

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

第1章:襲撃 (Raid)

“Link, wake up! The Great Deku Tree wants to see you!”

I slowly open my eyes. Blinking against the bright sunlight I try to find the source of the voice. Dancing around my head flies a small fairy, with silvery wings and a slim body. Resting my head against the tree's trunk I'm sitting against, I close my eyes again.

“Oh, is that so?” I answer the fairy, feeling sceptical at the sudden announcement.

“He also told me that from now on I'll be your fairy. Pleased to meet you, I guess.”

I open my eyes again.

“My fairy? Are you serious? Did any of the Kokiri put you up to this?”

I can't believe that after all this time without having a fairy like every other Kokiri here in the Deku Forest one'd suddenly present herself to me. One asking me to haste myself to the Great Deku Tree for an audience, no less.

“Why don't you come with me to the Great Deku Tree and find out?” She says, noticing my hesitation.

“This better be worth it.” I reply as I get up and follow the fairy towards the Great Deku Tree. It can't hurt to play along for now, I tell myself.

On our way, I wonder what the Great Deku Tree, who is the most powerful being in the entire forest as well as our guardian, would have to talk about with a stray Kokiri like myself. Especially since he doesn't talk much in general. I quickly inspect and clean a few twigs and some grass off my traditional green Kokiri clothes. I'd better not look like I just woke up from a nap, at any rate. Then I remember something.

“What's your name, little fairy?” I ask.

“My name is Navi, and I'm no little fairy.” she responds grudgingly, “For your information, not only am I a grown up fairy, I'm also much older and more experienced than you are.”

Navi moves away from me a bit. She appears to be pouting.

“Hey, I'm sorry.” I tell her, “I wasn't sure how to address you, and... well... that is...” I stumble over my words, trying to find the right words to make her stop feeling insulted. I'm reminded of the fact that I know almost nothing about fairies.

“I'm sorry, okay?”

Navi doesn't reply for a moment, then she turns around and looks at me. She's grinning.

“It's been a while since I've found someone who I can tease so well!” she says, as she moves closer to me. I suddenly notice that for a fairy she isn't bad looking at all. Almost cute, I'd say. Then I realize what I'm thinking about.

“Blushing all of a sudden, eh?” Navi giggles, “I think I'll learn to like you.”

I can feel that I'm blushing more and try to think of something neutral. Then Navi turns around and resumes flying down the path to the Great Deku Tree.

“Let's continue, shall we?”

I mutter in agreement and follow after Navi.

* * * * *

Long before we reach the Great Deku Tree's meadow in the forest, the grand shape of its upper part can be seen, towering over its surroundings. As we enter the meadow, the Great Deku Tree is standing there, as solemnly as ever.

“I'm back, Great Deku Tree.” Navi says.

The Great Deku Tree doesn't respond. As we move in closer, we suddenly see flames appear in its branches, then at its base as well, until the whole tree is ablaze. I hear Navi gasp in horror. Then with a shock I notice that the whole forest around me is ablaze as well. Part of me wonders how the fire could spread so quickly. I mostly feel filled with horror at this gruesome sight.

Hearing a noise behind me, I turn around and see the black shadow of a man. The only part of him I can see clearly is his slight smile. In one hand he holds a torch, the other carries a sword. Behind him is a sea of flames. Realizing that this person must be responsible for all this destruction, I grab a tree branch that's lying on the ground within reach and jump at the man, the branch held above my head, ready to strike in vengeance.

The coldness, then the pain as the blade enters my body. Wide-eyed I gaze at the man who has just impaled me on his blade. As the tree branch drops from my hands onto the scorching ground, I try to find the man's eyes, to read his thoughts. Then he casts my dying body aside onto the ground and walks away from me. While my vision is too blurred by tears and pain to see much, I can hear Navi nearby, yelling. She sounds so distressed and sad... I smile a bit, it's been so short and we've already grown so fond of each other... but, I'm so tired now... later, when I'm feeling less sleepy... we can...

* * * * *

“Hey Link! Won't you finally wake up?!”

