

~ Heart of a Zora

by RinjiPantera

Chapter 4

“Link. Wake up. Please.”

Link felt a hand gently rocking him. He stirred groggily as he struggled to open his eyes. He noticed that it was still night out. He looked around a little before seeing that Sidon was standing over him. From Link’s sleeping position, the Zora prince loomed especially tall over him.

“What time is it?” Link asked.

“It’s two in the morning. I’m very sorry for waking you at this hour. I promise I’ll make it up to you by paying for another night here with this bed; but I need to talk to you and it’s too difficult during the day with everything going on.” Sidon said.

Link slowly sat up and happened to notice Kodah in the background. She pretended to be reading something, but he caught her very brief grin, as though conveying a silent message to him that he was sure was ‘I told you so.’. The middle of the night, while he was legit trying to get some sleep, wasn’t really his ideal moment to proclaim his feelings for him. Maybe the spontaneity created that moment. Regardless, he needed to hear what Sidon wished to say first before jumping to any conclusions.

“It took some convincing for Kodah to allow me to awaken one of her customers. I already paid her in advance for your next stay; Zelda as well. Would you mind following me to my place?” Sidon asked.

Link was beginning to wonder where this was going. Seemed awfully direct for an invitation. Regardless, he climbed out of bed and did as he was told. Come to think of it, Link had never seen where Sidon slept. He never seemed to be around here when Sidon was actually in his pond. Perhaps his was somewhere else.

Sidon led Link upstairs towards King Dorephan’s throne room. The actual room was guarded by two guards, whose posturing made it clear that none except Sidon himself could enter. They stepped aside as he led Link past them. If there was a sleeping pond up there, he had never noticed it. Turns out the throne itself is convertible into a sleeping pond, as Dorephan himself was

floating peacefully within it, fast asleep. It was quite an unusual sight to see the massive king sleeping like that. Sidon led Link around back through a doorway that was now visible behind where the throne usually is. Inside it was what could only be described as a royal sleeping pond. It was decorated with the Zora crest among other things. Sidon's Lightscale Trident was affixed to the wall on a backboard, similar to the ones in Link's house. There was also a detailed painting of Mipha on his wall, which was adorned with flowers; no doubt his own personal memorial to her.

While the residential ponds all sat in the open on the main level, it seemed as though Sidon was the only Zora who got his own private living quarters. Still not entirely certain what this was about, Link watched as Sidon grabbed a chair and offered it to Link.

"Once again, my apologies for waking you at this hour, but I needed time to tell you about what my father and I discussed. There's going to be a public announcement, but I wanted you to know about it first." Sidon told him.

Despite his current fatigue, Link couldn't help but smile in spite of himself. "No need to apologize, Sidon. I'm always happy to see you."

He wasn't sure, but Link could've sworn he saw him blush.

"You're too kind, Link." Sidon smiled back. "Anyway, my father...well, he asked me about taking over as the new pilot for Vah Ruta as Zora Champion."

Link lit up at this. "Really? Oh, Sidon! That's great news! I'm so happy for you!"

Sidon rested back in his own chair, not quite as excited as Link expected him to be.

"What is it?" Link asked.

Sidon looked at him. "Well you see, Vah Ruta requires someone with exceptional skill and a strong soul."

“Well what’s the problem? You’re definitely quite skilled, both in the water and even on land. Remember how gracefully you leapt off Inogo Bridge?” Link asked.

“Leaping around and swimming fast aren’t exactly sufficient qualifiers to be worthy of bonding with a Divine Beast. My sister had amazing healing powers on top of her Zora abilities. I don’t. What’s more, *you* have Mipha’s ability. If anything, I’d say *you’re* more worthy of piloting Vah Ruta than I am.” Sidon said, the doubt in his voice evident.

Link reached for Sidon’s hand and held it in his own.

“Listen to me, Sidon. I owe a lot to your words of encouragement over the last year. I doubt I would’ve succeeded in my quest if it weren’t for you. You are a good man with one of the strongest souls there is. What’s more, you’re Mipha’s younger brother with a heart of gold. I have no doubt that Vah Ruta would accept you as its new master. Because...” Link paused. He was within a hair’s breadth of telling him right there how he felt, when something held him back.

“Because I believe in you, just as you’ve believed in me. Let me also offer these words back to you also. You’re an incredible man, Sidon. I am very thankful to you. Because you *are*.” Link finished saying.

Without warning, Sidon pulled Link close and hugged him once again.

“Thank you, Link. That means so much to me. And you’re right. My father knows more about Vah Ruta than most. If he believes I can assume control of Vah Ruta as the new Zora Champion, then I too must believe it.” Sidon said before letting go of him.

“Was that what you wanted to tell me?” Link asked.

