

The Legend of Zelda: The Wheels of Destiny

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Prologue: Dawn of Destiny

The lands were still young when the first born first walked upon them; however, no one's really remembering which race was the first to strive the earth. Nevertheless, it was the Hylians, the closest race to the gods, who built their first town in the middle of the land which became rapidly known as Hyrule. The hylian king, aided by the goddess Hylia, unified this land under one flag; no matter from where the people were or of which race they belong was gladly invited to join the king. The forged alliances between the Zoras and the Gorons with the Hylians persist since that day. The range of lands, that the king took under his possession included all territories surrounding Hyrule-Castle, whereas, the western border of the kingdom reached the western desert that the Gerudos claimed for themselves. The Gerudos were a band of female only thieves, it was said that once a year a couple of them came to Hyrule-Town in order to secure their offspring others believe that they make children differently, however, the king let build the Arbiter's Ground, a prison in the desert not too far from the desert border but far enough of Hyrule, to lock in the most dangerous criminals that would threat the kingdom. Many legends have arisen around this place and those who were there weren't allowed to speak of it. Yet little was known about the Hylians that co-existed but the most peculiar difference was that some of them had pointed ears and others hadn't. Those with pointed ears were more resilient than those without but as far as they knew no one was immortal. However, it was said that an older race was living in the great forest to the east but no one's ever returned to tell the tale, and there was another legend about a race when once the first Hylians commenced to occupy the country, has left the earth for the sky and it is said that leftovers of their technology may still be found throughout the kingdom.

In these land's there was the legend of an ancient relic of the goddesses called the Triforce that was handed down from Din, Nayru and Farore into the protection of their younger sister Hylia, in order to prevent it from being taken by evil forces. However, she knew that if she was to stay close to her people she would surely fall in love as they would, so she gave her harp, a blue ocarina and this holy mission to the royal family and sacrificed her divinity to get as close as possible to her people. While doing this, she involuntarily chose the family where she would be born in. A few years later the Queen Zelda I bore a child to the king, in the hope that this little girl would become as great as her mother was, they called her Zelda II.

Maybe it was a coincidence or not but on the same day, another hylia mother gave birth to a son to the king's best friend and General. Somehow it came that the little one was named Lynk for whatever reasons the parents had. Well, it had to be a mood of the gods that Zelda and Lynk were raised by the same nurse maid called Impa and as they grew up they became close friends.

Fearing the worst the King handed the ocarina, trusted to him, to his General, just in case...

Chapter 1: Unmatched

At the age of fifteen, Lynk and Zelda were sent to the Knight Academy, both of them owing their own practice wooden swords. This, however, caught the eye of a group of older students who'd rather like to mess around and scare the newcomers instead of studying. Their leader Vallandyr blocking Lynk's path spoke in a sharp tone: "Who do you think you are, carrying this wood stick around?" "Well, as my father always says, your weapon is your life so better get used to carrying it at all times!" replied Lynk. Vallandyr only having a thing in mind, "What do you think of a bit of sparring, just you and me?" "I have a bad feeling about this." Whispered Zelda, "Hmm, well then come at me!" yelled Lynk, Zelda totally confused "What in the name of Nayru are you doing?" "Ooh is your little girlfriend afraid you could get hurt?!" "That's enough mockery for now don't you think?" replied Lynk, while drawing his sword and pointing it at his challenger. "All right, younger one's first. Come on!" The practice swords were clashing onto each other never letting a single blow hit the wielders but Lynk had Vallandyr right there where he wanted him to. At Vallandyr's first mistake Lynk managed to get behind him and concluding the battle. Vallandyr now totally confused and as pale as chalk looked like he never had been more humiliated in his life. "More bold than skilled, aren't you? Hehe..." Suddenly a voice ringed "What is going on here?!?" It was Master Sirion, the melee combat teacher. "Well, we..." started Lynk, but he has been interrupted by Professor Owlán "These two were sparring and the young one gave quite a fight. May I ask your name?" "Of course you may." answered Lynk while releasing his opponent, "My parents blessed me with the name of Lynk. I joined the academy today with my delicate friend," "I am not delicate!" returned Zelda, "We were on the way to the headmaster's office when these guys went into our path." "And he challenged you because you have a new face and thought to get an easy win?" asked Owlán. "Obviously, it did not turn out well for him!" scoffed Sirion "Seriously, you have been beaten by a new one, I thought I taught you better than that..." "What about letting me try to spar with him?"

asked Zelda, Vallandyr considering having enough embarrassment for one day refused to spar but after hearing's Zelda's taunt he reconsidered not wanting to accept being told a coward. Watching the fight everyone were looking at each other asking themselves how a young girl would keep up that lightly with an 18 years old knight aspirant and having finally beaten him Zelda, obviously proud of herself, mocked "You see Lynk, you're not the only one knowing how to use a sword." "Well, excuse me princess." replied Lynk. "What did you call her?!?" yelled Vallandyr, obviously not believing his ears. Zelda rolling her eyes to Lynk: "What bad manners for a lady not introducing herself properly, your ears do not deceive you I am the one and only Princess Zelda!" "I knew it! This fighting style precedes you milady," started Master Sirion "The flow and accuracy of the blows, this could only come from the royal family! Everyone on your knees her majesty deserves at least some respect." "I am sorry, not having recognized you earlier your highness. As a keeper of lore I should have known better than that." admitted Owlán. "Please gentlemen, I am not here fishing for attention so please get back up on your legs. I am here to learn not for being praised to have being born." reassuring the attendants Zelda looked around and added "Even though I would outrank you all twenty times, my lack of experience can only be corrected on one way, and I cannot cope with seeing my professors going down on their knees every time they catch sight of me." "As I can see, your grace's kindness has not been exaggerated in any way." To everybody's astonishment the headmaster appeared from around the corner and added "Your father told me about you and Master Lynk, but didn't your father asked you to cover yourself with the name of Hilda, didn't he?" Zelda rolling her eyes: "Well, ask 'Master' Lynk who did blow off my cover even before it was set up!" Lynk: "Well excuse me princess" Zelda annoyed: "Not helping" Lynk: "Well ex...." Zelda in a menacing tone: "I dare you saying that again." Lynk: "I'm quiet."

Headmaster smiling: "Hahaha, my children come into my office, we do have much to discuss. The rest of you are dismissed."

