

Tales of Symphonia®: Are you there, God? It's me, Sheena

A fanfiction based on the NAMCO RPG Tales of Symphonia

Written by

Koinekid
(fanfiction.net/~koinekid)

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Warning: Not for the queasy or for those who haven't yet had "the talk." You know, the one where the dwarf that raised you hems and hews and finally stutters out something about the fire birds and the giant bees? Yeah, that one.

Summary: Lloyd learns a thing or two about female anatomy in a most embarrassing way. An awkward conversation to be sure, but necessary when you think about it.

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Random scene that came to me today for reasons I cannot and best not disclose.

Are you there God? It's me, Sheena

One month after the fall of Mithos Yggdrasil

Lloyd held up the white cloth, dingy and streaked with blood. "Sheena!" he screamed. No response. Why did he let her go off on her own? There had been Desian activity in the area lately. Hell, that was why they were here in the first place. One of their major side-quests during the journey to rid the world of Exspheres had been to break up the last pockets of Desian oppression, and a particularly sadistic group of the half-elven oppressors of humanity was rumored to be headquartered in the lush plains outside Luin. No matter how she insisted, even to the point of threatening him with bodily harm, he shouldn't have consented to giving her privacy. Not with the danger this palpable.

He sprinted along the river, thorns and branches from the surrounding outgrowth whipping into his face. This was the only tenable path, bordered on one side by a river too wide to cross without a boat and on the other by a steep embankment. If she wasn't down this path, he didn't know where to look for her.

Please...please let her be... To whom was he praying? Surely not Martel. She was no goddess. Mizuho's god then? *Whoever's listening, let her be okay!*

He burst into a clearing and had time only to mumble thanks that Sheena was indeed safe, before tripping over a rock and sailing into a pile of dirty laundry. Blood stained several of these cloths as well, but he paid them little heed.

Sheena stood calf-deep, pants rolled up, in a shallow part of the river bed, dunking a cloth into the water. Blood flowed from the cloth, dyeing the surrounding water crimson. Pushing off the ground, he practically dove into the river and grasped her hands. "Where are you hurt?" he cried. "Why haven't you used a gel?"

Sheena snatched her hands away. "What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"Sheena..."

"I asked you for privacy. I told you to leave me alone."

"But the Desians...and I...I found this." He held up the cloth. "I thought..."

Her cheeks flushed in anger or embarrassment. Maybe both. "Put it down, Lloyd."

"But..."

"Put it down and get out of here. Now!"

"You're sure you're okay?"

"Now!"

Lloyd dropped the cloth into her hand. "I'm sorry," he said as he stepped onto the shore.

Tears welled up in Sheena's eyes as she watched Lloyd disappear into the undergrowth. When she was sure he was gone, she sat on the shore and burst into angry, hurt, vulnerable tears.



Lloyd felt a jumble of emotions: elation that Sheena was alive, concern that she might still be injured, hurt that she had yelled at him, frustration that he didn't know how to help her, and discomfort that his boots were soggy. Okay, the last one wasn't strictly an emotion. But it did annoy him as he sat barefoot on a rock, shaking his boots to rid them of the water and unknowingly resting his feet in a patch of poison ivy.

"Lloyd?"

"Yeah?"

Sheena emerged from the clearing, and walked slowly to a rock near his. "Lloyd, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have yelled at you."

"It's okay."

"No, no it isn't."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes," she said and nodded reluctantly.

"But all the blood. I thought you might be hurt."

"That blood is...a natural...part of being a woman."

Lloyd shook his head. "I don't get it."

She sighed. "No, I don't suppose you would, and, to be honest, I don't relish explaining it to you. But if we're to journey like this together alone, it's something you need to know." She took a deep breath. "I'll try to put it as *delicately* as possible. When a girl reaches a certain age..."

"What age?"

"The age when she becomes able to bear children."

"Nineteen? That's how old you are, right?"

"It's different with each girl," she said, "but it's usually closer to thirteen. So, this has been happening to me for a while. Anyway, when she reaches this age, her body goes through changes."

"Oh, dad explained this."

