

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

第3章: 別れ (Parting)

The rest of our journey was quiet. Far too quiet. No spiders dropped out of the trees, no one of us was lifted suddenly into the air to be turned into a neatly packaged cocoon. Either this means that we were wrong about the Great Deku Tree's meadow being the location of the source of this invasion, or we're being led right into a trap. Considering the ambush earlier by a relatively large group of those spiders, the latter seems far more probable. Despite this knowledge we continue walking, well aware that we can't expect reinforcements, as all the other Kokiri appear to have been caught and Hylians or others rarely visit the Kokiri Forest. We're on our own.

As we get near the meadow, we get off the path and try to stay hidden as well as possible in the undergrowth, which gets denser nearer the meadow's clearing, thus providing excellent cover. Assuming the enemy isn't already aware of one's position, naturally.

From our position we can see most of the meadow. The Great Deku Tree of course takes up most of our vision, surrounded by the grass and some larger plants of the meadow. Everything appears to be peaceful with nothing out of the ordinary. Aside from the gloom which seems to cover the place, that is. It's as though it's dusk even if it can't be more than an hour or two past noon. Yet despite both of us looking everywhere, criticizing every little detail, we can't see any evidence to support the idea that something evil may be inhabiting this place.

Just as I'm about to give up and discuss with Saria what to do next, I hear a series of sudden creaking noises above us. Before I can turn around I hear a shriek. Looking behind me, my sword and shield at the ready, I at first don't see Saria. Looking up, I can just see how she is being dragged up into the tree while yelling and kicking around her. Shocked by the sight, but not too shocked to think, I run through my available options, yet seem to come up rather empty. I can't rescue Saria as it'd be absolute madness to attempt to follow her up into the trees where I'd be at a severe disadvantage, not to mention up against who knows how many spiders. The only realistic options appear to be to attempt to escape from this place – and go where? - or to find the source of this all and put an end to it. Acknowledging the futility of either option, I find myself dashing from underneath the trees after one more look at the darkness above me into which Saria has vanished and where no doubt more danger lurks onto the meadow with its questionable safety. At least nothing can ambush me here from above, I find myself thinking.

Making my way towards the Great Deku Tree I glance behind me just once, only to see that I'm not being pursued. In fact, there's not a spider in sight anywhere around me. This all feels so wrong. Despite everything I keep running. If I can just make it to the relative safety of the Great Deku Tree I'll at least have a semi-defensible position. Less than thirty meters from the Great Deku Tree I look up at it, caught by a sudden, faint hope that it may be able to do something about the spiders and whatever else may be wrong around here. Yet it doesn't talk to me, or even seem particularly alive. The last time I was here, birds were sitting in and flying all around its crown, with each leaf and branch seemingly coated in a layer of liquid sunlight. Like the gloomy sky above, even this glow appears to have been replaced by grayness. With tears filling my eyes I run the last few meters towards the Great Deku Tree's trunk as the bitter realization of everything I have lost in just one single day seems to choke me. I almost wish things were like in my nightmare instead, as at least then I had something to fight, not the way things are now. I didn't come here to die a honourless death by monstrous spiders in a futile attempt to be a hero, attempting to save the entire forest from some terrible evil.

The ground and my surroundings have become a blur through my tears. Closing my eyes for a moment to clear them, it suddenly appears as though the ground is giving way beneath my feet. The sensation of running forward is replaced by a falling sensation as I feel the air rushing past me. Then the darkness swallows me whole.

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I feel so very cold, it's as though my limbs have turned into ice. I move around me with my hands, trying to find my blanket and pull it back over me. Not finding it, I turn onto one side first and feel around me again. Annoyed, I still can't find it. Wet... everything feels like it's soaking wet. Did the roof start leaking? Slowly drifting back to consciousness, I hear a voice inside my head yelling at me that something is terribly wrong, that danger is nearby and if I don't get up like right now I'll end up sleeping for all eternity.

Startled, the memories come rushing back. Our trek through the forest, the ambush, the village, Hako, my run towards the Great Deku Tree, Saria... Now wide awake I sit up and realize that not only am I sitting in a layer of water, but also that surrounding me is only impenetrable darkness. Feeling around me I realize that the soft, water-soaked sand must have broken my fall. I just hope that my sword and shield fell down with me and are lying nearby. Looking up, I can see a spot of light which must be tens of meters above me. Laughing bitterly to myself I desperately wonder how I'll ever find my way to the surface again. First things first, I guess, I think to myself while grimacing in pain. I don't think I broke or injured anything, but I wouldn't want to fall a distance like this again.

