

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

第4章:運命 (Fate)

Warmth diffuses through my body, making me feel comfortable and at ease. Everything around me feels soft and warm. The sensation of being crushed in impenetrable darkness is replaced by one akin to floating. I can't recall ever having felt this at peace before. Through my eyelids bright light caresses my eyes. This is such a difference from my last moments in those tunnels, running for my life while the world came crashing down around me...

Feeling startled, the memories come flooding back to my conscious mind. The sudden threat to the village, the enemies, the sword... and above all the desperate fight against the Spider Queen and... Saria!

I'm about to open my eyes and look around me for Saria when I feel a sudden sharp pinch on my right cheek.

“Are you sure he's still alive, oh Great One?” I hear a high-pitched voice say while I open my eyes and look around me. What I see isn't the threat I was suspecting subconsciously, nor is it some kind of blissful afterlife. Blinking against the bright sunlight, I can see that I'm lying on the soft grass of the Great Deku Tree's meadow. Hearing a buzzing sound like that of a small bird, I turn my head around and see a winged figure darting through the air like a butterfly, yet unlike any I have seen before. I can distinguish silvery wings and a slim body, shaped like that of a Kokiri, only much smaller... Suddenly images from that one dream, many nights ago, fill my mind.

“Navi!” I gasp, the dream images and reality momentarily becoming one.

The fairy stops darting around for a brief while and looks at me with her head tilted.

“That is my name, yes, but have we met before?” She asks me. Then she looks away from, as though she's intensely listening to something I can not hear. She nods a few times. “I see, I understand now.” She responds to the voice I can not hear.

Then I too can hear the Great Deku Tree's voice: “Welcome, Link. I would like to thank you for risking your own life to save mine. What you did was very brave and courageous.”

Blushing at the sudden honour and realizing that I can't just keep lying here on the grass in the face of our mighty guardian, I quickly attempt to get up on my feet. Too quickly, I find, as I sway to and from on unstable legs while I nearly blank out from the lack of blood to my head. Returning to a sitting position, I imagine I can hear the Great Deku Tree chuckling. Blushing even more now, I again focus my attention on him. I notice that Navi takes up a position near me.

“Link, what I am about to tell you may be very disturbing to you. Please do not despair at these tidings. The truth is that I am dying. When this curse which you defeated was put on me my fate was already sealed. Before I depart this world I wish to tell you about a few matters of the utmost urgency and importance.

“This curse was put on me by an evil man from the far away desert, a person whose intention it is to conquer all of Hyrule and put it under his rule. He perceived me to be an obstacle when I refused to cooperate and thus he cursed me. While he may think that this part of his plan may have succeeded, there is one thing he didn't take into account. That one thing being you, Link.”

There's a short pause here, as though the Great Deku Tree is gathering his strength. Glancing to my left I see Navi wiping what appear to be tears from her face. Inside I can feel my thoughts racing: what does the Great Deku Tree mean with all this? Is he really dying? What will the Kokiri, nay, the entire Kokiri Forest do without his presence? And me making a difference in this upcoming conflict...

Troubled, I can hear the Great Deku Tree resume his story: "Let me tell you something about yourself you don't know, Link. You weren't born in this forest. In fact, you aren't a Kokiri, but a Hylian. Years ago a severely injured woman made it into this forest together with her baby, seeking my protection. Before she passed away she told me about some dark force pursuing her and her child. She begged me to take care of her baby, which I agreed to.

"Deeming it the safest if you were raised as a Kokiri this became the story the other Kokiri and you were told. You quickly became friends with Saria and never knew about your violent past until now."

I find myself reeling from the suddenness of hearing all this. I'm Hylian? I had a mother who died to protect me from some threat? I feel a sudden bitterness rising up inside me as I realize that my life so far has been a lie. Only the knowledge that it was done to ensure my safety and fulfill the promise made to my dying mother keeps me from getting up and leaving this place.

"You're right, perhaps it wasn't entirely fair to you, to keep the truth hidden, however, don't forget what you gained: friends, many trouble-free years during which you were able to do and learn those things you preferred. Would you call your friendship with Saria a lie as well?"

At this I shake my head, somewhat angry at myself for exposing myself like that. Suddenly overcome with a sense of dread, I'm about to speak when the Great Deku Tree answers my worries: "Don't worry about Saria, she was only unconscious by the time you defeated the Spider Queen. She is back at the Kokiri village with the others.

"Now, listen well for I do not have much time left. You are the chosen one who will save Hyrule from the evil that now threatens to destroy it. Your task won't be easy, with many hardships and events that will test you to your limits, but you must persist if Hyrule is to survive. You do not appear in the evil man's plans and thus only you can disrupt them. Do you understand?"

