

Then and Now

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Then and Now

by [CatLady86](#)

Summary

Two best friends separate as children and despite promising to stay in touch, they begin to drift apart as they get older. To their surprise and joy they meet up again at college and rekindle their friendship, it slowly turning into more.

Notes

For this prompt: <https://ffxv-kinkmeme.dreamwidth.org/4747.html?thread=9852299#cmt9852299>. It was too cute to pass up and as someone who moved far away as a child and lost touch with a couple best friends, this hit home for me.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Two young boys happily play together at the park, the little of the two chasing the other with glee all over his face. Finally, the older boy slows down, allowing the other to catch him, the small boy bouncing on his back with a boisterous laugh.

“I caught you Gladdy!”

“Yup, you did. So you get to choose what we play again.”

“Swing me around!” the younger boy chirps, his arms raised in the air and hopping up and down.

The older boy holds out his hands for the other to place his and once he has a good enough grip, he starts to spin around, picking up speed as they both laugh. They stop and tumble to the ground, laughing boisterously and laying side by side while looking up at the sky.

“I’m going to miss you Gladio.”

The brunette frowns. “I’m going to miss you too Noct.”

The younger looks with deep hope at his friend. “Maybe if I ask my daddy and you ask yours, you can come live with me instead of leaving.”

“As much as I would like that, I can’t. My parents will be really sad and I need to help them when my new little brother or sister is born.”

“I’ll be sad too.”

“I promise I’ll keep in touch, I’ll call you every Friday night, and maybe during the summer we can visit each other.”

“Promise?”

“Promise.”

The two children clasp pinkies and smile at one another before the smaller boy, Noct, stands and grins.

“Okay! I’ll run now and you chase you.”

Gladio nods and stands, waiting for the boy to begin running and chases after him. A couple of days later, Gladio’s family finishes packing up their belongings in preparation for their move to the other side of the city, where the boy’s father had been transferred to. Noctis watches from his families porch, tears streaming down his face as his lower lip trembles. With a sharp cry, the smaller boy runs over to the other and wraps his arms around him tightly, pressing his face into his front and wailing.

“Don’t leave Gladio! Please don’t leave!”

“Noct.” the older boy says with a doleful expression and hugs him tightly, tears forming in his eyes but he tries to remain strong. “I’m sorry but I have to. And remember our promise?”

Noctis sniffles and rubs at his runny nose with his sleeve. “I remember.”

Gladio smiles and strokes the boy’s black locks tenderly before they separate, then holds his hand out to give him a handshake. The older boy then climbs into the back of his parents’ car as Noctis begins to whimper.

“Bye Gladio!” Noct calls out and waves.

The older boy leans out of the window and waves. “Bye Noctis!”

The car pulls away and Noctis keeps waving until the car gets further away, making him panic and give chase futilely. Once the car leaves the gated community, the metal gate clanging shut, Noctis falls to his knees and wails. His father steps up behind him and scoops his sobbing son up into his arms, hugging him consolingly.

The two boys kept their promises to one another, Gladio telling Noctis all about his new town and how boring it is since it’s mostly all old people that live there, plus about his new sister and not understanding how people say babies are cute since she’s all wrinkly and smells. Noct tells him of the new boy that moved into his old house who has a funny accent and likes to bring him over treats, then about the blonde boy he met once he started school. They stay in touch for a few more years, Gladio joining a nature club and being at a reading level two grades higher than others while Noctis started playing soccer and took up martial arts to be like the characters in the fighting games he plays.

As the two got older though, the phone calls became less frequent until stopping completely, them just becoming too busy with their lives. But every so often Noctis will remember the brunette boy with the honey colored eyes who he would camp out with at night during the warm summer months and then play in the snow with during winter.

After Noct graduates high school, he moves onto the campus of the college he received scholarships for, majoring in forensics and hoping to become a pathologist. Unfortunately, the school is like a maze and he needs to find the auditorium for freshman orientation and to get his packet with all his schedules and key to his room. He once again finds himself before the campus map, groaning and trying to see where he took a wrong turn.