The headmaster's office was a huge room which walls were covered by a library filled from bottom to top with diverse kind of books and in its centre stood an imposing desk with a few chairs around it. While sitting down on his office chair he offered: "Please take your selves a seat. We do not need to stand while discussing, don't we?" After sitting down and seeing Lynk's mouth staying shut Zelda took the word: "Headmaster, pardon my eagerness but why did you want to talk to the two of us before your speech we were told to attend earlier this day?" "Well," started he, "I wanted to see you because it is a rare occasion to have nobles beginning the academy and even more royalty you see the point is that you already might have guessed by now that noble houses care of instructing their children, not only about etiquette but also about warfare very early. As I witnessed the fruits before, but having now seen your abilities with the sword, may I guess the level is shared to all of your skills?" "I see your point now, should I answer your question with a yes this would be a lie. Actually, for now I cannot use my magic as I fence. So in order to deliver you a complete insight over my skills you may set me under a row of tests to have a reference." replied Zelda. Lynk's answer wasn't that extended but accurate nonetheless: "I am aware of, with which end of my sword I have to stab the enemy, while showing a good performance at archery, but I do not know a thing about magic whether if I am even able to use it so..., I guess my role is clear." "Indeed," commenced the headmaster reflecting "I can see now a little bit more why your parents sent you to me. Although I must confess that because of the lack of blueblood within the academy I cannot make a class only for your year, so you have two possibilities, either you join the already established noble's class or you join those of your year while being mixed with commoners. It is your choice to make not mine."

Zelda: "Hmm, this is not a very difficult choice to make, so I'd rather join the high born than the others. I do not desire to come across one of this oafs like before again. What about you Lynk?" Lynk slightly distracted: "You should know it by now, your choice is my choice! Princess..." Headmaster: "Then it's settled then! I'll show you your class, what time is it? Oh, this late already we'll better hurry they began a few minutes ago, Lord Darius will take you right into it." Lynk relieved: "No speech listening, but more sparring sounds good to me!" "Well, given the circumstances we have all the information we need I guess so why do we keep the lord waiting?" asked Zelda. They went across the school to the archery stand where they joined the practice, due to the high expectations that had to be matched by students of noble houses, Lord Darius did not say much but what had to be done and watched his new squires closely. After the lesson there was time for the higher society to socialise with each other as they treasure to do every day after the last lesson of the day. Most of the young men talked about weapons and fighting techniques while the others more arcanely gifted students were talking about what they called intellectual subjects.

It is when Lynk really first got to know Leldir, an upper class student who preferred ambidextrous combat styles over the classic sword and shield build. So it came that both of them quickly became friends. But what they didn't know was that this friendship would become even more crucial in the years ahead.

After school Lynk went back to the castle with Zelda, but arriving at the gate the guard told him that the General was looking for him. Lynk thanked the guard and got passed the gate and entered the central building and then heading left to go to his father's quarters while Zelda went to the stairs to get on with her business. After several corridors he finally found the office his father was waiting in, entering Lynk started to speak: "Hello father, did you summon me?" "Indeed my son," started the general "I summoned you because I have something very precious to pass on to you. Since I know that my remaining days will soon be counted short, I thought I had to give you this." Said he while turning towards Lynk and showing him the ocarina. Lynk's eyes were widening and he asked: "What exactly is this?" "Well, it is called an ocarina; this one though is called the ocarina of time. The King trusted it to me, while telling me it is supposed to be a key of some sorts... And now I trust it to you!" said the general calmly. Lynk was everything else but calm, having received a so important duty from his father he didn't find any words for that so he nodded. "Well, while you're protecting it you might as well try to play it..." added the general, Lynk though was confused: "How am I supposed to know how to play a music instrument I have never seen before?" General: "Maybe ask the King, he might know." On the way to the throne room Impa, who had been promoted to a Captain of the Hyrulean Forces when the children didn't need a nurse maid anymore, saw Lynk holding a wondrous blue object and asked: "Hey boy, what is it you're carrying?" Lynk turned his head towards her surprised and hesitated first but soon realised that he could trust her, said: "Well, it's an ocarina but I have a problem I don't know how to play it... So I guessed the King could help me finding a teacher." "Even though I don't look like it but I know my way around music, maybe I can help you before you're going to disturb the King for such a petty matter." Ordered Impa, Lynk: "Yes, ma'am." So Impa and Lynk went outside of the castle to avoid noise within the castle so near to the throne room and she took out her own ocarina. "Do you remember that?" asked she Lynk, "Hmm, hold on wasn't it the one you used to play the lullaby for Zelda?" asked Lynk. "Indeed" started Impa "and for now I will teach you this song, only those related to the royal family know how to play it." So Impa started by explaining how to play the ocarina and Lynk learned quickly and was ready to learn the song although he had some troubles with the higher notes. "Well, I have to admit this wasn't too shabby

for your first time but we must make a habit of this lesson. I have an idea each day on the same time on this spot of the garden. Understood?" asked Impa, Lynk very sure of himself: "Understood!" So it happened that each day after coming back from the academy he'll be playing ocarina with Impa. Zelda eventually joined in sometimes with her lyre she received from her mother.

Chapter 2: An ill Presage

4 years later...

