

# The Wedding, Part II

DATE: February 14, 2010

TIME: 1:30 PM

LOCATION: Lobo City, Tolmekiya Region

A light dusting of snow covers the ground surrounding Fairborn Castle, with a rather warm 42°F for a February afternoon. Inside, the marble floors were polished in a way that one could literally see their own reflection. The walls were lined with white vases of red roses and white hyacinths, while long, white satiny tapestries were hung from the rafters. On the left side of the throne room, each tapestry was embroidered with the Fairborn Family coat of arms to represent the brides' side of the room, while the tapestries the right side were embroidered with the Elyran Family logo, which was originally conceived by Rin Elyran in 1984 as the official Elyran Telecom logo.

Still hanging proudly above the throne since its installation in 1986, the KonoTech Digital Regulator chimed once, indicating that the wedding ceremony would begin in exactly thirty minutes. The Digital Regulator is a digital wall clock whose design borrowed elements from the iconic Regulator pendulum wall clock. The main face consisted of a very large seven-segment red LED display inside an octagonal oak frame, while the seconds elapsed display was situated in the hexagonal oak-wood cavity below the main face.

Dressed in black tuxedos with red vests, Rin's groomsmen were a Lucario named Lupin, a sergal named Hayao Muramasa, and Rin's best friend, a sergal named Seiji Konokama. Rin has known Lupin since his days at the academy, and Hayao was Rin's commander during a government-ordered bounty mission in the 2000s. Rin's best man was his very own younger brother, Zevarius Kerensky-Elyran.

Robed in lovely, flowing red dresses, Elly's and Zarana's bridesmaids were a Lopunny named Sakura, Rin's sister Michelle, and Elly's elder sister Kathryn. Like Rin's friendship with Lupin, Sakura has known Elly since school, while it was Kathryn and Michelle who first introduced Elly and Zarana to Rin in 1985. The maid of honor is none other than sergal Eboshii Muramasa, Elly's best friend and Seiji's love interest.

At 1:45 PM, a white limousine parks in front of the castle. The chauffeur opens the door closest to the castle, and out comes Rin's parents Lara and Kevin, then Elly's parents Jon and Elena, in that order. As the parents of the bride and groom make their approach, a pressure plate just in front of the main entrance detects Jon's RFID key card and triggers two linear actuators, which autonomously swing the two heavy doors outward. Once inside the vestibule, Jon enters a code that overrides the key card detector, thus permitting guests to enter unhindered by security systems. Thirty seconds later, the valet brings Rin, his uncle Ken, his 92-year-old grandmother Sarah, and his 93-year-old grandfather Derrick to the entrance of the castle in Rin's own white 1985 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme, leaving a generous four feet of distance between the rear of the limo and the front of the Cutlass. Rin hasn't driven the Cutlass since entrusting its care to Derrick. Time has been very kind to Sarah and Derrick, as they continue to appear and behave as if they both

were 18 years old. In fact, if Derrick and Rin were placed next to one another, one could swear they were twin brothers.

Jon: Welcome back to Fairborn Castle, Derrick and Sarah.

Kevin: I'm glad you both could make it, Mom and Dad.

Sarah: It is quite an honor to witness a wedding once more in these hallowed halls... I feel as if it's like 1940 all over again.

Derrick: Indeed. How's the conglomerate doing, gentlemen?

Kevin: We've reached record-breaking customer ratings in all of Vasti, and we even received the Honorary Award of Excellence, given by His Eminence himself.

Jon: I do say that Elyran Telecommunications has become among the absolute finest in the world – no, the universe. You have indeed become the textbook definition of 'success'. I feel I have made the right choice in helping found SJK Corporation with Sir Kevin and Sir Hideki.

In front of the throne, Ninetales Ryuichi telekinetically prepares an altar for the very first wedding where, at Rin and Elly's special request, his mother Vastina has been chosen as the officiant. Ryuichi's fur is the same luxuriously golden coat as with any other Ninetales, while the "hair" on his head is slicked back into a relatively short mullet. Vastina also is a Ninetales, but with silky white fur, and the hair on her head appears to be styled as a ponytail with bangs combed to the right. Custom-fit white capes are very loosely tied at Vastina's and Ryuichi's necks, covering their entire bodies except for their front paws and the bases of their nine luxurious tails.