After feeling around on the ground for a few minutes I eventually find my shield and sword not far from where I landed. Gripping them tightly I feel some semblance of the old me returning. Maybe things will turn out fine after all. If only I had a light to see my way by...

Startled, I see that my sword suddenly has begun to emit a faint blue-ish light. Feeling amazed in a pleasant way by the unexpected features my sword appears to have, I silently urge the sword to emit more light, enough for me to not stumble or fall down the first hole I may encounter. To my relief it obeys and begins to emit enough light that I can even see some of the place I ended up in. It's a somewhat dome-shaped room, with the shaft in the ceiling leading to the surface. Behind me and to my left and right is a blind wall. The water appears to be seeping out of the ground as I can see no other place from where it may enter or exit. Near the other side of the room, in front of me, the ground is dry. Leading upwards at a gradual angle, it eventually vanishes into the darkness of what appears to be a tunnel. This may be my way out of here.

Slowly making my way towards the tunnel I make sure to stay to the side in case there is something unfriendly in the darkness, ready to jump at me. I safely make it to the tunnel entrance and inch my way inwards. I can hear or see nothing stir so far. The ground appears to get more dry and solid the further I go with the ground forming the roof seemingly packed tightly enough to not collapse if one were to merely sneeze. When I still haven't encountered anything which could be considered threatening after a few hundred meters I begin to relax somewhat. Maybe this just is a natural formation or was created by some creature which is now gone and I'll soon find my way back to the surface without any issues.

That thought brings back memories of the spiders waiting for me outside and of poor Saria. I hope she is okay. I firmly wish I knew a way to save her, but this entire mission was a bit of a desperate act to begin with, without a clear plan, no idea of what we were up against or how to end the threat.

Suddenly the thought of staying down here and just letting things for what they are seems very appealing to me. Sinking down to the ground I put my shield and sword next to me and put my arms around my knees while resting my back against the wall of the tunnel. Feeling so very alone and helpless I find my thoughts are in turmoil while a powerful sensation of despair and sadness threatens to overwhelm me. No longer feeling the need to act strong I put my head on my knees and start sobbing. This whole situation is so unfair, so cruel. Why did I and the other Kokiri have to get caught up in it? We never did anything wrong. I can't imagine anyone more harmless and innocent than the average Kokiri. So why?

As the sobbing subsides I can feel that my thoughts have cleared up as well. I now notice that I'm no longer afraid either. Not for myself, not for Saria, not of the spiders outside and not of anything which might be lurking in these tunnels. All that remains is a tiny, fiery core of determination. If I have to go down against this overwhelming enemy force, it may as well be in sheer defiance. Feeling better about having decided this, I'm about to grab my sword and shield as I hear a rustling sound next to me. Startled, I turn towards the noise, while grabbing my sword and using its light to identify the source.

"I say, it's good to see a fellow traveler down here in these damp tunnels." I hear a somewhat squeaking voice say as I see a pair of brown-yellow eyes enter the range of my sword's light. The eyes are surrounded by the most curious collection of what look like a pile of both green and brown-red leaves compacted to form a more or less humanoid shape about the size of a small Kokiri. It seems to scurry more than it walks as it moves closer to me. Not entirely convinced of its seemingly peaceful intentions, I pick up my shield as well and take up a defensive posture.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" I demand from the creature.

Seemingly undeterred and absolutely not taken aback by seeing a sword pointed at him, the creature slows its pace until it is standing in front of me, then tilts its head which causes a sound like the rustling of leaves.

"I thought you Kokiri knew about my species, the Deku Scrubs? If you did, you would know that we are not your enemy, even if things got muddled a bit with the arrival of those horrible gigantic spiders and their queen. I haven't seen any of the others in a while after I had to take refuge in these tunnels, though. Oh, such terrible events." At this the creature covers its head with what have to be its hands and slowly shakes its head.

The mentioning of the name of its species does make me recall some things I have heard and read about. Deku Scrubs, as they're called, are a rare kind of woodland creature which lives in most forested areas in Hyrule. They prefer to live underground or in caves and are rarely seen. Some say they like to trick people, others say they have the right intentions but are just easily distracted, leading to unfortunate situations. Either way, this Deku Scrub doesn't appear to form an immediate threat to me. Lowering my shield and sword, I say: "What can you tell me about what is in these tunnels? I accidentally ended up in here and have no idea what these tunnels are. Is there a way out?"

