

The Companions' Beginning

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Submitted: September 6, 2005

Updated: September 13, 2005

This is a little story I did for sixth grade E.P.P. (Extended Projects Program) during the Fantasy unit. That was my favorite unit ever! :) So originally this was 13 pages long, and it still is.

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2 - Prolouge

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Prologue

Kiata Greenfrog had always been a member of the Pokamoke tribe. This tribe had always revolved around the Birdwind's belief. This belief was one where birds were thought to be sacred. The Pokamokes had a festival every year where the mysterious bird spirit would come and take the tribute of one of the members of the tribe. This year it was Kiata's turn. She waited anxiously for the moment Traa would come to take her. Traa came. He was the mighty spirit of all birds. He had the eyes of a hawk, the fearsome claws and beak of an eagle, the body of a vulture, and the wings of a buzzard. They stared at each other for a moment before Traa's hypnotic glare took over Kiata's mind and everything faded into darkness.

3 - Faria's Quest

Chapter 1

Faria's Quest

“This task is for you, and no one else,” Faria's mage-teacher told her. “I've contrived a story for your short little disappearance. Everything ready? Good.” And with that Faria disappeared in a flash of green light.

“You did **WHAT?!**” King Archibald Williamburt III shouted. “How dare you just send my daughter away like that?!”

“When you've calmed down enough to speak without shouting, then you can talk to me, but for the moment, do not bother me. I've contrived a little story about why your precious Faria is gone, just in case anyone wonders. But this should not happen, since I sent her out of time. It will be as if time froze when she returns; everything will be the same. Unless of course she takes longer than the time I gave her, or some fatal accident occurs.” The mage Numair was worn out after this speech, since he wasn't used to talking so much at one time.

The king was about to retaliate when the trumpeters announced that King Archibald's lead warrior, Aragorn, was there.

“My lord,” he said while walking in. Aragorn was tall, had dark hair, and a beard. He was about thirty-five. “There has been word of a fearsome creature in this land. I went to see for certain it was true, and the sight that met my eyes was the worse thing I ever did see.”

“Well, what is it?” The King impatiently and irritably waited for a response.

“It was a type of bird. Actually it was a mix between a hawk, eagle, vulture, and buzzard. It was terrorizing the sheep and some innocent farmer. I would have taken it on and slain the foul beast, but it was too large and powerful for just one man to take on.”

“You are dismissed,” the king said curtly. “Gather the army and tell them to hunt down and slay the creature.”

Aragorn bowed and backed away from the throne. He thought about inquiring on the whereabouts of the princess, Faria, who was normally standing next to her father, but thought better of it.

When Faria dared to open her eyes again, the world was totally different. She immediately shut her eyes again, though. Why did it seem like she was floating underwater? And why was the pressure so tremendous? *I must be underwater*, she thought, *but how can that be? I can still breathe, and I don't feel wet at all. How strange.* When she dared to open her eyes again, she was inside of a palace. The palace however, seemed very awkward. Faria started to sit up when she felt a blade at her throat.

“Don't ye move or I'll slice yer neck. Come wi' me an' I'll spare yer life.”

Faria looked around despite the blade, and saw she was surrounded. When she glanced around at her setting, she nearly let out a scream. They were in the ocean, yes, but this was not a regular ocean. For one thing the fish that were swimming by were at least a mile long each, and it was almost totally dark outside of the palace. Her captors appeared to be some sort of a cross between a human and a fish.

Their hair was sea green, and so were their skin and eyes. The perfect camouflage. “If you do not release me at once, I shall use my powers on you and destroy all of you with a single blast.” This was said calmly and evenly, even though her thoughts were totally different.

This seemed to cause a rift in the creatures' courage, but the one who appeared to be the leader said, “She's prob'ly jus' bluffing. Aint that right, little girl?”