The clock then struck two. Vastina leads the procession, followed by her four arctic foxes and arctic wolves. Next up are Derrick and Sarah, followed by Kevin and Lara. Akemi Muramasa, the wife of Hayao and best friend to Elena, escorts Elena to the pews immediately in front of the throne. Lucario Zaldin leads the entourage of groomsmen to the right side of the altar, and then Seiji takes his place next to Hayao. Finally, Rin takes his place at the front right side of the altar, dressed in the same white military uniform that he wore for Hayao's mission, with the addition of a white cape. Lopunny Sakura leads the bridesmaids, with Eboshii taking her place next to Kathryn.

Escorted by Elly's father Jon and brother Christian, Zarana and Elly process down the aisle. Elly's white polyester dress is the same one that Elena had worn for her own wedding back in 1976, restored just in time for the big day. The main part of the dress loosely yet completely covered Elly from the bottom of the collarbone, off of her shoulders, and down to her ankles, while the two-foot train was accented by ruffles made to imitate rose petals. Elly's chest was covered by a lovely white faux-fur stole, and she wore a white faux fur hat in lieu of a veil. Her white satin gloves almost completely covered her arms, running from the tips of her fingers and stopping halfway past her elbows. Zarana is wearing a very similar outfit, although the main difference is that she has the veil.

Vastina: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to witness the sacrament of holy matrimony, for Rinzler Fox Elyran, son of Kevin and Lara Elyran, Ninetales Zarana, and Elisabeth Kristine Fairborn, daughter of Jonathan and Elena Fairborn. Should anyone object to this marriage, please speak now, or forever hold your peace.

The throne room fell so silent that one could literally hear a pin hit the floor.

Vastina: Alright, then let us continue. Do you, Rinzler Elyran, take Zarana and Elisabeth to be your lawfully wedded wives, in sickness and in health, till death do you part?

Rin: I do.

Vastina: Do you, Ninetales Zarana, take Rinzler to be your lawfully wedded husband, in sickness and in health, till death do you part?

Zarana: I do.

Vastina: And do you, Elisabeth Fairborn, take Rinzler to be your lawfully wedded husband, in sickness and in health, till death do you part?

Elly: I do.

Vastina: By the power vested in me by Arceus, I now pronounce you – Rinzler, Zarana and Elisabeth – husband and wives. Rinzler, you may kiss the brides.

Just as Rin, Zarana, and Elly had left the altar and stood in the main doorway, the audience outside roared with utter excitement, cheering for their hero and his lovely wives. At that moment, Elly cast her bouquet behind her, and her sister Kathryn was the lucky recipient. Kathryn turned and showed the bouquet to Zevarius, who shrieked joyfully like Dan Avidan of Game Grumps fame. The two of them then kissed each other before Zevarius and Rin erupted into screams of excitement.

Zarana: Now that we know who's next for getting hitched, any idea when you want to get married?

Kathryn: Probably October 23rd... wanna be my maid of honor?

Zarana: \*giggling excitedly\* Would I ever say no to a friend?

Eboshii: October 23rd?! That's when we're getting married!

Kathryn: Really?? Awesome!

Zevarius: It'd be awesome if Rin would be my best man... whaddya say, bro?

Rin: You know I would.

Rin and Zevarius both gave each other the same special handshake that they'd been doing for

years, a handshake that's very reminiscent of Solid Snake and Otacon's "Konami Code Handshake", from Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty.

Jon: Everyone, may I have your attention, please? We shall commence the wedding reception at precisely 5 PM. Feel free to slip into something more comfortable, or come as you are presently. Either way, we look forward to seeing you later.

The reception was to be held in the ballroom of the castle, located just on the other side of the residential wing that was added to the castle in 1985. As quickly as the two families congregated, the throne room was emptied, except for Vastina, Ryuichi, and Vastina's four wolves and four foxes.

Vastina: Now that they're gone, I want to talk privately with you about something.

Ryuichi: Yes, Mother?

Vastina: Ryu, long before you and your sister were born, I've lived my life as a solitary nomad. I honestly thought my life of solitude was the way to go, but then loneliness settled in, so I assembled my entourage. Every minute of every day, we lived our lives on the move, until this very day. We don't really have anywhere else to go now, so I thought we could finally settle in here and become part of the Fairborn Royal Family. What are your thoughts?