At hearing my voice the Deku Scrub lowers its hands which were covering its face. Narrowing his eyes to slits, he responds: "There's a way out alright, but you won't like it. These tunnels weren't here until a few days ago. Every way out for you leads through the spider queen's lair, and she isn't that easy to fool."

"Spider queen?!" I ask, alarmed.

Nodding, the Scrub answers: "She has taken up residence here, right underneath the roots of the Great Deku Tree. We Scrubs encountered her lair by accident while minding our own business.

Before we knew it dozens of huge spiders were upon us, leaving me and a few others no choice but to flee to safety. I got separated, though.”

While the Deku Scrub is talking a desperate plan is beginning to form in my head. Looking at the creature who has returned to shaking his head at the unfairness of the situation, I put down my shield and put my hand on its leavy shoulder.

“Could you take me to the spider queen?” I ask.

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A brief explanation by the Deku Scrub taught me that there are a lot of these new tunnels underneath the Great Deku Tree. Apparently I ended up on the top level, with many more levels underneath this one. Some levels contain rooms where the immature spiders and eggs are kept until they're ready to move to the surface where they'll continue the destruction of the forest. The Scrub also said he thought there was something unnatural about these tunnels and those spiders, as though some kind of black magic had placed it here.

Remembering the silence of the Great Deku Tree as I was running towards it during my escape from the spiders, I find myself agreeing with the Scrub and adding to it that I'm worried that this may be some kind of magical curse laid upon the Great Deku Tree. But by whom? Neither of us know.

In the back of my mind I keep seeing the images of that evil person standing amongst the flaming ruins of the Kokiri Forest. What if it was more than just a dream? Not wanting to finish this train of thought at this point, I push the images away and focus on the task ahead. The Scrub has led us through tunnel after tunnel, sometimes narrowly avoiding groups of spiders. A fight in these narrow tunnels would most definitely put us at a disadvantage, not to mention that the Scrub doesn't appear to be the fighting type at all. Fortunately the spiders appear to be not alert on intruders and we manage to hide in side tunnels each time without them detecting us.

After what feels like another few hours of walking through identical dark tunnels, with the only real change detectible being the gradient of the floor at times indicating that we are in fact getting deeper into the tunnel complex, the Scrub suddenly indicates we should halt. Obeying immediately, I sink down on my heels next to the Scrub and look at him for an explanation.

The Scrub stares intently ahead of him at what only appears to be absolute darkness to me. After a few seconds he turns towards me and tells me in a low voice that we are only a hundred meters or so away from the Queen's room, with a number of spiders standing guard in front of it. At the moment there do not appear to be any nursing spiders around, who take the Queen's eggs to the rooms we have seen before. If we can just get past the guards, I find myself thinking out loud.

“We? Oh no, I'm not going in there.” The Scrub says whilst shaking his head. “As you may have noticed I have no defenses other than running away, let alone any weapons to attack with.”

I smile. “Of course, I was just thinking back to when Saria, my companion, was still at my side. My apologies.”

“If I may ask, what happened to this Saria?” The Scrub asks carefully.

“The spiders probably took her as their prisoner right before we reached the Great Deku Tree. If only I had reacted sooner or paid more attention...” I say in frustration.

The Scrub nods in understanding. “Just be careful. If she was taken prisoner she is likely still alive,

and I have this feeling that defeating the Queen is the solution to ending everything. Defeat her and your companion may come out of this unscathed after all.”

“I truly hope it will.” I respond.

Saying our goodbyes, the Scrub vanishes into the darkness of the tunnel from where we came as I head down the other direction.

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Keeping the light from my sword at a level low enough to see where I'm going, yet not enough to alert anyone or anything tens of meters away, I slowly make my way towards the Queen's room. Realizing that at some point the guard spiders will see or otherwise hear me approach, I decide to throw caution into the wind and go for a surprise attack. If I can defeat the guards before the Queen is alerted I won't have to fight all of them at once, let alone any reinforcements. Picking up my pace, I soon find myself running towards yet another uncertain fate. I'm grateful for the soft soil dampening the noise of my running, although the spiders will be aware by now that something is approaching using the sensors on their sensitive legs. It's a good thing I'm only meters away now if I got it right.