“Hmm, left at the cafe and then a right by that ugly ass mural then ummm-”

“Hey kid, you lost?”

Noctis lets out a sigh. “Yeah, this place is so damn big.”

“You’ll figure it out eventually, took me a good couple months before I could find my way around. So you need to get to the auditorium? I’ll take you there, my first class is by it.”

“Oh, awesome, than-” Noct stares at a broad chest and then raises his head to look up at the young man. Blue eyes connect with brown and the teen feels his heart thump quickly in his chest as a flood of memories and emotions flourish through him. “Gladio?”

The large brunette goes wide-eyed. “Noct?”

The two young men smile brightly, Noctis drops his backpack and leaps into his old friend’s awaiting arms, wrapping his arms and legs around him tightly as he’s spun around, them both laughing joyfully. They begin talking frantically over one another before stopping and laughing, then looking nostalgic and fondly.

“I missed you.”

“I missed you too. Can’t believe we meet up again after all these years.”

“Yeah.” Noct says and looks down with slight regret. “Sorry I didn’t keep in touch after a while, things just got so busy.”

“Don’t apologize, I didn’t keep in touch much either and I know how things can consume your free time.” he says, grinning brightly and making the younger man feel butterflies flitting in his stomach.

A bell rings out loudly, making Noctis curse.

“I’m going to be late.”

“Hey, come on, I’ll show you a shortcut and we can catch up on the way there.”

“Sure.” Noct says and looks at the offered hand, turning a deep red and then taking it.

The two men run together, telling each other what they have been up to and making plans to meet up later so they can hang out, and talk more.

Chapter 2

It was around eight that the two old friends met back up, commandeering a loveseat where they have been sitting and watching old videos for the past hour that Gladio's parents had uploaded.

The current one was during the summer time, Noctis was two and Gladio five, and they were at the younger boy's house for a cookout between the two families. Gladio's father is recording while Noct's is on the grill, their mother's sit by the inground pool with their feet soaking as the two boys swim about in the shallowest part. The camera then focuses on the tots, with Gladio holding on to the owl-eyed Noctis as they slowly float on the water before the older boy counts to three, then blows in the toddler's face and dunks them. Once they submerge Noctis squeals with glee as Gladio cheers and tells him he did a good job with the little one begging to be dunked again.

"Aww." Noctis coos as he continues watching the video. "You were teaching me to hold my breath underwater."

"Mmm hmm. Although you did swallow some water a few times, I sort of remember you throwing up after taking a few bites of your hot dog."

"Please don't tell me that was recorded."

"It wasn't." Gladio says and begins grinning cheekily. "Although there is something else way more embarrassing."

"Oh, gods what is it?"

"Not telling." he teases and gets whacked with a pillow.

Noct is swiftly pulled into a tight hold and tumbles off the loveseat with Gladio, both men chuckling and play wrestling like they were kids again. The larger man begins poking about the teen's torso until he finds the spot that makes Noctis howl with laughter and wiggle, focusing on that spot and tickling him. Not everyone was amused by the two's childish behavior though, as a fellow student glares at them from across the lounge.

"All right you dorks, people are trying to study. Either chill or take it into the bedroom."

"Sorry man." Gladio says and smiles apologetically despite keeping Noct captive in a bear hug. "We'll settle down."

Noctis manages to wiggle himself out of Gladio's hold and leans against the loveseat, smiling sweetly at the older man, taking in his features more closely than he had before. His face was more chiseled and defined, he was sporting a goatee, his eyes weren't as large as they were as a child but his lashes were still long. He looks like the male lead of one of those old movies he used to watch with his grandmother. Gladio turns back to look at the younger man, his eyes half-lidded and a deep smile on his face that makes Noct's cheeks feel hot along with a

fluttering in his belly. He was no longer that curly haired boy with large shiny amber eyes but a young man with long brown hair up in a messy bun and seductive come hither eyes. He was hot, really fucking hot.

“So Noct,” Gladio begins, snapping the younger boy out of his daze. “why’d you choose this school? Figured you would have gone somewhere more elite.”

