

Title: Dreamscape  
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Series: Ranma ½  
Pairing: Ranma/Ryoga

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Notes: This is the story that inspired my doujinshi of the same name. It began as the response to a Lyric Wheel challenge on the Rryaoi mailing list, in which the objective is to accept a random song from another author and attempt to write a story with that song in mind. The song I received was "Possession" by Sarah McLachlan, and this story was the result. Now that both the story and the doujinshi exist, one might say that the latter could actually be considered a prequel to the former.

Warning: Lemon

~DREAMSCAPE~

Another day. Another sun setting on the end of twenty four wasted hours.

Ranma sighed as he hopped off the roof of the Tendo dojo, the warm purple and pink colors of evening splashing over his otherwise shadowed form. He moved lightly, but he was as heavy as always, the tragedy of sunset rolling through his mind ambivalently.

On one hand, he hated evening, hated it for being the death of another day in which he failed to live up to the expectations of those around him, not to mention the harsh demands he placed on himself. No matter how many opponents he bested, how many rescues he orchestrated, or how many new moves he mastered; it was never enough. He wanted more, wanted everything, wanted to be the undisputed best in the world. It was within his reach and he possessed the ability, he only had to work hard enough, become good enough, so that he would be able to grab hold of it.

A high minded goal, to be sure. And one that he knew would ultimately make no difference in respects that mattered. Being the best in the world would never fill the great emptiness that was always yawning wide open within him. The top was destined to be a very lonely place, he knew that already just from the mild pain that often resulted when he distanced himself from family and those who might have been friends. Each day that he worked, he placed another brick in his growing wall of aloof indifference. Once it was complete, that barrier would be so high as to be unscalable. But Ranma had long ago accepted that. It was the price to be paid for greatness, and really, what

else did he have to reach for? What he really desired, in his most secret heart, was far too lofty to be grasped.

Alternately, Ranma loved evening. Loved the play of colors and the chilling of the air. Found solace and beauty in the way that the koi pond turned into a dark mirror, with shimmering highlights and the palette of the sky skating across its surface like a reflection from another world. He liked the sound of the evening wind as it roused the wind chime hanging at the back of the house, and most especially Ranma enjoyed the feeling of sleepy heaviness which descended on the place he lived. He could feel it as he stepped in from the porch. No one had the strength left to berate him about anything, or give him furious looks, or complain about imagined slights he been responsible for during the day. All thoughts were slowly succumbing to the seduction of fluffy soft bedding, warm bedclothes, and comfortable pillows.

Everyone, everything - Ranma included - was that much closer to sleep. And that was what Ranma truly loved about evenings.

As things wound down, the television was turned off and the colors of evening gave way to the shroud of night, Ranma made his way upstairs, drawling out the occasional good-night to Kasumi or Nabiki. He paused only briefly as Akane lingered at her door and peeked out as he passed, her dark eyes filled with weariness and vague glimmers of annoyance leftover from the days events. "Have you seen P-Chan?" she asked, the tone of her voice almost an accusation.

"No, I ain't seen your dumb pig," Ranma told her shortly, tucking his hands behind his head as he went. The slam of her door jarred the entire house, but it was music to his ears. Akane's nights without P-Chan were the pig-tailed martial artist's favorite hours of all.

Though he shared his room, Ranma was alone at night. The large bulk of man or panda which slept beside him was usually so oblivious as to not even be there, and that was fine with Ranma. He often laid on his pallet, hands tucked behind his head, and stared up at the ceiling, without seeing the wood that it was comprised of, or even the shadows that clung to it like a fog of bats. Ranma instead watched the play of his thoughts and memories, running through them over and over, mentally pointing out missed cues and muffed lines. He thought of eyes. Large beautiful eyes of dark garnet brown, filled with reflections of emotions, feelings he himself had prompted into existence. He mused over a time long ago when two boys had been friends and the fate which had made them rivals.

