

Serah's Quiet Day in Ponyville
by Legendary Emerald

Serah's Biography: <http://mlpforums.com/topic/7687-serah-anastos/>

The Story So Far: Serah and a small group of other humans find themselves in the magical land of Equestria and discover that not only have they been turned into ponies, but that they are the new backup Elements of Harmony. Tasked with defeating Discord in the troubling absence of the Mane Six, the group fought against the demi-god and seemed to be prevailing. But at the last second, Discord pulled the rug out from underneath them all, depositing them from his pocket dimension and back into Ponyville.

The ponies have just realized their predicament, and their defeat...

Chapter 9: Tanabata, Pt 1

"He's gone. Discord..."

Serah looked around at Ponyville. Except for the heap of ponies that had just been deposited into it, everything was peaceful. The edge of Serah's mouth began to curl up in a menacing sneer. Fire raged behind her eyes, and she shuddered with uncontrollable anger. Seething breaths escaped her clenched teeth. Finally, she could hold herself back no longer.

"FUCK! FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!"

She pounded the ground with each expletive, not caring how ridiculous she must look. She glared at SiFi, choosing him as the outlet for her rage.

"You... if you had only done something..."

She took a threatening step towards him.

The pony known as Peach Pallette turned to Serah, addressing her..

"Placing blame will only break us again. Like Artsy said...Discord feeds off of negative energy. We need to think positive here." Peach explained as calmly as she was able

Peach's words failed to touch Serah's heart, but they did stop her from wringing SiFi's neck. For the moment. That pony had prostrated himself on the ground, and looked about ready to cry.

"Pathetic... how can a group work together and 'harmonize' with a weak link like him?"

Serah snorted. She silently fought herself for control of her own actions; she so desperately wanted to punish that pony.

"This is why I've traveled alone since leaving home. When it comes down to it, you can't rely on anyone but yourself."

She turned and began to walk away, hoping she wasn't noticed.

"I'll stay with them, but only because it's the only way I'll get my revenge on Discord. But for now... right now, I need to smoke. And I don't think this world is going to be as generous to me as that screwed up void world was."

Serah walked through the streets of Ponyville, still trying to cool off. She visually inspected the buildings she past, looking for anything that looked like a convenience store.

"Where's a Walgreens when you need one..." she frowned. *"I wonder if I'll ever see anything from Earth again..."*

For the first time since she'd found herself in her new form, in this new world of Equestria, Serah began to feel an emotion that had grown unfamiliar to her over the course of the past year. Not anger, not confusion, not even indifference.

She felt depressed.

"Screw it, I don't need cigarettes anyways. They probably aren't even natural to Equestria. I just want out of this town. Out of this messed up pony world."

She didn't know where to go. The prospect of going back to the inn from hell didn't exactly appeal to her, but she didn't feel like sleeping in an alley either. She decided she'd just continue her walk for a bit longer, and worry about how she'd spend the night later.

Following a familiar scent, Serah found herself at the Ponyville marketplace. Shops were set up alongside the road, carrying various foods and other items.

"Reminds me of the flea markets in America. They were always useful for gathering supplies."

Most of the shops had already closed, or were in the process of closing. She scouted the ones that were still open, keen eyes searching for the easiest targets or most tantalizing targets.

She saw a bread stand, and knew it was that smell which had lead her to this place. What was probably the last batch of the day had just been put out on the counter: two beautiful, steaming loafs of home-made whole-wheat.

“Perfect.”

Serah discreetly approached the stand, eyes directed elsewhere so as not to give away her intentions. She couldn't just use her levitation spell to steal the bread; not only would the light from her horn give her away, but things she magically manipulated had a tendency to... get a bit heated. She overheard the two brown earth-ponies who ran the shop talking to one another in hushed tones.

“I'm sorry honey. I just don't think there will be any more customers today.”

“There won't be if we keep trying to sell the same dusty loaves.”

“I know. But we're running out of wheat, after what that chocolate rain did to our field.”

“As soon as we make our bits back, we can buy flour and make bread that way.”

“I know. But no one has the bits to spend these days.”

“Then lower the prices again. Ponies can't just stop needing bread.”

“I know. But we've lowered the prices so much already.”

“Damn it all Wheatley, then how our we supposed to provide for our children?”

“I... don't know...”

Serah cringed. She wasn't going to be stealing from those two ponies. No matter how hungry she was.

Another voice grabbed her attention from a few stalls away. A displeased customer, arguing with a cherry salesmen.

“50 bits for a cherry?! That's ludicrous!”

“You don't like it, you don't buy it.”

"You've always been nothing but a crook. Even before Discord showed up you've charged everypony a hoof and a tail."

"Listen again, closely. You don't like it... you don't buy it!"