“This school has the better courses in forensics, they do paid externships, and there’s a body farm close by that I can go check out whenever I want for extra credit.”

“Ah, I see. You get over your fear of bugs?” the older man asks and snorts when the other boy cringes. “So how do you plan on dealing with flies and maggots?”

“Gloves.”

Gladio snorts again. “So that means I can expect to be woken up at two in the morning to come rescue you from a moth like old times?”

“Well, at least this time I don’t have to walk across a street and crawl through a doggy door.” Noctis chuckles.

Both men crack up laughing, getting confused and annoyed stares from others in the lounge.

“All right, so I told you why I’m here, what about you? I know you’re getting your teaching degree, but this is awfully far from where you moved to.”

“Yeah.” Gladio says and bites his lower lip. “I wanted to move away from that area, to many judgemental old people. Here I can be more myself.” he says and smiles. “Don’t want to give the old fogeys heart attacks from seeing my tattoo and long hair. Plus it opens up the dating pool a bit more.”

Noctis furrows his brows, feeling a slight twinge in his chest. “Oh?”

Gladio looks at him and softly smiles. “I’m bi.”

“Oh?” Noct says and feels his heart thump in his chest rapidly as his cheeks heat up, going slightly wide-eyed when it finally hits him. “Oh! I see, that’s great that you like men, I mean umm not that it matters who you like and uh-” he rambles out flustered but settles when Gladio snickers.

“Yeah, so what about you?” he says, thick eyebrow arching up. “What’s your preference?”

Noctis’ mind goes blank. He never really thought much about it, spent most of his time with school and extracurricular activities. When he did, it was mostly just finding a girl at school cute or being smitten with an actor from a movie.

“I don’t really know.” he admits.

“Well you’re an adult now and in college, experiment a little and see what you like.” he says and pats the teen’s shoulder. “Just make sure it’s with someone you trust, you use protection,

and if someone acts like a creeper you come get me. Already had to chase some guy off for harassing the girl in the dorm across from me.”

“Okay, thanks Gladio.” Noct says and blushes, looking down and noticing that their hands are really close. Tentatively he reaches his pinkie out and pokes the other man’s, getting him to wrap his around Noctis’. “Promise?”

“I promise.” Gladio says, flashing a wide smile. “Well probably should get to bed, I have an early class and you should get up early too so you can find your class without almost being late.”

“Yeah.” Noctis says and smiles fondly. “I’m glad we get to hang out again, it felt like there was a void in my heart when you left.”

“Me too.” the older man says, cheeks dusting slightly pink. “Goodnight Noct, I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Goodnight Gladio.”

The brunette offers him his hand and helps the teen up, them both smiling bashfully before heading off to their respective dorms.

Chapter 3

Noctis can't move fast enough to get to the student parking area to meet with Gladio, the two young men going to a local diner Gladio frequents on the days he doesn't feel like eating cafeteria food. Standing next to a dark blue pickup truck is Gladio, staring down at his phone oblivious to the world around him. A little memory pops into the teen's head, one where he had pounced onto Gladio's back in surprise and the older boy spun them both around until they both got dizzy, then proceed to throw up. He doubts Gladio will spin them both, but he can at least jump on him in surprise for old time's sake.

So as quietly as he can, Noctis scuttles over to the truck and peers over, checking to see if Gladio has noticed yet. He hasn't yet so the teen slowly moves around to the front of the truck, inching ever closer to his childhood friend, and then pounces. Arms wrap around Gladio's shoulders while legs spindle tightly around his waist. The older boy stumbles slightly from the shock of it but quickly regains his composure, a big smile forming on his face as he hooks an arm under one of Noctis' legs while using his other to keep the teen's arms held in place, then begins to spin them. Both boys howl with laughter, getting eyerolls and confused looks from those in their vicinity.

"You're not going to puke now are you?" Gladio snickers as the younger boy slides off his back.

"Not unless you do it first, like last time."

The brunette snorts. "Sure, okay." He unlocks his truck and opens the passenger door. "For you m' dear."