But none of these nocturnal meditations were accompanied by bitterness. In fact, they were the single bright window in Ranma's growing wall, the one thing that he kept as his own and did not give away to others. It was something he could never truly possess, thanks to his ambitions, but which he could hold tightly to regardless. Something that kept him warm and occupied on nights such as this. Perfect gifts that made all the training and strife and chaos bearable. Snapshot visions of fights, of

touching, of secret yearning. The incredible explosive power of an anger so strong it could shatter rock or crater the earth. The far more poignant effect of a rare smile filled with hope, longing, or a reflection of the wide open world. Moments of poetry. Memories trapped in time. They each belonged to Ranma alone.

It was only at night, when the household was asleep, that Ranma sought to indulge himself in what others might have called day dreams were the curtain of darkness not drawn over the sky. These were things he could not show the rest of the world, things he could not expose to the sun, least they wither under that harsh light. They came out only at night, when Ranma's mind opened and his slender fingers conducted his body in a harmony so moving, so releasing, so liberating, that the impact sometimes lasted far into the next day. Thoughts of warmth, of powerful muscles beneath his fingertips, of laying under the full sight of the moon and stars, pressing over and into the body of his rival . . . these images were strong enough with yearning and desire that they often followed Ranma into his dreams.

There - nothing stood between them. No ambitions. No stigmas. Or fights. Or sidelong looks of disapproval. No secrets. No lies or denials. Within the dreamscape, they had only themselves, stripped raw and laid bare for honest viewing.

Their meeting place was always the same. A huge empty field laid out like a quilt beneath the arching spread of many cherry trees. Above, the sky was strewn with the spilt salt of thousands of stars and the glistening eye of the moon as She stared down and watched over them in this place of safety and retreat. On the ground, high grasses ruffled in waves under the influence of a wind that was warm and could hardly be felt when it touched the skin. Everything was in shades of black and muted grey, save the slowly falling petals of the cherry trees. Between the grasses were patches of absolute darkness, so still and ink black that they seemed to be portals into nothingness. Only the occasional touch of a neon pink petal to their surfaces belied that impression. Then concentric rings of gold spread away from the gentle disruption, silently skating across the unseen waters to ultimately disappear.

Ranma usually arrived first. Memories of playing his own body lingered with him as he waited, heart beating hard within his chest, eyes closed as echos of pleasure undulated around inside. The warm breeze ruffled him, pulling his braid loose and scattering long dark hair around his head. He usually wore his red Chinese shirt here, but like everything else the color was greyed out because it was something that didn't really matter much. He knew it only by how it fit and moved with him. The legs of his black pants flapped lightly under the influence of the wind.

He always sensed when the other arrived, and would open his eyes - dark piercing blue in the grayscale world - to drink in the sight. The young man stopped in front of him, at arm's length so that he would have to stretch if he wanted to touch. He always wore black - pants and a sleeveless shirt that well showed off the power trapped in the firm trim muscles of his arms. Leather laces criss-crossed his calves. Cherry blossom petals seemed to be especially attracted to him and would drift on the wind to

reach him, turning little midair dances that caught the glittering shine of the moon. The resulting sparkles showed up in his eyes as he stared back at Ranma. Eyes as dark and heavy as the distances between the stars.

“Ryoga . . . “ Ranma greeted in a low tone that was less like speaking and more like listening for a response to a statement which would be intrinsically understood without having to be heard. There was always a quiet implied joy in the word, something that Ranma could never let slip in the waking world, but here it was as much a part of the other boy’s name as the characters used to write it. “You made it.”

Ryoga nodded slowly, habitually casting his gaze downwards toward the soft grasses frilling at his feet. The wind caught his hair, sending the dark untamed locks in every direction around his face. The muted bandanna, which would be yellow and black under the light of day, did very little good in keeping his heavy bangs out of his eyes. His hands at his sides opened and closed, tightening into repeated fists, causing the muscles of his arms to flex.

“Of course I made it,” he replied, his low voice purring through the air to be received by Ranma. When he looked up, through his bangs, there was a rare glint of humor in his eyes. “This is the one place I can always find, no matter where I am.”