“Actually...” Sidon said, “...there’s something else. Apparently, there’s a bit of a quest my father was thinking of asking you to partake in. I told him how busy you were fixing to be, what with helping the Princess begin rebuilding Hyrule Kingdom. He actually told me he’d gladly volunteer some Zora to help in

the endeavor in your stead. He spoke to me of a sacred spiritual stone, one of three that once existed centuries ago. The details are sketchy, but he believes they once played a vital role of some kind. The stone in question is known amongst my people as Zora's Sapphire."

This certainly got Link's attention. "I see. And what is it he's wanting me to do?"

"He is aware of your Sheikah Slate's ability to take real life photos of certain objects, weapons and such and be able to set it to track the actual object of one of those images using its sensor ability. Zora's Sapphire has been deemed lost to our people since long before even my father was born. It is of great significance to our people, even now. He...or rather we are hoping that your Sheikah Slate might be able to detect it with a proper image of it to scan for. Mind you, there's no guarantee the sapphire even exists today. For all we know, it may have been destroyed long ago. It could be buried where no one can ever reach it. But if there's even a slight chance it can be found and recovered, it would constitute a significant historical recovery." Sidon explained.

Link said nothing as he pondered his request. He was right in that this was no easy task. If what he said was true, this sapphire could be anywhere, assuming it's even still in Hyrule at all. However, there was very little Link would not do for him. With Hyrule at peace once again, surely he could be spared for a few days to try.

"Okay, sure. I'll do it. But on one condition." Link said.

"What's that?" Sidon asked.

Link smiled as he looked at him. "That you accompany me on this quest."

Sidon nodded. "I'd be delighted to go with you!"

"Great." Link said. "Well, I'm happy to hear that you've been tasked with taking over Vah Ruta. Come to think of it, I wonder if the other three villages are doing the same; selecting successors for the other three Divine Beasts? With

the spirits of the original Champions having moved on, that could explain why the Divine Beasts have stopped working, starting with Vah Ruta.”

Sidon thought of this for a second. “Well, I don’t really know who they’d choose. But I have heard that Yunobo of Goron City shares Daruk’s power of protection. Perhaps he could take over Vah Rudania.”

“That may be.” Link mused. “If I had to guess: Chieftainess Riju of the Gerudo Tribe could take over Vah Naboris, since she’s a direct descendent of Urbosa and Teba of the Rito Tribe, because I’ve seen his aerial combat skills and he’s almost on par with Revali himself in terms of skill.”

“Well then,” Sidon spoke, “I’d say that covers everything. I’ll inform my father in the morning of your willingness to accept his quest. He’ll then speak to Zelda of our offer to send a few of our own to accompany her on her task of rebuilding. Hopefully, she’ll be okay with this.”

There was an awkward silence from Link, to which Sidon interjected.

“Is everything alright? You seemed distracted for a moment there.”

Link looked up at him again, snapping out of it. “Oh. Sorry. It’s just...my first duty is to the Princess as her guardian knight and protector. I don’t know if it’s such a good idea to leave her to do this without me at her side.”

Sidon leaned forward in his chair. “Listen, Link. Calamity Ganon is gone. Peace has returned to Hyrule. If the legends remain true, should Ganon ever return again, it won’t be in any of our current lifetimes. I’ll personally see to it that those who accompany the Princess are among our finest warriors. They’ll even be asked to swear their lives to ensure her safety. Besides, I actually have my own reasons for seeing Zora’s Sapphire returned to our people.”

Link thought of asking what those reasons are, but decided to hold off on that. Just then, an idea occurred to him. He reached in his pocket and took out a small round device which bore markings similar to the Sheikah Slate.

“I can give my Travel Medallion to Zelda. Should she find herself in any danger, she could activate this to create a warp point at her location, to which I can then instantly fast travel to wherever she may be. She has the ability to communicate with me telepathically, so she could then reach out to me across any distance to call for my help should any such danger befall her.” Link explained, more to himself than to Sidon.

“That sounds like a great idea. Well then, I’ll let you get back to sleep. In fact, feel free to sleep in if you need to. The announcement won’t happen until noon anyway. I’ll inform Kodah to ask Zelda not to wake you. If she insists otherwise, then we won’t stop her.” Sidon said.

Link found himself in another moment where he felt the urge to reveal his feelings. But he reminded himself that the middle of the night on a sudden nighttime conversation wasn’t the best time. Barring any unexpected circumstances, he’s got a big quest ahead of him.

Link got up and headed to the door. He paused to look back at him.

“This is a nice place you have here. I’m a bit disappointed you never showed it to me sooner.” Link said with a deadpan gaze.

Sidon wasn’t sure how to respond to that. Link then chuckled. “Heh, I’m just messing with ya. But in all seriousness, thanks for showing me your room. Anyway, I’ll see you in the morning.”

Sidon’s uncertainty deflated then. “Sweet dreams, Link.”

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