

# SMR

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*An exiled princess, a young lord, and a betrayed and orphaned prince. The three ingredients that make SMR the fanfic that it is.*

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# 1 - Alone and Done For

## Chapter 1

### Alone and Done For

The sun rose over the kingdom of Jarus. Their princess, Sierra, had been up three hours ago, practicing her magic and fighting skills in her room. A princess in other kingdoms wouldn't normally study the art of the knight or the magician, but Sierra did, and with confidence.

"Princess," said a voice out of the blue, "you might want to go to the throne room. Your parents would like a word." Sierra opened the large oak doors, finding beautiful hallways, but destruction and ruin in every direction. She ran to her parents' throne room, still in her long, flowy nightgown. Once there, she bowed, and said, "What happened?" "Sierra, you missed the raid. We could have used you," her father said, "and I'm upset about that." "When was this, mother?" Sierra asked, almost in tears. "Exactly one o'clock in the morning," said the queen. "Why didn't you wake me?" Sierra cried. "Why don't I exile you?!" exclaimed the king, "Pack your things. You leave for Lyria. Stay out of Jarus until exactly two hours from the grand ball, which is six months from yesterday, at eight o'clock sharp."

Sierra ran to her room and cried her eyes out. Why was her father mad at her for not being awake? She was only fourteen, and a princess to boot. All she wanted was a friend. Someone to confide all her hopes and fears in, and who could cheer Sierra up when she was down in the dumps. She packed her bags, packing only three formal gowns, and an extra set of armor and magic books. She put on her knightly garb: beautiful green armor and skirt, green and silver boots, and her knight's crown, plus her long, green cape that draped across her shoulders.

She left the palace of Jarus by horse wagon, taking three hours to get to Lyria. Little did her father know that Lyria was Sierra's dream place. Lyria was the knight's and magician's capital of the Fire Continent. The city had every magic book and training arena and weapon in the world, holding its title to be true. This was Sierra's break from the world.

She settled into a manor two minutes from the city, and set out for shopping and training. She managed to find six different magic books, including how to make yourself disappear, and how to use combat and magic together. She found a shop for swords, and browsing through the glass aisles, she finally found the most beautiful blade imaginable that matched her armor. She bought it, plus two jewels to indent on the front and back of the blade, and an amazing sheath belt. Sierra named her sword Hawchion of Jarus, calling it Hawk for short.

Sierra spent at least two hours training with her magical swordplay, but her day took a worse turn. Suddenly, a giant dragon flew over the city, landing in a nearby clearing. Riding on its back was a ninja-like countess with one long brown braid down her back. Sierra's own short-flipped black hair whipped in the wind behind her. The countess jumped off the black dragon and walked towards Sierra. "What is a princess like you doing here?" she said menacingly. "I—I was exiled," Sierra said. "Good," said the countess, "you deserved it." Sierra rose to her feet, swung Hawk, and created a green explosion using her magic. Amazingly, the countess evaded Sierra's attack. "Fool. My name is Ariella.

Call me the Countess. I was the one who hypnotized your parents into thinking you were late for an invasion, when I simply wrecked the castle halls. Your father the king would destroy you if he had not exiled you here.” Sierra held her blade in an attacking position, but didn’t attack. “Why did you do this to me?” “Foolishly hilarious, Sierra. I wanted you to be gone. You are a menace to Aarona. I wanted to annihilate your kingdom, but I simply did that.”

The countess instantly swung her dark blade, glowing with evil. Sierra’s magical shield was too small to counter her attack. As soon as she swung, Sierra felt a hard push. Someone had jumped from the side and saved her from utter destruction. But who was it? Sierra thought these words as she swirled into deep blackness.

## 2 - Roy

### Chapter 2

#### Roy

Sierra awoke in a cave near a campfire where a boy was sitting. He looked to be her age, and a knight. His semi-spiky red-brown hair seemed to blend with his majestic red armor. His sheathed sword was at his side on a belt, and his red cape had the ornate design of raging fire.

She stood up, relieved but still recovering, and walked slowly towards the campfire and sat next to the boy. "Thank goodness, you're awake! You slept like a rock, which was what it felt like to carry you up here," he said. Sierra laughed. "You're funny. What's your name?" "I'm Roy, son of the lord of Pharae Principality. And you?" "Sierra, knight and princess of Jarus. Training in the art of a magician." Roy grinned. "You have quite the personality. It was amazing how you stood up to the countess." Sierra turned her head towards him. "You're the one who saved me! I knew it! I knew from the look in your eyes." Roy shrugged. "Well, I just felt that you had to be spared. Plus, it's chivalric for a knight to save a damsel in distress. Of course, you aren't helpless at all, but you're a fellow knight-princess. And I'm not a knight, either." Sierra chuckled. "Roy, what's your story? How did you get to Lyria? And where are we?"

"Well, it's like this. I had lots of spare time, so I decided to go study in the kingdom Ostia. When I heard that an enemy kingdom had invaded our highest army league, I also heard that my father fell ill. I decided that I should assume leadership of Pharae's armies. It was fun for a while, and I got to meet several princesses and famous knights all over the Fire Continent. But what I missed most was being free. Having the whole world to explore. So, once we got back to Pharae, I withdrew my leadership, and went to the master bedroom and almost told my father what I had done for him, but he was almost too ill to speak. He encouraged me to be strong, and he was proud of the thing I did. So I left Pharae to recover from my reality. I have never seen or heard from my father again.

"I ran to Lyria, found you, saved you, carried you up to a cave fifty miles from there, and here we are. Do you understand what I'm saying?" Sierra nodded. "I would do the same thing." Roy grinned. "Say, why don't you tell your story, Sierra?" Sierra poured her story out, how she was exiled, and how she met the countess. "Nice," said Roy, "I can relate." "Roy? I was wondering if you could be my escort for the grand ball in Jarus. You're perfect for it." Roy smiled. "I have always wanted to go to your kingdom. Besides, I'm related to royalty, and I have tons of spare time NOT to be spent in Ostia." Sierra laughed again. "Oh, Roy! You're the best!"

The next morning, Sierra woke to fresh eggs and the purest water. She saw Roy tending the fire and the fresh bacon from his sack. "Good morning, Sierra! I fixed us breakfast before we hit the trail. I also found nuts and berries for snacks later on." "Thanks, Roy. How far are we walking?" Sierra asked. "We'll try to get over two of the first mountains," said Roy, pointing to two stubby-but-tall mountains, "we'll camp in the valley then, if we actually make it." "Oh Roy," said Sierra, "we'll make it, thanks to the provisions you prepared." They both chuckled. "Well, I guess the bacon's ready," said Roy, taking the metal stick off the makeshift roasting stand. After they finished their breakfast, Sierra and Roy took

what they could and hit the hard, rocky trail.

Two hours later, they had crossed one of the mountains. The sun shone brighter than normal, resulting in extremely hot weather. “Okay, why is it so hot?” panted Sierra. “Well, the weather is, like, really warm today or something. At least we’ll be going underground to cross,” said Roy, pointing to a tunnel in the distance.

Once Sierra and Roy went inside the tunnel, Sierra used her magic on two large branches and made them into long torches. After they had walked several miles, Roy stopped. Sierra backed up, cautious and trying to see why he stopped so short. “Roy, what’s wrong?” “I saw something,” he said, “in the distance. Two glowing green eyes—”

Suddenly, those green eyes multiplied into twenty. They could have been one thing: Continental Cave Bats. They were poisonous, and hung around in caves, waiting to strike their prey, which was a human. One bite could kill you almost instantly. Sierra and Roy looked at them in horror. They ducked, and the bats flew straight for them instead of over. All of a sudden, a figure with a long cape and stunning armor jumped in front of them. Unsheathing his sword, he used some form of magic which Sierra recognized to create a loud, purple-ish swish with his blade that drove the bats away with several noisy screeches.

“Friends,” said the mysterious figure, “let me help you.” Sierra and Roy graciously agreed, and followed him out of the tunnel.

## 3 - Marth

### Chapter 3 Marth

Sierra and Roy followed the mysterious person onto a grassy valley. They had crossed both mountains in no time at all. They saw that their friend wasn't exactly mysterious at all. Once they all sat down, they saw who their friend was. He had hair that was a different-looking dark blue, matching his narrow blue eyes, and his blue armor looked to be that of royalty like Sierra's. "Uh...hey! I'm Sierra, Princess of Jarus, and that's Roy, the soon-to-be lord of Pharae in the red armor. What's your name?" "My name is Marth," said the guy, "and....I don't necessarily have a legal title." "Well, tell us about yourself," said Roy, "if you want."

"I'm sure you've heard of the lost kingdom Altea, right? Well, I am the betrayed prince of that kingdom, all thanks to dark magic. I was forced into exile because enemy kingdoms invaded mine. Seeking revenge, which wasn't the wisest thing, I led a one-man revolt and slayed the dark dragon Medeus the First with my beloved and divine blade, Falchion. Afterwards, before I could say anything, my kingdom was annihilated by an evil someone that I don't know, magic again. To this day I hang around the Altean ruins, sleeping in caves, and wishing for some new adventure to rise."