Someone is tugging on my arm. How can this be? Wasn't only Navi...

I quickly open my eyes to even quicker close them again against the bright light that is shining through a window of the room. Moving my position so that the sun is no longer shining directly into my face, I open my eyes again, and see the face of my good friend Saria looking at me in an amused fashion.

I sink back into my pillow.

“So it was just a dream...” I mutter.

“Was it a scary dream?” Saria asks.

“It was... I don't really remember it, but I think it was scary, yes.” I answer, not fully truthful. I do remember everything that happened in the dream, even the moment I 'died'. What I can not answer is whether there is any meaning to the scenes in it or merely the result of my overactive imagination. No use in making others worry needlessly, I decide.

“You feel ready to head to the Forest Temple for a day's work? Or would you rather sleep for a few

more hours?” Saria asks teasingly.

Shoving aside the dream's frightening and puzzling images, I remember that I promised yesterday that I'd help Saria again in her ongoing project to clean up and restore the Forest Temple. It wouldn't be the first time we'd be doing this, and I remember looking forward to it yet again. Besides, there's no way I could abandon a good friend like Saria.

I work myself up to a sitting position, then swing my legs over the side of the bed and glance at my nightwear.

“Just give me a moment to get dressed, okay?”

“Sure thing. I'll be waiting outside.” Saria says, then turns around and leaves the room.

I sigh a bit and look around the room while stretching my arms. Everything looks so perfectly normal in here. Every bit of furniture, the few trinkets I've collected over the years... down to the wooden walls, ceiling and floor. The sun's rays touching the floor and the bed, with little specks of dust floating in the air, illuminated to look like tiny sparkling diamonds.

It's hard to reconcile this peaceful room with the violent images of my dream. I can think of nothing else that has happened the past days which'd inspire such thoughts either. Giving up on trying to find an explanation, I decide to get dressed. Discarding my nightwear, I find my regular clothes thrown about on the floor and quickly put them on. I dash out of the room, through the small hallway and outside, where the bright sun's rays greet me, along with the chattering of birds and various other sounds of the awakening forest. Looking around, I see Saria standing next to a tree in front of my house. First taking a deep breath of the morning air, I then rush down the couple of stairs and over to Saria.

“Took you long enough to get dressed.” She says teasingly, “You want to eat breakfast at my place before we leave for the Forest Temple?”

My stomach grumbles at the thought of breakfast.

“Sounds like a yes.” Saria says, smiling. I merely blush somewhat.

* * * * *

After preparing some breakfast in Saria's small kitchen, we take our plates outside and sit down next to a tree on the grass. As we sit there, eating our breakfast in the bright morning sunlight and watching animals and Kokiri alike emerge from their homes and move around, we don't say a single word to each other. Yet we know exactly what the other is thinking. Such is how true friendship works, I think.

I've known Saria pretty much from the day I was 'born', or emerged, as it's called for us Kokiri. Deep inside the Deku Forest there are a number of trees on which large 'fruits' grow, inside of which a Kokiri develops, like in a womb. Once 'ripe', the fruit is taken down by other Kokiri and the new Kokiri inside is freed. Since the newly emerged Kokiri is almost fully developed some of them actively experience the emerging and can recall it later. I'm one of those who don't recall it, though. My first memories are of green-haired Saria standing over me and poking my cheeks. Later she told me that was because I looked so cute. I'll just take her word for it, I guess.

From that day onwards Saria was almost always at my side and we'd grow quite fond of each other. As soon as I was ready, she'd take me on trips through the Deku Forest and I got to meet the Great Deku Tree on one of those trips. I mostly recall feeling awestruck at the sight of the gigantic tree,

whose voice I could hear inside my head. That experience still makes me feel proud to be a Kokiri. She'd also take me to her most favourite spot of the entire forest: the Forest Temple. Built centuries ago by the Hylian people of this country, Hyrule, it had once been the location of many rituals, and seen regular visits by the Royal Family of Hyrule. Years of peace and various distractions around Hyrule and beyond its borders led to these visits becoming less and less frequent until they eventually stopped completely. The priests of the temple maintained the rituals for a while after that, but ultimately they either left or died from old age. It seemed nobody recalled the exact purpose of the rituals being performed anymore, and information about it is scarce.