Ranma did not have to hesitate here, as he would have in the real world. Ryoga knew what he wanted, why they both came. Ranma stepped forward, his feet swishing through the grasses, until he came to a stop before the other boy. He lifted his hands, placed them on the warm flesh of Ryoga’s upper arms and squeezed lightly. “Ryoga . . . “ he whispered, giving life to the cherished name once again as he leaned forward and pressed a simple kiss to the Lost Boy’s cheek. Ryoga closed his eyes briefly, and a small smile appeared on his slightly curled lips.

“Talk t’me . . . you know your words keep me alive . . . “ Ranma requested quietly, pressing in close and moving one hand up to cup around the back of Ryoga’s neck, his fingers losing themselves in soft hair. His other hand dropped to find its way around the boy’s waist, pulling their bodies together. He heard Ryoga make a soft needy sound in the back of his throat as he kissed again, this time letting his tongue loose to play along the lines of his partner’s gently rounded face. “Say that you’re mine.”

“I’m yours . . . “ Ryoga responded, tipping his head back a bit to give Ranma better access. In this place - it was true. He belonged to Ranma. Though in the real world, the Lost Boy was a bitter rival, there was no hiding his desire here. He adored Ranma’s touch and the lingering echos of previous pleasure that he could feel within the blue-eyed boy’s body. When they were together on the dreamscape, Ryoga dropped his anger and hurt and let his true feelings show. He was Ranma’s plaything. Perhaps that was also true in the waking hours, but in a far different way. A much more hurtful way. Here, the play was a delight and Ryoga had no pride to hold him in check. As Ranma’s mouth moved over his skin and he felt warmth in the friction between their

pelvises, Ryoga's inner poet was released and he gladly gave up the words that he knew his partner wanted to hear.

"I am yours . . . " he repeated throatily as Ranma's teeth played with his earlobe and the hand at the small of his back dropped to cup his rear through his pants. "You're my trap, a bondage I cannot break free of. Nor do I even want to try. Ranma . . . " Ryoga drew in a sharp gasping breath, feeling the other boy press harder into him, grinding their hips together as he kissed his way over Ryoga's closed eyelids and down his nose. "I love you. I need your hands to play me, your kisses to baptize me. My body longs to be your breath. My soul wants to be your heartbeat . . . "

Ranma pulled back a moment, giving the Lost Boy the gift of a loving twinkling smile, starlight purring in his eyes. "Ryoga . . . that's beautiful."

Ryoga drew his head up and met Ranma's gaze, finally lifting his own hands to slide around his companion's body. He pressed his forehead to Ranma's and offered a small sweet smile of his own. "I mean it."

Ranma knew that was the truth. There was no need to hold back here, no need to lie, and since the very first time Ranma had dreamed of this place, Ryoga had been refreshingly honest with him. It warmed his body all the way through, washed away the heavy dirt of daylight trials and nonsense. Lowering his hands, Ranma slid them beneath the waistband of Ryoga's pants and hooked his fingers under the hem of his black shirt. He pulled it out and off over the nomad's head in one deft move that probably would have been impossible in reality. But, this wasn't reality by any means, and Ranma had trained himself to be a very lucid dreamer.

Ryoga's bare chest and torso were a magnet for Ranma's hands, and as he pressed them to the Lost Boy's warm tanned flesh, stroking his fingers over the taunt form of those trim and powerful muscles, Ranma leaned in and pressed a kiss to his partner's throat, inwardly pleased beyond measure that Ryoga trusted him enough to hold steady and let him do whatever he wanted. Keeping his lips against the gentle vibration of his lover's heartbeat, Ranma simply held there for a long moment and drank in the other boy's wonderful outdoor scent.