Ryuichi: Well, I do admit that I've taken an intense liking to Rin and Elly, so if you want to make Fairborn Castle our new home, then I'm all for it. My question to you is, how do you feel about residing with Rin and Elly?

Vastina: Honestly, I was going to ask you the same question. Personally, I would absolutely love living with them, but where would the girls go? I admit I'm very attached to them.

Ryuichi: They'd have an entire courtyard to roam if they wanted, would they not? That way, we could still see them whenever we desire. Same goes with Rin and Elly.

Vastina: True, but I wonder what Lord Tyrone and Lady Arlene would think about having a courtyard full of wolves and foxes.

Tyrone and Arlene Fairborn, the grandparents of the bride, return to the throne room, as if out of nowhere. Tyrone and Arlene are the loving, lycanthropic patriarch and matriarch of the Fairborn Family, and although they appear very fierce, they are as gentle as lambs. Tyrone's fur color is jet black, while Arlene's fur is light gray in color, and they are both dressed in the same armors they wore while fighting alongside Derrick, in The Last Dragon War of 1936.

Tyrone: You guys had better get going, otherwise you'll miss the reception.

Vastina: Before we join you, I have a question.

Tyrone: Sure. What's up?

Vastina: Ryuichi and I are planning on moving into this venerable family, and we thought we could let my arctic companions roam the courtyard freely, but we didn't know what you'd have to say about the matter. I'm very fond of my attendants, and I could never forgive myself if I were to just dismiss them. Also, Ryu and I wish to reside with Zarana, Rinzler and Elisabeth.

Tyrone: If my wife agrees, then so do I. Arlene, what say you?

Arlene: The courtyard will remain open to all members of this venerable family, into which I heartily welcome all of you. Vastina, Ryuichi, ladies... we're very excited to share our lives and stories with you. As for residing with Zarana, Rinzler and Elisabeth, I'm sure they would love to take you in. Ryuichi and Lady Vastina... with open arms and hearts, we welcome you into our beloved kingdom.

Tyrone and Arlene knelt before Ryuichi and Vastina, and embraced their new nine-tailed residents. Vastina and Ryuichi both nuzzled their lycanthropic friends.

Arlene: I will admit, I've been wanting to hug you for a very long time.

At 4:59 PM, all in attendance of the wedding have taken their seats at the reception, and were waiting for the bride and groom to arrive. Just then, the clock struck five, and not a moment too soon, Zarana, Rin and Elly appeared in the doorway, and the guests applauded. After joining the bridesmaids and groomsmen, Elly picked up her dinner fork and tapped the side of her wineglass. The room fell silent, waiting for Elly's announcement.

Elly: My friends, on behalf of Fairborn Castle, I would like to thank all of you for being with us this afternoon. The waiters and waitresses will be around shortly to take your orders for dinner. Also, there will be a fireworks display promptly after sundown, so if you would, please join us in the courtyard at that time. Until then, I hope that you all have a wonderful time.

After the wedding party and guests finished dinner, it was time for Zevarius to deliver the speech he had been preparing for the past six months. Zevarius steps confidently up to the microphone, pulls a Hewlett-Packard HP-95LX palm-top computer out of his pocket, and sets it on the podium, loading the document from internal memory.

And now, time to cut the cake. Rin and Elly took turns slicing the cake and feeding it to one another, rather than the very disrespectful act of just smashing the cake into each other's face. This was an act that Rin avoided, as it would have guaranteed the delivery of divorce papers on the morning after. When Rin fed the slice of cake to Zarana, however, he held the slice behind his ear as if to smash it in Zarana's face, but instead dabbed some of the frosting on the tip of her nose, and then kissed it shortly after. Zarana had done the same to Rin, and the wedding party went "Aw..." in unison. The festivities that followed the distribution of the cake were typical of any modern wedding reception, lasting for the next two hours. As the party settled down, Elly rose from her seat, and took Rin and Zarana with her.

Elly:           \*urgently\* Please excuse us. There's something that the three of us must take care of. Rin, Zarana... please come with me.