"Such a kind gentleman you are." Noctis gushes theatrically and climbs into the truck.

Even though he saw the area when he scoped out the college, he didn't really pay attention to its quaint features and little nuances until Gladio points them out. The buildings were old but in no way rundown, every shop along the way had beautiful flower arrangements and hand painted signs out front, adding to their cozy and friendly atmosphere. It's so much different then the main city and gated community he had lived in for eighteen years, this was the type of place you would want to settle down in and raise a family.

"We're here." Gladio says and pulls into the diners parking lot.

The establishment is just like every other one in the area, welcoming and rustic. The inside as well with hardwood floors, soothingly light colored walls, marble tables and countertops, and comfy looking seats.

"So booth or counter?"

"Booth." Noctis says with a smile.

They take a seat and pick up their menus, scanning across them while every so often taking quick peeks at the other, making funny faces that cause them to have giggle fits.

“So lemme guess,” Gladio says while wearing a shit eating grin. “chicken fingers and fries.”

Noctis snorts. “Wow, good guess, how’d you know?”

“Well besides your height, not much has changed about you, figured you were still picky as shit with eating.”

The teen blushes from embarrassment. “I’m not that bad anymore.”

He wasn’t, gone are the days of eating nothing but scrambled eggs, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, and fries. He added rice and a few other items.

“And who are you to talk, you ate noodles all the time.”

“Needed the extra sodium.” he replies nonchalantly and sets his menu down as the waitress walks over. “Hey, Ophelia.”

“Oh hi Gladio.” the young woman says with a friendly chuckle and smile. “Lemme guess, rubbery imitation turkey, bland gravy, lumpy mashed potatoes, over cooked green beans, and a stale roll?”

“You know it.”

“Geez, you think for such a nice school they could do better with the food they feed y’all.” she says and looks to Noctis, face lighting up. “Aw, you finally brought your sweetie in?”

Gladio coughs embarrassedly. “Umm no, I umm broke up with that one. This is an old childhood friend of mine who just started going to uni over here.”

“Oh?” The woman looks the teen up and down before smiling. “Such a little cutey. What can I get for ya both?”

“My usual.” Gladio says and hands her the menu.

“And you hun?”

“Umm, I’ll have the same as him.”

“Okay, I’ll bring your drinks over awhile.” she says and takes Noctis’ menu.

Noctis turns back towards his old friend and notices the shocked look on his face. “What?”

“For all you know I ordered a salad.”

“Yeah, okay.” Noctis snorts.

The drinks are brought over to them with Noctis looking questioningly at the drink first before picking up the straw, but instead of removing the wrapper like a normal person, he

blows into the uncovered end and pelts Gladio right between the eyes.

“You little shit.” the older boy chuckles and slides out of his seat, moving to the side where Noctis is and pushes him down, unleashing a tickle assault on the pinned teen.

“Stop, stop, ha hah!” Noctis laughs loudly and even snorts a couple times.

Gladio finally relents and pulls the smaller boy upright, wrapping an arm around his shoulder and tussling his hair sheepishly. Noctis rubs the tears from his eyes as he catches his breath, then as he looks to the other patrons in the diner he notices something strange and nothing like back home. They were all smiling and looking bemused at the two of them, not judgmental or snooty. It was nice. What Noct found even nicer though, was the protectively large and warm arm of his friend slung around his shoulder. Unable to help it, he relaxes against the older boy’s chest and hears the quickened beating of his heart that doesn’t slow down even as his breathing returns to normal. His own begins to mimic the other’s, especially when Gladio pulls him closer against him and softly rubs his arm.

Chapter 4

It has been a month since Noctis started going to college and rekindled his old friendship with Gladio, and he loves every second of it. His professors are all great and keep him engaged, the first class of the day wasn't until ten so he can sleep in; unless Gladio picks his lock, drags him out of bed, and takes him out for breakfast. And speaking of the older man, the two of them spend every second they are not at class or asleep together, bantering and playing little pranks, it getting to the point that those in the boys' dormitories combined their names into one. He was actually getting ready to go meet up with Gladio, but first, he had to do something he had been putting off until he got himself fully immersed into being out on his own and with his schooling; call his parents.