Serah contained a smirk.

"Much better."

She approached the stand, it's owner too preoccupied to notice her. A bowl of cherries sat on the table. The fact that the unshaven scrooge behind the counter was trying to sell the cherries one apiece spoke even further of the injustice at hand. Serah had no regrets as she grabbed the handle to the basket in her teeth and trotted away at a brisk but not noticeable pace.

"Not bad, not bad."

Serah would have pat herself on the back if she were able to, and not in clear sight of anyone who might be watching.

"Hey, wait!" a voice suddenly called out to her. She heard the sound of hooves approaching her as well.

"Shit."

Serah wasn't about to run, even if she did just want to find somewhere private to eat her "meal". She turned to face the pony walking up to her, and was relieved to see it was only the pony who'd been arguing with the cherry salesman.

"Hey, I saw what you did back there." the pony stated matter-of-factly.

Serah looked at the pony, then down at the basket in her clenched teeth, and then back to the pony. Her body language bled a sarcastic 'oh?'

"I don't agree with what you did. But, I don't exactly want to tell that vast herd of a sales-pony where his missing stock went either." the pony continued, and then cleared his throat. "I'm uh, willing to let you off the hook if you'll sell me those."

Serah snorted, but raised an eyebrow. 'How much?' she seemed to ask.

"50 bits. For the whole basket." the pony added.

Serah had no concept of how much that was, but the other pony didn't know that. She could only trust that this was a good deal. Sighing, she placed the basket down on the ground.

"Deal." she said. The pony took two hefty looking coins out of his pouch, which she accepted. The pony nodded his thanks, and then took the basket and left without another word.

"What a coward, waiting for someone else to do what he should have done. I almost dislike him as much as the sales-pony."

At least she had money now, and she knew where she would like to spend it. She headed back over towards the bread stand, where the husband was trying to console his wife. Awkwardly, she dropped the two coins on the table.

"What can I purchase with this?" she asked, hoping against hope that she hadn't been cheated out of her cherries. When she saw the couple raise their eyebrows, she took it as a good sign.

"It'll buy you our last loaf of the day, that's for sure. They're on sale for twenty bits." he said. Serah's eyes visibly widened; just how much was that cherry salesman gypping his customers?

"I'll take it, then." Serah responded after she'd gotten over the initial shock. The two shop owner's faces lit up, and the sales-mare excitedly bagged up the loaf of bread for her. The lady pony offered to hang the bag over Serah's neck for her; Serah accepted.

"Thank you." Serah said in her usual stoic manner. She started to walk away.

"Wait, what about your change?" the female pony called after her.

Serah didn't pay her any attention, and left the marketplace behind.

Serah continued her walk through the town, taking in the odd sights and trying to familiarize herself with them. Chances were, she'd have to get used to them.

The bag hanging from her neck tantalized her with its pleasing aroma, reminding her that she still hadn't eaten anything since her arrival in Equestria. Spotting a nearby park, Serah decided that a small picnic was in order.

The park was small, little more than a tiny field with some benches and a table or two. Only one pony seemed to be there at the moment. As Serah came closer, she noticed that pony had an instrument. One which she was intimately familiar with. She smirked.

"Even here, they have lyres."

The musician was a mint-green unicorn, and she was seated on a bench much as a human

would sit. She held the delicate instrument in her hooves while a light glow weaved and plucked through the strings; her horn was lit the entire time.

Though there was plenty of room on that bench for two, Serah chose to occupy a second bench which was uninhabited; still near enough to hear the music, but distant enough maintain her privacy. She sat the same way she'd seen that pony sitting, and found that it was a bit difficult to do in her pony body.

"Same as when I'd tried walking on two legs everywhere. A position like this just isn't natural for a pony."

Serah glanced over at the musician.

"But if she can put up with it, so can I. Have to hold on to my humanity somehow."

Serah lowered the bag from her neck and took the bread out with her teeth. She tried to break it apart, but having hooves didn't help with that. Especially when the bread was still warm and malleable. She had to settle for holding the entire loaf between her hooves and taking large, ungainly bites out of it.

She swallowed a mouthful of bread as she tried to place a name to the song the musician was playing. It sounded vaguely familiar, but then again, most lyre music tended to sound the same.

"Strange how even here, in such a world like this, there are some things that are so familiar. Maybe I could get used to this place."

Serah grew thoughtful.

"Really, if it weren't for Discord, this would hardly be a change of pace. I've lived the same way here as I've been doing back on Earth: staying to myself, stealing to survive, and picking fights just to pass the time. The only differences is that I'm walking on four legs and shooting fire."

Serah took another bite of bread. She didn't notice that the music had stopped playing.