Making my sword's light increase to the brightness of a summer's day, I descend upon the unfortunate guards. Not blinded by looking directly at the sword's light, I can see that there are three spiders standing guard, all of them crouching down low to avoid looking at the blinding light since they lack eyelids. Two of them are standing next to a large entrance, the other a few meters in front of it. The Queen has to be at the other side in her room.

I first target the spider standing in front of the entrance. Jumping straight ahead when I get close enough I use my shield to knock it hard on its head to see it step back all dazed before it collapses onto the floor. Within a second I'm running towards the other two guards who still haven't fully recovered. Dodging a swipe from one of their legs, I end up between the two of them and put my sword into the head of the one to my left, killing it instantly. Catching and deflecting another leg swipe from the other spider I attempt to get close enough to take it out as well. Aware of the fate its fellow guard suffered, it does everything it can to keep me away from its head using a barrage of leg swipes and jabs. Doing my best to dodge all of them, I realize that this one isn't going to be that easy to take down. As an act of desperation I decide to take the long route to the kill and begin to target its legs with my sword.

Every time a leg comes close I swipe at it with my sword, sometimes just scratching it, but more and more often nicking it until with one lucky stroke I take off the end of one of its legs. Shrieking in pain it attacks me more furiously, but does so now blindly. Seeing an opening I dive underneath one leg and swipe around me, cutting through one of its legs near the body, then following through with a stab into the connection between the body and head, paralyzing it. Before the spider comes crashing down on me I roll away. Not bothering to look behind me I head back to the location of the first spider I attacked, which is just beginning to recover from the blow to its head. Still somewhat weak, it is no match for me and I quickly finish the creature.

Panting from the exertion, I allow myself a short break while I take in the new situation. I have killed or disabled all guards without suffering any injuries myself. Next up is the Queen whom I pray to be alone in her room. It is probably going to be a difficult fight regardless.

Not wanting to waste any more time I make my way towards the entrance of what has to be the

Queen's room, prepared to face whatever I may encounter. Willing my sword to blaze as brightly as before, I hold it in front of me and take in the sight of this room after passing through the entrance. It's a dome-shaped room, somewhat reminiscent of the room I first encountered, with four pillars reaching up to the ceiling many meters above the floor. There doesn't appear to be any other entrance or exit. It's then that I realize that I can't see any living being in the room. If the Queen is in here she has to be hidden somewhere.

Feeling very uncomfortable all of a sudden, I look up at the center of the dome. Right at the sight of eight eyes staring back at me. Eight eyes bigger than any I have seen before. Before I get a chance to respond, the eyes and the body they're part of is descending to the floor at a rapid pace to land a few meters away from me.

With my first instinct to run away I glance behind me, only to see to my horror that the entrance is blocked by countless spiders. After a moment I realize that they aren't entering the room, however. Returning my full attention to the Queen I find myself impressed by her sheer size. While her underlings aren't small themselves, being significantly taller than an average Kokiri, this Queen is at least five times as tall, with fine black hairs covering her body. Even with my magical sword I'm not sure whether I'm a match. I guess that's why she has no need for the spiders outside the room to assist in disposing of me. Well aware of the cold lump of fear inside my stomach I nevertheless attempt to cast the Queen a fearless look into her eight multifaceted eyes. It's then that I hear the Queen's voice inside my head.

“I am Gohma, Queen of this new Empire. Who are you to disturb the peace and murder my offspring?”

Swallowing, I answer: “Are you the one who is destroying the Kokiri Forest and has brought harm to the Kokiri?”

Again the voice inside my head, sweet and soothing: “If you mean the restoration of this forest to a more desirable state and removing the species who don't belong, then yes.”

Steeling myself, I take on a fighting stance.

“In that case, I will have to defeat you for bringing harm to my people, the Great Deku Tree and above all for hurting my best friend!”

The only response I get is a soft cackling noise inside my head. Glancing behind me again I see that the spiders still haven't moved. I truly hope they won't interfere. Gritting my teeth I begin to run towards the Queen while I yell: “For Saria and the Kokiri Forest!”. Before I can get close enough suddenly a huge spider leg appears to materialize out of thin air and swipes me off my feet. Landing a few meters away with the air knocked out of my lungs, I find myself fighting the dark, clawing fingers of despair. How can I possibly defeat a monster like this? I can't get close, can't come in from above like I did before...

