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Memoir

Try Again?

Fake left, slide, jump, glide, jump, aerial attack, spin, jump, stab, glide, Thundara... Cerberus, the three-headed demon sent by Hades to kill Sora, Donald, Goofy, and Hercules, seemed on the verge of defeat. His HP bar was dangerously low, all I needed was one more Gravira spell to suck the remaining life out of the beast.

Glide, jump, spin, Gravira...no Gravira? My go-to move had failed me, and I was absolutely clueless as to why. While running in circles as deadly fireballs came flying out from Cerberus' mouth, I quickly glanced down at my MP bar...empty. Panicking, I searched through my items to see if I had anything to restore my magic. No items. I was helpless but for my Keyblade and special attacks.

Left, right, jump, jump, slash, right, glide, aerial, left, tornado attack, charge, CHOMP.

Before I was aware of what had happened, I was staring at Sora's floating body underneath the small words "Try Again?" I sat and watched how his arm sort of bobbed in the invisible current generated by the game. It occurred to me that he was floating on nothing. Nothing was supporting him, nothing was holding him down. I wondered if that was what death was like...nothing. Frustrated by my thoughts, I yanked the hair elastic out of my long blonde ponytail and chucked it at the screen, hitting Sora right on one of his stupid bobbling arms. Now determined to never see that absolute nothingness again, I jammed my thumb down on the blue X. Try Again.

It returned me to the scene directly before the fateful battle. I, as Sora, was talking to Phil, the weird little, half-ram, half-midget thing that was Hercules' mentor. He warned me not to go in there. He tried to convince me that Hercules could handle it. Ha! I ignored him (of course) and slowly walked into the Coliseum just in time to see Hercules', um, butt handed to him on a silver platter.

Left, right, Thundara, slash, stab, glide, aerial, CHOMP, Try Again.

A strange noise somewhere between a train running over a rabbit at full speed and the roar of some prehistoric predatory cat erupted from my mouth. Partly because I had done almost zero damage to Cerberus, and partly because I'd actually failed. Again.

} Nice

I've never been very good at dealing with failure. Back when I was 8 years old, the third grade teachers at my Elementary School decided to hold a spelling bee. I, being the best speller in my class, was picked to compete with the other third graders on-stage to try and win a shiny trophy. On the actual day of the Bee, the competitors were dropping like flies. Eventually only Rachel, AJ, and I were left sitting on stage. All three of us were in the same class, and we all knew the spelling abilities of the others. I stepped up to the mic for my turn. I was instructed to spell weight.

What an easy word! I remember thinking.

"Weight. W-e-i-" *Wait...isn't it I before E? No no no I know that doesn't apply here...still...I don't think it's wieght...but what if it is?*

"Uh...Weight. W-i-e-g-h-t. Weight."

I lost. Sure, I got the third place trophy, but Rachel got the gold one. I remember coming home and crying because I knew I was right, but my obedience has gotten in the way.

Anyways, I once again chose to Try Again.

This defeat was even quicker. I decided to start with Gravira, my strongest weapon. Too bad Cerberus seemed ready for it. CHOMP. Try Again?

It was at this point that I realized I was a slave to the Try Again option. Why couldn't I ignore that simple question? Because I hate failure. Because I am obedient. Because I hate the thought of nothingness.

This time, as I watched Sora's arm bobble in the mysterious wind, I thought about why I refused to accept defeat. Perhaps it was because I'd never learned how to handle failure?

An instance from the sixth grade was called to the front of my mind. It was 3 or 4 AM, and I was in the middle of a nervous breakdown. I was crying so hard that my blue-green eyes looked like some kind of glassy ocean. I remember screaming at my mother that it was her fault that I wasn't satisfied with my project. In an unsuccessful attempt to calm me down, she told me that the worst that would happen is that I would get a B on my report card. Not for the year, just for those nine weeks.

"That is unacceptable," I said, overcome with hysterics.

At this point I was observing Sora's hair, watching it bounce at a different rhythm than his arm. It occurred to me that I expected too much of myself. I realized that failure was a part of life, and I'd just have to learn to deal with it. Besides, it was just a dumb video game.

I crawled out of my position on the cool carpet in my basement and reached over to press a button that would change my life. POWER OFF. It wasn't until then that I heard my stomach rumbling and developed a sudden taste for chocolate.

I trudged up the stairs and into the kitchen, still feeling the defeat. I opened a wooden cabinet and pulled out a white, cracked bowl. Then I pulled out a half-empty carton of chocolate ice cream.

I wasn't exactly sure where the wave of impatience came from, but it was just as strong as the urge to wipe Mayo off the face of the person you are talking to. Well, wherever it came from, I picked up a spoon and ate straight out of the carton.

The sweet taste of the chocolate, and the cold burn of the ice cream made me forget about my defeat, if only for a short while.

It's funny how a revelation can occur. Most people seem to think a light from the heavens will appear out of nowhere and they'll hear an angel choir singing. For me, it was as simple as seeing the carton as half-full. I had gone through 14 years of my life without learning how to deal with failure, and in two short minutes, a bowl of chocolate ice cream had showed me that things happen, and you just need to keep going, because if you never fail, you can never succeed.

Amanda -
Great work
here -
I'd think
about CW next
year with
Mr. Drew!

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