

Finding Home

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When Soren met Ike, it was the first time he ever felt like he belonged. Like he was home. Path of Radiance story.

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Chapter 1 - Finding Home

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1 - Finding Home

Hi, everyone! Wow, it sure has been a while since I wrote anything worth posting. This is a one-shot from the new Fire Emblem game, Path of Radiance, and was written, literally, in one go. Heh...and that may be the first time, too, since it usually takes me ages to write anything! (And I'm still working on a story I've been writing for three years...)

Disclaimer: Fire Emblem is not mine. And trust me; you would *know* if it was. -wink-

No real warnings for this other than some spoilers for Ike and Soren's B and A supports. Because as much as I love those two as a couple, it just isn't in this one.

Finding Home

A small, blue-haired figure darted through the crowded streets of a town, weaving through people's legs as he ran. With large, gleaming, ocean-blue eyes and a small, roughly-hewn wooden practice sword, he couldn't have been older than six or seven years old. A childish enthusiasm was about him, sharply contrasting with the dull and dirty walls of the buildings and the equally insipid faces of the town's people, which blurred together as he ran. It was an aimless chase with imaginary quarry, fueled only by the overwhelming curiosity and energy of the boy's young spirit. And in this manner he continued to run, short-sleeved tunic and knee-length pants flapping, until a tiny flash of color caught his eye. Nearly tripping over his small, bare feet, he slowed to a stop, peering back along the stretch of dirty, grey wall for the disturbance.

Another child sat there with its knees drawn to its chest, seeming to be about the same age as the first, though considerably worse for the wear. At first glance, there was nothing distinguishing the figure from the drab stone wall behind it. The child wore a simple tunic, looking like a potato sack, though its original color could not be determined from beneath the caked-on filth. Although his skin was equally dirty, as well as covered with bruises and scratches, the few patches that showed through were unnaturally pale, gleaming a pinkish-orange color in the dim, evening sun. Long and stringy black hair that was matted with dirt hung limply over most of the small boy's face, which was thin and starved-looking, showing no trace of the baby-fat that was normal for a child of his age. However, the forehead showed through clearly, and it was the forehead that had caught the other boy's attention. A strange, bright red mark could be seen there, too natural to be paint but too bright to be a scar, and it stood out profoundly against the drab tones around it.

Tentatively, the blue-haired boy approached the crouching child. At first, he didn't stir as the light footsteps grew closer, and his eyes remained closed. However, when the light rustle of fabric occurred as the wooden practice sword was tucked into its wielder's belt, his eyes slowly slid open, revealing large, luminous orbs that were the same crimson color as the mark on the small boy's forehead. Undeterred by this oddity, the blue-haired child smiled down at the other and spoke.

"Hi there!" His voice was also young, and was fairly high-pitched. At these words, the black-haired child's eyes widened and he shifted slightly. He made no effort to reply, though, so the other boy continued. "What's wrong? You look lonely."

The boy clenched his teeth together, tilting his head down and shaking it rapidly. From close-up, thin, dried tear-tracks could be seen running down his face, making pale streaks through the dirt shine slightly as his head tossed. This gesture did not appear to be in denial of the previous statement, though, so the first boy continued. "My name's Ike. What's yours?"

Keeping his eyes downcast, the other boy paused for a moment before replying, "...Sss...rre..." Both of the children's eyes widened as he struggled again to speak. "Sso...nnn..." However, it was to no avail—the words just would not come out. Sighing a petite but obviously dejected sigh, he slid further down the wall and curled inward, wincing slightly as he rested his chin on his scraped knees.

"Can you...not talk?" Ike asked, gazing, puzzled, at the diminutive child, who gave a small, sad nod as an affirmative. After a moment of slightly uncomfortable silence between the two, the still-standing boy visibly brightened.

"But that doesn't matter!" He exclaimed, and the smaller of the two lifted his head from his knees and looked up at the other boy in surprise. After pointedly adjusting his tattered green headband, Ike knelt down, extending a small, slightly callused hand to the pitiful child in front of him. "We can still be friends! How does that sound?"

With a tiny nod and an even smaller smile, the other boy reached out and took it.

"You know, when you were trying to say your name earlier, it sounded a bit like `Soren'. Can I call you Soren? I like that name."

Tightening his hold on the taller boy's hand, Soren nodded.

Ike's home turned out to be a miniature fortress of sorts, with towering walls of grey stone and a tall, wooden gate as the only entrance. Standing on tiptoe and extending both hands in order to reach, the small, blue-haired boy's fingers grabbed the cool iron of the makeshift knocker's handle. As he smacked the metal arc onto the hard, iron plate behind it, several loud cracks resounded through the crisp,

evening air. A few moments later, after the child had lowered himself back to the ground and once again grasped the other boy's hand, the door creaked open. Soren took a moment to marvel at what he could see in the dim light of evening, which was augmented by several merrily burning torches that were scattered around the inside. A small wooden building stood up against the left side of the wall, and two slightly rickety canvas tents had been pitched along the back. Dim lights shone from the window of the little building and from under the tents, proving their occupants to be still awake.

As a shadow fell over them, both boys looked up at the man who had opened the door; one's face held happy recognition, and the other's showed some apprehension. He was an immensely tall man, with roughly cropped grey hair and thin, dark eyes that seemed to scrutinize whatever he looked at. With his fairly simple garb of a loosely-tied tunic, pants tucked into knee-length leather boots, and half un-shouldered and chest armor, it seemed that he too had been winding down for the night. At the sight of the large axe he carried, Soren shrank back slightly, but the other boy held his hand firmly in place as he greeted the man, "Father! I'm home!"

A warm smile lit up the giant of a man's face, wrinkles crinkling the scars around his eyes as he spoke, "Ike, it's good to see you're back." Lowering himself to his knees so as to be at eye-level with the children, he shifted his gaze to the unfamiliar boy. "Son, who is this?"

The blue-haired boy grinned widely as he tilted his head toward the other child, exclaiming, "Look, father! I made a friend!"

And between the welcoming smile the man offered him and Ike's hand still wrapped firmly around his own, Soren finally felt that he, too, was home.

Owari

Finished. Please try not to flame me, although if you do, they will be used for my science fair experiment, as I am burning things.

Adios, everyone!