Sierra felt her jaw drop. A betrayed prince? That sounded a lot like her own story, which she told along with Roy's, and how they met. Pretty soon, they found that Marth was actually a great person once you got to know him. They enjoyed each other's company, talking about random subjects that would deem them crazy if they were in the open public. "Sierra," said Marth, curiously, "you said you were an exiled princess searching for your kingdom, attempting to pass through cities like Ostia and Pharae. I was wondering...if...I could join you. I have tons of spare time, and I have been to some of these cities." Sierra paused, and said, "Why not? I mean, you can come with us, but it'll take six months and a day. Are you okay with that?" Marth laughed. "Sure! I'm used to long-term adventures. They're so much fun!" Roy chimed in, "Hey, if we're all going together, maybe we should come up with a name for our group!" "How about the Betrayed Blue-bloods?" he suggested. Sierra and Marth just sat there, until Marth said,

"How about the SMR—Sierra, Marth, Roy." Sierra and Roy agreed to Marth's suggestion. "Hey, if we're a group, we should have some sort of rules, like taking turns cooking, free time every couple of hours to rest, and other stuff like that," said Roy. The three of them agreed to the rules that they also suggested. It was officially Marth's turn to cook. He put all their nuts in a hollowed out piece of metal left on the ground, washed with water, and used as a pot. He then poured lots of water on all the nuts, and added salt, pepper, and a hint of spice. "Marth," said Sierra, "what are you fixing for us?" "Nut soup! It's been passed down in my family for generations, for the weary travelers that came to the palace." Roy and Sierra were staring at Marth's ragged apron that said, 'Danger: Royalty Cooking.' Marth noticed, and said, "My apron? I made it while I was on the trail. I used cow hide, dyed it white, and used red dye to paint on my design. Yes, I actually sewed and tanned the leather and everything." "You can sew?!" Roy said. "Yeah," said Marth, "like I said, I have lots of spare time."

After their long conversation, the nut soup was ready. Surprisingly, it tasted creamy and had lots of

crunchy nuts, even though the only real ingredients were nuts and water. The nuts, however, were coated in the spice, as if they were prepared with magic. They actually had a decent supper that night. The moon shone above them, bright and full. For the first time, Sierra left her feeling of loneliness. She had the greatest friends who she could relate to, who were funny, and whom she could actually confide in.

That night, Sierra awoke late to see their campfire still burning, and Roy sat in front of it, staring. Sierra sat next to him, just like the night they met. The moon was full, and the sky was dusted with stars. “Roy?” Sierra said. “I cannot sleep,” Roy whispered, as if he was choked in sobs, “because I just received word that...my father is dead.” When Roy said that, he wiped away a tear. “Oh, Roy,” Sierra whispered. “I’m so sorry!” Roy actually cried for the first time, in Sierra’s eyes, anyway. “So...you’re a lord now,” Sierra said. Roy nodded. “It’s all so sudden!” Roy cried, more tears streaming down his face, “why does it have to be this way! N—not that I dislike l—lordship...” Sierra put her arms around him. “I know, Roy...I know.” As Roy cried his eyes out, Sierra began to realize exactly what happened. Roy’s dad died, and he would have to face his promotion alone, with no advice to help him. That was the exact feeling Sierra had when she was exiled. So, consequently, she too cried, for Roy’s sake. Also, she hated seeing her friends cry. For a long time they cried their eyes out, until they decided that crying all night was not as wise as they thought, put out the campfire, and went to sleep under the stars.

The next morning, they all woke to Sierra’s sweet-smelling berry cakes, fresh with raspberries today. “Wow, Sierra!” said Roy, half-eating, “you really outdid yourself!” “Thanks Roy! What do you think, Marth?” “I think they’re the best form of pastry ever,” said Marth, taking another bite.

They spent the next twenty miles of their journey talking about their kingdoms. “Roy, what’s Pharae like?” Sierra inquired. “Pharae is just a simple kingdom. All we did for fun was shake up soda cans and shoot them at neighbors. The king banned that act two years before I even left the kingdom for Ostia. It was fun, though.” Marth laughed. “Altea was similar, only we never had soda. The most popular drink was called Happy Pop, which wasn’t even carbonated. My father the king invented the drink. It had an Altean spell cast on it where it would pop going down your throat. It was interesting.” “Well, do you mind me taking the subject off of drinks,” said Sierra, “because I want to talk about parties. Speaking of which, once we arrive in Jarus, there’s a grand ball. There’s going to be dancing, soda, lots of cool music, and the like.” “In Pharae, there were balls, but like I said, it’s a simple kingdom, so we all just had a violinist and two types of soda and waltzing,” said Roy. “How boring,” sighed Marth. “In Altea, the parties were always held outdoors. We had games, lots of Happy Pop and nut soup, and beautiful music played by my former servants.”

After their conversation, they stepped onto a cliff. In the distance, they saw a huge brown castle. “SMR,” said Roy, “we are exactly twenty miles away from Ostia!!!”

## 4 - Ostia: City of Books

### Chapter 4

#### Ostia: City of Books

About an hour later, Sierra, Marth, and Roy were at the gates of Ostia. The gates were printed with ornate designs of a king reading next to a huge stack of books. "So, Roy," said Marth, "exactly how long did you stay here before you went traveling?" "Oh, about a month in the library," said Roy. "What exactly DID you study?" Sierra asked. "Uh..." Roy thought aloud. "You forgot what you studied?!?" Marth cried. "...sort of," said Roy, blushing slightly.

Suddenly, the gates opened without any guards or royalty awaiting them. Behind those gates was a quaint town, lots of people, with a huge castle with lots of small towers in the distance of about fifteen feet. "So," sighed Sierra, "we'll have to create an itinerary on what we'll be doing and how long we'll be here." "I agree," said Roy, "you and I can look at magic books and other stuff. What will you browse through, Marth?" "Okay," said Marth, "I'll probably look at ancient cookbooks, how to make clothes besides tunics and aprons, and the like."

They instantly ran into the huge castle, which held the biggest library ever imagined. The oak walls were lined with oak bookshelves filled to the brim with all kinds of books from encyclopedias to simple crafts. "Okay, Sierra," said Roy, "Marth's in the cooking section. Let's hit the magics." Sierra and Roy went to the magic section, picking up at least twenty books that looked interesting. Sierra opened the first book, which was, *Different Types of Magic and How to Use Them*. Inside, she read the first few paragraphs:

#### Different Magic:

There are three famous magic powers:

1. Altean
2. Pharaean
3. Jarusian

Each of these powers are easy to learn, if you have the qualifications:

#### Altean:

This power does not require deep concentration, but can be used in daily life, such as cooking and cleaning, but can be used in combat as well. Very quick, bluish-purple. This magic is only usable by royalty from the ancient kingdom of Altea.

#### Pharaean:

Pharae is the famous home of this magic. More explosive than Altean or Jarusian, this magic requires deep concentration. Slightly slower, red, orange, and yellow. This magic, unlike Altean, can be mastered by anyone.

#### Jarusian:

Most popular in Jarus and many other places, Jarusian magic is multicolored, depending on what



kingdom the caster is from. Requires patience, but not too much concentration, and it's not too fast, not too slow. Can be learned by anyone.

Sierra and Roy looked at each other. "Roy, did you realize what kingdoms the magic powers are from?" Sierra asked. "Of course!" Roy proclaimed, "The SMR magic is the most popular! We need to get books on all three." Sierra put the first book back, and plucked six books on Pharaean, Jarusian, and Altean magic from the twenty that they had already picked. "See why I like, no...wait...LOVE this place?" Roy said, grinning.

They found Marth still in the cooking section, and told him what they had found. Marth agreed that he had found enough books, so they went outside for fresh air.

Suddenly, a huge shadow passed over them. It was the countess, riding her dark dragon over Ostia. Her dragon landed on a huge field behind the castle, and Ariella walked towards them. She planted her feet into the dirt road, calmly staring at Roy. "I recognize you," she said, "from when you rescued my arch-arch-arch-arch-foe!" "Oh yeah," said Roy, sarcastically, "the one who tried to sabotage my best friend!" The countess paused, then laughed. "Young lords today, trying to rescue princesses like the great knights in stories! I bet Marth recognizes me as the beautiful countess who destroyed his kingdom and everything in it!" "What?" cried Marth, "explain yourself!"

"Well," said Ariella, "I was bitten by a cave bat around the tunnels going to Altea. Normally, a human would die from the first bite, but I didn't. The bat infused me with evil magic, and my heart was set on revenge. I had a particular dislike for Altea, and the people in it, so I destroyed it. Completely. You, Marth, are its only survivor."

Marth just stared at her. Roy instantly unsheathed his sword, which was already surging with a form of magic, without him realizing. "Countess, we could take you on, easily!" Ariella laughed. "Hilarious, Roy! You couldn't possibly defeat me. I have a kingdom under my control, and I have sovereignty over the evil magic of the world!" Suddenly, she thrust out her hand, palm-upwards. A swirling black nimbus of magic instantly formed. She struck the magic to the ground, creating a smokescreen, then vanished completely. Sierra, Marth, and Roy watched as she rode her dragon upwards and towards another direction.