Rin:            As you wish... Mrs. Elyran.

Zarana:       I do beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen.

Just then, Elly took Rin's hand, and the two of them retreated upstairs with Zarana following close behind

Rin:            I can't believe it... I've come so far, so quickly... from zero to hero in the thirty-three years I've walked the planet. It's almost too much for me to handle right now.

Overwhelmed by everything that he had experienced within the past twenty-five years, Rin stopped at the bedroom door and became very tearful, while Zarana and Elly were quick to comfort him. Zarana lovingly wrapped her tails around Rin.

Zarana:       And yet, Rin, you've handled yourself quite well.

Elly:           It's alright, Rin. If you look at it this way, even though we have a few physical and emotional scars to prove what we've gone through... we live, nonetheless. The world would have fallen into turmoil had it not been for our heroic deeds, and as such, they thank us for the good we together have done. Don't feel sad; instead, feel loved by the world. Now, close your eyes, and follow the sultry sound of my voice.

Elly and Zarana led Rin into the bedroom, the three of them stopping in the middle of the room. All of a sudden, Rin feels voluminous fur brush across his heel. This startles Rin at first, but a sensation of familiar comfort soon overcomes him, and thus his troubles melt away.

Elly:           Okay, Rin... open them, and look down.

Rin looks down and finds himself surrounded by four Ninetales: Vastina, Ryuichi, Alisha, and Boshi, the latter of whom had finally evolved into a beautiful Ninetales. Vastina was sitting upright, while the other three were laid down at Rin's feet.

Rin:            Vastina! What a surprise.

Elly: I thought you might enjoy having a few friends around as we enjoy our first sunset as a married trio.

Vastina: Ryu and I made a proposition to Tyrone and Arlene, and they agreed to allow us to take residence with the two of you.

Rin: And your attendants? What's going to happen to them?

Vastina: Their new home is the courtyard, and all of you are welcome to unwind with them anytime you like. I know you enjoy being among them, Rin.

Boshi: Congratulations on your marriage, Master Rin, Miss Zara, and Miss Elly.

Rin: Thank you, Boshi... And thank you for everything, Vastina.

Vastina: My pleasure.

Boshi nuzzled into Rin's left hand, while Alisha nuzzled Rin's right hand. Smiling, Rin responds giving gentle rubs between both Ninetales' ears, while Elly gently directs Rin's muzzle upward, kissing him passionately as the sun begins its descent behind the horizon. When Elly finished, it was Zarana's turn to kiss Rin who, with very little hesitation, joins in on the passionate kisses as their guests cheer from the courtyard below. Pleasantly surprised, Rin and Elly look down from the balcony.

Ian: I'd buy THAT for a dollar!

Zevarius: Don't you mean 112 Gil, Cheese-Wedge?

Ian: Same difference... nerd.

Derrick: Hey Rinzler, remember that promise I made to you when you were younger?

Rin: The one about your lightsaber?

Derrick: Yep! That's the one... now, think fast.

Derrick tosses his lightsaber up to the balcony, and Rin catches it with lightning-fast reflexes.

Jon: One more thing, Rin... there are some pyrotechnicians on the other side of the viaduct, and they need some sort of signal to begin the show. They'd have a better chance at seeing you from that balcony than seeing one of us, so whenever you're ready, fire that baby up and raise it to the sky.

Rin: You got it.

Rin ignites Derrick's lightsaber and raises it to the sky, signaling the pyrotechnicians to begin igniting the fireworks. With the lightsaber still raised, Rin then kissed Elly and Zarana for the second

time that night, the guests cheering shortly afterward. After the fireworks spread flashes of color across the night sky, Vastina's vulpine and lupine companions howled at the full moon.

Once the smoke from the fireworks cleared, Rin and Elly brought out their acoustic steel-stringed guitars and played the song "Unstolen Jewel" from the video game, Chrono Cross. The two guitarists played to the guests from the balcony, while Vastina and Zarana – mother and daughter – sat between the two of them, taking turns singing the verses in their original Japanese form. Having plugged it into Rin's 10-watt guitar practice amp and skillfully using double stops to create the chords, Zarana played the final choral section of the song on an electric violin she purchased during the mission.

The audience applauded after Rin and Elly let the final notes ring from the guitars.