She was, of course, bluffing, but she wasn't about to admit to that. “To show weakness is to die” was her first ever lesson. Instead, she raised her arms over her head and made magic sparks fly out of her hand. This was one of the simplest tricks, and one of the first tricks that Numair had taught her, but it was effective, especially with non-magic folk. One couldn't exactly call harsh half-fish non-magic.

“Fool! You think your petty tricks can work on me?! Guards, throw her in the dungeon!”

Faria could do nothing to resist, so she let herself be led away. She was designing a plan for escape.

Her captor was none too gentle in handling her, and Faria was thrown into the dungeon. When she was able to get up, she explored every inch of the prison cell. She jumped when a voice whispered, “Ferget it. I've been here nigh three years and I still haven't found a way out.” Two bright eyes stared out at her through the gloom and darkness. “I'm Gainred, by the way.”

When Faria's eyes adjusted to the light she could see that Gainred was a blond haired copper eyed lad not more than twelve years of age. He looked tired and like he hadn't washed his hair in years. This was probably true, since he *had* been there three years.

“I'm Faria, and I don't know what offense I committed, other than existing.”

“That's exactly why you're in here. That particular Mermaid tribe is not friendly. Not friendly at all. They don't just put a simple death sentence on ye and be done with it. They leave you to rot in this dirty rat hole for years. If you like, I'll tell you my story.”

“That would help to pass the time, yes.”

“When I was three, my father died in a raid by the Uniragons. You know what Uniragons are, right? You know, half unicorn, half dragon?”

Faria nodded.

“My mother died of grief soon after that. I was left with my older sister Riana, and the twins- Sophia and Borimor. The younger ones are twins. When the evil king Archibald Williambert II took our lands, I was five. His soldiers then took my siblings and me into slavery for a few years. I remember diving in a lake to try to escape the torture of slavery and I ended up here. I've been here ever since.”

“What happened to your siblings?”

“My older sister refused to get married to some rich lord or other and got sold to one of the cruelest masters as an example to the rest of us. My little brother got sold to another place and I have the feeling that he's either gone evil or died, since I can't telepathically communicate with him anymore. I believe it was the latter one, since even if he did turn evil I could still sense him on this earth. My little sister was walking along one day when in front of my very eyes she disappeared into a puff of green light. I really miss them. They're prob'ly telling stories about how I drowned in the lake or I got killed by the Merpeople.”

“I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked. I can see now that it has made an evil memory come back into your head.”

“S'all right. I needed to tell someone. By the way I'm Gainred.”

“You already said that. And I already said I was Faria.”

“I told you my name already? Oh, well. I happen to be eleven, by the way. You see, I tend to have a short term memory.”

“Right. I've lived ten years.” Under her breath she muttered something unintelligible, but Gainred decided not to inquire. Suddenly there was an explosion and a series of screams. The cell door was busted down, and the two children did not waste their chance to escape. When the dust settled and cleared, Faria tried hard to stifle a scream. Floating right in front of them was one of the giant fish that she had seen earlier. This one looked like it would swallow her and Gainred in one gulp, when another of the giants came slamming into it, fighting over who got the meal. It turns out neither of the fish did, since the two companions and new found friends silently moved away, out of the cell, away from danger. After they entered the hallway leading away from the dungeon, they appeared to be in some sort of antechamber. Gainred spotted it first.

“Look, a portal!”

Without thinking they both jumped into it. When Gainred looked over at Faria, he saw her slim and long fingers fondling a jewel at her throat. There seemed to be something strange about Faria, but he couldn't put his finger on it. *Let's see, he thought her fingers are really long and skinny, but that's natural. Faria's hair is golden. That's natural enough. Her eyes are a violet color with blue speckles. Aha! That's it! Her*

eyes are what are strange. You hardly ever see violet eyes. Of course there was something unnatural about her hair too, but what was it? When a strand of her hair blew around in the strange wind that was blowing in this strange world, he knew. Faria's hair wasn't just golden. It was also purple-streaked. Not something normal in a girl. She also seemed to be hiding something, but then again, so was he, he admitted to himself.

