

~ Heart of a Zora

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Chapter 1

Calamity Ganon has been defeated, peace has returned to Hyrule and Princess Zelda is freed from her self-imposed containment within Ganon, having kept him at bay for a hundred years. The process has also kept her in a suspended state, stopping her from aging. A similar process had occurred while Link was asleep in the Shrine of Resurrection. Their victory was bittersweet, however, as Hyrule was sadly left in shambles. There was much work to be done in rebuilding all that had been destroyed. Hyrule Castle itself was among the most prominent of these projects.

Link and Zelda set off together to begin the rebuilding process. The two stood on a hill at Hyrule Ridge. Link had lent Zelda his Sheikah Slate for the time being, which she used to check on the status of the Divine Beasts...

“Divine Beast Vah Ruta...looks like it stopped working. Let’s investigate the situation.” Zelda said.

Link nodded his agreement and looked on as Zelda had a look of contemplation on her face, looking up from the tablet.

“Mipha’s father...I believe he would like to hear more about her. The least we can do is visit him and offer him some closure. Although Ganon is gone for now, there is still so much more for us to do; and so many painful memories that we must bear. I believe in my heart that if all of us worked together, we can restore Hyrule to its former glory. Perhaps...even beyond. But it all must start with us.” Zelda said out of further contemplation.

Zelda looked at Link, having come out of her reverie. “Let’s be off.”

Link followed behind her for a moment, when she paused in her tracks.

“I can no longer hear the voice inside the sword. I suppose it would make sense if my power had dwindled over the past 100 years...”

Zelda turned around to look at Link. Her expression turned into a smile.

“I’m surprised to admit it, but I can accept that.” Zelda said enthusiastically.

She looked up the hill they were on, silently acknowledging the resurgence of her favorite flower with a satisfied smile. The Silent Princess, which were once almost extinct, was now everywhere. The two headed for their horses to begin their trek over to Zora’s Domain. Before they set off, Link gestured for her to wait.

“What is it, Link?” Zelda asked.

Link took out his Master Sword, as if to confirm something. What Zelda said was true. The glow of the Master Sword’s true power was now gone from the blade. Link clearly remembered hearing that voice as well shortly after passing the Trial of the Sword. It was as though a living entity resided within the sword. Nevertheless, he was certain it would rekindle its legendary glow should he encounter any lingering malice or any other similar evil. After all, he earned that right. As far as he could tell, the Master Sword was just asleep in its hilt. Nevertheless, it remained Link’s most reliable weapon.

Be that as it may, he has other weapons he could use. His Sheikah Slate has the power to digitally store other weapons, bows, shields, food, etc within its memory core. Its technology has also shown to be compatible with the mystical abilities of the Koroks, specifically Hetsu, who was able to expand Link’s weapon, box and shield inventories to a certain extent. Coupled with the ability to fast travel to any previously activated shrine in Hyrule, Link has found travel across Hyrule much easier.

However the Sheikah Slate’s power, much like the Master Sword, has its limits. If he uses it too much in a short time, the tablet goes into a low power mode while its power regenerates, leaving him only able to swap out items and such. Regardless, such a setback had been of little concern for him, given his tendency to rely on horseback at times and more recently, the Master Cycle Zero he earned from completing the Champion’s Ballad trials.

“I understand the Sheikah Slate here is able to transport you anywhere in Hyrule at activated shrines. I never knew it was capable of that. Of course, its

full functionality was reserved only for you. I wonder. Do you think this thing can teleport more than one person?" Zelda asked, holding the tablet out for Link to take.

Link silently took the tablet in his hand, navigated to the Hyrule Map, zoomed in on Zora's Domain and tapped on the Ne'ez Yohma Shrine. The option popped up for instant transport. There was only one way to find out. He held his hand out to Zelda, who took it. Before Link could activate it, Zelda looked over at their horses.

"Wait! As much as I'm curious to see if this works, we can't really leave our horses behind. Let's take them to the nearest stable first and board them. Then we can try the instant transport option then." Zelda recommended.

Link glanced at her for a moment before navigating back to the home screen, switching the screen off and putting it back on his hip. He then nodded in agreement to Zelda's change of mind. They mounted their horses and headed for Outskirt Stable, which was closest.

As they rode down the pathway, Zelda spoke to Link.

"Listen, Link...the threat of Calamity Ganon is over. Peace has been restored and our burdens have been eased. While that's not to say evil won't ever return, there's something...personal I'd like to ask of you."

Link looked at Zelda with an expression that invited her to state her request.