“Are you ready to go to your death quietly, Kokiri?” The familiar voice invades my thoughts. “I won't mind playing a bit more, though. You have no idea how boring things can be down here.” Followed again by the soft cackling.

Feeling infuriated by my own helplessness, I put down my shield while acting as though I have given up hope and use it as a cover while I search the floor for anything useful. After a few moments I find what I'm looking for: a decently sized stone. Leaving my shield behind, I slowly get up and with my head bowed I walk towards the Queen who is towering over me, seemingly gloating about her perceived victory over an inferior Kokiri.

“Great Queen Gohma, my apologies for my actions. I fully realize my own foolishness now. I will

give my life so that your great Empire may flourish. All I ask is that you end my life quickly.” I say meekly while throwing down my sword which keeps glowing with its internal light.

Again the self-assured cackling noise.

“Very well, I will accept your apology and grant you your wish!”

Seeing the Queen momentarily distracted I quickly switch the stone I'm holding in my right hand to my left hand and throw it with all my strength at one of the largest two eyes of the Queen. Scoring a perfect hit, the stone enters the eye with a sickening crunching noise. Quickly retrieving my sword and willing it to radiate as brightly as possible, I hear the Queen shriek in intense pain while she raises her body upwards, her injured eye away from her attacker and from the bright light.

Seeing movement from the corner of my eye I notice that the spiders at the entrance have made their appearance on the battlefield as well. I must act quickly now. Rushing towards the injured Queen, I slash at her hind legs, which still take me three or four perfect hits to cut through them, until I get her attention again. Before she gets to me with her front legs I manage to stab into her body a few times as well.

Mad with pain and rage, the Queen swipes and jabs at me, intending to knock me out or simply crush me. Her aim is poor, however, no doubt due to the sword's brightness, and I quickly get close to her head. Launching into the air I manage to nick the side of her head, which makes her even more enraged. As I land on the ground I can see her head with the mouth pieces ready to lethally injure me coming at me. This is the chance I have been waiting for. Pretending to not notice or care about the impending doom I remain half-sitting until there's only about one meter between me and the Queen's head. At that point I roll myself forward and stab upwards as soon as I get out of the roll. Not desiring to get crushed I get out of there, to the side of the Queen right as she comes crashing down.

Looking back at her, I notice that she isn't dead yet. The other spiders are getting really close now as well. Sprinting to the Queen's head, I use two hands on my sword to drive it fully into her head. Inside my own head I hear a horrifying death wail which abruptly ends. The Queen is dead.

Expecting death to be upon me soon as well, I bow my head while still holding on to my sword in the knowledge that I have done everything I could to avenge those I care about. As the moments pass, I suddenly become aware of the intense silence around me.

Extracting the sword from the Queen's carcass, I use its light to look around me. A shocking scene is revealed before my eyes. In front of me, starting a few meters away and extending beyond the room's entrance the floor is covered with the remains of spiders. It's as though all the life has suddenly been sucked out of them, leaving their bodies behind like those of dolls with no one left to pull on the strings.

As I move away from the Queen's remains to inspect the scene, I'm suddenly aware of a weird hissing noise behind me. Fearing that the battle isn't over after all I quickly turn around while cursing myself for having been so careless. To my surprise I see that the Queen's body has turned a weird black-green colour and appears to be slowly vaporizing, which is what causes the hissing sound. The scene confirms my fears that the presence of these spiders wasn't a natural occurrence as suspected.

By the time the Queen's body has mostly vaporized the other spider bodies have joined the process and before long I'm left behind all alone in the empty room.

“Time to leave.” I mutter to myself as I make my way to the entrance, picking up my shield on the way out. Before I reach the entrance, however, a rumbling sensation nearly knocks me off my feet.

Clumps of earth fall down onto me as the notion that this place is probably going to vanish as well now that its makers are gone hits me. I have to get out of here, fast. Running out of the Queen's room, I run into the tunnels while using my sword's light to guide me while cursing myself for not considering this sooner. If I had begun running sooner, perhaps...

After a minute or so of increasingly worse tremors and shocks I begin to realize that it probably wouldn't have mattered anyway and that before long I'll simply become a part of the Kokiri Forest soil. Probably a better fate than becoming spider food, though. At this point even the light from my sword isn't enough any more to penetrate the curtain of falling soil and clouds of dust. Coughing and choking I stumble on for a few more meters when I suddenly get hit on my back by a large object which forces me to my knees. Lacking the strength to get up again I lie down on the floor and embrace the darkness.