That's what Saria has been working on for the past months: to restore the Forest Temple to its former glory and find out more about those rituals. While this may sound like a fun and interesting project, it mainly consists out of choking on centuries-old dust and getting scared to the very edge of one's life by local wildlife which has taken refuge in the temple. I'm fairly certain at least half of the forest's spiders live in the temple, for one.

Still, I think it's a worthwhile project, and a lot better than any of the other tasks the other Kokiri occupy themselves with, which seem to consist mostly out of gardening in what can be called the biggest garden in existence. Besides, I feel very comfortable working together with Saria and I think she feels the same about me.

I glance over to Saria and see that she's looking at me with a smile on her face.

“What is it?” I ask her.

“Nothing special. It's just that you seem quite happy today.”

“I am?” I reply, slightly puzzled. If anything, I'd expect her to ask me what I was pondering about, after which I might have told her about the dream... It's then that I realize that I haven't been thinking about the dream since I left my house, which fills me with a feeling of relief. At least today won't be spoiled by that weird dream.

* * * * *

While walking down the path towards the Forest Temple we once again don't talk much, at most pointing out a field of pretty flowers or a squirrel looking at us while we're passing by. The great weather has put us and seemingly the entire forest as well into a great mood. I feel that I'm actually looking forward to getting back into the dark, cramped and dusty rooms of the Forest Temple.

The path we're walking on is actually one of the many ancient roads that run through the forest, most of them leading to and from the Forest Temple. They're made from solid stone blocks which used to be carved and assembled in such a fashion as to form a nearly completely level surface. I keep thinking that seeing one of those roads in its original form must have been truly an amazing sight. Now, however, they're covered with moss and vegetation, with many stones having shifted over the years or even cracked, making the surface quite irregular. Perhaps once we're done with the Forest Temple we can take care of these roads as well. With some help of the other Kokiri... I smile at my own thoughts.

“Thinking of more grand plans again, aren't you? Perhaps restoring the old roads as well?” Saria enquires.

“I don't know... wouldn't that be a lot of work?” I respond, trying to hide how well she'd guessed my thoughts yet again.

“You bet it'd be. Who knows, if we can interest more Kokiri for it... The Great Deku Tree would like to see it as well. It has literally been ages since he's seen these old works in their full glory.” Saria's thoughts seem to drift off for a moment, as though she's recalling something.

“Anyway, it'll take years before even the Forest Temple is done, so there's little use in dreaming about such things. We'd better try not choking to death on those layers of ancient dust inside the temple.” She decides.

“Right you are.” I nod in agreement.

“Say,” I continue, “you think we'll find the library today?”

The temple's library is truly one of the biggest treasures, as it should contain invaluable documents on events and rituals from centuries ago. It should also contain blueprints and similar on the construction of the temple, which would help a lot with the restoration. We know that the library has to be on ground level within the temple from what the Great Deku Tree has told us. The problem is that the forest has reclaimed so much of those parts of the temple that only the upper sections which are still intact are easy to reach. Not wanting to use brute force to clear out the overgrown sections, our progress has been slow the past weeks.

* * * * *

For those who don't know of its existence, they could possibly walk past the Forest Temple without realizing an entire building is hidden underneath the growth of trees, bushes and other forms of vegetation. Here and there some moss-covered parts of the building are visible, but only when moving closer into the dense growth does the scale of the building become clear. Starting with the front stairs, moving up towards the massive entrance, formerly holding two huge doors of which the remains now lie on the floor in a mass of decayed wood and rusted iron, the entrance granting access to the colossal main hall, with a ceiling so high that in the half-gloom of the partially covered windows at the sides of the hall only darkness can be seen. Where the large, half-circular windows are still intact or not covered by plants, impressive scenes can be seen depicted in colourful glass.