The portal was of a greenish color. Nothing strange about that. The strong and persistent wind was of those that have died and are meant to stay dead, but for some reason were roused. That wasn't good. That was not good at all. It meant war between kingdoms and people. The Dead Winds always brought bad tidings with them. Another name for these spirits was Thlimnocs, but no one ever called them that. In fact, few ever spoke of these fearsome creatures.

There was suddenly an evil shrieking, high-pitched and foreign. When Faria dared to open her eyes, what she saw was this: A girl about her own age, trying to fight off an evil looking creature that seemed to be a cross between the most fearsome and the foulest birds.

As the two children watched in horror, the Thlimnocs had silently closed in on them and suddenly they were slipping, slipping into darkness.

4 - The Realms of the Dead

Chapter 2

The Realms of the Dead

When Faria revived, everything was misty and cloudy. When some human-like creature walked by, it was actually floating. All of the creatures had wings, and some sort of circlet hovering above their heads. There was music floating down to her. Beautiful music, and she wished she could sit there all of her life and listen to it. One of the creatures came to help her stand, and it held out a hand. When she lifted an arm to reach for the outstretched hand above her, she saw that she, Faria Rhianna, daughter of King Archibald Williamburt III, was the same misty color of her surroundings. She stood up, using the other creature as a support beam, and felt a strange sensation in her shoulder blades. That was odd. It seemed as if she had become one of the beautiful and wonderful... humans? Elves? Something in the back of her mind told her they were angels. But if that was true...

“How did I die? What happened? What was that evil creature? Why am I here? Is that girl alright? Where's Gainred? Exactly where on earth is this? What-“

The angel cut her off before she could ask any more questions.

“Little one, I can not answer all of thy questions. As for why thee art here, thee must help us. Thee have not died in the mortal world, just been sent out of time to here. When you appear again, thee shalt be wherever you were three days hence. As for thy help, you art needed for the defeat of the evil gods and goddesses worshiped by the Pokamoke tribe. Those tribe people put a sacrifice to Traa, one of their most evil gods. This year the sacrifice decided to resist rather than give in to the dark powers, and was captured by the Thlimnocs. You and thy friend, who is being told the same thing, must go and save her. The only things we know about her whereabouts are this: she is located in the swamp of the misty dead. Go now, before it is too late. Oh, and take this Matber with you.”

The Matber was a tiny little dragon. The odd thing about this dragon was that it was furry. It went to Faria and tickled her ear.

“The creature's name is Hope. You shalt need it. One more thing; remember thy powers and don't forget the jewel.”

And with that, they were gone, pushed into the realms of the gods.

5 - The Realms of the Gods

Chapter 3

The Realms of the Gods

When Gainred awoke, he was inside of a cave. It was a bright crystal cave, and naturally, if something is bright, people assume it is safe. *That's odd; he thought I don't remember falling asleep or fainting or getting knocked out. How did I wake up if I never was asleep? Well, the angel did say I would get sent out of time, but I didn't think it would be like this.*

What had woken him up was an urgent chirruping in his ear. When he turned to find the source of the sound, he saw a dragon-except it wasn't. This dragon was a mixture of colors. It was also fuzzy. Suddenly he remembered, "Hope! He exclaimed. He ran over to his old pet of times past, from when his family was whole. When he glanced around, he saw nothing out of the ordinary except for a tiny white spider, and Faria, still asleep. A thought popped unbidden into his head *she's awfully cute while sleeping.* He mentally reprimanded himself *that's crazy talk.*

The cave was a crystal cave, with different colors shining everywhere. The wondrous cave was all illuminated and filled with multicolored light. Faria slept on in the corner of the cave, unaware of the world around her. Suddenly there was a booming voice that filled the entire cave. Startled, Gainred looked around. *Now what was unnatural about this cave? Oh yeah, the spider, but spiders can't talk- can they?*

"That is where you are wrong, boy. Your companion cannot wake up yet. She is still caught out of time. It will be a while before she wakes up. For now, this is your part of the quest: get the Dragon Stone from the Great Dragon. Do this and your entrance to the Realm of the Gods will be partway finished. Fail, and die."