It was the day of the Wing ceremony, the final exam for the knight apprentices, and Zelda sent a carrier pigeon with a small letter in its beak. Soon after the bird arrived at his destination, luckily Lynk's window was open, it saw that its mistress friend was still sleeping it ensured that the elf-boy got some rude awakening! Lynk totally confused grabbed his practice sword and fell off his bed. After pulling himself together, he noticed the letter which the pigeon had released and let fall on Lynk's face. Unfolded you could read: *"You do remember you wanted to meet me before the ceremony don't you? I hope you enjoyed the visit of my pigeon pal here, Love Zelda."* Lynk: "Yeah, right she did mention something like that yesterday, but do all those things have to take place so early in the morning? I mean they could postpone everything for an hour or two couldn't they? Well fine, just go to the statue near the temple of time wasn't it?" Having put on his shiny knew uniform he left the house in a hurry heading to the north of the town. Finally arrived there, he wasn't able to see the princess... Lynk: "That's the place isn't it? But where's Zelda?" Suddenly a voice resounded Impa: "You're late, boy!" Lynk: "Impa, is that you? I was supposed to..." Impa: "Yes I know she's already waiting inside." Impa stayed to watch over the entrance of the temple while Lynk went inside hearkening the sound of a lyre. There was she standing, the princess in all her radiance, in front of what seemed to be an altar of some kind playing her divine instrument passionately. "You know what they say don't you?" asked she. "Depends on what you mean..." replied he confused and added "Were you talking about the ceremony or this awkward inscription there?" Zelda: "I was referring to the point that unites both. To be honest, I made some research about what our task will be today and found something interesting," Lynk: "Oh really, what is it?" Zelda: "Well, it was in a book hidden in the royal library and written in a strange language but I managed to translate most of it, it said that those born with power that exceeds their comprehension will have to be tested in the hardest way possible." Lynk: "But how do you know that it does concern us?" Zelda: "Well, the headmaster was talking about it with my father earlier this week, I wasn't able to listen to the whole conversation but the bit confirmed the content of the book because the same book was lying opened on my father's desk." Lynk: "Hmm, and what are we supposed to do now?" Zelda: "Well, before I left the castle my father gave me some instructions, 'go to the temple of time and solve the riddle of the pedestal but tell nobody else about it but him' he said and added 'this shall be your final commitment for the academy'" Lynk: "So there will be no such thing as a ceremony or what?" Zelda: "Obviously we have to get the job done before." Lynk: "And I thought this was going to be a boring day..., anyway what is written on the pedestal?" Zelda: "Well it's a little bit of gibberish but it says 'Only to those with the artefacts of the goddesses of light and time will the way down be revealed.'" Lynk: "Great, now were dealing with divine charades. But I might have the key to all of this!" Zelda: "How would that be possible?" Lynk: "Didn't you ever wonder why your lyre was radiating in a golden way whereas my ocarina shines with a mystical tone of blue? I guess those two

instruments are the key otherwise I don't have any clue how to access this lower area." Zelda: "I see you learned how to use your head and not only your muscles." L: "Since I had to solve many complicate riddles this one seems quite petty...." Zelda: "Maybe a coordinated song would activate something!" Lynk: "Not the worst idea you ever had, but which song?" Zelda: "Perhaps the ballad of the goddess!" Lynk: "Well, I guess we may as well try out any song we know if this one does not work..." Zelda: "Have you finished complaining? Good, then we may begin." The melody resonated through the hall but nothing happened. Lynk: "That's not the right the song." Zelda: "I noticed." Lynk: "Well, I have an Idea, since it is the temple of time..." Zelda: "The song of time how obvious..." After finishing the melody they saw how a large stone door moving slowly up wards only to see an empty room but what appeared to be a pedestal in its centre. Once they approached the stone they saw a small gap on the top and a Triforce symbol on the front but there was nothing else in this room. So they turned around and saw a window that showed the back of the goddess statue but with an opening, astonished they stepped outside and went behind the statue only to find nothing that would indicate a hidden opening. Zelda: "How curious, I thought we had found the way down. Impa stepped to them holding the grip of her claymore," Zelda: "Impa is something amiss?" Impa: "I sense something, something odd and dark. It's watching us." Zelda: "But how would anyone know about this?" Impa: "The forces of evil have their eyes and ears everywhere, and it seems they're focused on you two, so I guess once you found the key to all of this, your skills on the battlefield will be tested on a harder way than I ever would have imagined." Lynk: "Why doesn't that surprise me, I thought the riddle in the temple was a farce but it seems to be only the first part." Zelda: "Anyway, we have to end this now! So, I would suggest we find the way in." Lynk: "Hold on, I think I have found something!" Zelda: "But how?" Lynk: "Well, since I am more acquainted with digging in the dirt than you..." Zelda: "Well, I AM THE PRINCESS!" Lynk: "Yeah, but if you want to be an adventurer you'll better get used to make your hands dirty. Anyway look at these symbols, they look like partitions!" Zelda: "A hidden song for a hidden entrance..." Lynk: "Does it seem familiar to you?" Zelda: "Wait... Could that be that easy, the ballad of the goddess is the key?" Lynk: "I think so but only if played with some specific instruments..." Zelda: "I don't think this is a coincidence. We were sent here on purpose since we are the only ones who ever could hope to open these gates." Lynk: "Well, we should play the song."

And so they did and slowly the entrance showed up but mysteriously still closed.

Lynk: "Great, even more riddles appeared right out of the blue..." Zelda: "Let's see what they say, hmm, 'The spirit chosen by the goddess of light has to be purified by the sword he afterwards will reforge.'" Lynk: "Wait what does this mean? Has that something to do with me?" Zelda: "I am not sure but look at the crest in the centre, isn't there a gap where you could insert a sw..." Lynk: "I handle that!" Lynk being too fast, Zelda had no time to react and when he draws his sword out of the crest the heavy stone plate moved aside revealing a hidden staircase leading downwards. Lynk: "Well, that's that." Zelda looking at him angrily complained: "You didn't even know what could have happened! You could have killed us!" Lynk: "Haven't you noticed all these riddles are meant for us, so someone wants us to go down there, so this was meant to see if I was the chosen spirit, but chosen by the goddess of light, so I guess by the one who might like me more than friendship but doesn't want to admit it..." Zelda: "Do you know what you're saying?" Lynk: "I know this might sound a bit strange but all the clues fit together you're a divine entity reborn as a hylian and I am you're chosen champion..." Zelda: "Now that you mention it, but either way we have time to clear

this out later. Now to the task ahead we have still to go down there.” While going down Lynk had some thoughts ‘Purified by the sword... I wonder what that will mean.’

