

Rivers Part (Pilot)

By Ethan Vue

Chapter 1: Lucas and Timothy

“Lucas.”

“Yes, Tim?”

“Let’s break up.”

On the bridge over the Mississippi River, the two broken lovers stood – bathed in the deep orange hue of the sunset. The wind had held its breath and all that was heard was the harsh, cold river. The rush of adrenaline and the increase of beating hearts could almost make the river run even faster. Lucas’s mouth was frozen and his eyebrows curled slightly. What was going on inside his mind? Did he feel no emotion? Did he feel all of them? He replied, breaking the tension,

“Okay.”

Finally, the wind let out a breath and embraced the broken lovers with a warm breeze. Leaves and pollens had swept up off the ground and followed the wind’s current. Lucas watched as Timothy smiled. His hair moved elegantly with the

wind and the sunset reflected from his deep brown eyes. Still, Lucas saw the sadness in Timothy's eyes. Lucas and Timothy were neighbors and they lived across from each other. When they first met, Lucas and his family had just moved from California to Minnesota. It was summer, and outside was humid. While Lucas was hauling boxes, he glanced around at his surroundings. There, both his and Timothy's eyes locked. They two stared for a brief moment. However, in that brief moment, the two felt an instant connection.

Back on the bridge, over the Mississippi River, Timothy's face reminded Lucas of that moment when they first met. Timothy stayed at the bridge while Lucas left. He arrived at an empty home. His parent had left to run errands. Lucas went straight to his room. He collapsed to the floor with the same blank expression. Lucas's breathing became quick and heavy. He grabs his hair and clenches his fist. A burst of short groaning and screams echoed across the empty house. This was it. This was where their chapter ended. Where Lucas and Timothy were no longer lovers, and now strangers.

Chapter 2: Lucas Her

The day Lucas and Timothy parted was the summer after their high school graduation. Now, it's Fall; Lucas's freshman year. At this time, Lucas's personality had changed. He kept to himself even more and had no courage to strike up conversations. Before the semester started, he made a special request to dorm alone. During Welcome Week, he avoided any peer activities. Wherever and whenever he walked, he'd stare at the ground at his feet.

On the first day of class, Lucas sat in the back. He was the first to be there. As students trickled in, one student caught his eye the most. There, Timothy had walked through the door and sat in the front of the class. Lucas's eyes widened. He felt a cold sensation engulf his body. His breath shortened. His vision became murky. It was as if the entire room submerged to the bottom of the sea. Everything seemed to happen slowly like objects moving in the water.

More students walked in and greeted Timothy. Timothy looked around the room and noticed Lucas. He was also shocked but then smiled. The room suddenly resurfaced to shore. Lucas could finally breathe again. His sight returned, however, he was confused as to why Timothy had smiled at him. Timothy looks away and class starts.

This interaction between the two strangers continued throughout the semester. From a distance, they saw each other. From a distance, Timothy would always smile. The two never stopped to talk with each other. Lucas, however, was driven to the point of paranoia. The more he thought about Timothy, the more he became distracted. The first semester flew by and Lucas's grades were poor. Before Winter Break, he sat down with his college advisor, Rebecca.

"Lucas Her," Rebecca said, "I'm sure you're well aware that you're grades are, you know-"

"Awful?"

"Not, awful. But more like..."

"Horrific?"

"No-" she sighs, "You can still recover from this."

"You think so?"

"I know so. But, in order for me to help you, you have to help me. What is it that's keeping you from performing academically well?"

“Well, it’s personal. I don’t mind talking about it but it’s difficult for me to describe the situation. It’s all that I think about and I can’t even focus on my studies, I-”

“Okay. Let’s stop there. You don’t need to tell me every detail.”

Lucas breathed out slowly, “Right, sorry.”

“No need to be sorry at all. I think for the next semester, you should register for an elective. I remember you like art, is that correct?”

“I do. But what does that have to do with *this*.”

“Sometimes, you need a distraction from a distraction. I’m sure making and learning about art can help clear your mind.”

“I guess it would...”

“Great! So glad we’re making progress. Is there anything more you need from me?”

“No. Thank you though for your help.”

During Winter Break, all Lucas could think of was Timothy. The weird encounters. His smile. His soft brown hair. His deep brown eyes. Lucas was up all night and hardly slept. Already, Spring semester started and he was exhausted. He looks at his schedule and his first class is art. He sets his bag down and sits. The professor walks in and starts the lesson. Ten minutes pass and a student slams open the door.

“So sorry I’m late,” he shouted. “I was driving on 35W and there was just a lot of traffic and there was this car behind me who was up against me like, ‘Okay sir or ma’am, if you wanna go so fast then go around me! We both got our driver’s license so I know you’re smart enough to’-”

The professor interrupts him, “Okay, no need to share that. You’ve already interrupted the class enough. Please, have a seat.”

“Oh, right.”

He turns away from the professor and faces the class. From the peripheral vision of Lucas’s eye, he saw the student approach closer and closer to him. Then, his legs were right beside him. Lucas was determined to not make eye contact with him and stared directly at the professor. A few seconds passed and the student asked,

“Mind if I sit here?”

Lucas replied, “Uh, sure. But, you wouldn’t see well back here”

“Oh...then, why do you sit here?”

“Yeah, you can sit here.”

“Thanks! I’m Willace by the way; Willace Lor.”

He extends his arm for a handshake. Lucas looks at his hand. He wasn’t expecting someone so energetic to sit next to someone so dull. Lucas reaches out his hand and finally looks at Willace. Lucas was taken aback. The first thing Lucas noticed was Willace’s smile. It was warm and bright.

It felt like Lucas was standing on a hill at dawn and suddenly the sunrise engulfed everything in its light. Lucas looked away and he was back in reality. He remembers what his advisor told him: *Sometimes, you need a distraction from a distraction.*

“You’re gonna leave me hanging?” Willace asked. Then, Lucas reached his arm and gave Willace a handshake.

“Sorry. I’m Lucas. Lucas Her.”