

The keybladers began to fight the horde of Heartless, swinging their weapons to whack the black monsters. Diablos came right at Zephyr with the intent to attack him. "Aerora!" the blonde called, blowing away the ruffian and a few other heartless. Glacies did a Quick Blitz at one Neoshadow before she almost got hit by an Earth Core. She did a counter-attack at it by thrusting at its eye, which made it rear up with its closed eye as it let out a pained roar.

Sakura engaged with an Invisible and a couple of Neoshadows. She whacked Shadow Heart at the charging latter two, knocking them back onto their butts. The Invisible flew swiftly towards her with its sword to slash at her. But the girl quickly guarded against it and yelled, "Take this!" She did a Counter Slash to swipe at the flying creature. Chase did a half Round Blitz at three Neoshadows and hit them all square in their stomachs. Then he kicked an Earth Core hard in the face and swung his keyblade to knock it away into the other Neoshadows behind like a bowling ball hitting the pins. When something launched a rock at him, the man threw himself to the side and saw that an Earth Core had sunk itself into a soft patch of soil to become an earthy snake-like creature protruding from the ground. But then one of the thugs took this as an opportunity to try to cast Quake. The Earth Core tower brought up another rock from its throat to bring to its mouth.

But fortunately, before it could spew out the rock, Hitomi called out her spell, "Slow!" Since Slow was an area of effect spell, it would catch any of the heartless that were in the radius, including that of Earth Core tower. Kumo also helped out by casting Bind as the rest of the Heartless to freeze them in place.

Chase said, "Alright, now is our chance to take down as many of them as possible before they all move again."

"Right!" his friends said. Then they all wounded the affected heartless even more. The mysterious girl warped to this world and watched the fight from afar, turning her gaze to the LimeX, who was on the roof. She took to watching this darkblader for a bit before turning her gaze back to the chaos below.

Chase whacked one of the heartless on the head and destroyed it, making it disperse into vanishing dark steams. The others did the same to their foes. Kumo hit a Neoshadow and destroyed it. "Yeah!" he cheered with a jolly smile.

Glacies was preoccupied with attacking her paralyzed enemy when a dark fireball struck her and made her cry, "Eeyahhh!"

The girl crouch over in pain as Sakura looked at her and asked in concern, "Glacies, are you okay? You need me to heal you?" Before an answer could be made, another dark fireball flew into the demon and burned her. "Youch!" The rest of the dark fireballs regrouped and formed themselves into an Invisible.

Chase realized that most of his group were separated from each other and that Diablos & the Heartless could gang up on each of them and possibly beat them with no support from their friends to help them out. "Oh snap!" the man cursed as he realized his mistake in not taking his foes' recovery time from their

status abnormalities into account. The surviving Heartless came at them and ganged up on each individual.

Five Neoshadows went to attack Zephyr; three of them scratched at him with their sharp claws and the other two jumped at him. Hitomi calmly watched as three heartless came to attack her. She raised her keyblade, calmly saying, "Zero Gravity." Casting the very spell she just said, she made the creatures float into the air.

One of the Earth Cores went into the soft ground and turned into its tower form to replace its slain brethren. It then spewed a rock at Juliet. Sakura threw herself at the blonde, tackling her out of the way before she launched a Fire spell at the earthy beast. The demon gave Juliet a displeased look and complained, "Geez, would it kill you to pull some weight? We're fighting for our lives here!"

The blonde looked away with her eyes to the ground and murmured, "Sorry." Sakura was right and she felt guilty about not helping them out. But still, she did not want to hurt her mentor and go against her plans that none of Chase's friends knew about.