"Hey dad, hey mom." Noctis says looking at their smiling faces over a video chat.

"Oh, so we do still have a son, we were starting to think we imagined that for eighteen years." his father says teasingly with a chuckle. *"So everything going well?"*

"Yeah, it's great."

"That's good, make any friends?" his mother asks.

"Yeah and guess who I met here, my old friend Gladio."

"Aww that is so sweet, you two were so close as children."

"You cried for days after he left. We also had to put new locks on all the doors and windows since you would take off in the middle of the night with a bag of clothes and snacks. The night watch would bring you back crying that you wanted to go find Gladio and live with him." Regis laughs.

Noctis feels his cheeks heat up from embarrassment. "Oh, yeah I kind of remember that. He's also been showing me old videos of us as kids that his parents sent him. There was a summer cookout one, I forgot your hair used to be so dark dad."

"Yes, yes. Would you like for us to send you the ones we have? We actually have your twos first meeting."

The teen's face lights up. "Yeah, I'd love that and I'm sure he'd get a kick out of it."

"All right, we just have to load them onto the computer and we'll send them. So everything else is going well?"

"Yeah, keeping mid-nineties in all my classes, planning on joining a fishing club next spring."

"Sounds wonderful and we're so proud of you dear." Aulea tells him, a slightly sad tone seeping into her voice. *"We miss you."*

“Miss you both too.” he says, forcing back a frown, and looks at the time. “Well, I need to go, meeting up with Gladio tonight to hang out.”

“Have fun and we both love you.”

“Thanks and I love you too.”

He shuts off the video chat and lets out a sigh, then grabs up the items Gladio had written on a list for him. Wear comfy pajamas, bring a pillow, blanket, and a nice pair of clothing. Noctis guessed the first three items were for a sleepover in the other man’s dorm but the need for ‘nice clothing’ was what threw him off. He figures he’ll find out once there. Upon arriving at his friend’s dorm, he gives a quick knock and waits, exchanging smiles and waves with dorm neighbors before he hears the click of a lock.

“Hey.” Gladio says with a huge smile. “You ready for a night of fun?”

“Aren't I always?” Noctis titters and heads in after Gladio moves out of the way.

The teen can’t help but feel a bit jealous at the older boy’s room, him being there three years and having the privilege of not having to share, unlike Noct who has to bunk with another boy.

“Oh.” Noct says and looks at the makeshift fort in the center of the room held up by twine dangling from the ceiling. There was a mat on the floor along with some pillows and a blanket, a string of star lights that illuminate the otherwise dark room, a bowl of popcorn, drinks, and Gladio’s tablet. “Aww, you made a blanket fort like we would have had as kids.”

“Yup. Figured I had to do something special for our one-month re-meet.”

Noctis can’t help the excitement on his face, nor the blush and definitely not his heart pounding in his chest like a jackhammer. “I love this.”

“I’m glad.” the older man says, smiling fondly down at his friend.

Gladio takes the pillow and blanket from Noctis, situating them inside before the two crawl in and hunker down, chuckling like little kids and poking at each other.

“So tell me, why the fancy clothing?”

“That’s a surprise for tomorrow.” Gladio says and smiles while setting his tablet up for them to watch. “For now though, got some more home movies from my parents.”

“Oh, awesome. And speaking of which my parents are going to send some they have.”

“Cool, we’ll have to check those out sometime too.” he says and scrolls through a folder.

“We’ll start with this one.”

Noct looks at the title and raises an eyebrow, can’t imagining just what ‘ADORABLE KISSES’ would entail but he gets his answer as soon as the video starts. The two boys are lounging side by side with a picture book set in front of them, with Noctis, who looks about

three, staring at Gladio with a grumpy expression. The older boy peeks out the corner of his eyes a couple times before pressing his lips to the boy's cheek and blowing raspberries that cause the toddler to howl with laughter. The tinier tot then grabs Gladio by his face and peppers multiple kisses to him before looking expectantly, his face slowly morphing into an annoyed pout before the older boy blows raspberries against his cheek sending Noctis into another round of giggle fits.