"Where do I start looking for this dragon? What does the stone look like?" He was confused, and slightly afraid. There was something else, too, but he couldn't tell what it was. Of course, he wasn't about to let out his emotions to some strange spider.

"You'll know the stone when you see it. You may take one item with you. I'll give you a power. When in dire need, think of the one you met. Start looking in the Barmus Swamp. The Barmus Swamp is a barren wasteland. You'll find the dragon there. I must go now, before I transform shape and try to eat you."

6 - Gainred's Quest

Chapter 4

Gainred's Quest

As Gainred ventured out of the mouth of the cave he decided to take one of the swords on the rack of weaponry. A suitable choice, since he *did* have to venture out on his own *and* defend his own. As soon as he walked out of the cave he decided to head where the swampland was. Which... was... everywhere. Great, that was a *lot* of help on finding the Barmus Swamp. A *lot* of help indeed. He was, of course, thinking sarcastically, but that didn't help at all. Complaining never got anyone anywhere. He decided to head due northeast, since the spider said that the swamp he was looking for was a barren wasteland, and the direction northeast had the least trees. As Gainred was walking, he heard a low rumbling. He wondered what it was. The ground started to shake, and a blast of heat met Gainred face on. There was a very loud and deep voice that practically shouted "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, INSIGNIFIGANT HUMAN CHILD?"

This, Gainred assumed, was the Great Dragon. Now, what to do? There was no point in hiding, since the dragon had already spotted him. No use in fighting it, either. What was the next best way to defeat a dragon?

To be heard, Gainred had to shout. "I challenge you to a riddle match. I'll name my terms, and you'll name yours. If I win, I get the Dragon Stone. You name what happens if I lose."

"I eat you."

This took Gainred by surprise. He didn't mind giving up his sword, or dueling with the dragon; okay, that last part wasn't quite true, he did mind dueling with a dragon, but being *eaten*? He wasn't ready for it yet, and there was no backing out now.

"Well, here goes. You start." Gainred hoped his voice wasn't as shaky as he felt. There was no time to contemplate on this now, since the dragon was already posing the first riddle.

"What has roots as nobody sees,

Is taller than trees

Up, up it goes,

And yet never grows?"

Lucky for Gainred he'd always been quick to see things, and he had heard that riddle before. "That's easy, a mountain." Obviously the dragon had underestimated his intelligence. "Now it's my turn.

*It cannot be seen, cannot be felt,
Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt.
It lies behind stars and under hills,
And empty holes it fills.
It comes first and follows after,
Ends life, kills laughter.”*

“I know that one, the dark. Here's your riddle:

*Voiceless it cries,
Wingless it flutters,
Toothless bites,
Mouth less mutters.”*

Gainred had to think about that one for a while. Suddenly and triumphantly he cried “Wind! It's the wind!
Here we go.

*What force and strength cannot get through
I with a gentle touch can do,
And many in the street would stand
Were I not a friend at hand.”*

“You think that to be a challenge? Get real! The answer is a key. I bet you can't answer this one.

*This thing all devours:
Birds, beasts, trees, flower;
Gnaws iron, bites steel;
Grinds hard stones to meal;
Slays king, ruins town,
And beats high mountain down.”*

Gainred thought and thought. He couldn't think of anything. The dragon was drawing uncomfortably closer. The heat got more intense. No matter how hard he racked his brains, he could not think of an answer. Finally, with sweat making a steady stream down his face, he made a guess. "Some sort of all-knowing guru?"

"ABSOLUTLEY WRONG!" The giant voice boomed. The correct answer is time, of which your life is now lacking. Prepare to be eaten!"