Three other heartless fought the wounded Glacies as she tried to swing at them with keyblades, while getting hit in retaliation. The fight went on for about a minute and a half until Diablos stepped in and said, "Enough, boys! I think it's time I finish off that little she-thing myself once and for all like I said I would." The monsters parted to let the boy confront the girl who was covered with a few bruises. Diablos grinned sadistically and said, "Let's go, you bitch! Or should I say soon-to-be dead bitch?" The menacing look in his eyes and that mocking sneer made the girl irritated and motivated to defeat her enemy first. Diablos made the first move by using Freeze Raid at her. Glacies spun on one hand to the side to dodge the evading keyblade. The boy ran at her and just as she was getting up, he did a three-combo hit on her. The girl was struck vertically from her shoulder to her chest, then she was struck horizontally at the center line between the chest and stomach, and finally she was thrown back across the ground by her enemy's finishing move. Glacies slid face-flat across the ground, before she lifted her head first as she was trying to get back up. But Diablos was in front of her and tried to swing his keyblade down at her. But the lightblader brought up her keyblade to block the attack. Then he kicked her hard in the face. The blow caused Glacies to get a broken nose, a headache, and made her dazed as she started seeing stars. Diablos grinned sadistically as he repeatedly struck his keyblade at her head and back, earning cries of pain in response. He was going to make her death slow and painful as possible.

Zephyr was in a rush, trying to block as many of the attacks from his foes as he could, but getting hit by a good amount of them. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Diablos attacking his friend viciously. "FIRE SURGE!" he called out, dashing to where they were and right through the wall of Neoshadows, burning each one of them.

Diablos kept striking at Glacies until he sensed some heat from his left and turned his head to see the blonde boy coming at him fast. Diablos got tackled and burned as he was pushed off away from the girl

to the side. The battered and bleeding girl looked up at her best friend and murmured thankfully, "Zephyr."

Zephyr looked down at her battered body, feeling horror and pity for her. He held his keyblade over her and said, "Heal!" He casting his Cure spell on her, which healed some of her wounds and made them disappear, but she was not completely healed though. Glacies looked into his eyes and smiled weakly at him. She lifted her hand off the ground as she felt tempted to touch his face, but she knew they had a fight to finish first. So they need to take care of that now.

A man native to this world showed up around the street corner and asked no one, "Now what is all that racket I'm hearing?" He immediately dropped his jaw when he saw the ongoing battle taking place before his eyes. He cried, "Oh god, monsters!" Summoning a keyblade in his hands, he said, "Hang on, kids! I'll save you!" Then he charged into the skirmish to fight the Heartless.

Four heartless engaged Kumo; an Invisible grabbed him up by his brown cat tail. Kumo kicked his legs and arms around as he struggled to get back on the ground and cried, "Ahh, let me go! Let me go!" The winged humanoid monster pointed its sword at him and pulled it blade back, preparing for a thrust. Kumo saw that and with gray eyes wide with fear, he cried, "No no no no, please don't do it!"

Chase was busy fighting off four Earth Cores. He struck at them, evaded some of their attacks, and sometimes got hit by them. He then heard his apprentice's screams and thought with panic, *'Hang on, Kumo. I'm coming!'* An Earth Core tried to charge at him, but Chase jumped out of the way. Then when an unknown man showed up to engage the Earth Core, Chase accidentally thrust his keyblade at the man's heart when it should have gone to the heartless's face. The man screamed in pain as his heart flew out and he fell on his knees. Then he collapsed on the ground and flew towards a ball of darkness. The silverette looked at the odd scene in front of them as they wondered what was going on. "Huh?" he said. The heart merged with the dark ball and turned into a Shadow heartless. Chase let out a silent gasp in surprise as he thought *'That man I just killed; did I turn him into a heartless? But how and why? The temple raiders I killed never turned into heartless before. Was my theory true after all?'* While he was still in shock at the heartless he created, a strange lanky silver creature appeared. Chase assumed that was the creature was one of the nobodies that Kumo, Hitomi and Juliet talked about. LimeX was ready with a portal to grab it. Whenever one appeared, she would grab it quickly and take it back to her perch. She had four so far, just one more and she would have enough. After she snatched it, Chase snapped to his senses and shouted at her, "Hey, wait!"

LimeX went back to the roof and told the ruffian, "One more nobody, Diablos. Then get out of there and we'll leave." She prepped a portal behind her, tossing the nobody inside for easy storage.