"Wow," said Roy, "so much for that disappearing act. I say we leave Ostia and head straight for Pharae. I have a promotion to attend." Sierra looked at him in shock. "Roy, I thought you didn't want to be promoted to your father's position!" "Well, it's got to happen sometime, right?" said Roy.

## 5 - Young Lords and Horses

### Chapter 5

#### Young Lords and Horses

The SMR left Ostia and headed for Pharae, which according to Roy was only an hour's walk away. "What about the countess?" Marth asked. "Don't worry about her," Sierra assured, "she'll be back, but we'll be ready." The three of them crossed at least ten bridges, until they got to one bridge that was rickety and worn out. "Sierra, Marth," said Roy, "I've crossed this bridge one too many times, and I actually lived. Be careful, or else a plank will fall along with you."

Roy entered first, then Sierra, then Marth. Right before Roy stepped onto fresh grass, he heard a scream. He turned around and saw Marth standing in panic and two hands over a plank. Sierra had fallen. Roy hurried cautiously across to Sierra, knelt down, and held out his fingerless-gloved hand. "Sierra!" he cried, "Take my hand!" Tears were streaming down her face. "I can't," she said, choked in sobs, "this plank will f—fall." "Sierra," said Roy, calmly, "I saved you once, I'll save you again. You can do this." Sierra paused, then thrust her hand to hold his. Roy and Marth helped her back on the bridge and onto the green grass.

Sierra and Roy sat on the ground, and Roy checked Sierra to see if she was injured. "You're okay, but I bet that scared you, didn't it?" Sierra nodded. Roy pointed to a beautiful red and white caste in the distance. "See? We made it. There's Pharae. My home." Sierra instantly thrust her arms around Roy's armor-plated shoulders. "Thank you!" she whispered. "Okay, guys," said Marth, "we're close to Roy's place. Let's go." Sierra and Roy got up from the grass and walked towards Pharae.

Once they got there, the SMR headed straight for a countryside manor. "Guys," Roy said, "this is my place. C'mon in!" On the outside, the house looked like a regular cottage about the size of the Jarusian throne room, which was pretty big. Inside, however, was a marvelous, antique-looking mini-mansion with a large fireplace in the living room. Upstairs lay 2 rooms: one for shiny weapons, and one for sleep. Sierra had the single look of complete amazement as she walked around the room. "Okay, S and M. R's going to his promotion. It starts in thirty minutes at that big mansion over on the coast. See you later!" Roy left the manor with a clang of the metal doors behind him.

Sierra and Marth walked into the living room and sat on two huge couches across from each other. "Okay," Sierra said, "Roy thinks that we're not going to his promo to his father's position. To be honest, I think he would wish later that we were there to watch." "I see," said Marth, leaning back on a leather pillow, "but Roy may want to spend the few moments of promotion alone. Then again, you may be right. Besides, we can REALLY surprise him by putting you in a Pharaean dress!" Sierra stared blankly at him. "Me? In a foreign dress? Okay....I guess it'll be worth the 'fun.'"

So the SM went into Pharae's town square. The hustle and bustle led to a lot of confusion. But, thanks to Sierra's magic, she could locate Marth easily. They eventually found the dress shop and Sierra found a black with a silver chain belt, and a simple tiara with matching earrings to boot.

They managed to get to the mansion, and Sierra changed into her dazzling outfit, keeping her green Jarusian cape on. They went through the receiving line slowly, and they showed their Royalty IDs faster than lightning when the doorman asked for them. Sierra and Marth sat near the back row, waiting for the promotion to begin. About a minute later, Roy walked out of the oak doors in a gold version of what he always wore, but he didn't have his usual headband grazing his forehead. Sierra thought he had the same look of sensitivity and courage that he had on his face when he saved her off the bridge. Then this guy came out with a slick and thin gold headband with a red jewel in the center held in his tightly clenched hands. Roy turned to the side, and the guy held the headband as if he was about to coronate him. "Here is Roy, Lord of Pharae," the guy said. The band was secured around his forehead. He was officially restored to his position.

At that moment, everybody started clapping. Marth and Sierra were even whistling for him. Roy then took a bouquet from a vase and tossed it into the audience. All the girls Sierra's age were going crazy. Sierra unexpectedly caught it, feeling slightly awkward at what it meant.

When Marth and Sierra walked out, they found Roy in the courtyard, staring at the pond beneath his feet. "If only Sierra and Marth were here..." "Uh, Roy?" Sierra said. Roy instantly turned around. There was Marth and Sierra, standing right behind him. Roy got up, and hugged them both. "Oh, I didn't think the two of you even WANTED to come!" Sierra then pulled the bouquet out behind her back. "I caught this at the end, whatever it means." Roy blushed a little. "Well, that's supposed to be the symbol of...erm...friendship between us." Sierra couldn't believe it. What really was supposed to be a simple object was really a token of friendship. "Well, if anything, we should spend some time here," Marth chimed, "I mean, really. If we're supposed to be in Jarus within five more months, we should hang around some." Roy and Sierra agreed to Marth's random suggestion, as usual.

Ten minutes later, after the SMR got out of all things formal and into their usual clothes, Sierra and Roy went out to the stables, while Marth decided to make clothes with the fabric he bought earlier. "Sierra, why don't you ride Opal?" Roy suggested. "I mean, she's a great horse. One of my favorites." Sierra nodded, and got up with Roy's servant's help onto Opal, who was a tan horse with caramel-brown hair. Roy's horse, whose name was Jadius, was solid black all over. Sierra and Roy walked their horses, riding them, of course, to Pharae's beautiful beaches.

"Okay," Roy said, "we'll race across the beach. The first one to get all the way to that metal post, touch it, and ride back here wins!" Sierra laughed. "Roy! You know I'm the best at horse-racing!" "Well, we'll just have to see!" Roy said, and he yelled for his horse to go. Sierra did the same thing, and the race begun.

Faster and faster they went, their horses galloped across the beach. Sierra and Roy were neck-and-neck, looking at each other square in the eye. "You can't catch me!" Sierra yelled. She instantly sped faster than him. Roy caught up. "Well, as a matter of fact..." Roy touched the iron pole. "...I can." Slightly annoyed, Sierra touched the pole and raced Opal faster than lightning back over the beach. She finally decided that she was letting Roy slip by, and used magic to make her horse go faster. Of course, Roy was slightly ticked, but hey, he thought, this was a fun race, not the Continental Derby. Sierra won their race.

About two weeks later, Sierra and Roy found Marth in the cottage's study, reading the books he found in Ostia. "It's about time you two came back!" Marth said, "we should get going. The Jarusian ball is in

4½ months!” Sierra gasped. “You’re right! I guess it is time to go. Roy?” She looked at him, expecting a slight opposition, but Roy’s expression was adventurous. “Hey! There’s kingdoms to explore! Can’t stay at good ol’ Pharae forever, right?” Sierra and Martha agreed, and they packed their bags and left the great city of Pharae.

## 6 - A Night to Remember...Literally

### Chapter 6

#### A Night to Remember...Literally

The SMR came to a point between Pharae and Dolua to rest. A giant cave on the side of a hill was the perfect place. "Sierra?" Marth said, "how far is Jarus from here?" "About.....4 months from now." Sierra replied.

Once the trio got there, Roy got out the magic books looking at the ones that specialized in Pharaean magic. Sierra noticed. "Whatcha doin, Roy?" "Oh," Roy said, immediately closing a book. "Just reading, that's all." Sierra was slightly confused. "Roy, if you want me to teach you some magic, I can." Roy turned his head towards Sierra, who was sitting down. "How?" "Simple!" Sierra chimed. "I spent a year on Pharaean magic. It takes some practice, patience, and concentration, but I can teach you." Roy's face lit up. "Okay! When do we start?" "How about now?" Sierra asked. Roy nodded, and she flipped the pages in a book to the basics. "Guys," Marth said, getting up, "I'll be cooking supper if you need me." Marth walked to a ridge, cast a makeshift fishing pole line, and started fishing.