Dazzled, I just nod, wondering whether I have finally taken leave of my senses.

"Finally, there is just one last thing... You know the story of the world's creation, don't you?"

I nod again. "Very well," The Great Deku Tree resumes, "then you know Farore with her courage, Din with her power and Nayru with her wisdom together created this world. When they left this world they left behind the Triforce, the combined forces of their powers. It is this Triforce which you must obtain, as it is beyond the powers of mere mortals to defeat the evil threatening Hyrule.

"Now, do you accept this quest?"

Still not feeling like I'm thinking clearly, I do recognize the truth in the Great Deku Tree's words. I also have no reason to believe that anything I have heard so far is untrue, especially considering the events I have been through so far today, assuming today is still the same day as when the spiders first attacked the village. I sigh briefly, then I lift my head so that I face the Great Deku Tree.

"I accept." I reply.

"Very well." The Great Deku Tree responds. "Allow me to give you this item which you will need

to gain access to the Sacred Realm where the Triforce remains.”

After briefly wondering what this item may be and how it'll be presented, I become aware of a bright glimmer in front of me which keeps increasing in strength and size until it's almost impossible to look at it directly. Then suddenly the bright green light recedes and I can see what is hovering in front of me.

It's a green gemstone, a large emerald, the like of which I have never seen before. It slowly moves towards me until I can gently hold it in my hands.

“What you are holding is one of the three Spiritual Stones, the Kokiri Emerald, which the evil man still desires for his own purposes. The other two are held by the Gorons and the Zoras. Ask them for their support in your quest.”

The Great Deku Tree remains silent for many moments after this, making me, and clearly Navi as well, quite nervous. I'm about to speak when I hear his voice again to my relief.

“Navi... listen well... I want you to support Link on his quest... take him to Hyrule castle to meet the princess there... she'll be able to help him further.

“Link...?” Feeling shocked by the effort it seems to take the Great Deku Tree to speak at this point it takes me a moment to realize that I'm being addressed again.

“I want you to listen well to Navi... she has seen and experienced more than many others... you should find her... help invaluable...”

I nod furiously, as my throat is choked by the tears I'm suppressing. I try to wipe away the few rebellious tears which have made it down my cheeks.

“Goo... good luck... Link... and... Navi... F- fare... farewell...”

The voice of the Great Deku Tree vanishes from my mind and I know this was the last time I will ever hear his comforting voice. Looking up at the Great Deku Tree, I can see how the golden sheen is already fading from its branches and leaves. As an ashen veil covers its former luster, discarded leaves find their way to the ground.

Next to me I hear little sobbing noises. Turning towards Navi I see that she is sobbing uncontrollably. Feeling her sorrow answered by the feelings inside me, I move a bit closer to her and utter her name. After a few more sobs Navi looks up at me for a moment, then flies towards me and clings to me. Clumsily putting my arms around the tiny fairy who is wetting my clothes with her tiny tears I close my eyes and give in to the feelings of sorrow and anger churning inside my chest. Together we remain there on the Great Deku Tree's meadow, crying and mourning until the last daylight fades from the sky.

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By the time Navi and I make our way back to the Kokiri village night has already fallen. When we approach the village we are greeted by the light from many fires. At first I feel alarmed at this sight, yet as we come closer I realize the fires were lit by the Kokiri, probably while they were waiting for our return. Inside the village we can see many figures, one of which heads towards us as we reach the edge of the village. It is Saria, who approaches us with a somewhat worried look on her face. Once she sees the look on my face she immediately understands.

“I see.” She says. We embrace each other. It is then that Saria notices Navi who has kept her presence quite subdued. First looking at the fairy with curiosity-filled eyes, she then turns back to me. Before she can ask anything I briefly explain to her what has happened.

“So you're going away then, on this... quest?” She asks.

I nod in response. “I do not think I have much of a choice in this matter. It being the Great Deku Tree's final request to me, not to mention the importance of this quest if even half of the threat he described to me is real.”

Saria merely nods to indicate she understands. She then turns her attention towards Navi, who is hovering some distance behind me.

“So you're Navi, the fairy?” She asks, upon which Navi moves closer to Saria and nods.

“My name is Saria, it's a pleasure to meet you.” Saria says, smiling, while she extends her hand towards Navi, who first seems unsure what to do, then puts both her tiny hands on either side of Saria's hand.

“Same here.” Navi says, managing a faint smile for the first time since the events today.

“So, any of you feeling hungry? I think I can manage to find some food for the two of you.” Saria asks both of us, at which we nod, suddenly realizing the emptiness in our stomachs. Following her, we come across many other Kokiri, some of whom are just sitting there, staring at nothing in particular, others talking with each other, others yet again simply eating, including Mido, who seems to have fully recovered from his ordeal. The faces of most Kokiri reveal that they know about the loss of their guardian and father, yet I see the determination on many faces to continue their lives no matter what hardships. I get the feeling that the Kokiri will get through this all just fine.