"And the Order of Balrog will never find me here, if they were ever after me at all. Maybe... maybe this is preferable. Traveling a land no other human has ever seen before could be exciting. Again, if it weren't for Discord..."

A soft thump on the bench startled her out of her thoughts, and she turned her head to see the musician had left her own bench to join her. The pony had a large smile on her face.

"Hi, I'm Lyra!" she said cheerily, extending her hoof out for a handshake. Serah was momentarily puzzled, unsure of how to shake a pony's hand when hands weren't something they were

supplied with.

“Are you now?” Serah asked, sounding more standoffish than she meant to. She was legitimately interested in that name; it was a human name. She hadn’t heard any of those in a long while.

“Yup!” the cheery pony didn’t seem to be put off by Serah’s response. “I saw you sitting here like I usually do and thought, ‘Hey! Another pony who sits like I usually do!’”

Serah didn’t respond, though she did look down at herself and the pony next to her. Apparently, sitting like this wasn’t as common as she’d thought.

“Sooo, what’s your name?” Lyra continued, unabashed. She was refusing to be ignored.

“Serah.” Serah stated curtly, and then filled her mouth with bread again so she wouldn’t be expected to say anymore.

“Wow, even your name is similar to mine!” the unicorn practically gasped in delight. “Don’t tell me you play the Lyre, too!”

Serah nearly choked on her bread.

“Actually, I used to.” Serah admitted, not sure why she was continuing to acknowledge the pony who had interrupted her privacy.

“No way! You’re pulling my leg, right?” Lyra asked, almost hopping up and down in her seat. Serah shook her head.

“It was years ago. Learned it back home. Can’t play anymore.” Serah condensed her experience with the lyre back in Greece to three simple sentences. She left out that the reason she couldn’t play one anymore was that the strings would burn up if she tried to play it the way Lyra did.

“I’ve been playing all my life. My parents really pushed me into it as soon as I got my cutie mark.” the unicorn pointed to the lyre symbol on her flank proudly. The mentioning of parents made Serah frown.

“My parents made me stop learning when they joined that cult. My father ended up snapping my lyre in half when he found where I’d hid it. Music wasn’t allowed in the Order of Balrog.”

Lyra’s cheerful voice knocked Serah out of her dark memories.

“Of course, my real interest is in human studies!” Lyra exclaimed. This time, Serah really did choke on her bread, causing the other unicorn some alarm. “Are you alright?”

"I'm fine." Serah responded, pounding her chest with a hoof. "Did you say... human studies?"

"Yeah! Most ponies think they're a myth, but I know that they used to exist! There's so much evidence all over Equestria. The average height of doors, the holes in bowling pins..." she held out her instrument. "Even the lyre! If you've played one, you know how awkward it is for a pony to play."

Serah couldn't say anything. She was too surprised just to be finding out that there were even ponies in this world who knew of the existence of humans. Even if Lyra was speaking of them as if they were mythical creatures who'd gone extinct.

"No pony has ever believed me, though. My parents always told me I was wasting my time with my research. Even my roommate thought I was crazy. It's made it a bit hard for me to make friends with other ponies." Lyra admitted, a hint of sadness in her voice.

"Then why bring the subject up, if no one ever believes you?" Serah asked, moderately interested.

"Well, someday I'll find some pony who believes me. And then I won't feel so alone." Lyra answered sheepishly. "I saw you and a lot of other new ponies come into town today. I guess you're just the first to hear my sales-pitch. Heh..."

"I see." Serah said, mulling over the unicorn's words. She could have told Lyra right then and there that she believed her, and that she wasn't alone in knowing the truth about humans. But something stopped her, and made her uncomfortable to say the words that Lyra desperately wanted Serah to say.

Lyra eventually broke the awkward silence that had ensued with an equally awkward and forced cough.

"I'm sorry for bothering you. I just... haven't had any pony to talk to in awhile." Lyra said, looking off into the distance. Her legs slowly swung back and forth at the edge of the bench.

"It's... fine." Serah replied. She took a long hard look at the pony. For the first time, she noticed the faint grass stain that stood out against the lighter green of Lyra's coat. The unicorn's mane was less than neat as well, and over the aroma of the bread, Serah could faintly smell the distinct scent of wet horse. Serah came to a depressing realization.

"She's homeless. Probably plays her music out here for money. And she mentioned an old roommate before, so she probably hasn't lived this way for too long."

For the second time that day, Serah felt her normally frigid heart moved by one of these

multicolored ponies. With renewed vigor, she attempted to break the rest of the loaf of bread in half. She eventually succeeded by using her knee for balance.

Serah held out the half-loaf of bread to Lyra, who stared at it in surprise before slowly accepting the gift. The pony was so happy that she was nearly crying.