Sierra pointed at a lesson titled "Blazer: Flight: Difficulty Level 1" in the book. "We'll learn this first." Sierra said. "What do I do first?" Roy asked. "The book says to think of something that makes you feel like flying," Sierra said. Roy thought for a moment, and nodded for Sierra to move to the next step. "Then graze your sword over the ground, swing up, then jump, concentrating on the thing that made you feel like flying. The highest you'll go is seven feet." Roy did just that, and only got to normal jumping distance, no magic swirling around him. "I don't get it," Roy said, "I did what the book said." "When I did this spell, I concentrated, very hard, then jumped," Sierra said. Roy closed his eyes, and thought the hardest he could. Suddenly, red and orange nimbuses of magic swirled around him. "Jump, Roy! JUMP!!!!" Sierra yelled. Roy grazed his sword against the dirt ground, and, swinging his sword upward, jumped. The magic lifted him seven and a half feet, according to Sierra's calculations. Roy opened his eyes as he flew in the air. He panicked slightly, but made a smooth landing. Sierra ran to him, checking to see if he was okay. Roy was super excited. "THAT WAS AWESOME!!!! LET'S TRY ANOTHER ONE!" Roy exclaimed. "Alright," Sierra sighed. She turned to the next page. That spell was called "Double-edged Dance." Roy used several combinations of swordplay with swift movement, and at the fourth swing, flames emitted from his sword. The spell after that was called "Flare Blade." Roy concentrated on something that gave him a feeling of power. After at least seven seconds, Roy slammed his sword against the ground, and caused a massive explosion. Sierra smiled. Roy actually made a good pupil. "FISH IS READY!!!!" Marth cried. Sierra and Roy rushed off to the smell of a seasoned campfire, happiness filling their hearts.

Marth had the fish ready, cooked in a glaze that was created, of course, by magic. Sierra and Roy ate ravenously. After supper, Sierra decided to take a little stroll around the grassy hills. Trying desperately to keep her black bangs from getting in her eyes, she stared into the water at a nearby lake. Surprisingly, Roy didn't follow her. Sierra figured he was tired from magic practice. It was high time, she thought, to try some magic herself. After all, she was trained in its prestigious art.

Sierra put her hand on the surface of the crystal clear water, and created magic ripples on its shell. "Great waters that flow to my home, tell me who I am," she said. She took her hand off the magical pool, and it swirled into a small dragon. "The water dragon of Jarus..." she whispered. This water dragon could only be called by certain few Jarusian magicians; Sierra was one of them. "Well," The dragon said in a crystalline tone of voice, "you say you are a knight of Jarus, and a magician, but this dragon says that you are much more, and much less as well. Listen to this ancient Jarusian prophesy: No matter where you are, no matter where you roam, but the one who will remain by your side in times of trouble will be the next king of Jarus, and eventually, the Fire Continent. Call upon me again, with the flame haired one, and I will tell you the meaning."

The dragon slipped back into the water, and left Sierra very confused. What did the prophesy mean? She could only call the dragon properly once a week, so she couldn't do it tonight. Plus, she had to bring Roy along! How was that possible without him laughing? Sierra returned to the camp. The guys were fast asleep, and Sierra took her place on a blanket under the stars. With the prophesy of Jarus repeating itself in her mind, she fell asleep as well.

## 7 - The Castle of Dolua

### Chapter 7

#### The Castle of Dolua

The next morning, Sierra awoke to Marth practicing an ocarina, and Roy desperately trying to cook a breakfast fit for royalty. You had to admit, Sierra thought, Roy was funny when it came to cooking. The meal seemed to last forever, until Marth finally decided to hit the trail once more. When they started walking, Marth suddenly stopped. Roy and Sierra turned around. "What's the matter, Marth?" Roy said. "Dolua...is just ahead." Sierra was a little confused. "Dolua? Never heard of that city." Marth turned to face Sierra with a face she had never seen before, as if he was trying to hold back tears. "We need to sit down. I want to tell you two a story."

Silenced by Marth's sudden change of emotions, Roy and Sierra sat down on the grass next to the path, where Marth set down their provisions. "When I was young, about twelve, the Altean castle was invaded. When I was young, I had a sister, by the name of Raia, who was nine when I last saw her. She was captured by the invaders, and I never saw her again. Later, the great council of Altea told me that the invaders were Doluans, part animal and part human, who had taken Raia to their underground kingdom." Marth had tears in his eyes, but went on, "I vowed from that day forward to take a vengeance upon the Doluans, and avenge my sister's capture. I love her so much..." For the first time, in Roy and Sierra's eyes, Marth shed tears before them. "We can bypass Dolua if you want," Sierra said. "No," Marth said, courage coming to him again, "We will march into Dolua like proud knights, and use any means we have to take my sister back. I know it may sound silly, even for an orphaned prince like me, but I value family and friends like you two above all else, and I won't let those half-humans get away with taking Raia."

With a new purpose, they walked the path towards a large clay gate. As soon as they were about to walk inside, Marth heard a cry, sounding much like, "BIG BROTHER!" He turned around instantly, "Raia?" It was a little girl, thirteen or so, who had Marth's many features: tall, blue hair, and a tendency to wear blue garments. "RAIA! I have found you at last!" He and Raia ran towards each other, and embraced. Marth, having tears streaming down his face, said, "I missed you so much! How did you escape the Doluans?" Raia replied, "I didn't escape them, silly! I live in Dolua!" Marth was surprised. "You what?" Raia nodded towards Sierra and Roy, "Who's with you, Marth?" Marth stepped back a little, standing next to his companions. "This is Roy, Lord of Pharae, and this is Sierra, Princess, Lady Knight, and Magician of Jarus." Raia grinned wide when he heard "Magician." "I wanna be a magician, too! I've trained a little. Can you show me some magic?" Sierra smiled awkwardly, feeling a little bit iffy about Raia's enthusiasm. "Sure! Since you know a little magic, how about you call a bird to your hand, then I'll multiply it. How's that?" Raia crossed her arms, and her foot stepped into the shadow of the trees. "No! I want you to make fireworks!" Sierra almost didn't follow Raia's request, seeing how saucy she had instantly become, and turned to look at Marth, who was shocked as ever. "Sure, I'll make some fireworks for you," Sierra said. Raia sat down and replied, "Yeah, great, step in the shade so I can see them." Sierra could tell that Marth was feeling irritated by his sister's sudden change of personality. She created the fireworks, making things from willows to Saturn rings. When Sierra was finished, the only ones applauding were Marth and Roy. Raia still had a unsatisfied look on her face. Sierra felt exhausted

from creating such extravagant of magical art, and sat on the soft grass with them. “Raia, please, no more magic...” Raia ignored Sierra’s request, and said, “Posh to you! Sitting down with a commoner like the Lord of Pharae...” That did it. Sierra couldn’t take it anymore. She had criticized her magic, and now her best friend. “Listen! If you don’t like my magic, fine. If you don’t like my background, fine. But NEVER, EVER criticize Roy like that EVER AGAIN!!!” Surprisingly, Raia didn’t flinch or seem hurt. Sierra was shocked at her own words. “Oh goodness, I’m so sorry! I—” Raia put a hand to Sierra’s nose. “Don’t be. You three obviously need to see my homeland in order to get the feel of my new personality. Come!”

She led the three slightly disturbed knights to the adobe gate. Raia then put her hand on the clay doors, and recited, “Dolua my home, awaken from your slumber!” But she said it in a different language. Sierra thought it was Altean, but Marth said no. Roy was also confused. The door slid open, and they took the steep stairs to the underground.

Once they reached the city, Raia smiled and said, “Welcome to Dolua!” Dolua, to their surprise, especially Marth’s, was massive. Marketplaces graced the streets, and a beautiful gray castle was centered amidst the chaotic crowds of half-humans. “Raia? Are you sure you’re happy here?” Marth asked. Raia only smiled back. “I love this place!” But the way she said those words seemed almost forced to Sierra. Marth and Roy seemed to notice as well, before a ridiculously loud bugle sounded and a town crier announced: “All Doluans! Attend a feast at sundown tonight, so says King Alchior!” Raia was excited. “I love feasts here! Come with me, big brother!” Marth, with Sierra and Roy following, joined Raia at the feast, which was beyond their expectations. Meat, meat, and more meat covered the table; there was not a vegetable or fruit in sight. “Raia?” Roy asked. “Can I ask you something?” “Of course!” Raia said, half-eating a massive chicken leg. “Where do the Doluans get all this meat if they live underground?” asked Roy, almost yelling to make himself heard to Raia. “Easy! We take the half-humans who were killed in the nightly wars, who turn into animals by night, and we each get a portion of their spoils!” Luckily, the three didn’t eat anything before Raia said what she said. Raia continued to eat ravenously, almost blending in with the half-humans. Roy pushed back his plate. “I don’t feel hungry anymore.” Sierra decided to ask another question. “Where do you get water?” Hopefully that didn’t come from mud. “You simply take your glass to the cave walls and wait for the water to drip. You could try the hot springs, but they come from black Doluan mud, not water,” Raia said. Sierra simply put her glass on top of her plate, a Jarusian custom that they would not be joining the feast. Upon knowing this, Marth and Roy did the same.