Arriving on the bottom, they found themselves in a large room with again a pedestal in the centre but this time a mystic looking sword was stuck in it. Lynk: “Wait could it be that easy?” Zelda: “Hmm, seems like we just found you a new toy.” Lynk: “Well I think I should go take it...” Right after having touched the sword Lynk got emerged in light and when the light stopped Lynk pulled out the sword and pointed it skyward heroically. Unknown: “Finally someone removed the sword from the stone and I am finally free!” Suddenly a small glowing winged something flew out of the stone. Navi: “The name’s Navi by the way, I am a fairy of the eastern woods.” Zelda: “But, how did you happen to be locked in within this stone?” Navi: “Good question indeed, but hey I have seen you somewhere... Oh now I remember, you were the woman who casted a spell on me and locked me in!” Lynk looked surprised to Zelda who still hadn’t said a word. Zelda: “I don’t think it was me, although not directly, maybe this goddess reincarnate story might even be true.” Lynk: “What happened back then?” N: “Well before I left following her, the old Deku Tree told me to help the one who is to become the hero since I had no Kokiri companion.” Lynk: “So you’re going to stick around with us, whether or not we agree.” Navi: “That’s right, but hey you didn’t tell me you’re names!” Lynk: “I am the hero Lynk and my girlfriend here is the princess of the realm, Zelda.” Zelda: “You wicked little...You deserve a slap for talking about me like that!” Navi: “You two are quite fun.” Lynk: “Well, now what is this tablet there?” Navi: “Watch out! It might be dangerous!” Zelda: “Here to help the hero hihhi...” Lynk: “Anyway, hmm the tablet looks like it shows the Hyrulean map but somehow only the eastern forest with a green gem on it. Might be that the next piece will be found there.” Navi: “Yeah, it will feel like going home!” Lynk: “Sure, but there is still something that must be done in the temple, I think my new sword now might activate something.” So they went back into the room of the pedestal, contrarily to what Impa said before nobody attacked them. Lynk: “Now watch and learn.” And with a fast stab he pushed his sword into the stone and a new pedestal appeared in front of them, with a Rapier sticking within it. Zelda: “Hmm a fencing weapon and a beautiful one too, might be my new blade!” Lynk: “Try it out, princess.” Lynk pulled out his sword and Zelda gripped the new blade and while pulling it out something that appeared to be a blue spirit had left the blade and started talking, Fi: “Mistress am I glad to see you again after this whole time how long has it been? Ah, I see you found the one with the spirit of the hero!” Zelda: “Ah, sure thing but I might not be directly the woman you think I am.” Fi: “But only you can even touch the blade. Oh my memories come back mistress, I was so excited to see you again that I forgot that you told me, that you Hylia, wanted to be reborn as a part of your people, you called me Fi the spirit of the Goddess Blade ‘Hirilvagal’ and I see the hero has found his blade but in order to call it the Master Sword ‘Hirvagol’ he will need to enhance his blade with the sacred flames that are found within Hyrule, and on this journey I shall serve you as an adviser and trusty weapon.” Lynk: “Looks like, I’m not the only one with an ‘advisor’ now...” Zelda: “So all of this is true..., Fi tell me more about the past, please.” Fi: “I’m sorry mistress but I’m unable to describe it in details, but I know for sure, that you’re beauty is still the same and you loved your people more than anything else! But you told me, that you feared someone wanting to take over Hyrule to find a powerful relic and so you did what you thought would be necessary. You sealed me within this temple and told me we would see us again...Afterwards everything got dark.” Zelda: “I’m not sure what this relic would be but I have an idea. More important, though, I understand now what is going on.” Lynk: “Hold on, I hear battle noises coming from outside!”

Once they stepped outside they saw Impa fighting for her life! Lynk draw his bow and shot an arrow at the aggressor but she blocked it with a skilled movement of his shield arm. Seeing her opponent distracted Impa dodged to the back and said: "He is much more powerful than I thought, we have to get out of here!" Lynk: "I take care of him!" stepping forward with his new blade Lynk yelled: "Show your face coward or I'll remove your hood myself!" Dark Lynk: "Muhahaha, normally I wouldn't do anything for anyone but him, but if you insist." Lynk: "You, you just look like me but how?" Dark Lynk: "Hahahaha, I am you but much darker behold my appearance, in full black with these awesome blood coloured eyes!" Zelda: "Lynk I can feel his power let me fight at your side!" said she while casting a thunder ball but Dark Lynk just repelled it with a single strike of his blade. Unknown: "Don't tell me you're in trouble again Dark you know how I hate it when you fail." Dark Lynk: "My darkest lady I was just getting warm." Showing herself Dark Zelda said: "I will cast a dark wave; just keep them away from me!" Dark Lynk: "This will be a great show, hahahahaha!" Fi: "Mistress I can switch between the rapier and the light bow 'Galadros' try it out we have to keep interrupting her." So Zelda did and stunning her dark alter ego. Dark Zelda: "Dark what are you doing you're supposed to hinder them doing this." Dark Lynk: "I haven't seen her carrying a bow before so..." Dark Zelda: "You oaf I start again with a magic shield at my side." The two young men were clashing their blades as if there was no end. Suddenly, Zelda yelled: "Lynk jump back!" while shooting an arrow towards Dark Lynk to stun him and one to Lynk, Zelda: "Lynk block towards her now!" Lynk: "What?!" The arrow deflected by the shield got passed the magical barrier she summoned earlier and interrupting her again! Dark Zelda: "You really are useless let's get out of here we have what we wanted to know." Dark Lynk still a little bit dizzy: "Sure milady." And they both vanished in the shadows.

Impa: "Are you both really just trainees who just have passed their final exam, well I guess, from the smallest seed grows the biggest tree." The king, the headmaster and the General as well as Leldir and Karane approached to congratulate them. Karane is a knight in training and is growing quite fond of her tutor who happens to be Leldir. Headmaster: "This was a very impressive demonstration of your fighting ability as well as Zelda's tactical knowledge; even though we hoped it wouldn't happen at all." Zelda: "So you knew about these two?" King: "Not quite but we assumed that the dark god had some powerful minions that are trying to destroy the kingdom and throwing everything into chaos and since you might have found out who you really are now, you should know why they attacked you." General: "My son, are you all right?" Lynk: "Father you're also here?" General: "How could I miss the promotion of my own son, your mother should arrive soon as well, you know how busy she is."

Suddenly a light flash alighted and there appeared the mothers of Lynk and Zelda.

Queen: "Excuse me for being late my heart." Zelda: "It's alright mother, ruling a country is important." Queen: "But you're just as important to me!" Lynk's mother: "I am so glad for you my son, I knew you'll be the best warrior Hyrule has ever seen!" Lynk: "Thanks' mum!" Headmaster: "Now, now let us feast for we have two graduated students." Queen: "What a wonderful idea, everyone to the castle."

And so the day ended with a ball at the castle but Lynk and Zelda discussed their further steps and Leldir overheard a part of it. Leldir: "A secret mission hmm, sounds interesting..., what if I can convince them to take me with them...maybe if I ask Karane as well...?"