"Oh my gods." Noctis chuckles with his hand over his mouth to keep himself quieter, face bright red and tears forming in his eyes. "That is adorable."

They watch another, this one Gladio's first day of kindergarten, with a two-year-old Noctis having to be carried off the bus by his bemused father, the boy crying for Gladio to not leave him. The next isn't as long, with Gladio covering himself with a blanket and pulling it off with a loud 'BOO' that sends baby Noctis into a loud squeal of hysterics. The next one the two watch shows the two boys sitting side by side on a couch, heads down and looking ashamed.

"Boys, would one of you like to tells everyone what you were doing?" Clarus asked the two.

"Nothing." Gladio responded with his head still down.

"Oh really? Didn't look like nothing to me, how about to you Regis?"

"Definitely not nothing."

Noctis then scoffed theatrically. *"It was just smooching."*

"And why were the two of you smooching?"

"Duh, he's my boyfriend."

The two men can't help but crack up at the child's lack of filter as he huffs and folds his arms. The teenage version hides his face as a deep blush spreads across his face while Gladio laughs.

"Man you were sassy." he says and nudges the flustered boy. "Hey come on, don't be embarrassed, that was cute."

Noctis still continues to hide his face in embarrassment, feeling his cheeks heat up more and a knot form in his stomach. He kind of wishes he had that unabashed 'say whatever popped into his head' mentality, feeling it would greatly help in a little predicament he has been finding himself in for the past few weeks.

He's fallen for his handsome, smart, and boisterous friend, hard. While he knows Gladio goes both ways, he's not sure he is even the older boy's type especially after seeing his ex. Plus there is the factor of their friendship and the possibility of that being ruined. It sucked and he was nervous. Noctis must have looked distraught and tense, for he feels hot breath tickle his exposed cheek before slightly chapped lips press against it, then feels the vibrations as Gladio

blows air against his skin. Noct can't help but laugh and pull his hands finally from his face, attempting to roll away only for the older man to bear hug him.

A tickle assault is launched onto him, his feet flailing usually as the older boy wiggles his fingers and pokes about his body.

“Stop Gladio, oh my gods, can't, haha, breath!”

Gladio does stop, leaning over the younger boy, both of them out of breath and red-faced. They stare into one another's eyes, the lights illuminating around Gladio's head like a halo, and smile deeply as the brunette slowly dips down. Noctis feels his heartbeat at breakneck speed, body tingles, and little flutters fill his tummy. Was he going to-

A knock on the door startles both boys, Gladio sitting up quickly with a deep flush on his face.

“Yeah!?”

“Hey keep it down in there, Ioan is being a douche today and he'll probably report you.”

“All right, sorry.” Gladio says and flops down with a sigh.

Both boys grow into an awkward silence, with Noct staring at the top of the fort while Gladio drums his fingers against his pillow.

“So umm, movie?”

“Yeah, a movie sounds good.”

And that's what the two of them do, watch terrible old movies and pick apart all the cheesiness or spot mistakes while chuckling softly until both fall asleep, Gladio on his side with an arm slung around the teen who lays with his head tucked up under the older man's chin.

Chapter 5

The need for the nice clothing was finally revealed as Noctis stares in delight at the small restaurant that looks like a log cabin you would see pictured on a syrup bottle, cozy and warm. The place was only available through reservations and had a strict dress policy for its patrons, but besides that, it was greatly popular with even some from Altissia heralding it.

“This place looks great. How did you happen across this?”

“My parents were invited here by the company my dad was transferred to. They fell in love with it and decided to make it a tradition to bring me and my sister here once a year. The first time they brought me was when we were moving, they said I was crying so hard because I missed you but would stop momentarily to eat a piece of my breakfast then begin to sob again.”

“Aww, you poor thing.” Noctis says with a chuckle. “Well, there won’t be anymore crying now that we found one another again and we’ll always be together.”

