

~ Heart of a Zora

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Chapter 13

The reaction from the crowd was not quite what Sidon was expecting after announcing his and Link's romantic relationship. On the contrary, he could make out a couple sentences being uttered.

"What? That's it?"

"We knew this already."

"Is there something we *don't* know?"

Nevertheless, every single Zora soon broke into an energetic applause, if for no other reason than out of respect for their beloved prince. It was a silent agreement that for all of Sidon's strengths, his skills as a warrior and his diplomatic flair, he was rather transparent to many as far as trying to keep secrets goes. Indeed, it seemed in the end that a great many of the Zora tribe had already suspected Sidon's affections for the Hylian Champion, much the same as it was with Mipha.

Sidon held his hand up to gently silence everyone.

"There's one other thing, and it's most important not only for everyone here..." he turned to look at Link as he finished, "...but for you as well, my Link."

Despite everyone already pretty clued in for some time about Sidon's feelings for Link, there was some gushing amongst the crowd. Even King Dorephan couldn't suppress a grin.

"I've taken the time to catch up on the history of our tribe. Zora's Sapphire is not only a precious heirloom of our people, a sacred stone that once comprised two others that were the keys to opening the inner sanctum of the Temple of Time, located on the Great Plateau, where the Master Sword once slept..."

There was a pause as Sidon considered his next words.

"...but it also served a very special purpose. For you see, before we created custom Zora garments intended for the one who we wished to marry..."

Sidon was suddenly cut off by rapturous cheering. The moment the word 'marry' left his lips, everyone instantly knew where he was going with this.

This time, it was King Dorephan who called for silence, more forcefully than Sidon did.

"Quiet down! Let Sidon finish!" the king demanded.

Link couldn't pretend that his heart wasn't already racing from hearing the same thing; but for his love's sake, he struggled with all his might to remain placid and let him finish saying everything before he allowed himself to react properly.

Sidon had to quickly recollect his thoughts after that interruption. He generally had no problems telling it like it is. But knowing that they all surely knew already made it feel like he should've chosen his words more carefully and not wind up in a position where it now felt redundant to say anything further. But for Link's sake...

"As I was saying. Zora's Sapphire also served a very special purpose. For you see, before we created custom Zora garments intended for the one whom we wished to marry, the Zora's Sapphire was used instead by those in the royal family for that same purpose. Which leads me to..."

Link kept struggling and struggling not to react, but his emotions were racing faster than the effects of the highest level speed elixir. Sidon dropped down to one knee, leaving him *still* taller than Link.

Sidon gave the most impassioned speech of his life.

"To my dearest love, Link. You have shown great courage since the day we first met. You've gone on to free not only Divine Beast Vah Ruta, but the other three Divine Beasts as well. You've gone on to save all of Hyrule from the threat of Calamity Ganon and through it all, you've been there for me when I needed you most. You helped me get past the loss of my sister and though we didn't quite see it until almost a year later, a powerful love has grown between

us. What I'm trying to say is that we've already taken that fateful first step, one that I trust you wouldn't have taken if you weren't as serious as I am. And so, I wish to ask if you'd be willing to take our relationship even further. As a token of my eternal love for you, will you accept this precious sapphire and become my lifelong husband?"

At those words, Link could no longer restrain himself. He looked at the sapphire that Sidon held out to him, but instead leapt right into his arms and, for the first time in as long as he can remember, broke down in tears of joy as he cried happily in Sidon's embrace.

"YES, SIDON!! YES, I WILL MARRY YOU!!" Link cried as every last Zora, including the king himself, cheered harder than ever!

Sidon stood up tall, lifting Link up in the biggest hug he could muster. The two kissed each other with small pecks several times before Sidon finally set him down. With his feet firmly on the ground, Link pulled Sidon down and kissed him deeply to the growing loudness of everyone's excited cheers. When at last their lips parted, Link finally accepted the sapphire, but having no time to really admire how beautiful it was amongst the overwhelming energy in the air from such a momentous occasion.

In the back of Link's mind, he wished Zelda had been here to witness this.

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In no time at all, every last Zora in their domain knew about Sidon and Link's engagement. But it didn't stop there. Word traveled quickly across all of Hyrule: to Rito Village, Goron City, Lurelin Village, Gerudo Town, Tarrey Town, Kakariko Village, Hateno Village (where Link currently lives) and even Korok Forest.

Meanwhile, inside Hyrule Castle, Princess Zelda and her Zora entourage have eliminated the last of the monsters. Zelda has shown great skill with the bow and the Bow of Light has proven to be as legendary as the Master Sword and Hylian Shield. With the castle now eerily silent and still, she took some time

to tour the castle and inspect all the damage it had sustained in the past hundred years.