Chapter 3: Plumbers

Suddenly the two heroes of the day stood up and went out of the ball room, a little after Leldir followed them. Leldir: "Leaving so soon you two?" Zelda and Lynk surprised that someone actually did notice stood there straight and turned around slowly. Zelda: "Well, we had to leave because we have some preparations to do. Nothing you ever should worry about." Lynk whispering to Zelda: "I told you he was observing us." Leldir: "So you surely wouldn't mind if I come along, it does get a little heavy inside there after a time, wouldn't you?" Lynk: "Of course not!" Zelda: "Lynk don't tell me..." Lynk: "What? He isn't as stupid as that. By the way he might even be useful." Zelda: "May I mention, that I am still opposed to all this..." Lynk: "You may, but..." Zelda: "Anyway he still has a trainee to tutor so he won't be able to anyway, or am I wrong?" Leldir: "Well, now that you mention it...I always believed in field training being the best that you can give to a new recruit..." Zelda: "Don't tell me... Do you really think it is wise? I mean this is serious, but then you tell me: 'Soldiers are trained for that...' All right, go get her and meet up with us at the northern guard tower, we're leaving tonight. So don't be late!" Leldir: "I will go get her; she has guard duty tonight so she should be awake. I just tell the guard commander the princess herself has ordered a field training session. He surely won't be able to refuse that." Zelda: "Very well, you know what is always troubling as a princess? You always have to take responsibility for everything..." Lynk smiling: "Good that you know that!" Zelda: "It isn't that much fun, you know? Anyway you have one hour, understood?" Leldir: "Yes your majesty!" So everyone went their way to prepare and making sure everything goes as planned.

Later that night in the castle's northern garden...

Zelda: "It is nearly time to go, where are they?" Lynk: "Hmm, I..., Ah here they come!" Leldir: "We're all set. Right, Karane?" Karane: "Of course, your majesty." Zelda: "Good, no one must see us. I'll create a diversion, so you three will have to leave the castle by the window in the guard's room. So as soon as I enter it and set everyone on guard, this will be your chance to get through the open windows. Be careful not to make noise. I'll meet up with you a little later in the town." Lynk: "You really think this is our only option? What if we took the one secret way..." Zelda: "You don't mean the one leading through the channel works?" Lynk: "Well, it isn't guarded as far as I know and we would rather be safe of being seen..." Zelda: "Very well, but we have to get through to the south tower... Hold on there is a hidden door there!" So they went to the spot near the south tower in which was the guard rooms and barracks through those the way lead... Leldir: "Hmm, we solved a problem but just found another one, am I right?" Karane: "Well it is here, were you got me out of guard duty..." Lynk: "Yes, but this is our best call." Zelda: "The good thing is that this way leads to the back of this statue next to the one which hide the secret passage." Lynk: "I just hope it doesn't make too much noise when the doors open... it is an old way." Zelda while searching for the opening: "Well, we'll see what we can do..."

So they made their way through the small tunnel towards the barracks, Lynk being in pole position activated the lever to open the stone door, which was somewhat noisy but thank fully hidden from sight by the statues. Karane closed the stone door after everyone had gotten through while Lynk opened the way down to avoid too much noise. Inside the hole that had been revealed was an ancient metallic ladder that Lynk climbed down first to scout the way ahead, but even before he could reach the bottom, Zelda started climbing as well, soon after followed Karane and Leldir closing the way behind him, sealing the room below in complete darkness. Karane: "Uhh this way smells awful!" Lynk: "Well cope with it, Navi could you come out please?" Navi: "What is it?" Zelda: "Good

call, now we have light to light up the lanterns!" Lynk: "Indeed but we don't know exactly what awaits us down here..." Karane: "Who would ever want to look for us down here?" Lynk: "I'm not afraid of people being down here..." Zelda: "More like, other things..." Leldir: "Well, there's only one way to find out." Navi: "You know I have other qualities than only being a light source..." Lynk: "Do you? Well, we'll surely have the chance of hearing about them later but now quiet."

They were following the tunnel for quite a while now, but suddenly an enlightened entrance showed up after the last turn. Lynk whispered to the others: "We're not alone, there's light ahead." Slowly sneaking to the entrance they heard voices like there was an assembly of some sort. Arriving at the spot, hidden in the shadows Lynk peered into the great hall. What he saw made him shiver, there were a lot of small silhouettes and what appeared to be the leader of them, who looked bigger, taller and stronger than the rest of them. Karane disgusted but quietly: "Awww, the smells only getting worse..." Lynk: "I hope they don't know about this way or Hyrule castle is in grave danger!" Zelda: "What do you suggest we should do?" Karane: "I have an idea! We could try to seal the way behind us!" Leldir: "And by the way getting the monsters attention?!? Are you insane?" Lynk: "Actually, they're here for some reason... We could use some bombs to blow up the tunnel, and so we could lead them away from this passage..." Zelda: "What? Are you mad? We're right underneath the castle barracks or even worse, the moat! The collapsing tunnel would drain the upper ground what would have disastrous consequences." Lynk took his thinking posture and Fi talked out of the sword: "Mistress, loud my calculations we should be right under the moat, not far away from the northern town wall. Bringing the tunnel to collapse would surely attract attention from the monsters and the guards above when suddenly the ground brakes in and the whole water flows down here. Although there are two tactical advantages to this, the monsters would be flown away and some guards might come here to check out the area clearing out the survivors... But still it is a risky plan." Zelda: "Not to mention that our cover would be blown, no we're not going to do this." Leldir: "I agree with the princess, we need a more subtle approach." Zelda: "Finally a knight who does not think with his muscles or toys first!" Lynk staring at Zelda: "What's that supposed to mean?" Zelda: "You know exactly what it means." Leldir: "Hmmm, I might have a plan... I agree with Lynk on the fact that these guys are not here for fun. They have a business here, and have you noticed that there are no scouts or guards standing near here? It's obviously a trap." Lynk: "Indeed but all this discussing wastes our time that is already counted short. So, you had a plan and I think I know what you wanted to do. The best option is to flood the room." Leldir: "I guess were on the same track." Zelda stares sceptically at the young men, "We need to open the water ways somehow otherwise anyone can get past the guards." continued Lynk. Leldir: "But first we need to get down there and quickly!" Leldir took up the lead and everyone followed. Lynk whispered: "There, there is a valve!" Leldir nodded and let Karane opened it up only a bit so that the water didn't make an outstanding noise slowly filling up the lower part of the room. Zelda having spotted three other valves whispered: "What if we opened the four valves at once? The water would speed at the monsters washing them away in the process." Lynk smiling: "I think I might have found a way how to use my bombs after all" Karane: "Oh I see now, I'll just close the valve again. Would you lend me a bomb then?" Lynk smiling to his ears: "I got bombs for everyone! Quick get them and here are some tinderboxes. We'll all light the fuses once we're dispatched and as soon as the bombs are lit we have to run to where we were before. I think one of the sideways might lead somewhere..." And so they swarmed out placing the lit bombs and started to run to their starting spot. Suddenly a few monsters came round the corner and saw them, "What the -? What are they doing down here?" "I don't know