It was heady, and almost like a drug. Ranma suddenly felt marvelously drunk. Pulling back, he grinned at Ryoga and shifted his hands to the boy's shoulders, pressing down with insistence. His dark eyed companion got the idea and sank to his knees, his own fingers plucking at the waistband of Ranma's pants, so that he could pull the garment down with him and let it pool around his lover's feet. Already an arousal was warm and pressing against the fabric of Ranma's undergarment, and he let his head fall back and eyes close as Ryoga's talented fingers extracted him from that confinement and exposed him to the gentle breeze. Shivering deep inside, Ranma took a moment to kick his useless clothes away, and they disappeared as obligingly as Ryoga's shirt had.

“Give me your hands, Ryoga . . . “ Ranma said throatily, the intensity of the Lost Boy’s fingers touching him almost too much. Ryoga complied immediately, lifting his arms above his head. Ranma caught both his wrists in a tight grasp and pressed his other hand to the top of his dark eyed partner’s head, to grip into his untamed mane of unruly hair. Ryoga leaned forward on his knees and nuzzled in Ranma’s crotch, soft breath hot against taunt bare flesh. This prompted Ranma to shut his eyes tightly and secure his hold on the Lost Boy as Ryoga first lipped gently down the length of his erection. Then the heat of his eager mouth closed over the head of that roused organ and he drew it past his teeth and deep against the top of his throat.

The sensation was incredible, and it took all of Ranma’s strength of body and will not to waver and succumb to his lover’s talented mouth. Legs feeling as if they were made of water, Ranma unconsciously bucked his hips, shoving his arousal further between Ryoga’s lips, but there was no protest aside from a moan that came from the depths of the Lost Boy’s chest. He faltered only a moment in his sucking, pinned tongue stroking the underside of Ranma’s erection, before he continued. With each contraction of the muscles of his mouth, the suction increased in intensity and just a touch of speed was added. Ranma did his very best to maintain, to stay steady and prolong the pleasure that always seemed to slip past far too quickly, but it was next to impossible. He could not resist Ryoga’s talent for long, and soon the blue eyed boy was fighting to keep his hips still and stay on his feet.

His arousal vibrated with need and heat, but Ranma gripped his fingers into Ryoga’s hair and forced the Lost Boy’s mouth off. “St - stop . . . “ he panted, the order both firm and breathless. Ryoga tipped his head back and Ranma could see the flush of his face and the passion that gathered as hot drops of sweat on his eyelashes. His open mouth was rosy and swollen from his activities, and he gasped for air as well, but honestly Ranma did not think that Ryoga could look more beautiful than he did in these moments when he was trapped in the midst of desire.

Ranma lowered himself to his knees and drew Ryoga’s body close with a tight embrace, letting his wrists free. He zealously sought the Lost Boy’s lusty mouth with his own, trapping his partner with hard and devouring lips. Arms going around Ranma’s neck, Ryoga responded greedily, and for several long extended heartbeats that ticked away in the night, the two boys wrestled their way through a hungry passionate kiss. They took no heed of the breeze that failed to cool their inflamed bodies, nor did they see the swirl of cherry blossom petals which vortexed around them like guardians keeping attendance.

When the kiss broke, both lovers gasped out a few inarticulate words concerning want and love, but what they said was lost in the dream and none of it particularly mattered anyway. Like their clothing, the grayscale words fell away unneeded. Ranma pressed Ryoga back down into the soft ocean of cresting grass waves, and his kisses moved down the Lost Boy’s centerline, as if being drawn downwards by a force that would not be denied. Ryoga’s back arched under the assault of his partner’s mouth, and his own arousal pressed upwards as he buried his hands into Ranma’s hair in turn.

A long desperate moan came from his throat, to be echoed by Ranma a moment later when he arrived at his ultimate destination.

The blue-eyed martial artist was reaching the limits of his control by the time he had kissed his way down Ryoga's wonderfully trim and supple body. The Lost Boy's noises and fluttering movements were driving him toward a climax he was hard pressed to contain, but Ranma fought to stay steady, and as his hand closed around his lover's sturdy arousal, it trembled only a bit. Ryoga gasped at the feel of those strong slender fingers, and his body buckled. He reached up and grasped Ranma's shoulders, pulling his partner down rather abruptly, hips rising to meet him. He desperately wanted what Ranma had been holding back on, and every signal - from his covetous grip to the sounds growling from his throat - were telling Ranma that he'd best get on with it, or Ryoga himself would lose control.

