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Ming rushed through the dense trees until she found a small, lonely clearing. The brown grass was dull and lifeless, unaided by the silver moonlight that made it appear gray. Most if it reached her ankles; no one had tended to this place in a long time. Up ahead, a tall house rose up before her, one that had once been a beautiful sight to see, owned by a couple who had once had a cotton plantation. As a Kitsune with two fox-tails, she was relatively new, but she could use her abilities to see the past unfold around her.

The plantation owners had been happy. In the end, they had three lovely children and lived a joyous life. Waving her hand through the air, Ming reverted the scene before her back to the present.

He appeared in the broken doorway of the abandoned 19th century house. Blond curls hung loosely around his shoulders, and she admired his slender, muscular build. "Dero." Her whispered words wafted through the gentle breeze, carrying his name toward him. She dashed toward him and he reached his hand out toward her. With a smile on her face and inside her heart, Ming placed her right hand in his, only...

Her hand went through his.

She looked up at Dero in horror, shaking her head. "Dero, you're fading!"

He glanced down at himself with saddened eyes. "I cannot keep up this human form for much longer. Ming, my love, my energy is... almost gone."

Tears sprang to Ming's eyes, evidence of her pain. "No! That means..."

"I will never come back."

Ming refused to believe it. First, his emotions would flee, then his memories and thoughts, until his ghost-like ethereal form turned into energy and became a mindless will-of-the-wisp. It was the fate of all Ethereals once a will-of-the-wisp turned them from a human to an Ethereal, or ghouls, as the locals called them. "I love you, Dero. P – Please don't leave me!"

Dero smiled at her and his hand traced the skin on her cheek gently. She didn't feel it, but she could imagine his touch, the feel of him against her. "I love you more than you will ever know, Ming. This is not forever. You will never forget me. I will live on, through your memory of me, of us and... our time together."

Ming shook her head, tears flooding down her cheeks. She wrapped her arms around his chest, as the rest of his body slowly began to fade. "No! Please, Dero! Don't go. *Don't leave me!*" Pain tore through her heart and sorrow ate away at her soul. They should have had a lifetime together; a house like this one, children, happiness...

Not this.

Dero smiled at her with pain in his own eyes. "This... This is goodbye, for now."

His body faded into nothingness as he became an Ethereal once again. A deep-rooted pain surged through and she sobbed and screamed, longing for him to return to her. When at last she gained her composure, she whispered through the tears.
“Goodbye for now.”