At the other side of the main hall start two white marble stairs at each side of the hall, rising up in a quarter circle to meet up at a central walkway, the latter providing access to another set of large double doors, these still relatively intact. Behind it are the halls into the rest of the complex, leading to various rooms and stairs to the upper and lower floors. The stairs leading to downstairs, however, are inaccessible at this moment due to roots and plant life having upturned and collapsed parts of the structure and blocked access with roots and vines. This is the floor where the library supposedly is. When we found that the stairway was blocked, we attempted to access the floor via the windows outside, only to find that the growth around the sides and back of the temple was so dense to be nearly impenetrable, thus we have spent the past weeks clearing the stairway from debris, roots and more, all the while kicking up thick layers of dust.

We have explored the upper floors already, finding nothing but decayed furniture and curtains, books which either fall apart at the slightest touch or have long since turned into a moldy mass, some broken windows with the branches of trees poking through them and parts of the roof having collapsed. Repairing the roof will take the efforts of many Kokiri, so all we can do for now is record the damage.

* * * * *

As Saria and I arrive at the Forest Temple, we enter as usual via the front entrance, through the main hall. Before we walk inside, I turn around on the top of the stairs and look at the scene unfolding in front of me. For as far as I can see there is only forest, its leaves like green gemstones in the sunlight. In the distance on my right hand side extends the mountain range which surrounds Kokiri Forest on two sides, with Death Mountain, an active volcano and the tallest feature of the mountain range, on the edge of my vision. For a moment I think I can see a white flash of light from Hyrule Castle, a long distance from the forest. Might have been my imagination.

Saria, who has noticed my delay in entering the temple, comes to stand next to me, looking at the same scene. For a few moments we don't say anything, just watch this scene we have seen so often and yet which remains as captivating as ever. The forest appears like a single, giant living entity, breathing softly as the gentle breeze which picked up before we arrived at the temple gently stirs the leaves and their branches. Beyond it are the mountains and the rolling hills of Hyrule Field, places we'll never see for ourselves, as we Kokiri can not live for very long outside the forest, beyond the sustaining influence of the Great Deku Tree. From our position, however, we feel like we can see everything and dream of visiting all of Hyrule and beyond.

After staying like this for a while we both turn around as on cue and walk into the gloom of the Forest Temple's main hall.

* * * * *

Today we resume our work on clearing the library's stairway. The stones we can lift are put in a section of the main hall, while the larger ones are shifted to the side. The roots and other parts of plants and trees we either pull to the side or cut through them with the serrated knives we brought with us. Some of them are incredibly thick and tough, costing an hour or more to cut through. This all is made even more enjoyable by the clouds of dust surrounding us, to which we add every time a stone is lifted or merely moved. With no airflow to carry the dust away we are forced to take regular breaks outside the main hall to cough the dust out of our lungs.

Our work is only illuminated by the light filtering through from the doors leading to the main hall and some windows further along the hallway the stairways connect to. While it isn't a lot of light, it is enough for us to work by. We work steadily for a few hours, clearing a few more meters of the stairway. As the little light doesn't penetrate far into the tangle of roots and vines in front of us, we can't tell how far we still have to go. I keep feeling inside the tangle for the presence of a door, a change in the walls or anything which might tell us how far we still are from the end of the stairway. Every time I feel nothing but more roots and vines.

We eat our lunch together on the steps of the front stairs. While enjoying the feeling of sunlight and the gentle breeze on my face, I glance at Saria who is sitting next to me. While working we don't talk much, focusing on the task ahead instead, leaving the talking for these breaks.

“When do you think we'll reach the end of the stairs? It seems to go on forever.” I ask her.

She looks up at me. “I honestly have no idea. Why? Are you getting tired of choking on dust already?” She grins without losing the air of innocence she always carries with her. I merely smile.

“It just seems to me that we should be getting close to the end of the stairway with the ceiling height increasing.” I suggest, finally telling her about what I noticed a few hours ago. Saria's face seems to brighten at this information. “We may actually reach the hallway, or room, or whatever is beyond

the stairway today.”

We discuss the possibility of reaching the next part of the lower floor for a while longer before we decide to return to work.

