magnera spell due to the winds. A bit impressed with the boy's

tactic, he commented, "Nice way to keep me from getting to you, Zephyr. But that can't prevent my shotlock attack from getting to you. I'd like to shoot it at you, but I don't want to waste any more time than we need." He willingly banished the Magnera orb. Then he looked at the ghost and said, "Glacies, you're next." Then he let the Aerora winds blow him over to where the two girls were standing. He somersaulted with his keyblade being swung vertically with him as he bursted into flames and said, "Try to keep me from hitting Hitomi." Glacies instantly stood in front of the smaller girl and cast Reflect as soon as Chase got really close. The Heat Storm attack bounced off as Chase hit the beehive-like barrier. The flames disappeared as Chase said, "Alright, I guess you two are good enough to come with. With quick reflexes like that, you might be able to handle yourselves against Limex. Come on, let's go to Dusk Meadow. Kumo, stay with Sakura and Jack until we get back."

"Yes, Master Chase," replied Kumo obediently.

Juliet turned and made a portal. She concentrated hard to stop it from flickering, and then turned and motioned, "Through here. If I had any choice, I would prefer not to rely on lightbladers, but sadly I'm not the most social person in the world." She walked through the portal and came out in a small rural town in perpetual twilight. Chase and the apprentices went into the portal to Dusk Meadow with Glacies following behind as she walked with Hitomi in hand.

The group arrived at the town in Dusk Meadow and were changed into their true forms. There, Glacies looked horrified to see dead bodies of slain people on the ground and burning houses. She cried, "Oh this is terrible!"

Chase frowned, "I know; LimeX always had fun in killing people when she wasn't on temple guard duty and felt like it." He thought, *'And I keep wondering why I'm in love with LimeX, when she does the things I don't like.'* He added, "But she only went after the bad ones, not the innocents." A lot of the victims here appeared to be normal everyday people; surely most of them would not have done anything to incur LimeX's wrath, right? Then the man looked to Juliet and asked, "Juliet, where's the last place you saw LimeX here?"

Juliet answered, "Right this way, over by that lone tree." Then she led the group to the spot where her master attacked her and left.

Chase looked around for wherever his darkblader counterpart may be, but she was nowhere in sight. He said, "Looks like she's not around here anymore. She might be in other parts of this world though. We should split up into two groups and find her. Zephyr, Hitomi, and Glacies, you three will be together. Juliet, you'll be with me."

The blonde girl obviously was not fond of working with a lightblader, but she decided to go along with it anyway, "Alright fine, but don't get in my way, lightblader." Then the two groups went separate ways.

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Meanwhile back at Halloween Town, Kumo looked up at Sakura & Jack and held up his skeleton monster puppet as he asked, "Want to play monster with me?"

Sakura nodded, "Sure, let's play!"

Jack laughed, "When's the last time you played with a toy?"

The girl replied, "It's been a while. I may be a keyblade wielder, but technically I'm still a kid."

Kumo cheered with joy, "Yaayyy!" Then he explained his game to Sakura, "Alright, I'm going to be the monster and you have to run away from me. If you get touched, then you have to be the monster and try to catch me." It was pretty much like the game 'Tag', only this time it involves tagging people with a monster puppet. He asked, "Are you ready?"

Sakura boasted, "You'll never beat me at this game. Hahaha, try and get me!" She took off running towards the graveyards, giggling. The nekomimi smiled and chased after her there.

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Zephyr, Glacies and Hitomi went back into the burning town to see if LimeX was still around there, looking for survivors to finish off. The bright lights emanating from the flames were nearly a bit blinding to the eyes as they gave the town an orange hue in their vision. The dead bodies littered their path, with some of them burning, as they walked around them to avoid stepping on the deceased. The differing wounds on the victims indicated that the people had been killed in various ways with some of the victims having gruesome wounds. Some such as the mustached man who had his skull broken with blood poured out of his wound. Some like that older man who had been electrocuted with his skin charred, his hair sticking up like a hedgehog and his terrified eyes left open upon his death. Some like the woman who had suffered some serious burns on her body with parts of her clothes burned and skin melted, exposing her pink flesh. The teens were unnerved by the horrifying sight. Glacies clutched Hitomi's hand tightly into her own, being protective of the girl in case of any deadly ambushes from LimeX. She remembered how the darkblader had beaten both Zephyr and herself; they could have died back then. The bluenette did not want the same thing to happen to Hitomi or worse. But now that she thought about it, she wondered if they made the right choice to bring the child with them into danger like this.

The boy murmured uneasily, "LimeX sure is like a monster. How can she kill all these people with ease?" Perhaps she was more powerful than he thought. It was not every day when you get to see a mass murderer of this caliber.

Glacies shook her head, "I don't know, but let's hurry up and find her. This place is giving me the creeps."

"Yeah," the boy agreed. The sooner they got this over with, the sooner they would get out of here for their sanity's sake.

Then suddenly, they heard children screaming in terror and calling, "Help! HELP!"

The trio looked around in alarm, trying to find where the screams were coming from. Zephyr cried, "Sounds like trouble! We have to help!" They decided to put off their search for now to rescue the poor children in distress. He called, "Where are you?!"

Hitomi listened out for the screams to pinpoint their location. After finding it, she told her friends, "This way." She pulled Glacies with her as she ran towards the burning house the children were in. Zephyr followed after them to keep up. The closer they got, the louder the screams became, indicating that they were getting to the right place. They stopped in front of an open door where the screams were at their loudest.

A young boy shouted, "I don't want to get burned. Help!" This was followed by a girl's high-pitched scream.

Glacies let go of Hitomi's hand as Zephyr told their youngest friend, "Stay here, Hitomi. Glacies and I got this." The teens rushed inside where they saw flames burning the furniture and floor. The fires looked so much brighter inside than they did outside thanks to the walls blocking the light outside. But the closure also made the room feel like being in an oven with all the heat trapped inside coming from the flames. The singeing smell of the smoke was also bothering their lungs. At the corner of the living room, sat two young children huddled together, a girl and a boy. They were completely trapped by the fire in front of them and looking terrified of their fiery doom. The male teen looked to them and told his friend, "Over there!"

The bluenette assured, "Don't worry, we'll save you!" They doused the flames on their way with their Aerora and Blizzara spells. They found the bodies of the parents, who like the other victims, were murdered as well. The encroaching fire slowly got closer to the siblings to the point where it was almost touching them. The children shut their eyes tight and screamed again.

*Whoosh!* The wind of the Aerora spell made the fire disappear into nothing. The siblings opened back their teary eyes and looked up at their blonde rescuer. He told them, "You're safe now. Come with us, we'll get you out of here." The children stood up and went with the teens, going outside their home.

They met back with Hitomi as Glacies took her hand again and said, "Let's go, Hitomi. We have to take these children out of town." The apprentices took the siblings with them as they led them out of town for their safety. As they passed the dead bodies, they noticed that there was not a single child among the victims. Either most of the town was childless or it seems that LimeX has an apparent standard against killing children. The latter could explain why these two siblings were left alive. Once they

reached the end of the town, the bluenette told the siblings, "Run far away from here as possible and stay outside the town until the fires are all out." The siblings nodded silently and ran off together through the field.

The apprentices watched them go as Zephyr asked worriedly, "Think they'll be alright out there on their own?"

"I hope so," Glacies replied with a frown. She felt sorry for the poor orphans; they were all they have left of each other and she was not sure if there would be adult survivors or another town that would take care of them. The teens hoped that LimeX will not leave to find them for their sake.