With a quick grin, Ranma obliged his plaything. As with everything else in the dream, he mentally manipulated exactly what was needed, so that when his fingers pressed into Ryoga's opening, they slid in easily with the aid of a lubricant that had materialized from nowhere. Ryoga cried out in ecstasy nonetheless, pushing down on the invading digits in an attempt to get them deeper. The Lost Boy's fangs showed as he tossed his head from side to side and clung even tighter to Ranma, fingers pressing into the resistant flesh of tensed shoulders.

"Ranma . . . uh, kami . . . Ranma . . . " he muttered lowly, poetry long lost, words coming between gasps for breath as his body first tensed and then decompressed, inner muscles relaxing around Ranma's fingers, giving the blue-eyed boy unspoken permission that everything was ripe to continue. And not a moment too soon. Ranma removed his fingers slowly and slid his arms under the small of Ryoga's back, hoisting his hips up further, taking a snapshot moment to marvel at the traces left behind as beads of molten sweat rolled along the lines of the Lost Boy's body. Leaning down over his lover to lick up a taste of that salty condensation, Ranma could not suppress an aching moan as he pushed himself into the tightness of Ryoga's depths.

Then they were both still, blinded by unthinkable pleasure and unable to think or even react. Ranma's being blanked out as he felt the Lost's Boy's inner muscles tighten and constrict around him, and for a moment he was afraid that he would wake up and leave the dream woefully unfinished. Ryoga froze at the sensation of Ranma's length urging inward, tickling at the bundle of nerves which sent shocks of debilitating rapture slamming into his head. He too was worried over the stability of the dream, and his fingers clutched at Ranma ever tighter in desperation. Things could not break apart now! Not when they were so near to climax, so close to the moment when their hearts would beat in unison, when they would be closer than they could ever dare to be in the real world.

The fragile moment passed and they stabilized. Ranma began a slow sliding pace that plucked teasingly at Ryoga's secret inner spot of stimulation, and the blue-eyed boy again lowered his head to lap at the beaded moisture which covered the Lost

Boy's body. It was a gentle activity that he could not keep up with for very long, for he was far too aroused, much much too close to the edge. With each inward thrust, Ranma's speed increased and his rhythm lost beats, and Ryoga's hips thrust upwards to meet him at each counterpoint. Faster and faster they went, until they had completely lost any semblance of order and regularity. Together the two boys essentially writhed together, as Ranma drove himself into his partner with all of his strength and Ryoga received him ardently, matching his lover's power with equal wildness.

Unlike the grayscale surroundings, their joint climax was brilliant. Red hot and burning blue, it soared around them in a uncontrolled burst of ki not unlike the Hiryu Shoten Ha, however there was no ice in this torrent. This was the combined heat of two were never allowed to show their true passions, except for in this small corner of unreality. Though both had released their share of power in the past, separately their explosions were to the nova that they produced together as a roman candle is to a nuclear blast. For several long moments, their sleeping world was a flower of heat and color, each edge and shadow sharp and defined.

When the passion faded, the returning blacks and grays found the two boys twined tightly together, holding each other as if drowning in a sea of waking dreams. Ranma laid out on Ryoga, covering his body, and clenched his hands on either side of the Lost Boy's face. They pressed their foreheads together once again and shut their eyes. The sweat beads that rolled over Ranma's cheeks mimicked Ryoga's teardrops.

"I love you," Ranma whispered, his voice shaky and low, trembling with this emotion that he hated to show. He'd been taught that caring and compassion created weakness, and though he didn't believe it, the conditioning was almost impossible to break. But here . . . in this world . . . he could speak his heart, and he knew that Ryoga would never think less of him.

For, of course, Ranma knew that this Ryoga was nothing more than a dream.