Zelda understood and did just that. "Will you consider ending your silence? Will you speak to me...to everyone? You once told me, the only time I remember you saying anything, that the burdens placed upon you as the chosen hero has led you to move forward in silence to shoulder that weight in the way you felt best. Even now, after a hundred years, you've maintained that stoic silence. I respected your decision to remain silent, but in a time of peace, proper two-way communication is more important than ever. Will you end that silence...for me?"

Link stopped his horse, followed shortly by Zelda, who had to turn her horse around a bit to see him behind her. She could tell he was contemplating her request. Link had become used to saying nothing. In fact, sometimes he preferred it, as though speech was unnecessary for him. Though she claimed to have watched Link on his journey, clearly she hasn't seen everything. Link has indeed spoken on occasion to select individuals, one of which began occupying his thoughts since the battle with Calamity Ganon had ended. Perhaps she was right...

If Link was going to speak again, he decided to start with something specific that he now wished he had answered immediately after she asked.

"You asked me if I remembered you. The answer is yes, I do. I've recovered all of my memories. At the same time, I'm still privy to all of the new memories I've formed before I regained my older ones. A hundred years feels like a lifetime ago, almost as though it were a past life that I can still remember; one that I've revisited rather than resumed." Link said.

Hearing Link's voice was a little jarring for Zelda, despite anticipating it. Like him, she too had grown accustomed to his silence. Nevertheless she couldn't, in good conscience, let Link continue to believe that he had to shoulder that burden of silence any longer. She smiled at Link.

"I'm so happy to know you do indeed remember. Yes, I can understand how all that time spent in the Shrine of Resurrection has created a sort-of divide in your memories, despite getting them back. But please understand, those memories are still a part of you. Who you were back then and who you are now are very much connected."

Link beckoned his horse forward again, prompting Zelda to do the same. She continued talking.

"Like you, I too have experienced a divide between the present and the past since my consciousness reasserted itself upon your revival. I spent those same 100 years in a suspended state, my power keeping Calamity Ganon confined within Hyrule Castle. It took a lot of effort to help telepathically guide you on your journey. I guess what I'm saying is that I understand how you feel. I

guess my disconnect between the two time periods isn't as great since I never lost my memories. Ah, we're here."

Zelda's abrupt change of subject owes to the fact that they were approaching Outskirt Stable. It was to become a regular thing, traveling once again with Princess Zelda, seeing her being recognized by the few elders that laid eyes on her.

"Princess?! Is it really you?" an old man called out.

Zelda stopped her horse in its tracks as the old man ran up to her. Link recognized him as Toffa, the man who tasked Link with finding the one-of-a-kind white horse that was descended from the same kind of horse that Zelda herself once rode in a previous age. It was one of the many things Link made a mental note about to reveal to her once they had the time.

As Zelda waxed nostalgic with Toffa, Link took the liberty of trodding his horse up to Embry, who ran this stable.

"Hello, Link! How may I help you today? Are you here to take out a different horse or are you here to board Epona?" Embry asked.

"I wish to board her, please. Zelda's too, once she's done." Link said.

"Splendid!" Embry said. "Just give me a few moments while we take them both into our care."

Link dismounted his trusty steed and wandered over to Zelda, who was in the middle of dismounting her horse. She had apparently overheard Link starting the process of boarding their horses and made way for Embry to take them both.

Toffa was just asking Zelda about her plans for the future.

"Well, rebuilding Hyrule is my biggest goal, one that will take time and a lot of volunteers. If you could help spread the word, that would be most helpful." Zelda said.

Toffa smiled. "It would be my pleasure, princess! Oh by the way, has Link told you? He managed to tame the extremely rare white horse that you yourself once rode. I wish I could say she is at this very stable, but she's certainly boarded up at one of them."

Zelda looked at Link, impressed. "Is that so?"

Link managed a nod. "If you'd like, I'll gladly turn over ownership of Cream to you if you'd like. She's clearly more suited to *you*, after all."

Zelda giggled. "You named her Cream?"

Link looked perplexed. "What? You don't like the name?"

Zelda shook her head apologetically. "No, I'm sorry. It's just I never expected such a name from you for a horse. It's pretty apt, I'd say."

Once all the local pleasantries were finished, the two set off down the path on foot a little ways. Once they were out of sight of the stable, Zelda stopped in her tracks and gestured to Link's Sheikah Slate.

"Alright. Are you ready?" she asked.

Link took out the Sheikah Slate and selected the Ne'ez Yohma Shrine. Once more, he held his hand out to Zelda, who took it.

"Ready?" Link asked.

Zelda nodded the affirmative as Link stretched a finger to tap the 'Travel' option. Zelda watched as the familiar blue lines of light disassembled Link's body to teleport him to the shrine. She felt her own feet leave the ground as the same light immediately engulfed her own body, filling her entire vision with it as she felt disjointed between the physical and the metaphysical.

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