"Thanks." Lyra eventually managed to squeak out, giving Serah a genuine smile before her expression turned downcast. "Things have been... hard since the apartment burned down."

"Discord?" Serah asked, going off of her previous hypothesis. Lyra nodded.

"Apparently, he got to the landlord. And one day that pony just decided the insurance policy on the apartments mattered more than the ponies living in them." Lyra explained. "Burned the whole building down when he thought there was no pony around, and then got hurt saving two children from the fire that he'd started. Told his story to the paramedics before he died."

"I see." Serah said. She watched Lyra wipe away a tear.

"Everything BonBon and I owned was gone in a matter of minutes. She has well-to-do parents in Canterlot, and they were able to take her in. They offered to put me up for awhile as well, but..." Lyra gave a weak, pathetic smile. "I was too prideful to accept."

Serah watched Lyra take a bite out of the bread, savoring it as if it might be her last meal.

"Lyra... we really are similar."

Serah and Lyra sat in silence, consuming their meals and making no more conversation. But Serah's mind was working in over time.

"She can't survive on her own. She isn't like me. She's too soft, and I think she knows that. Should I offer her help?"

Serah's scowled.

*"Help her? I've got no reason to. I look after myself, no one else. Which is why I actually paid for food today. And then gave half of that food away. F*ck, what is this place doing to me..."*

Serah was running out of bread. She'd need to make a decision soon.

"So, where are you and those other new ponies from?" Lyra asked after awhile; she'd already finished her meal.

"From... not around." Serah answered cryptically. "I don't know the others well. We just ended up together."

"Yeah, I figured you weren't much of a pony person." Lyra responded.

"You have no idea." Serah couldn't help but smirk.

"Are you all staying at the inn?" Lyra asked nonchalantly.

"Yes. The Peach pony bought rooms for us all when we arrived." Serah answered carefully. She hadn't missed the subtext in Lyra's query.

"Umm... c-could I maybe..." the musician stumbled over her words, crossing and uncrossing her hooves. The unicorn gulped. "Could I stay with you? Just for the night?"

"I was dreading this. No. She can stay here and survive on her own. Besides, even I'm not sure I trust that inn anymore after last time. But, if Lyra was there, I'd at least be able to protect her. Not that I should have to."

"Sure..." Serah answered with a sigh. Lyra's face predictably lit up with happiness and relief.

"Thank you. Thank you so, so much." Lyra smiled so appreciatively that it almost hurt Serah to look at her.

"This is terrible. She's going to become dependent on me at this rate. She's digging her claws in, trying to attach herself to me. And the worst part is, I'm letting her."

"I promise not to get in the way of you and the rest of your group. I just can't take another night laying on the grass. It's.. itchy." Lyra punctuated her point by scratching her grass-stained side, with some difficulty. "Arg, this would be so much easier with fingers..."

"Tree tops make good resting places. Learned that in my travels." Serah dumped the rest of her bread in her bag, and slung it over her neck. She stood up from the bench. "Beds nice in a blue moon though."

"Hah, I hear you. You sound like you're pretty good at the living alone thing." Lyra left the bench as well, and began to follow Serah.

"I thought I was, until you showed up."

Serah led Lyra back towards the inn, which was a bit of a trek. Ponyville wasn't as small as it seemed, though it wasn't anywhere near the size of the cities Serah had passed through on her

tour of the US. Lyra talked almost constantly, mostly about humans and how wonderful they were. Serah was unable to share her enthusiasm, and said nothing in return.

“And that's why it's called its called a gondola!” Lyra concluded some wildly off-base story just as the two of them reached the inn. “Oh, we're here already?”

“Yes.” Serah said through grit teeth. She pushed open the door and headed inside. She briskly passed through the lobby without looking anywhere but straight ahead.

“The last thing I need is those other elements seeing me bringing a woman to my bedroom at this time of day.”

Lyra kept up with Serah's pace, and they reached the room that Serah had woken up to find herself in when she'd nearly frozen to death. Combined with what Discord had done to the inn afterward, Serah's memories of the place were less than pleasant.

Lyra sat on the edge of the bed, causing it to bounce up and down. She looked around happily, her eyes eventually landing on the singed blanket.

“Woah, what happened here?” she asked, looking through a hole that had been burned into the sheet.

“Never mind that.” Serah answered shortly, still slightly embarrassed over that accident. “I'm going to find the others in my group. Stay here.”

“Alrighty then.” Lyra replied with a small salute. As Serah turned to exit the room she heard the soft 'plumf' of the unicorn's entire body hitting the mattress. She closed the door behind herself with a sigh.

“Great. Just an while ago I found out I'm the Element of Power, and now I'm going soft. Perfect timing.”

AN: I'm not sure who I'll bother showing this document to, so an author's note probably isn't necessary.