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Navi and I spend the night at Saria's place. We all feel the need for companionship at this time, as well as the need to talk about many things. Having grown up together, it isn't easy for Saria and me to part like this, and yet we realize there is no other way. As for Navi, she tells us that fairies are fairly solitary and will be fine wherever she goes. She has known the Great Deku Tree for as long as she has been alive, however, and it isn't a loss which is easy to deal with. At least knowing who is responsible for his death does give us a target to focus on, in the form of our quest.

Tomorrow Navi and I will embark on this quest, of which I have no idea where it will lead. I have read some things about the world beyond the Kokiri Forest in the books from the Forest Temple's library and from what little is known among the Kokiri themselves, yet I'm well-aware that I probably don't even know half of what I need to survive and find my way. My last thought before I drift off to sleep is how grateful I am that Navi will be traveling with me.

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The next morning dawns with the most beautifully coloured sky I have ever seen. It's as though even Nature tries to remind us that there will always be hope. When I get out of my makeshift bed I

realize that neither Navi nor Saria are inside the house. Quickly getting dressed, I find a carefully prepared breakfast on the table with a letter next to it telling me to eat well and to have all the luck in the world on my quest. It is signed with Saria's name. Not sure what to think yet, I step outside the house and take a few deep breaths of the crisp morning air.

“You finally woke up, didn't you?” A high-pitched voice near me says.

Turning around, I see Navi sitting on a nearby tree branch. She looks a lot more cheery than she did last night.

“Good morning to you too. Did you by any chance see Saria?” I ask her.

Navi shakes her head in response. “Haven't seen her. Maybe she isn't the type for goodbyes?”

“Maybe...” I mutter, mostly to myself. “I'll have to go to my house first anyway to gather some things I'll need on the road. Maybe I'll run into her.”

Navi joins me while I walk towards my house. Even this short walk through the village is already difficult for me. Having spent every day of my life so far in this village, every house, every stone, every bend in the path holds many memories to the point where the thought of leaving this behind to perhaps never see it again makes me feel almost sick to my stomach.

By the time I get to my house, I can barely see straight any more from the tears in my eyes. Stumbling inside, I'm assaulted with yet more memories, forcing me to furiously blink away the tears which keep welling up. Then I notice something out of the ordinary, something which I most definitely did not put there, yet which is all too familiar to me. On my bed lies the sword together with its scabbard and the shield I got from the Forest Temple which together must have saved my life many times. Sitting down on my knees next to the bed I caress each line of the sword, each scratch in the shield.

I notice Navi has moved next to me. “The Great Deku Tree wanted you to take both of them with you on your quest. The sword is called the Kokiri Sword. Nobody really knows who forged it or for what purpose, but for ages it has been a symbol of the strength of the Kokiri Forest. It allows its bearer, if his heart is pure, to draw out immense strength, and to cut through even magically reinforced armour.”

I nod, my earlier suspicions regarding the sword confirmed.

“The shield holds no special powers, but it is made from the wood of a tree from this forest.” Navi resumes. “It's still a pretty sturdy shield and should do fine until you grow older and can handle larger, even metal shields.”

I nod again, unsure as to how to respond. The thought of growing older and with it taller due to my Hylian heritage still is too new for me to have come to terms with.

After I gather some of my belongings into a bundle which I strap to my back together with the shield and put the sword into its scabbard, I feel that I'm as ready to depart as I will ever be.

Motioning to Navi, I head for the door of my house. Before I close the door behind me I take one last look inside. It feels like taking a look into a far-away past. With a heavy feeling inside my chest I close the door and head in the direction of the road which leads outside the forest, towards Hyrule castle.

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Our progress is slow. Not because the road is that difficult, because it's very easy to walk with no obstacles worth mentioning, no wind, a rapidly warming morning sun and many birds chattering in the trees. Normally I would be feeling cheerful during these times, yet normally I would be walking with Saria towards the Forest Temple, looking forward to another day filled with discoveries and the pleasure of each other's company. While I don't want to offend Navi, her company doesn't quite fill the void yet, if it ever will. Looking ahead at the road which will soon reach the grassy planes of Hyrule Field I suddenly stop, staring in disbelief at what surely has to be an illusion, for a short distance ahead I can see Saria standing among the trees. She is holding on to the trunk of one tree, half covered behind it, as though she is trying to convince herself to fully appear to us.

After rubbing my eyes I can still see her, so I call out her name. Moving in closer, she apparently has conquered her doubts as she steps towards me.