Once the feast was finally over, the King of Dolua stood up at the far end of the table. “Doluans far and wide, it is time to hand my rule over to my brother...” Suddenly, Marth felt a tap on his shoulder. It was a half-human, who looked to be the princess. “Please, you need to leave the city, before you are killed. Come with me.” Sierra, Marth, and Roy followed the princess into a smaller cave away from the other half-humans and Raia. “I am Nadia, Princess of Dolua, and I know that your sister, Prince of Altea, is in great danger. She was captured by my people and taken as their own. On all human citizens of Dolua, we hypnotize them into thinking that this is a pleasant place, then at night, we turn into our animal forms, and wreak havoc on the city, on King Malathor’s rule.” “Wait,” Sierra said, “I thought the king was Alchior.” “He is king by day, Malathor by night. When we all transform, Raia will become like us, only not as an animal. There are two robotic clasps near her crown, that react to light and darkness. If it is light, she is friendly as usual, but in the shadows, she is as sour as Malathor. The only way you can take her clasps off is tonight.....” Suddenly, Nadia flinched. Fur was growing on her arms and legs, and her hands transformed into clawed paws. She had turned into a were-fox.



The three ran into the depths of the smaller caves to stay hidden, and hopefully weed out the half-humans to find Raia. "I wish Raia hadn't been captured," Marth panted, "or else I wouldn't have to worry about her so much as I am now." Sierra unsheathed her sword. "Well, since we're here, we may as well fight them off!" They fought the half-humans off until they saw Raia, angrier than ever, her eyes glowing red.

Sierra decided to try some magic again. Concentrating her power, she got in touch with Raia's mind, and heard, "Sierra, Roy, Big Brother? I am sorry for what I did, I'm under Dolua's dark spells. Please save me!" Before Sierra heard anything else, her hold on Raia's mind broke, and she was fighting desperately to get the clasps off her head. Marth and Roy were doing the same. At last, Sierra pinned her down with the magic that she could summon, and used a slumber spell to put her to sleep. Marth, feeling very glad that his sister wasn't about to attack him, removed the clasps from her head.

Raia finally awoke on the grass outside the adobe gate, which was locked up by a good welding of Roy's Pharaean flames. "Raia?" Marth whispered, "can you hear me?" Raia sat up and hugged Marth with all her strength. "Thanks for saving me, big brother!" "Hey, I saw an empty cottage on the coastline on the way here! We can stop there for the night," Sierra suggested. "Great idea! I'll get our stuff!" Roy chimed, picking up all their bags.

The next morning, Sierra, Marth, Roy, and Raia had breakfast in the great room. "So...are you going to join us?" Sierra asked, eating her piece of bacon. "No," Raia said. "I want to restore Altea." Marth spewed the milk he drank all over the table when he heard Raia's words. "What do you mean?" "I want to restore the kingdom I love so dear. I will live in this cottage until Altea is completely restored, and you and I will reclaim our titles, Marth. Are you sure you want to leave?" Marth nodded. "I think I need to busy myself with saving the continent from Ariella, and attending the Jarusian Ball." "The Jarusian Ball!!!" Sierra suddenly cried. "I completely forgot! We need to hit the road, guys."

So they left the cottage, and Raia, after hugs and farewells, and set off to Morden Mountain, to its capital, Aarona, Ariella's domain.

## 8 - Ariella's Plans

### Chapter 8 Ariella's Plans

The citadel of Aarona that settled in the craters of Morden Mountain was bathed in darkness, except for the deep orange and purple flames that gave the palace an eerie glow.

Ariella sat on her throne....surveying her fast-growing armies train for the next invasion: Pharae. She would tear up Roy's kingdom faster than lightning. But.....there was only one way to figure out where Roy was.....

"MARCUS!!!!" Ariella called. Clamboring down the halls in uniform was a blond-headed servant boy, 14 years of age. His red eyes pierced through the darkness, and he had black and red armor similar to Roy's.

The countess of Pharae grinned. "There you are. Tell me, have you heard of the new head of lordship.....Roy?" Marcus, his face being covered in mud from the work he had been doing, nodded. "Yes, he is my cousin." "You don't say! Well, this makes things more perfect....." Ariella chuckled, "I have a job for you. Roy, accompanying the Jarusian princess Sierra, along with the Altean prince Marth, is currently headed for this mountain. Lead them to the clearing, then lead Roy to the caves. Defeat him, and Pharae will have a chance!" Marcus smiled back. "Being the former duke of Pharae, I used to play with Roy. Now....that's about to change.....there will be only one ruler of Pharae....."

And both Ariella and Marcus laughed evilly, so that the sound echoed throughout the mountain.

## 9 - Fire and Ice

### Chapter 9 Fire and Ice

Sierra, Marth, and Roy were running up the mountain summit. The masses of trees were starting to cease, and the grass changed from rich, dark green to a somewhat dull chartreuse. Of course, Roy was bored out of his mind, Sierra was trying to amaze the group out of boredom and fatigue with fireworks, and Marth was navigating. "Okay....so we turn LEFT at the tree with the strange X carved on it, then we turn RIGHT at the entrance to Mountain-Town village? I'M SO CONFUSED!!!!!" Marth exclaimed. Roy couldn't care less; he would have fallen asleep at the next village if Sierra hadn't been keeping him entertained.

When they finally got to a clearing on the summit's edge, the trio decided to rest. Roy collapsed on the grass. "Why were we RUNNING???" Roy panted. "Because we only have four weeks to get to Jarus! My home!" Sierra said. Marth was taking a break from navigating, and called a bird to his hand. "Why won't you two relax? Not only are we close to the end of our journey, we are close to saving the world! Besides...there's no enemy here to look out for...." Suddenly, a figure came from the distance. "If there's no one here," Sierra said, "who's that???"

The shadowy figure actually turned out to be a 14-year-old royal, with blond hair and reddish eyes. His armor was black with red trim, as was his long-sleeved tunic. He carried around a lance which was attached to a sheath on his back by small silver chains. Instead of a cape, he had a long, black scarf tied around his neck. His outfit looked, to an extent, similar to Roy's.

Sierra was the first to say something. "Who are you, and why are you here?" But the boy was silent, unsheathed his lance, and set to strike Sierra. However, Roy was faster, thanks to a new speed charm Sierra taught him. They clashed sword with spear, and the blonde backed slowly away a couple of paces. "Roy? Lord of Pharae?" the boy said. "Wait.....it can't be....one of my kin?" Roy breathed, sheathed his sword, and stared at him. "Well, you can't be my brother, because then you'd look just like me..." he reasoned. The blonde royal couldn't take it anymore. "I am Marcus, duke of Pharae, YOUR COUSIN!!!!!" he cried.

Roy stepped back. Sierra, confused, whispered in Roy's ear, "Wait a second. I thought your whole family consisted of redheads.....who dressed almost alike....." Roy chuckled silently and whispered back, "I have a huge family, and I just now remembered: Marcus is the duke of my home. He's kinda....um....detached....from the rest of the family."

Marcus sheathed his lance, and said, "Who are these people you travel with, Roy?" To his cousin's surprise, Roy was happy-go-luckier than ever. "This is Sierra, my best friend. She's a princess/magician/knight of Jarus. This is Marth, the blue-haired prince of the kingdom Altea." The blonde Pharaean walked up to Sierra. "You Jarusians make me sick....I should've known you were one." Roy was shocked that his cousin would be so discourteous. "MARCUS!!!" he cried, "WHY? Why did you disgrace yourself in front of a PRINCESS? I am so ashamed of one from my kin." Marcus only

chuckled. "You are just like my uncle. Kind and courteous to all, even Jarusians. It makes me wonder how you managed to survive all of Ariella's blows. You and your side of the family were one of the reasons why my father and I fled Pharae." Roy was not only angry, but confused. "Why the Jarusians? Why not the Lyrians? Or the Doluans?" Marcus was silent. And another thing: how did Marcus know about Ariella? And did he say he FLED Pharae? Marth decided to end this welcome greeting by a comment: "Marcus, duke of Pharae, I would like to ask you to accompany us on our journey to dethrone Ariella. Please?" Marcus thought on it, and came to a conclusion. "I would like to accompany you, only if the Jarusian doesn't come." Sierra couldn't take any more thrashing on her self-esteem. "In case you're wondering, my name is Sierra. Call me Sierra. Also, I'm the reason this journey began, so if you don't like me on this quest, you may as well leave." Marcus stepped back, surprised. "Tough, huh? Okay, I'll go."

They continued walking up the mountain, until a chariot whizzed by and splashed mud all over Marcus's tunic. "ROY!!! I must have another tunic! Get me another tunic...now!" Roy laughed. "Sorry, cousin.....no servants on this bandwagon. We'll wash it once we get to the next rest stop. Besides," Roy turned to face him as he walked up the hill, "I thought our family was the most perseverant thing besides Pharae itself?" Marcus ignored Roy, and was still fuming over his stained clothes. "Why not now? Why can't you wash this thing now and give me a fresh one?" "Tell you what. I'll make a garment out of magic, if you'll be quiet and say no more about your mud-soaked clothes." Marth said, "And I have another question: Is it cold around here to you? I'm freezing!" The three teenage royals shook their heads. Once they got to the next clearing, Marth sat down and started to wave his hands over a piece of black fabric. It began to glow, shift positions, and billow in the wind. After about ten minutes, a fresh tunic was made for Marcus. "Thank you, Prince Marth! I am forever your ally!" Marcus said, running away somewhere to change. Roy, who was very kind when it came to his friends, came to Sierra and said, "Sierra, I'm sorry about Marcus and what he did." "It's fine, Roy...I'll be okay," Sierra said. "No, I feel I must help you, after what Marcus said earlier. Since he said something about my father, and pretty much my whole side of the family, I don't know if I can trust my cousin," Roy whispered so Marcus wouldn't hear. But, before Roy could finish, Marcus walked to the group, pulled out a cold fish from his sack, and tried to start a fire with sticks. "Marcus! Marth fixed us fish yesterday! We're eating chicken tonight. And besides....that's NOT how you start a fire." Roy took off his glove, pointed at the stack of logs, and said, "PYRRUS!" and the logs caught fire. Marcus was astonished. "Magic? That's the LAST thing I would do. You learned from the Jarusian?" he said. Sierra didn't say anything. Marth was still cold, even in front of the fire. "So," Marcus said, "who's cooking this delightful feast of chicken?" Sierra, Marth, and Roy pointed at each other. Immediately Marcus left them. "That was odd..." Sierra said.