A few hours later Saria is the first one to feel something other than roots and vines in the tangle. She says it feels like a wooden surface, possibly a door. Lacking a lighting source, we have no choice but to continue clearing the way until we can get closer to it. After a while I feel for the door again, which is now easily within reach. Touching around its surface I think I can feel a door handle. Not fully thinking through the possible consequences, I push down on it. Suddenly the door opens with a smoothness I had never expected. Taken by surprise, I find myself unable to let go of the door handle, and I'm dragged along, through the remaining tangle. I realize that my feet are dragging over a soft surface, like carpet. Moments later the door comes to a sudden stop and I, unable to stop my own momentum, crash into the door.

It takes me a few moments to shake off the dazed feeling and realize that I'll soon have a nasty bump on my head. After another moment I realize that Saria is calling my name, asking me whether I'm alright.

“I'm fine,” I tell her, “just got a nasty bruise on my head when that darn door suddenly stopped.”

I hear a sigh of relief, followed by Saria's voice asking me whether I can see anything. Realizing what has happened to me, I look around, seeing mostly the outlines of many shapes, many seemingly organic. The windows in this room are nearly completely covered by the growth outside, leaving me in nearly complete darkness.

“I'm not entirely sure where I am.” I answer. “There is very little light in here. I think it's safe to enter, though.”

There's a moment of silence, then Saria's voice: “I think we should return tomorrow with lights so that we can investigate the room properly. Can you make your way back to the stairway?” Feeling disappointment at the prospect of waiting until tomorrow before we can see what is in this room, I nevertheless have to admit the wisdom in her proposal. Crawling around in the almost completely dark room would only invite accidents. Slowly getting up on my feet, I make my way back to the stairway.

“Alright, I'm returning now.”

* * * * *

On our way back to the Kokiri village we can barely contain our excitement about our discovery of this new room. If it really is the fabled library, who knows what kind of books and documents we might find there. We could finally begin the reconstruction of the temple, learn about its history and the rituals performed there, the reasons for why it was abandoned and much more.

I can barely sleep that night, my dreams filled with potential discoveries and dangers. When I wake up I find myself both feeling excited at the explorations today as well as relieved at not having had the same dream as the night before. Now, a day onwards, I begin to consider that dream to be merely a nightmare, berating myself for fooling myself into thinking that it might mean something.

Saria and I meet up in front of her house, have a quick breakfast and begin to gather supplies, including a pair of lanterns. This time we intend to get as far as possible into the lower part of the temple. Without having to work our way through a tangled collection of roots and vines, exploration

should be much easier than before.

We make it to the Forest Temple in record time, barely registering our surroundings as we rush along. Prior to entering the stairway leading downstairs, we light the lanterns. For the first time we see all the details of the walls of the hallway and the connecting stairways. There are intricate carvings in the stone, covering most of every wall's surface. Some of them depict historic scenes, others are apparently decorative, showing the diverse plant and animal life of the forest and of course Kokiri as an integral part.

I take the lead as we move down the stairway as I have come the farthest yesterday. Shadows dance along the stairway's ceiling and walls as we make our way down the steps, each sound muffled despite the presence of so much bare stone. It's as though the entire temple is awaiting the first visitors to this one room in the temple that has remained inaccessible for centuries. Even the sudden noise of Saria sneezing behind me from the dust that is still floating around doesn't seem to disturb the solemn atmosphere.

As the light of my lantern touches upon the double doors leading to the room beyond, one of them fully ajar, I can see for the first time the detailed woodcarvings on its surface, reaffirming our suspicion that the room beyond must be important indeed. My feet once again touch the soft carpet which still covers the floor of the room as I move forward, Saria close behind me.

“Saria,” I whisper without knowing exactly why, “you have got to see this.”

As Saria stands next to me I raise my lantern to flood the room with light. Within the light's sphere we can see row after row of bookshelves, some of them toppled over, others with shelves collapsed, but all of them filled with more books than we have ever seen in our lives. We have found the long-lost library of the Forest Temple.