Ryoga tipped his face just enough to brush the whisper of a quivering kiss to Ranma's lips, tasting the salt and lingering echo of passion there. He too equated love with weakness, but for a far different reason than that of his companion. For the Lost Boy, too many years of secret desire for his rival had prevented him from exacting his revenge and restoring his honor. Now, he knew, he was so far in love with Ranma that he would never be able to beat him, no matter how hard he trained, no matter how good he got. And there was resentment over that, as if he felt that Ranma had purposely forced Ryoga to want him so that his life would fall empty of meaning and purpose. In his heart, the Lost Boy knew that was a lie. The love and resentment were his own weakness, and an exploitable vulnerability, which was why he never dared to show his true heart during waking hours.

But here . . . in this world . . . there was no rivalry. There was no reason to hide, and from the first time he'd found himself in this place, Ryoga had let his heart blossom



open. Not having to hide felt wonderful, liberating, and he was happy to belong to Ranma, to let the blue-eyed wonder take control of his body and play him like an willing and eager instrument. In this place, he could answer Ranma's confession of love whole-heartedly, without shame.

"I love you too, Ranma . . . "

For, of course, Ryoga knew that this Ranma was nothing more than a dream. An embraceable secret hope, something that could be touched in the privacy of the night and carried with him during the day. Something that belonged only to Ryoga, to give him strength, the one thing that he kept as his own and did not give away to others. It was something he could never truly possess, thanks to his driving need for honor and revenge, but which he could hold tightly to regardless. Something that kept him warm and occupied on nights such as this. Perfect gifts that made all the training and strife and chaos bearable.

When his eyes opened, it was to the heavy darkness that filled space above him. Body covered with sweat, and one hand buried deep in the pants that he'd worn to sleep in that night, the Lost Boy heaved a great sigh and slid his other hand under his head so that he could stare unblinking toward the dome of his solitary tent. From beyond its fabric walls, he could just hear the rustling sounds of night - a cool wind crinkling through leaves and grasses, the quiet songs of distant choirs of crickets, an occasional rustle in the brush or sound from an owl. All familiar. All real.

Dreadfully, regretfully real.

The air in the tent was hot, and Ryoga was sure that condensation was already building on the inside curve of the dome. There was a weighty scent clinging to him, that of sex without the benefit of a partner, and in the heat of his pants, his fingers were coated with stickiness. Grimacing, Ryoga withdrew his hand and turned onto his side, the lingering aching whispers of passion unfulfilled rolling with him.

Casting his garnet brown gaze into the unrelenting shadows, the Lost Boy sighed again and a gravity influenced weight of loneliness and further resentment descended upon him. Just as it did on most nights when he woke from the hungry nocturnal vision of coupling with Ranma. He might have called it a recurring dream, except that it seemed to be different each time he experienced it, save the steadfast landscape and the feelings of honesty and abandonment.

Ryoga chuckled humorlessly to himself as he always did when the notion of telling Ranma about the dream popped up insistently in his head. Something inside spoke in whispers to assure him that revealing this secret would not result in pain, as he was so positive that it would. Constantly, when he was with Ranma during waking hours, the need to speak up lingered on his tongue. But he would not give in to it. There was no way that Ryoga dared open himself up like that. Not to anyone, but especially not to Ranma. To do so would be to invite retribution and possibly even

ostracism. Even though Ryoga was usually lost and didn't get to be with Ranma nearly as much as he would have liked, and even though his few moments with the pig-tailed martial artist were usually spent in fighting . . . it was better than nothing, and Ryoga didn't want to risk losing that.

So, the dreams would have to stay in the realm of his mind, along with the burning secret desire. As always, the Lost Boy spent quite some time under the enveloping darkness of night strengthening his resolve, fueling it with tattered lingering traces of the vivid pleasure he had imagined on the dreamscape in the arms of his rival, under the watchful eye of the moon and a thousand scattered stars. And when sleep at last overtook him, Ryoga embraced it gladly and without pride, stepping out onto the field of shivering grasses and dancing neon petals, to face his perpetually waiting lover once again.

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