Suddenly, Marth was shivering more than ever. His hand was shaking, and when he looked at it closer, there was a light blue mist coming out of his palm. "G-guys? T-there's this blue stuff c-coming out of my hands. I t-think it's ice!" Sierra and Roy rushed to his side. "Roy, you check to see if there is any warm place on him. I can't touch him in this state, he's too cold." Roy put on his warmer gloves, and took Marth's wrist. "Reveal to me fire in this ice cube..." he said, but in ancient tongue. Suddenly, fire briefly came out of Marth's hand; the ice and shivering subsided by a long shot. "Thanks! Now..." Marth said, "Let's cook this chicken!" "We're the SMR, and we can do ANYTHING!!!" Roy chimed. They put their hands on the chicken, and yelled, "SMR UNITED!!!" To their astonishment, fire, earth, and ice magic left their hands. At the same time, the chicken was frozen, scorched, and seasoned with the greatest of ability. "Wow! We really CAN do anything!" Roy said.

As if to spoil their pep rally on cue, Marcus got out his lance, and for some odd reason, it had a blue strip of fabric tied to it. "Cousin," Roy said, "where did you get that fabric on the lance?" Marcus untied it, and waved it in front of them all. "This was my uncle Eliwood's—" "DAD!" Roy cried with such emotion that his voice echoed throughout the crest of earth. "Since when have you ever kept any of my father's memoirs?" "I keep basically anything of worth of my uncle's. Odd, really. Since I went to...um...Lyria, I've had much interest in my family's heritage." "Excuse me," Sierra interrupted politely, "Lyria is the city of music and knightly training. Not family heritage. Are you sure you're not talking about Ostia?" Marcus became angry...again. "Princess Sierra of the Jarusians! You'd best be quiet! No one likes your opinions." Sierra felt tears stinging her eyes, but she did her best to hold them back in front of Marcus.

"You know what?" Roy said, angrily, "I challenge you. To a battle. Now. You chose the place." Marcus thought, then smiled. "We duel in the Crescent Caves. Come!" Roy did a victory sign with his fingers to assure Sierra that everything was going to be okay.

"So tell me," Roy said, once they got to the bottom of the cavern, "how DID you disappear for so long from our shores?" Marcus said, "Well, it's like this, Roy....I was born, and when that happened, the city was under invasion. I am actually supposed to be marquess, or lord, as you might call it, but my father fled the country and settled in...Aarona." Roy was shocked. "It's true," Marcus continued, smirking, "I was actually raised in Aarona. While you and your family were living as boring nobles, I was enlisted as a servant by my father to the countess Ariella—" "ARIELLA??? ARE YOU CRAZY?! She's the meanest, most evil heiress ever to ascend the throne of Aarona, whether it was a good citadel or not!" Marcus got out his lance. "You are so dense! Pharae has slowed you down. Now you know. I'm the blonde of the house Pharae who's sworn fealty to Ariella and her ranks." Roy unsheathed his sword. "Are we going to duel or not?" Marcus attached the chains to leather wristbands, and thrust the lance from his hand with such force it made Roy wonder if he was using a speed charm. Then he remembered: it was a Jarusian charm. Marcus wouldn't even use a Jarus spell even if it would save his life.

Roy swung his sword, yelling several Pharaean spells. "PYRRUS! BRISOR! BAEIN! NAZERGA!" Marcus dodged every spell aimed at him. "You want some magic?" Marcus said, "I got magic! ERESHIKAL!" When he yelled this, he shot a flame so dark purple it almost mimicked Ariella's magic. "WOOOAAAHAH!!!" Roy cried, and was struck to the back of the cavern.

"Silly Roy..." Marcus said, "I thought you were much better. Ah well.....at least the victory is mine. Besides....you're just as bad as your father. So weak, he doesn't even know HOW to duel!" Roy felt a fire inside him: the fire to press on. "I...have....had it! You may not like Sierra, or Marth, or even me, but you never, EVER, say my father was bad! He was the one person who was JUST LIKE me in not only looks, but in personality and friendship. So what if I'm a living clone of my ancestors? I take comments of that as compliments. But, if you would be so vile as to criticize MY side of the family, instead of swimming in your own wealth in Aarona, I have no choice, but to send you back where you came from!" Roy felt the fire within him turn into a massive inferno. He remembered Sierra, Marth, and how they said they would always be together. He remembered the people he'd met: Raia, Marth's sister, Princess Nadia of Dolua, and others. He was surrounded by friends, and NOTHING could stop him from doing what he was about to do: literally send Marcus back to Aarona. "Hunh...." Roy swung his blade. He felt the gentle earthy magic of Jarus in his veins. "Tei...." He then felt the icy power of Altea. "TORIA!!!" He felt the fire of Pharae in his body, and thrust his sword in the ground, sending a trench about four feet deep towards Marcus. Blue, green, and mainly red streams of magic swirled through the trench, hurdling towards the target. Marcus was too astonished to speak, as the magic teleported him to Aarona. Roy

had won the duel.

\* \* \*

Roy ran up the cave slope, trying to avoid the trench he just created. Sierra saw him, and gave him a big hug. "Roy! You won! I'm so happy for you," she said. "It was nothing....I teleported him straight to Aarona...where he belongs!" Roy declared. Marth was shocked. "That's a spell I can do!" said the blue-haired prince. "Hey..." said Sierra, "I wonder if that 'SMR united' thing was a transfusion of our powers?" Roy refastened his cape. "Could be....but hey, at least Marcus is a cousin, not a sibling!" They all laughed. "Well," Sierra said, looking upward at the mountain, "I say we get a move on. We have a countess to defeat!"

## 10 - Three Friends as One

### Chapter 10

#### Three Friends as One

The three friends ran up the mountain, trying to find an entrance into Aarona. “Roy?” Sierra said, “How did you get into those Crescent Caves?” “Marcus led me there. He’s Aaronan now, so I bet—” “Marcus was AARONAN???” Marth interrupted. “Yeah,” Roy replied, “why?” “If only we had a key or something...” Sierra felt a sensation in her hand, a sharp pain. When she opened it, there lay a small, golden key that had green, red, and blue stones inset at the handle. Roy and Marth were astonished. “How did you do that?” Marth asked her. “I-I don’t know.....” Sierra said, looking at the key. “Now, all we need is a door...” Roy said, searching the area. Marth called his friends to a hole in the ground in the shape of a giant keyhole. “Um...how big is that key, Sierra?” Marth asked her. Sierra held it up; it was only two inches in length and a centimeter in height. Roy stared at it and exclaimed, “That’s WAY too small! It could fall in there and we’d probably NEVER find it!” Sierra looked at the key some more, and came to a conclusion. “I think that this isn’t the keyhole that the KEY goes in....there’s a door down there that this key can fit in. That’s probably why it appeared.” “So you’re saying that we’re supposed to jump in the hole?” Marth asked her. Sierra nodded. Roy, being so brave yet so unpredictable, jumped in first. Sierra followed, and Marth after her.

Once they reached the bottom of the hole, they found a door about their size (Marth would have to duck) and a ridiculously small keyhole. Sierra pulled it out, turned the lock, and the door opened. What they saw was not a grand gate like the other cities that they had visited. This apparently was a secret entrance that led right into the Aaronan square. Going through the gate would have been impossible, as it was almost too well hidden underground. “Well, at least we’re here,” Marth said. “I can’t believe Marcus joined Aaronan ranks,” Roy said, “this place is all too creepy for me.” Indeed, the place was creepy. Orange and purple flames lit up the entire square, giving the whole roads an eerie glow. The Aaronan palace loomed over the city, glowing a shade of ghostly purple. “So, are we going to the palace or not?” Sierra said. Marth and Roy nodded, and they set forth to the palace, trying not to be seen.