With that, Gainred prepared for death, but the blow never came. He heard the monster cry out in anguish. When he dared to take a peek, he saw that the Matber had followed him. It had slain the dragon for him, but had sacrificed its own life for him. Tears streaming down his face, Gainred ran over to the Matber and cradled it in his arms. The tiny creature was actually his oldest friend and best companion.

A bolt of lightning struck close by, a bit too close, actually, and Gainred shook, stood still for a few seconds, and then collapsed.

7 - The Battle

Chapter 5

The Battle

When Faria regained her senses, she was in a bright cave. A rift in the wall of the cave suddenly opened, and out flew a bunch of the Thlimnocs. Faria raised her forgotten sword to protect herself. There was suddenly a sword point at her back and a voice that said, softly and practiced, "Move and you're dead."

Faria obeyed and asked "Who are you?"

The response was hesitant "K-Kiata. I was fighting Traa when you came along so I came to see whether you were friend or foe. Oh, those Thlimnocs were just an illusion, used to fool the gullible. We should actually try to defeat Traa together, since `together we stand, divided we fall."

So the two girls went together into the rift in the wall, the holographic Thlimnocs completely forgotten.

Once they entered the room, a terrible smell met their noses. It was the worse smell imaginable. The sounds and sights were almost as bad, though. Dead things were floating around the cave, and high pitched bloodcurdling screams. Then the monster appeared. This time Faria was ready for the beast, with her sword held high.

"Kiata, I'll take the right side and you take the left!"

They encircled the foul beast as it lashed out with its claws. Faria looked over to see how her new-found friend was doing. Just as this happened, she saw Traa deeply gash Kiata's leg. Kiata screamed and dropped to the floor, but not until after wounding Traa on the knee. *Great, Faria thought now I have to do this on my own. Master Numair sent me on this quest and here I am.*

Traa rounded on her, blood dripping from its claws. It sent a mighty blast of wind toward Faria by frantically beating his wings. This knocked Faria down to the ground. Traa used this opportunity to pin her down and poised to kill her. As a last desperate attempt Faria found some unknown power deep inside of her. This time she was not bluffing about blasting an evil creature into a pile of ash. Traa let out a horrific shout and vanished into a puff of smoke.

Faria managed to stand up and let out a triumphant shout before falling into a heap, all of her powers spent.

8 - Epilogue

Epilogue

When Faria woke up, she was in the castle infirmary. *That's strange; she thought how did I get here? Oh yeah, Master Numair sent me out of time to complete my quest, and here I am, quest completed.*

"I congratulate you, young Faria. Marvelous feat at the end there, simply marvelous. Of course, after using all of your powers, it will be a while before you can do magic again, but you'll be fine."

"Where are Kiata and Gainred? And where's the Matber, Hope?"

"Alas, the little creature died valiantly in a battle against a dragon, but its spirit shall now be with the angels. As for Kiata, she's over there, in that infirmary bed. Took a nasty leg wound, but she'll live. Gainred is also in this hospital, recovering from the shock of Hope's passing, and also recovering from some burns. The evil god Traa has been slain thanks to you and Kiata, and the Dragon Stone has come to this kingdom to bring peace and harmony, thanks to Gainred. There will be a feast in the three of you children's honor, but not before you all get better."

While the mage had been speaking, Faria glanced over and saw Kiata, who was asleep, and Gainred who happened to be just barely awake. With that glance Faria knew that she, Kiata, and Gainred were now a team, inseparable until death should take one of them.

"How did I use magic I didn't even know I had?" Faria's eyes were starting to droop, and she was beginning to feel sleepy again.

"That is a long explanation, my child. I shall tell you later, but not now. Right now you should sleep."

And with that Faria fell asleep, tired from all of that work, and content with the mage's answers.

To be continued in a sequel, *The Dragon Stone*.

The riddles in this story were taken from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and *Dragonology: The Complete Book of Dragons*.