Diablos replied, "I hear you, but first I need to take out a couple of rats first! Starting with that spikey-haired dickhead!" He aimed at Zephyr and shouted out his spell, "Poison!" Glacies gasped with a look of worry as the blonde grunted when he got afflicted with magical venom. He faced the ruffian and got ready to defend against any incoming attacks. Diablos goaded, "Come on, shrimp! Let's see what you

got!"

Glacies glared at the purplette as she got up off the ground. She tried to heal Zephyr's poison, "Esu-- Oww!" But then a Freeze Raid struck her arm and cancelled her spell.

The girl rubbed her arm and glared at the ruffian as he stuck out his tongue in a sneering manner and said, "Nice try, bitch! But I ain't going to let you pull that off again." Then he looked at the two apprentices and noticed the short range between them. He murmured sarcastically, "You both look very close to each other. Looks like love is in the air!" After shouting the Zero Gravity spell, he lifted the two apprentices off the ground.

They felt the rush of being forced into the air as Glacies cried, "Whoa!"

Suddenly a form dived at LimeX and her keyblade raised to easily deflect the blow. It was Juliet, she realized blankly, just staring at her as she finally got her master's attention. "And what comes after, LimeX? What will happen to you?!"

LimeX pushed her apprentice away, "I will probably vanish, but that is none of your business."

Juliet shouted in frustration, "I don't want you to vanish, LimeX. I'm sure no one does, no matter how much you are trying to push them away! Why don't you just tell him?!"

The brunette grabbed the blonde, holding her up and glared at her, "You've made me do this, Juliet; I warned you. This is your final warning." She tossed her apprentice back into the fray.

Chase delivered a swift killing swing to the Shadow before he turned and rushed to Kumo's rescue. To his relief, he saw his apprentice freed of the Invisible's grasp, having been saved by Sakura who was combating it right now. The heartless stuck its sword into the ground and transformed into a circle of dark fireballs that flew around the girl. She watched them uneasily, anticipating an attack at any moment. The fireballs stopped circling and sped towards her very fast. Sakura let out a quick scared cry as she tried to shield herself with her keyblade. "Aero!" Fortunately, and rather quickly, Kumo cast a barrier of wind to protect her. His pre-incarnational memory kicked in at the right time. The wind blew back the fireballs into other heartless and felled them.

Then a volley of light balls hit the rest of heartless around the keybladers, destroying them all. Chase had used his Meteor Shower on them. He went up to neko and demon, asking them, "Are you two alright?"

"I am," Kumo replied.

Sakura smiled confidently, "Nothing's going to get this girl down." Chase smiled with relief until he heard a scream. He whipped his head around to see another man in the distance getting killed by a heartless and turning into a Shadow. Another nobody appeared next to Juliet's body.

LimeX grabbed it and said, "Diablos! Hurry up! We've got what we need. It's time for you to meet our employer."

The ruffian replied, "But can't I just stay here for a little more longer and kill these two? I did want my revenge after all." He referred to his floating opponents. LimeX gazed down and nodded slowly, just once, before turning and leaving through the portal with her catch.

Chase watched her leave as he thought, *'That employer of hers, why is she working for him or her?'*

Thage saw nearly everything that happened in this world, with most of her attention being focused on Juliet. She had seen the blonde encounter LimeX again and the brunette capturing a silver husk. The woman assumed that this was a nobody. She thought, *'Huh. Not much to them...'* She was tired of sitting on the sidelines; she needed action. Thage teleported to Juliet and pulled her through the Corridor of Darkness to a point a long way from the battle. She then said to the girl, "Look. Do you know who I am?"

Juliet gazed, shocked at the form in front of her. "You're that nice girl that gave me the keychain."

Thage nodded at the girl. "Yes. I'm Thage and I'm here on a mission to help protect you from any harm. Now I'm going to meet my boss and see if they've got anything for me. Do you want to come with?"

Juliet glanced to the girl that had appeared, before turning back and shaking her head. "I can't.... I'm guessing LimeX sent you here..."