While they were in the town, a guard saw them. “You three! You’re not of Aaronan heritage! Only Aaronan citizens can come here, unless you joined Ariella’s ranks!” the guard said. Roy became angry at the instant. “Who are you kidding to mess with us?” he said, staring the guard cold. “Do you know what this is?” said the guard, pointing at the tip of his lance. “Do you know what this is?” Roy said, pulling out his glowing sword. The guard stopped, and Roy hastily made his attack. With a loud cry, Roy created an explosion with magic, and the three royals began to run. “Guards! SIEZE THEM! Especially that Pharaean!” the guard cried, and his comrades gave chase. All through the square, Sierra, Marth, and Roy bolted from street corner to corner, hiding behind street lamps to get away from the menacing guards. Several instances did they use magic; Marth created several walls of ice, and Sierra used her power to raise roots to the surface, tripping the guards on several occasions. The three finally stopped at a lamppost. “Hey, I think we lost them...” Roy panted, until he felt a rough yank on his shoulder pad. “Hello, future prisoner...” a guard hissed. This guard was much different. It was bone-skinny, unlike its muscular ally, and wore a black cloak. Darkness shrouded its face, giving it a creepy appearance. Two other guards like this grabbed Sierra and Marth, and they were taken to Ariella’s palace.

“First we fall down a keyhole, and now we get attacked by creepy guards in Aarona. Lovely visit, don’t you think?” Roy said to Sierra, trying to keep a good sense of humor in a clearly intimidating situation. Sierra chuckled a little, and agreed. Once they reached the throne room, Ariella, just the same as before, sat on the massive chaise. Her dress was much different: it was deep black, and markings on her face were also black. She had a different crown, which was basically a tiara inset with a tuscan-red gem. “Well, if it isn’t my least favorite people in the continent, the SMR,” the countess sneered. “I should have known you were basking in wealth all this time,” Sierra said, looking at her nemesis with such rage at what the countess did in the past regarding her “exile.” Marth was silent, and was struggling in the grip of the dark, wraith-like guards. Roy was also silent, but had just as much rage as Sierra, maybe even more, for taking away a part of his family. “Are you not going to fight?” Ariella said again, “are you just going to let your simple quest be shattered by the likes of me? That’s fine with me if you so wish...” That had blown Sierra’s last nerve. “I’VE HAD IT!!!” She used vines to wrap around the guard’s skeletal hands and broke free. Marth froze the guard’s hands, and Roy set fire to one of their cloaks.

After the guards were sent running for their lives, Sierra, Marth, and Roy stood in battle stance. “I don’t care what you say,” Sierra said, “we’re fighting you, and we’re winning!” Ariella simply chuckled. “Did you expect an easy win? I think not!” With that, the countess snapped her fingers. The whole throne room began to change, expanding and revealing more floorspace. The chaise disappeared, and Ariella’s outfit changed. It was a knee-length black skirt, a tuscan-red chainmail top, and brown boots. Her hair was in her usual braid, and her tiara changed to the normal crown she usually wore. A sword appeared in her hand; the countess was ready for the ultimate battle. “Ready?” Said Marth. “GO!!!” Roy exclaimed, and he charged at her in full speed. Ariella blocked his attack, and sent one of her own at Marth, who swiftly countered. Sierra charged at Ariella, but was blocked. Roy set his hand ablaze and cried “PYRRUS!” burning the ground in a trail towards the countess. Marth used this opportunity to change the fire to ice, and send icy shards at his opposition. Sierra used earth magic to send more vines to tie Ariella’s feet down, but the countess dodged her move.

The battle went on like this for a while, until Ariella cried, “Evil three that aren’t evil at all, set them flying against the wall!” and the three hurdled towards the back of the room, crashing onto the hard wooden floor. Sierra had a scratch on her face, Marth had scratches all over his arms, and Roy had a bruise on his elbow. “Give up now?” Before Sierra could answer, she felt a power so great, that she got up and earth power was surrounding her. Roy and Marth had similar happenings: Marth had a whirlpool of water around him, and Roy had an inferno of flame at his fingers. This was the final battle with Ariella, and they were going to set things straight. “You have no idea the power you’re dealing with...” Sierra said, eyes glowing bright green. “You have messed with us for far too long...” said Marth, eyes glowing a pale blue. “Now....you’re going DOWN!” Roy said, eyes glowing firey orange. At that, the three royals kneeled to the ground, and released huge spheres of fire, earth, and water magic the size of medium-sized dragons hurdling at Ariella. “This...is bad...” Ariella said as she was struck by the magic.

Suddenly, the landscape around the three changed. Instead of eerie glows, beautiful flowers covered the city. All signs of darkness—shadow guards, dark city streets—had been swept away by beautiful grass, flora and fauna. The flowers, however, were red and black, keeping Aarona from being a completely peaceful place. Any force of evil, however, was gone.

The SMR had finally won.



Ariella looked at the new Aarona in disgust. "REVERT! Revert I say!" she cried, but no magic escaped from her palms. "Can I at least have an Ereshikal?" No sign of magic whatsoever was in Ariella's body. As for the SMR, they couldn't believe their eyes. They had all three unleashed a magic that took away Ariella's magical power.

Then, as if the day couldn't have gotten any better, Marcus appeared out of nowhere. "COUSIN!!!" Roy cried. "Yes, Roy..." Marcus said, picking up two flowers, "I am now Count of Aarona."

"WHAAAAT??!?!?!?" Ariella cried. "How is that possible? You were only my slave, not my prince!" "Take this fiend to the prison. I want nothing to do with the former dark countess." With that, guards dressed in red and black like Marcus took her away. "YOU WILL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, SMR!!! YOU SHALL PAY!!!" screamed Ariella as she was being escorted to the prison.

"So you're not evil, huh?" Sierra asked Marcus before his coronation. "Yep...I'm so sorry for the way I treated you in the past...would you forgive me, princess?" Marcus asked her. In shock, Sierra just stared at him, then she finally said, "Sure! I mean....I forgive you."

\* \* \*

"THAT WAS AWESOME!!!" said Roy, clapping his hands. Marth was also happy and said, "I definitely agree with you! Lets sing!" They started singing something that went like this...

*SMR, SMR,  
Here we are, the SMR,  
Here we come, three friends as one,  
That saved the world.*

*Here is Sierra  
Sierra of Jarus  
How magical was she...  
She uses earth to conquer all evil  
The magic of the three.*

*Here is Marth  
Marth of Altea  
How vast in wisdom was he...  
He used the ice so evil'd think twice  
The speed of the three*

*Here is Roy  
Roy of Pharae  
How vast in power was he  
He uses fire to put evil on the wire  
The muscle of the three*

After their singing, they came to a beautiful palace, gold and green. "Guys," Sierra said, "Welcome to Jarus!"

# 11 - Hope Rising

## Chapter 11 Hope Rising

They were nearing Jarus when all of a sudden, a girl about 16 years of age appeared before them. "Greetings, Sierra, Marth, and Roy. I am Carmell." She said, smiling. Her caramel-brown hair was up in a neat bun, and her knowing brown eyes made you focus in on what she was saying. "I've come to tell you something of great importance," Carmell continued. "Tell us," Sierra said. "You three are the Continental Guardians," Carmell said. "What?" Roy asked. "Sierra, powerful in magic, you have the power of earth," Carmell continued, ignoring Roy, "Marth, smart in many ways, you have control over ice and water. Roy, courageous like the lion, you have the element of fire at your fingertips." "I still don't get it..." Roy said again.

"Allow me to explain," said Carmell, "Every generation, a new set of guardians are chosen to retain peace and harmony between the continents of fire, water, sun, and darkness. They have special magical abilities that no archsage can ever achieve, and they are normally non-royals that live in ordinary villages all over this region. This is the first time in 14 generations that royalty was picked in the guardianship.

"Sierra, Marth, Roy....you three have amazing adventures ahead of you, maybe even greater than the one's you've experienced now. Take these rings. They may help you in more ways than you'll ever know." And with that, Carmell disappeared.

"Okay....what was that about?" Marth asked his friends. "She said we were guardians. I had read about them in my history books. They have such power that they can take away and give magical powers to and from other people...." Sierra said, then stopped. "I get it now!" Roy declared, "That's why our power is so famous! It's simply earth, ice, and fire! Think about it: in Ostia we found that each of our kingdoms had the top 3 magical powers in the continent. We also discovered our powers one-by-one; starting with Sierra, then me, and ending with Marth. We then had the ability to TAKE AWAY Ariella's magic and set a new count on Aarona's throne. See? We've settled peace here, like we were destined. I have a feeling that this magic can take us across the continent to unknown lands.....and even to new continents altogether."

"Boy, that was DEEP...." Marth said. "Anyways, we've got the Jarusian Ball tomorrow night, so I'll introduce you to my parents and my beloved home! Come on!" Sierra said, beckoning Roy and Marth to accompany her into the palace. The castle itself was amazing. It sat on a cliff outside the Great Jarusian Lake, which opened up to the sea. It was tall, white, and the turrets were green with gold rims. Now, the only way to get to high places like this was to go by horseless chariot. It was a technological breakthrough, as the "horse" was nothing but a supercomputer that hovered and carried both itself and the chariot wherever the driver wished. Sierra, Marth, and Roy boarded each of their own, and rode the mile-long trek up to the castle.