bro." "We have to catch them!" "But wait what are this strange burning noise and this smell?" "Oh no..." Even before the heroes could reach the highest place they heard the bombs explode and while not looking back the continued climbing. The only things that they could hear afterwards was the rushing of the water and some frightened monsters trying to get away of the water masses. Lynk: "Pfffeeuuu, quick I can sense a light fresh wind, and where there's wind there's an exit. The water will fill up the hall soon sealing the way to the castle. Follow me!" two corners ahead they found what seemed to be an entry hatch, using the ladder they finally came out of the sewer, Leldir let Karane go first after Zelda and when Leldir went up the water level nearly reached his knees. Karane relieved: "Ahh, finally some fresh air again." Leldir: "Not too bad...for...a...change..." Leldir's mouth shut as he saw the town guards showing up from all sides surrounding them. Guard chief: "Identify yourselves, and state what business you had in the sewer and why the water level of the moat is sinking!" Lynk: "We...euh, went down there because..." Zelda: "We wanted to see what happened as well as to see if we could help fix it." Karane: "Exactly, but don't even bother thinking about it the ways are now completely flooded. It must have been a tunnel collapse." Chief: "Hmm, nonetheless we are taking you into custody till the investigations are over! Now, drop down your weapons!" Zelda whispering: "We can't do that, quickly everyone sheath your weapons and take one of these." Chief: "I said drop your weapons!" Lynk: "Well I think this won't be necessary." Chief: "I said..." Zelda yelling: "Everyone now!" The guards were hit by surprise and the four Deku nuts smashed on the ground stunning the guards and Zelda casted Farore's Wind teleporting them outside of town. Leldir: "That was close!" Karane: "Sure but we should not stay here any longer." Lynk: "Agreed."

Meanwhile in Hyrule town...

Chief: "Ohh my..., what happened?" Sargent: "Sir, the suspects vanished." Chief: "Indeed, we'll better pretend, this never occurred or our reputation is ruined." Sgt: "Understood!"

Chapter 4: Maiden of Miracles

Fi: "Mistress, are you back on your senses?" Zelda: "Ughh, my head hurts, but I...should be alright." Fi: "I have something to report; I managed to identify the monsters we saw earlier, there were a big group of Bublins who are normally lead by the King Bublin." Lynk: "Well, we gave them what they deserved! But Zelda you're sure you can walk on your own?", "I won't...need" said Zelda while trying to get up and falling to the ground again. Leldir: "Your majesty, you are in no condition to advance like this. We better help you." Karane: "Your highness, I know how much you fight for the emancipation of women throughout the realm but this is no place to refuse help." Lynk: "She's right princess, come I lift you up." Lynk was holding Zelda from the right and Leldir did the same on the left while Karane was watching their backs, looking for a hideout for the night they stumbled upon a small House so they put Zelda on the ground and Lynk stayed with her while the two others went there to inspect if someone was living in it. Zelda: "Lynk...I..." Lynk: "It's alright you did what you had to and we are most grateful for that, but please save your strength." Zelda smiled and felled a sleep.

Since it was late night there were no lights, but neither had the chimney been lit for quite some time, so Leldir went back to help Lynk carrying the princess to the old house where they would stay the night. Luckily it was summer so they did not need to make a fire which would have them revealed in no time. Something, though, was a miss. Even though the small hut was deserted it was tidied and clean. So Karane inspected the bed and since nothing was strange at it, the two knights laid down the princess softly on it. Lynk: "Now you both know, what we learned at the academy I

don't know how much time there is left to sun rise but never mind, we have to stand guard Karane you take the first shift, I will take on the second and Leldir the third. And don't forget to check on Zelda, she used a lot of mana transporting us four out of the fray so we better look that she survives that or her dad will have our heads for it!" Leldir: "Understood, but who takes on the lead when the princess is not able to, the next highest in rank would be me..." Lynk: "Do you really think this is a good time to argue about such a petty matter? We have an unconscious princess and a well maintained hut whose owner is obviously not here." Leldir: "Ah yes, I remember now...You were always the best for surviving tactics I guess I can live with that." Lynk: "So now we all need to rest, so I would say good night." Karane: "Well, I still don't feel comfortable here, were too close to castle town so all of you should be ready just in case." The others nodded and went to sleep.

That night...

'Lynk: "What is going on? Where am I?" Lynk saw a patch of grass with three triangles floating over it the rest of the landscape was covered by total darkness. Since there was nothing else around he was drawn to the patch and when he nearly attained it three strange looking figures came out of the earth. Lynk yelled: "Who are you? What are you doing here?" None of them turned around and all of them began laughing. Lynk felt that the laughter was somehow familiar, "No, it can't be..., murmured Lynk. Then the three created a portal, black as the dark void surrounding them, underneath the triangles and wicked looking man slowly came out of it. He had red fiery long hair, his skin was dark and he was surrounded by darkness. As soon as this man reached for the triangles the room once black became filled with fire, burning down Lynk in the process'

"What the...?" Lynk woke up sweating like never before snapping for air. "Oh, you're awake. I just wanted to wake you up for your shift." said Karane with a smile. Lynk nodded and added: "Alright, go on take some rest." He sat down were Karane was sitting before right next to bed and looked at Zelda. He checked if she was still breathing but couldn't help notice that she seemed to have a peaceful sleep. Lynk let out a sigh of relief and began thinking about his earlier nightmare, what could it mean? Feeling that he will find no answer for now he looked out of the window across the room. The moon was shining in a pale light and the stars glowed as if there was no end, there was no other sound to hear than the chirp of the insects outside. "I just hope the night won't be long," said Lynk to himself, "Zelda please wake up soon."

Later...