Diablos jumped up to attack Zephyr as the blonde got ready to block his attacks. "No!" Glacies cried as she wanted to save her friend, so she cast Blizzara at the darkblader. The iceball hit ruffian and knocked him away from Zephyr. Diablos fell on the ground with his torso, arms, and thighs trapped in ice. Glacies asked, "Zephyr? Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, thanks," the blonde boy said. "I'll get you down now." He cast his Aerora, "Wind!" The winds spun around, dragging them out of the Zero Gravity.

The bluenette looked at her friend and smiled at him thankfully before remember the poison their foe had inflicted on him. She beckoned, "Come here." Zephyr approached her, feeling feverish from the venom's effect. "Esuna," Glacies said as he cast the spell on him to remove any traces of poison. After that, she said in a grateful tone, "Thanks for saving me, Zephyr."

The two Neoshadows approached Hitomi. The heartless jumped at her with claws going to scratch her. But Chase, with his quick speed, slashed them faster than the blink of an eye before they could kill the child and turn her into another heartless. The last of the black creatures vanished into disintegrating black smoke. Kumo's super sensitive nose caught whiff of something. He said, "I smell light! A really strong one!"

"Hmm?" Chase hummed as he shifted his eyes to his apprentice. He asked, "Where's it from?"

Kumo pointed at someone on the roof, "From that lady with the green or uh blue hair. She smells really nice!" The neko had a fondness for light. Chase and Sakura turned to see the young woman on top of a distant house.

The mysterious girl had been watching the fight between the purple haired boy and the blond & bluenette. Then she jumped off the roof, disappearing in a Corridor of Light that she appeared under her. Another Corridor of Light suddenly appeared in between the three. She looked at both sides with a blank expression. As Diablos struggled to break free of the solid ice, the apprentices looked at the mysterious woman and Glacies asked, "Zephyr, who's that?"

Her friend answered, "I don't know...."

Diablos asked the woman, "Who the hell are you?"

The woman answered, "My name is Light..." With that, she disappeared into another Corridor of Light. "Of course, it is not my real name, but it is my real name." The second part seemed to emanate from nowhere and her voice sounded emotionless and hollow.

Sakura asked, "What the heck is she talking about? How can Light not be her real name, but yet somehow it is? Can someone give me an answer here?" She looked at Chase, the children and Zero, who floated down by their side, now feeling safe with the Heartless being gone.

Chase took notice of the hollow and empty tone of the girl and thought, *'That voice sounded pretty emotionless like a nobody that the kids described. She's probably one of them, but they're supposed to be those silver creatures, right? And why does that blankness remind me of LimeX? I think I'm going to have the strangest week ever.'*

LimeX appeared beside Diablos, "Done yet?" She used a low-level Fire spell to melt the ice, which would probably hurt the boy slightly regardless.

It did as the ice melted off of Diablos with him hissing through clenched teeth at the burns he endured. Thankfully, the water from the melted ice doused the flames before they could spread and damage him some more. He swore revenge, "Yeah, I suppose. But I'll be having my revenge next time and this time, I'll make sure to give them the bloodiest death they deserve. No one makes a fool out of me!" Then he looked at Zephyr and Glacies and told them, "Alright, you dorks win again this time. But you better watch out next time." LimeX pulled him into the portal to escape this world.

Chase and the others regrouped with the apprentices. Hitomi said, "That girl had lots of light..." Looking at the place where the mysterious girl had disappeared, she continued, "There was no way she could

have been a nobody with a presence like that..."

Chase asked, "So she's just another person like us?"

Kumo confirmed, "Yep! She's human like you, but she's a lot more than that!"

Everyone looked at him as Glacies asked, "A lot more?" Chase looked between Hitomi and Kumo to see if anyone of them would explain about the mysterious stranger.

"Uh-huh," said the neko as he nodded. "She's really strong, and I mean really! I bet she could beat Master Chase."

"Oh ha ha ha ha, very funny Kumo," said Chase sarcastically. "She might have power, but without speed and wits, it'll be nothing. So tell us, Kumo. Do you know if she has them?"