When they got to the entrance, the three royals were greeted with all due respect. They were royalty, after all.

Marth and Roy were introduced to Sierra's maids, butlers, and personal chefs. They even got to enjoy a Jarusian luncheon under the afternoon sun. "WOW! This is where you got your berry pastry recipe, I bet!" said Roy, who was raiding the pastry dish. After their luncheon, they enjoyed a walk through the private gardens, and afterwards the three were to see Sierra's parents.

The throne room was fixed up since the battle of Ariella versus the king and queen. It really was a battle, since the whole exile deal was a hoax. "Mom! Dad!" Sierra cried, throwing herself around their shoulders. "I'd like you to meet my new friends. This is Roy, lord of Pharae, and this is Marth, prince of Altea. Roy, Marth, these are my beloved parents, King Blaken and Queen Corina." "My gracious!" the queen said, looking at the three. "You three are filthy! You all need quarters, and you'll be getting special ones too. LINA!!! ALBERT!!!" Two servants, male and female, came bolting in, almost slipping on the marble floor. "Please set quarters for our guests, and prepare a bath for each of them. For Sierra, show her the new princess suite. The one I made for her." Sierra was led, separate from the guys, into a beautiful suite, complete with a fountain and velvet curtains in every window. Sierra was definitely happy; she was home.

After they cleaned up, Sierra, Marth, and Roy were in different clothes, other than their usual armor. Sierra had a simple green sleeveless knee-length dress which had a dragon detail on it. She had her knight's crown on, and matching jade earrings. Marth had a blue tunic on, but it was made in Jarusian fashion, although it had the altean crest on the front. Roy's tunic was crimson, with flames at the sleeves and trim, and it had the seal of Pharae, and was also made in the Jarusian style. "Guys, I just realized something," Roy said. "What is it?" Marth asked his friend. "This is the first time any of us have seen each other in tunics without armor," Roy said. They were silent for a second, then they laughed. Yes, they were going to have many firsts together, but that was just one out of many.

That night, when Sierra fell asleep in her quarters, Roy and Marth met up to see what they wanted to order for the tailoring in the morning. Roy had made sure that Sierra wouldn't order anything, so he could make a dress for her. "What color and style of fabric should I use, Marth?" Roy said, dismayed by the velvet, satin, and silk before him. "I say use silk, and have a velvet lining. It's what they do around here," Marth said. "That sounds great! But bad news....I can't even sew! I can't even tell the difference between pins and needles!" Roy said, distraught. "This is where magic comes in handy!" Marth declared, loud enough for the main servants Albert and Lina to hear, "We're going to use magic to make Sierra's dress. It'll be mostly your doing, and we'll use enchanted fabric so it'll fit Sierra perfectly! Plus, we have things like beads, fur, and other trims. Ready, my friend?" Marth said, levitating the fabric in the air. "Sure! Let's do it!" Roy said, and he took the fabric and levitated the silk himself. The piece of green fabric billowed and rolled in the air like liquid crystal as Roy worked with the silk, imagining every seam where it should be, imagining what sort of outfit Sierra would like. Finally, as a finishing touch, he put glittering flames at the hem. "There! We'll leave this at the tailor in the morning to make sure it'll be okay for the ball," Marth said, "but who's Sierra's escort?" "I am," Roy said, smiling nervously. "Really? That's great! Because I'm going to teach you how to walk like one! And Jarusian etiquette too! I mean, taking all the pastries at lunch was fine for today, but who knows? If you did that at the ball tomorrow, a royal might reconsider his vacation to Pharae!" Marth said, excited. It was a world of new things for Roy, especially since he was going to be marquess someday, and this was probably the worst.

The next morning, Roy barely stayed awake during breakfast. He excused himself to take Sierra's new dress to the tailor for extra work, and he dozed off in his room. Sierra and Marth spent the rest of the day debating with the tailor and each other over Marth's clothes. "I say you should have kings' attire. I mean, you're basically IN LINE for king, and by some standards you could be king right now. But then again, Altea's customs are a tad different when it comes to their heirs..." Sierra thought aloud. "Nonetheless," Marth said, "I should have Altean style clothing. I'm proud of my country, and I'm not afraid to show it in my attire." "Okay, we'll dress you up like a young king, and we'll do it Altean style..." The tailor said as she wrote down the style. "You'll come back before lunch for alterations. The

Pharaen lord has them after lunch. Sierra, you don't need to order anything. I have your dress right here at the back." When she said those words, Roy bolted in. "Can I see the green dress?" Roy panted. "Of course," said the tailor, and she gave him a package, "It's alright, and no other changes were added. See you at alterations!"

"What is this, Roy?" Sierra said, pointing at the package. They were sitting against the wall outside the door to the Great Hall. "It's your present from me, for being such a great friend. Here, open it!" Roy said, placing the package in Sierra's lap. She ripped open the box, and inside was a beautiful green strapless dress, complete with glittering flames at the bottom of the hem. "It's....so....beautiful! Oh, Roy! I love it!" Sierra said, throwing her arms around his now-armored shoulders. "Well, at least I don't have alterations, since the fabric is enchanted. I'll look amazing! And so will you!" she continued. "I have alterations after lunch...but that's okay! We'll be ready when the clock strikes 8:00! That's when we walk out together!" Roy said, grinning.

It was 7:45, and the whole great hall was changing, preparing for the guests to come. Tables were pushed back, and round tables were scattered throughout the whole area. The Ballroom was only a small stairwell away, and it was decorated to the hilt. Sierra and Roy sat with their backs against the railing, waiting for the clock to strike 8. "I'm so nervous, Roy!" Sierra said, pulling her cloak around her. "Don't be!" Roy said, smiling, "They'll love you, as they should. You are princess, after all...you get to rule this party!" Sierra smiled. She could always count on Roy for cheering her up. And it was many years more that both he and Marth would be of service to her, as the three of them were guardians of the continent and beyond.

At 7:54, Marth came to check on Roy and Sierra. "You guys have six minutes more. In a couple of minutes from now, guests will start pouring in by the dozens. You guys look great!" Marth said, giving them the thumbs-up. Marth had on pale blue princely robes that glistened in the light, and they complimented his simple crown. After Marth left, Sierra and Roy got up and waited in the hall. When Roy turned to look, already had twenty nobles come through the palace door.

Sierra's father gave a welcome speech, that was thought to last for at least a lifetime, or so Sierra said to Roy, then backed down. A crier blew a horn and said, "May the Kingdom of Jarus now present the princess Sierra, and her escort Roy, lord of Pharae!" "You ready?" Sierra said to Roy, linking her arm into his. "I'm game if you are!" Roy said, with a smile, and the curtains drew upwards. There they stood, and walked down the beautiful gold staircase. Roy's outfit was simply regal, as it was a shimmering, crimson, long-sleeved, armorless version of what he usually wore. Sierra's dress gleamed all the more in the lights, and once they touched the floor, gave a bow and curtsy, nobles politely clapped.

"And now," Sierra's father said, "it is these two who shall have the first dance." A little nervous, yet a little more confident, the two stepped out onto the dance floor. They danced to a slow beat, and once every other noble gradually walked onto the floor, the real party began.

The people who attended that were friends to the SMR were as follows: Raia, who danced with her brother, Marcus, who kept to himself; Nadia, who was liberated from Dolua's shadow law and kept to herself also.

It was pure magic that brought on what happened after the ball, for Roy had an experience all his own....

Roy found himself sitting in a dark room, alone. Was it a dream? He couldn't tell. Suddenly, a figure on a white horse rode up to him, and dismounted. It wasn't himself that Roy saw, but his father. "Dad?" Roy stammered, in shock. "Roy....how much you've grown since I last saw you..." Eliwood said, smiling, "I

suppose you're wondering why I'm here in your dreams. Do you remember when you were promoted? What they said?" Roy thought a moment, and managed to say, "H-here's Roy, lord of p-pharae..." "That's right," Eliwood said, "but what's missing?" Roy thought some more, then shouted, "they never said I was marquess!" "Exactly. You know what that means?" said Roy's father, "No? That means I'm still alive." Roy took those words in as if he would never grasp them again. "But where are you, father?" Roy asked him, confident again. "Not on the fire continent, but I'm still in the region. Roy....you and your friends have many adventures ahead. I still believe that this is only the beginning of the wondrous life you're about to lead," Eliwood said. "Dad...I have so much I want to share with you! Like the time I teleported Marcus back to Aarona! Using magic! That was awesome," Roy said, feeling happier by the minute, then his happiness dropped when he asked, "Will I ever see you again? In dreams?" "Of course, Roy. Not only here, but in the real world also. Don't worry, I'll see you again," said Eliwood, and with that, he rode off into the blackness of Roy's dreams. And after that happened, the dark room instantly turned into a meadow. Roy's dream world was alive again, as he slept peacefully the rest of the night.

Roy was happier than ever. His father had returned to his thoughts, and made them truly happy again. And, as Eliwood said, it was only the beginning for the adventures of the SMR.

The End.