"Thank God. Then I won't have to." She wiped the perspiration from her brow.

"Yeah. Her voice deepens, and she grows two beards. One on her face and the other...he had to be joking about that second beard."

"Okay," Sheena sighed. "Maybe I do have to explain. Dwarven women and human women are different, Lloyd."

"How?"

"This will go easier if you let me explain without asking questions."

"All right, I'll try to pay attention."

"You'd better. This is important."

He nodded and rubbed his foot against the rock to fight a sudden itch.

Sheena said, "One of the ways a woman's body changes is that for a few days every month she becomes...well, like I've been today."

"Irritable?" he suggested.

"Emotional," she corrected. "Part of it is due to the physical discomfort, stomach cramps for instance. And part of it's purely emotional. She doesn't feel pretty, and she yells at those she cares about most—particularly the men she cares about most. Following me so far?"

"I guess so," he said, scratching his head, "but what does it have to do with those bloody cloths?"

Sheena put her head in her hands. This was the worst part. "During this time, the girl also bleeds."

"Where?"

"*Ano*...from...it's not important where. It's usually not serious."

"So, you bleed several days every month, but it's natural, kind of like a...price you pay for motherhood."

She nodded slowly. "That's one way to look at it."

"And you're going to be okay?"

"Definitely."

Instantly, a huge smile filled his face. "That's a relief. I...I was really scared."

"Well, don't worry about me."

He shook his head. "I'll always worry about you."



Half an hour later Lloyd had pulled on his still wet boots, built a fire, and roasted the last of their pheasant. He'd wanted to make the entire meal, let Sheena take it easy, but she'd insisted on helping, shooting him a dirty look that said, "I'm not an invalid." As he bit into a stir-fried carrot from the vegetable platter she prepared, he had to admit she was a fabulous cook, even if she sometimes used weird ingredient combinations. Pineapple in curry seemed an odd choice, even though he was getting to the point where he couldn't (and didn't really care to) remember how curry tasted without it.

"What are you thinking about?" Sheena asked abtuptly.

He answered honestly. "I'm picturing you as a mother."

"Really?" She scrunched up her nose. "Why?"

He shrugged. "All this talk about your becoming a woman and everything got me thinking."

"And how do you see me shaping up?"

Lloyd smiled confidently. "You'll do great!"

"You really think so? I think you'll make a great father."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah. Dirk is a great role model, and Kratos will be, no offense, a great model of what not to do. I'm actually envious of you."

"Because you never knew your parents?" he said.

"Right. Grandpa did the best he could, but I don't really know what a parent is supposed to do. Maybe you can teach me."

Lloyd set down his fork. "I'll help you if I can, as long as your husband doesn't mind."

"Yeah," Sheena said, her smile wavering a bit, "whoever he turns out to be."

Lloyd's smile too wavered. "If you got married, we wouldn't be able to continue this journey, would we?"

"If I married *someone else*, no, we wouldn't."

Lloyd missed the hint. "I'll be sad when that happens."

"There may be a way to have both, Lloyd." She edged closer. "A family and this journey."

"Like there was a way to save both worlds?" he said.

"Not...exactly."

Lloyd slammed his fist into his palm. "If there's a way, I'll find it, Sheena. I promise."

Under her breath, she mumbled, "Idiot." But to her surprise, it was more in bemusement than in anger. "Keep me posted, Lloyd." She paused, then added, "And don't worry. I won't be getting married any time soon. I told you, I want to be with *you*."

He smiled. "I'm glad. Being with you has been the best time of my life."

Rising, she held out a hand. "Come on, let's get going."

He accepted the hand and stood. She held him in her grasp longer than necessary, then turned and started packing for their trip, saying, "We've got to get those Desians!"

Lloyd stared curiously at his hand, wondering why he was blushing. Then it hit him. There might be a solution to having a family and continuing on this journey, after all. His blush deepened.

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And all of a sudden his feet started itching.

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Bonus: Rejected Titles

- *Sheena, Bloody Sheena*

Reason rejected: Ewwwww!

- . (period)

Reason rejected: Too esoteric