“This is going to be quite an undertaking. I wonder if it’s even possible to restore the castle to how it once was.” Zelda said more to herself than the Zoras.

She was sitting in her study, which was one of the few rooms that still had most of its original effects, including Zelda’s diary. The thought had occurred to her that Link may have read this at some point. She even considered asking him about it when they saw each other again, but decided it was pointless now.

“If I may, Princess...” one of the Zora warriors said.

“Yes? What’s on your mind, Rivan?” Zelda asked.

“Well, I was thinking. I know you’re wanting to restore the castle to its former glory, but perhaps you should consider just starting over from scratch? The building is in terrible disrepair. The time and resources needed to restore such a large castle, even with entire teams of construction workers, would be immense. The malice has eaten away at several of the walls. Perhaps it may be better to just demolish the entire castle and rebuild it from the ground up.” Rivan recommended.

Zelda pondered this for a moment. Memories of her late father surfaced. King Rhoam Bosphoramus Hyrule was the last king of his namesake kingdom. Unless Zelda assumes the mantle of Queen and takes a husband, there won’t be another king to rule over the land. It was a thought that hadn’t escaped her.

She had actually thought of Link as a prospective husband, considering it was her love for Link that enabled her to awaken her sealing powers. And while Link devoted himself to protecting her, even with his life, she had never noticed any sign of romantic attachment from him. Perhaps she only had herself to blame. After all, during their first few outings together, she wasn’t exactly kind to him. She tried pushing Link away, insisting she could handle herself.

Some good *that* did.

And then there was Mipha. She was convinced that Mipha's love for Link far exceeded her own. Had things not turned out the way they did, it would've surely been they who settled down in the end and formed a family. Then there was Paya of Kakariko Village. She was aware of *her* strong attachment to Link as well. Though, he never seemed to reciprocate her feelings.

She even saw how the Great Fairies regarded him, though it seemed they were only interested in something physical. Of course, Link would've been a bit too young at the time, but the fairies made little effort to hide their interest despite not acting on it.

Seemed like Link was quite a ladies man despite not even trying.

In hindsight, Zelda felt a bit ashamed of herself. In the state she was in keeping Calamity Ganon sealed, her consciousness existed separate from her body. She could 'see' anywhere in Hyrule she desired. Naturally, she followed Link's adventure the closest. She saw how he overcame the Trial of the Sword to awaken the Master Sword's true splendor and how he bested the trials that would prove him to be a true hero and earn the right to own the Master Cycle Zero, a miniature Divine Beast she herself once rode.

But of all of the would-be lovers that Link has shown feelings for, it was Prince Sidon. If it's one thing Zelda prided herself on, it was her ability to perceive things others couldn't. She saw how frequently Link visited Sidon in Zora's Domain; how animatedly they talked to one another. Sidon showed such passion in his words to Link and Link held on Sidon's every word.

She encouraged Link to tell Sidon how he felt before she left. She wondered if he made good on that. Now that she was no longer in suspended animation while keeping Ganon sealed, she could no longer see beyond what her own eyes could see.

She never thought of Link as being bisexual before. But for someone like Sidon, she believed if there was any *man* Link could become romantically involved with, it would be him.

Maybe Rivan was right about demolishing the castle. After all, Hyrule was already in ruin. Most of the Hylians were wiped out during Calamity Ganon's initial onslaught. For all intents and purposes, the Hylian race was endangered. If they were to survive and regrow their population, there would need to be a lot of new families and babies being born. Nothing would be the same as it used to be. It would be a slow process that could take many years. She was grateful that the four main races of Hyrule weren't interested in conquest, especially the Gerudo. Each remained content with the land they resided in.

If Hyrule was to remain a respectable power in its own kingdom, then it would need a proper ruler and a new castle for its royal bloodline. Zelda was confident she would meet the right man, who would both capture her heart and prove himself worthy of taking on the mantle of King.

"Perhaps you're right, Rivan. Thank you for the suggestion." Zelda answered.

Zelda and the Zoras all spun around at the sound of footsteps running towards them. It was Dunma, Rivan's daughter.

"Dunma. What are you doing here?" Rivan asked her.

"Sorry to interrupt, but I was sent here by King Dorephan on urgent business to retrieve you all. He also requests that you return to Zora's Domain as well, Princess." Dunma said with seriousness in her voice.

"What is it? What's the matter?" Zelda asked.

Dunma's serious expression shifted into a smile.

"It's Link and Sidon. They've found the lost Sacred Stone from ages past called Zora's Sapphire. Long story short, the sapphire was revealed as the Zora's engagement gem intended by one of the Zora's royal bloodline for the one they sought to marry. Zelda, Sidon chose Link! And Link accepted! They're getting married next week!" Dunma could barely contain her excitement.

Zelda's face lit up. It was all such sudden news.

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