Lynk: "Leldir wake up its time for you to take over." Leldir: "Huh, what...oh yes right." While Leldir was checking on the patient, Lynk tried to sleep again but with little success, 'The dream, I just can't help thinking of it, that's probably keeping me awake.' thought he while closing his eyes to rest at least a little bit.

Unfortunately for him, his rest wouldn't last for long. Leldir was watching over Zelda and he suddenly had a feeling that something was wrong and in this moment a blue portal appeared in front of the door! Leldir yelled: "Lynk, Karane on your feet!" Lynk realising what happened: "Huh? What? What the...?" Karane couldn't sleep well either so she was quickly back on her senses: "What is it?" she asked. Leldir: "I don't know but this surely means no good to me!" It looked like something

would come out of the Portal and everyone was readying up for a fight. Finally the shape transformed into a blue haired maiden, and when she realised that there were some trouble makers who had introduced her house she asked angrily: "Give me a reason why I shouldn't kill you all." Lynk: "Hmm, we mean you no harm. Our friend here is unconscious and we sought protection for the night and stumbled upon your lovely hut. We didn't touch anything." Blue maiden: "Hmm, I see I cannot let a plea for help unanswered, but why do you smell like...wooaahhh. I better fix this." With the help of her trusty staff the maiden let blow a wind of fresh air and to everyone's astonishment the scent was gone. Leldir: "You're a sorceress." noticed he while lowering his weapons "Could you help our friend recover." Lana: "You can call me Lana, and yes I will see what I can do." Approaching Zelda Lana looked briefly over to Lynk and went back on her task. Lana was analysing Zelda with caution but something felt wrong: "Hmm, your friend is kept in this state by an evil force." Lynk: "Can you do something about it?" Lana: "I can try, but it will be difficult." Lynk: "Do what you have to, we're in a hurry and we cannot leave her behind. She is too important to me." Lana: "Why do you trust me?" Lynk: "You didn't attack us and I'm watching you..." Lana started chanting something when the hut started shaking! Lynk: "What the...?" "You have to keep them off, they're chasing me!" yelled Lana "Leldir come with me we're going outside, Karane you stay here, you must be the last line of defence!" Karane: "Understood."

Outside...

Lynk: "Ahh, and I thought this night would be boring!" Leldir smiling: "Hmm, a bunch of moblins chasing a maiden, nothing unusual." The both knights weren't as much occupying the hunters as they were cutting them apart but either way no moblin escaped their protector instinct. Lynk and Leldir came back to their senses; "Well, that was a hell of a butchery." noticed Leldir Lynk started: "Indeed..." when they heard a woman screaming, so they went rushing back in, Lynk first yelling "What did you...?" he stopped yelling when he saw Zelda awake sitting in the bed. Zelda: "Lynk, I... thank you for taking care..." Lynk: "It's alright. You know I would give my live for you." Lynk approached the bed and took Zelda's hand, "But Lynk, promise me, don't do that we're going to make it together." Lynk: "Yes, indeed we will!" Lana started to feel slightly awkward and asked shyly: "What happened to the monsters?" Leldir: "Well, we did distract them but..." Lynk continued: "But they didn't make it." Karane: "Boys..." Leldir: "What? We were supposed to keep them away from you..." Lynk: "Zelda, are you able to move?" Zelda: "I... should be alright now, but who am I to thank for my awakening?" Lana: "My name's Lana, I'm a white sorceress." Zelda: "Well then thank you Lana, I thought I would be trapped in that nightmare forever." Lynk whispering: "So I wasn't the only one." Lana: "Pardon?" Lynk: "Euhm, nothing." Zelda: "We should go now." Lana: "Do you mind if I follow you, I mean an enemy of my enemies is my friend." "I guess having two people with healing abilities wouldn't hurt the group..." said Leldir trying to seem innocent. "Well, you kept your word in healing her...but she's the actual leader." remarked Lynk. Zelda: "I don't know why but I can feel that we can trust you, but what is with your hut?" Lana: "Don't worry about that. I carry it around all time." Everyone was surprised but Lynk took the word: "How is that possible? Are you like a snail or something?" Lana smiling: "Not quite, but I can show you, if you would be so kind to follow me outside." Once everyone stepped in front of the hut Lana casted a spell, that made the hut shrink and put it in her bag. Zelda: "A most impressive spell indeed, is it even possible to make it bigger?" Lana joyful: "Yes of course, I show you later once we'll need it." Lynk: "But why didn't you take it with you earlier? I mean, why was it there?" Lana's face darkened: "I hoped you wouldn't ask, but well I shall tell you what you want to know, where we'll be safer from other ears." Lynk started:

“Then I see no point in growing roots here, dawn’s breaking anyway. The guards will be after us...” Lana: “Huh?” Lynk: “Long story, but we’ll exchange some words once we’re safe. First we need to reach the eastern woods.” Lana surprised: “Did you mean the Lost Woods? What kind of sorcery is leading you there?” Karane got curious: “Do you know something about it?” Lana hesitated but finally found some words: “Only rumours, it’s said among my tribe that whoever enters the woods will be changed into a monster of some sort and that the only living things in there were spirits who worship a big tree...” “Nevertheless, that’s our target now let’s move.” commanded Lynk pointing in the direction of the rising sun, Lana looked uncertain to Lynk and thought: ‘Is he really that brave, or is it just folly... Anyway, he’s kind of dreamy...’