“Saria, I...” I begin to speak when she holds up her hand.

“I somehow knew this day would come.” Saria says. “But it's okay. I know you have to go, even if I don't want it to happen. I also know that I can't leave this forest so I won't be begging you to take me with you. All I can do is pray you will return safely after finishing your quest.”

Saria now looks directly at me.

“I have something I want to give you, something which will hopefully aid you on your quest.” I suddenly notice that she has kept her other hand hidden behind her back while speaking. She now moves that hand within sight, offering me what it is holding. After one glance at it I stare at Saria.

“Your ocarina? But you made it yourself... taught yourself to play it... I thought you would never so much as show it to any of the other Kokiri out of fear they would damage it. And now you want to give it to me?”

“It's alright. I want you to have something to remember me by. Something... physical to hold which will give you hope when things are looking bleak. Please remember our days together...”

I nod and accept the gift, careful not to drop or damage it. Pulling some clean clothes out of my bundle I wrap the ocarina into them and put it into my bundle in a safe place. That taken care of, I return my attention to Saria, who is gnawing her lower lip, as though trying to hold back many unsaid thoughts.

“Thank you so much, Saria. You'll see, I'll be back before you know it to resume our work on the Forest Temple.” I say reassuringly.

We embrace each other one more time while Navi keeps herself at a discrete distance. No more words are spoken between Saria and me as none would suffice. After standing there for a while I let go of her hands. I hurriedly resume walking down the road. Looking behind me a few times, I notice that Saria is still standing there motionlessly. The next time I look she's gone.

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“Have you ever had to say goodbye to someone without knowing whether you would ever see that person again?” I ask Navi as we have been walking for a while.

“A few times, yes.” Navi responds. “If you want me to give you tips on how to deal with it, I'm afraid I can't give you any. It's just one of those things which will ease with time.”

Flying in front of me, Navi looks at me and smiles. “If it helps any, your friend Saria seems like a wonderful person. I haven't been following the two of you that often, but I can imagine the many fond memories you must carry with you.”

I find myself smiling a bit as well, then I ask: “You have been following us?”

“The Great Deku Tree had me keep an eye on things at times in the forest and I would come across both of you occasionally. It seemed like you two always had a lot of fun together.”

I nod while many fond memories come flooding back. “That we did.”

“Oh, seems like we're nearing the edge of the forest now.” Navi exclaims suddenly, darting ahead of me. Looking ahead I can see that the forest is getting even less dense and the light in front of us is so bright it's as though we're walking towards a really big meadow. I guess that's one way to look at Hyrule Field, which are the grassy plains connecting all parts of Hyrule with each other, from the mountains and Hyrule town in the north to Lake Hylia in the south, Kokiri Forest in the east to the desert in the west. I try to recall more details from the books I have read on the geography of Hyrule.

There are supposedly a number of farms on Hyrule Field, but otherwise it's largely uninhabited. I just hope it isn't as expansive as I have read considering we'll have to walk all the way to Hyrule Castle. Noticing Navi has returned again from a short exploration, I ask her how far she thinks it is to Hyrule Castle.

“About a day or two. We should find a farm to stay at during the night, as it's too unsafe to set up camp on the plains themselves.”

“Why would it be unsafe?” I dare to ask.

“Stalchildrens, animated skeletons, are known to appear during the night, as well as the occasional poe, a kind of ghost. Some say they are what remain of the soldiers of some ancient war fought on the plains, others say they are people who got lost or ambushed and perished. Nobody really knows what their true origins are any more, but it is a fact that they can injure or even kill.”

I find myself shivering at Navi's words. I had no idea things could be this frightening outside the safety of the forest. Yet again I question the wisdom of sending me out into this strange world where I'm probably more likely to get killed by some random spirit or walking skeleton before I even encounter this evil man from the desert.

“Oh yes, during the day we should also keep an eye out for peahats, large plants which can fly for short periods if they sense prey nearby, which includes Hylians.” Navi adds.

Inwardly I groan. Then I notice that we are now rapidly beginning to leave the forest behind. I can see more than just glimpses of the plains, as well as the blue sky above it. After just a bit longer we pass the last large tree alongside the road, which consists of little more than packed dirt with the occasional stone of the original, ancient road still visible in some places. Before me lies Hyrule Field, its grassy plains basking in the bright sun while a gentle breeze caresses its gradual slopes, causing ripples in the grass. It's a sight I have never before seen in my life, and one I will never forget. I feel as though I could sit down and watch this peaceful and hypnotizing scene all day.

“It's amazing...” I manage to utter, breathlessly.

“Isn't it?” Navi says cheerily. “Now, get ready for more walking and blisters than you have ever experienced before in a single day.”