Kumo scratched his head and said, "Uh... I don't know." He could sense light, but definitely not that the two things his master was asking about.

The man asked, "Exactly! So what makes you so sure she can beat me, if you don't know the exact level of these two things?"

Hitomi backed up the cat boy's assumption, "But she probably could beat you! One hand is all she would need to beat all four of you."

Glacies felt awe at the thought of the woman, "Well gee, that doesn't sound good. Just who is she anyway?"

Kumo answered, "I think she said her name was Light."

Chase said, "But it sounded a lot more like a riddle, Kumo. I don't think that's her real name at all."

Sakura asked, "So if that's not her name, then who the heck is she?"

LimeX and Diablos appeared outside the entrance to the dark corridor that the former had taken to deliver the nobodies. The new batch was tied together on the floor. "Come," she said, picking up the bodies and hardening the dark corridor so others could walk on it. "It's time to meet Shade."

Following after the girl, the boy asked, "Who is this Shade guy anyway?" LimeX did not answer as they walked through the barrier. Diablos huffed, "Tch, no answer!" She pulled it down so Diablos can get through. She did not wait for him as she turned and they headed into the darkness. They got to the

place where the boy thought Shade was and looked around for him, asking, "Is this where Shade is?"

The girl shook her head, "He is up ahead. Just excuse me for a moment." She turned and created another portal, directly in front of Juliet.

She pulled Diablos out of the way of the portal as he cried, "Whoa!" A light ball flew through it and into the darkness. The boy watched it go as he asked, "What the heck was that?" LimeX gazed after it before she closed the portal and they continued on their way.

The mysterious girl had appeared in the same world, but in a further place from where she was before. She had appeared right next to a girl she recognized with the group before and a different girl. She did nothing but look at them with her blank gaze. Thage noticed the stranger and said, "Bonjour, mon amie! Do you have business with us?" Juliet turned her attention to Light as well. The lightblader did not reply to them; she just stood there observing them blankly. She disappeared in another Corridor of Light, only to appear on the other side of the two. Juliet simply turned her head and continued gazing at the newcomer blankly. Thage watched with mild interest. She looked at this lightblader for any prospective talent. She looked like she could create similar Corridors to what the blonde woman could. The mysterious girl held up her keyblade which had then appeared in a big flash. She pointed it straight at Juliet. A ball of light formed at the tip and she fired a beam at the apprentice, trying to infuse her heart with the light.

Juliet merely blinked as a portal appeared in front of her. Jumping back a second later, she realized a ball of light had been about to hit her. The ball of light sailed through the portal and quickly vanished in the darkness of the world before the portal closed itself. Juliet growled at the lightblader and made her own portal to where Chase and the others were. She turned to Thage, "Come on, let's go have a chat with LimeX."

The blonde thought for a moment, "Alright. But be careful. My keychain will protect you from most of the darkness, but you shouldn't be too reckless in there. I don't want you to end up like my home world." She stepped into the portal and cast a Reflera spell that should deflect any further fire from the lightblader, if Juliet hurried and followed her into the portal.

LimeX paused at the foot of a large black square as they approached it. There was an opening and she walked through it into the darkness. "Welcome back, LimeX," spoke a voice in the darkness. "Is this Diablos you told me about?"

"Yes," she replied. The darkness dimmed slightly and Shade's outline was now visible.

The boy took notice of the voice and thought, *'That voice! I heard it before. It sounds like it's almost similar to--'*

Juliet stepped out of the portal beside Chase and told her companion, who was still inside the portal, "No time to explain Thage, just come."

Chase asked, "Juliet, where were you? What happened to--" Then he saw Thage coming out of the portal.

The woman said, "I would prefer not to bring them along..."

"Thage!" the team cried simultaneously before getting into battle stance. No one knew about anything about Thage being assigned to protect Juliet, but they all thought that she was here to attack them.

Juliet made a Corridor of Darkness to the entrance to the Realm of Darkness. "If we're lucky, she forgot to close the door again."