Gladio smiles tenderly as a blush flourishes onto his cheeks and puts his pinky out, just like they always did as children whenever they would make something a promise. His heart begins to pound, butterflies flutter in his belly, and it feels like he’s floating. It’s so many emotions surging all up into him at once he feels like he’s about to burst, instead though he begins to sniffle, feeling tears brimming from his eyes and tumbling down his cheeks, despite just teasing the other boy.

“Gladio.” he whimpers and places his hands over his face, softly weeping into them. “I’m, I’m so happy we got to meet again after all this time. Even though we drifted apart from being busy, I still kept thinking about you.”

Strong arms wrap around him, swathing him in a warm and comforting embrace. Gladio rests his cheek against the younger boy’s hair and gives it a nuzzle.

“I as well.” he says and pulls away slightly, wiping the tears away from the boy’s face with his thumbs.

“Gladio I,” Noct begins and bites his lip, then looks up at his childhood friend. “I don’t want you to ever leave again.”

Gladio takes the younger boy’s hands in his and holds them to his chest. “I promise I won’t.”

The brunette leans down and places a gentle kiss on his friend’s forehead, them both smiling fondly before one leans down and the other stands on his tip toes. Their lips press together and it feels like time stops all around them, like nothing else in the world matters. It feels so right, like this was meant to be. The sensation lingers even as they separate, looking into each others’ eyes which are filled with so much affection and joy. Gladio lets out a chuckle and scoops the smaller boy up and spins them both, Noctis wrapping his arms around the man’s

neck and laughing gleefully. The two share another deep kiss before Gladio sets Noctis back down, the two clasping hands and walking into the restaurant for breakfast.

The two didn't each much, nor really speak, since they just kept flashing doe eyes at each other and holding each other's hands. Eventually, they leave with a couple doggy-bags, Gladio's arm slung around Noctis' shoulder as the younger man holds onto the appendage while snuggling into the larger man.

"This is the best day ever." Noctis says and looks up at Gladio with a smile.

"It is, it beat out seeing you for the first time in years for me."

"Same."

They climb into Gladio's truck and hold hands as the older man goes to start his truck but stops and looks curiously at the younger man, whose face knits into confusion as he pulls out his phone that has begun to ring.

"What is it?"

"My parents." Noct says and opens the message, a smile forming on his face. "They're starting to send some of the home videos."

"Well, let's see what it is."

Noctis sets his phone into the phone holder after Gladio removes his, then presses play as the two huddle together to watch. The video starts off by showing the house Noctis grew up in before the camera swings to record the tot with his mother holding him, her taking his hand gently to wave at the camera.

"Gladiolus! Gladiolus Amicitia you get back here boy!"

The young couple turns to see a tiny boy bounding from the house across the street, stopping momentarily to look both ways before dashing across to meet them, his mother and father following suit and looking exasperated.

"Hi!" the boy chirps at the man holding the camera, then turns to the woman. "Hi!" he says and then turns to the nine-month-old. "Hi new friend!"

The boy is scooped up with a squeal and begins to squirm in his father's hold, the man looking deeply apologetic. *"I am deeply sorry he's bothering you, he just got a bit overexcited that another little boy was moving in."*

"It is quite all right." Regis says with a bemused tone and extends out his hand. *"My names Regis, this is my wife Aulea, and our son Noctis."*

"Nice to meet you, I'm Clarus. This," he begins and presents the giggling boy. *"is my son Gladiolus."* Clarus says and nods to the dark-skinned woman stepping beside him. *"And Amaranta, my wife."*

“Nice to meet the both of you.” Aulea says and smiles at the two before looking down at her son who has begun to squirm in her hold. *“You want down?”*

She sets the boy down and keeps her hands near as he wobbles but stays standing, then watches with amusement as he looks up at the other boy and wiggles his fingers. Gladio is set down next to the little boy, them looking at each other curiously before the two hug and giggle, eliciting chuckles and coos from their parents and some neighbors.

The two young men smile and turn their heads to look at one another, eyes filled with so much affection and love, before leaning in for another kiss.

End Notes

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