Chase asked, "So are you saying, this portal leads us to LimeX's hideout?"

Thage cursed under her breath and created a Corridor, which linked to the moonlight shore. She grabbed Juliet's arm and tried to pull her through. "Hurry! Close your Corridor! We can't let them through to the Dark World!"

"Hey wait!" Glacies cried as she saw Juliet getting kidnapped.

Chase heard the words, 'Dark World', and knew what Thage meant by it as he said, "She's taking her into the Realm of Darkness. Quick, after her before the corridor closes!"

"Right!" Zephyr said. He and Glacies activated their armors and the team rushed towards the Corridor of Darkness.

Juliet let herself be pulled into the realm and turned to say, "I am sorry." She waved her arm to close the Corridor, but not before Chase and Glacies got through.

"No!" Sakura cried as they were too late to get in. Beside her, Zero let out a whine.

"We need to get to them..." Zephyr said. Then he asked the younger girl, "Hitomi, do you think you could get us into the Realm of Darkness?" Hitomi nodded; it was a good thing that she and Kumo were still wearing their black coats. She held up her hand, making another Corridor appear to the Realm of Darkness. It might not take them to the same place Juliet was at, but hopefully it would be somewhere

near her. "Kumo, you should come with us; it's not safe for us to stay alone and you still have that coat."

"Okay," the neko responded. He put up his coat's hood on as the blonde pressed his armor button and summoned his keyblade. Glacies donned her keyblade armor, too.

Everyone entered the Corridor as Sakura frowned, "I sure hope this chase ends soon. This has been dragging on for too long." Zero barked in agreement.

Juliet apologized once more to Thage before holding her hands up at the engaging lightbladers, shouting, "Just hold on a second!"

The two lightbladers looked astonished. Glacies said, "Huh?"

While Chase asked, "What?"

The blonde girl paused and gazed at the three of them. "We don't have much time, if you want to know why LimeX is acting like this before he vanishes!" She gazed at each of them and then turned away and headed for the entrance to Shade's place.

Glacies asked, "He? Who's vanishing?"

Chase said, "She probably means Shade. Come on, let's follow her." Everyone followed Juliet to the entrance as he thought, *'Finally, now maybe I can get to see why LimeX was killing all those people. And if it's possible, maybe this time, I can convince her to stop taking more innocent lives. I do not want this cat-and-mouse to go on any longer after seeing what I can do today. I hate it if another accident occurred in a fight and my victim turned into a heartless. And most of all, I do not want that victim to be LimeX herself.'*

LimeX and Shade both flinched as the former turned to look behind her. The man said, "It seems your apprentice has brought company."

The girl sighed, "I am sorry Shade, do you want me to dispose of them?"

Shade laughed, "Let them come; I can vanish any moment I choose."

Diablos grinned maliciously and thought, *'So Mr. Goody-two-shoes and his friends have come, eh? I am so going to dispose of them one by one; starting with the bluehead first!'*

Shade chuckled, "Be patient, Diablos; why ruin the fun." The boy was surprised; it felt like his mind had been read just now. LimeX remained silent, glancing to the man as he dimmed the lights even further so he only looked like a black blob and even the others became hard to see.

A little while later, Glacies and the others arrived at the dark place and she said, "Wow, this place is much darker than the rest."

Chase said, "Well that's the Realm of Darkness for you. What did you expect?"

Then suddenly, Shade said, "Here they come. We have Juliet, your apprentice; Thage, the girl you sent to keep an eye on her; Glacies, an apprentice; and of course, her lover, Chase. How long did you hang out with him again before he finally got the picture?"

LimeX answered, "Sometime before you were created."

Glacies looked to her friend with uneasiness and asked, "Uh Chase, why does this guy sound like you?"

The silvertte answered with a frown, "I don't know, but it's kinda creepy if you ask me."

Shade said, "I guess I shouldn't keep our audience guessing anymore." The lights brightened and the man was finally visible. He looked like a carbon copy of Chase, except for the fierce, hardened gaze and the black cloak he wore.