Chapter 5: The Girl of the Spirit Forest

After a long march and a lot of squeaking noises from Navi about how happy she was... they finally reached the border of the forest at noon and Karane complained: “Do we really have to make the whole way on foot? We could arrange steeds at the Lon-Lon Ranch south west of here...” “That would speed along the travelling indeed...” added Leldir. “Well, first we should rest and find what we need within the forest before anything else.” said Lynk in a sharp tone. Lana: “Why are you so obsessed?” Lynk started yelling: “I can tell, you’re slowing me down, I need the flame of this forest to enhance my blade so why wouldn’t I be obsessed about it?” Lynk’s skin started darkening. Zelda: “Lynk, fight it that’s not you, where’s the kind and caring knight I knew?” Lynk’s voice went grave: “It’s all for you Zelda...” Lynk drew his sword and rushed toward Leldir first but he parried the attempt throwing Lynk a few steps back. Lana reacted quickly casting a magical shield, to prevent Lynk from attacking again. “You cowards, and Zelda why are you sticking to them?” yelled Lynk “They’ll just slow me down, I need to protect you!” but before anyone could say a thing a young woman appeared right out of blue, being all clad in green with green hair and holding her ocarina. Lynk: “Huh?” before Lynk could move the girl played a strange song and Lynk suddenly felt to the ground crying out for pain “Aaaaaahhhh, what’s going on? The pain, it draws me ahhhhh!” Zelda: “Lana, lower your shield I need to get to him, I think I know what the girl did.” Lana: “All right.” When the shield vanished Zelda rushed towards Lynk and sorely asked: “Lynk, Lynk? Are you all right?” she put her hands on his chest trying to ease the pain and it worked, her magic was more powerful than she had thought! Lynk soon retrieved his awareness and looked iffy to his friends looking down on him when he realised he was on the ground he asked: “What happened? I don’t remember a thing about the last few hours... Where are we?” The Girl in green: “I was observing you from the forest edge, you were driven mad by some kind of spell but thankfully I stepped in and played the song of healing, it’s a magical song that resets a being to his prior state of mind or appearance. That’s what we use to save the lost souls who enter the Lost Woods from becoming a stalfos; instead the song turns them into Kokiris so they can live with us in the forest.” Lynk confused: “Huh? Kokiris... Navi didn’t you mention something earlier about not having a Kokiri companion? And what happened to my armour?” Navi: “Hey, is it safe now?” Karane said: “Humpf, I guess you can come out now...” obviously doubtful. Navi: “Ohhhh hey Saria!” The green girl answered: “Ahh, Navi it is you!” Lynk even more confused: “Hold on you know each other, and Leldir quit holding my sword arm...” Leldir embarrassed: “Well, you know just in case...” Navi: “Look, I’m from this forest and Saria is one of the Kokiris she is kind of the mother of them all.” Saria: “That’s right you do remember!” Navi: “How could I forget you ‘mama’ hihih. And are Tatl and Tael here?”

Saria joyfully: "Yes come out you two greet your sister of the forest!" The two fairies: "Naviii! How long has it been?" Navi: "Way to long but now isn't the time to talk about the past. My friends didn't eat a thing for half a day they must be starving..." Lynk: "Woh, woh, woh, woh, what happened to my hyrulean uniform?" Saria: "Well, since the song turns lost souls into Kokiris; it may have affected you as well, well partly obviously since you're still yourself..." Navi: "But hey, the green shirt with the chainmail underneath is suiting you perfectly!" Lynk: "Hmm, fine but what's on my head... Hey the hat's looking awesome. No one's in Hyrule is wearing a thing like this!" Leldir mocking: "Hey, indeed we should make some new uniforms inspired by your outfit!" "Haha, funny man, at least someone didn't lose his sense of humour, but could you please set me free now, the blood isn't reaching my hand anymore." asked Lynk, Leldir looked up to Zelda and seeing she nodded Leldir released Lynk with a sigh of relief. Karane: "So now you should start making some apologies..." Lynk confused as never before...: "Huh?" "You were quite harsh before." Complained she, "Look, I don't have any clue what happened, okay? I obviously was possessed..." "So the purification wasn't complete..." started Fi scaring Saria and her fairies "I calculate a 50% chance that Lynk might go berserk again if we do not complete his sword soon." Tatl whispering to Tael: "What do you think it is?" "I don't know Tatl." whispered Tael. Fi dancing over to Saria and the fairies and introduced herself: "Well, my name is Fi; I'm the spirit of the Goddess Blade." returning to her mistress and vanishing into the rapier she whispered: "I calculate a 20% chance that Lana might even be responsible for this..." Zelda: "Hmm, Lana could you come over here with me, please?" Lana: "Hum, sure..." Having gone a few meters away Zelda took the word: "Lana listen, the group might start to think you're behind this so please tell me what you know about it." Lana hesitantly: "Well, I do have some confession to do, the moblins who were chasing me were sent by my evil sister Cia. She hates me for being the light she does not possess; maybe she used the connection that binds us together to harm your group. I'm trying to fight it but it's getting harder." Zelda: "It's alright I trust you." Lana: "Thanks, but maybe there's a way to cleanse all the evil out of anyone... You heard her play right?" Zelda not getting the point: "Yes, but what do you have in mind?" Lana retaking the word: "The song, I heard it before... It comes from this forest, so I think there must be some way to find something powerful enough to cleanse all of the souls of your friends and me as well. Even though tearing apart light from shadow might be risky... But should it break the curse... Yes we need to do that quickly, Cia will soon retry." Zelda: "Agreed, let's go back to the others now." As they went back the others were already sitting on the ground and eating some of the rations they had brought along in their bags and Saria had brought some fresh berries for desert! Zelda: "Lana and I have a plan how to avoid further mind control issues, but first let us rest a bit." "Works for me!" claimed Lynk, "I see someone hasn't lost his appetite..." said she smiling. "But there's still something you didn't tell me, Saria wasn't it? What exactly are Kokiris?" asked Lynk, "They are like forest spirits in form of children of about twelve years old and they never grow up." explained Saria, "But what's with you? You look close to our age but you seem to be way older since Navi knows you..." added Lynk, "To be honest I don't know my age... But I'm the protector of the Kokiris and somehow their mother; since many of them once were Hylians..." replied she. Karane: "Oh, and what's with the fairies?" "They are our guides, without them we would get lost in the woods..." explained Saria. Lynk laughing: "Alright, now I know why I have to take along my squeaky navigator!" Navi angry: "Why are you so mean to me?" Lynk laughing heartily: "Sorry Navi but I had to bring that one out... I'm just kidding." Navi: "Hey listen, we should move. I sense something odd." Saria: "Quickly everyone gather your things we'll go into the forest." They've all been trained for this so they got their things packed up in no time and followed Saria deep into the forest. Curiously, though, the curse of the Lost Woods affected neither Zelda, nor

Leldir, nor Karane nor Lana, so they didn't thought about it and went their way to a glade with what looked like treehouses. Saria brought them to the great Deku Tree at the other end of the glade and spoke: "Oh Great Deku Tree, these travellers are requesting an audience. I know you are not going well, though, the one in green could help!" Deku Tree: "So be it. Yes I can see, the hero is on his journey, unfortunately the flame of Farore cannot be found within these woods..." the Tree took a deep breath and continued, "Nevertheless, I can give you the key. Even so it must be earned and solely the hero may advance and enter my mouth to retrieve it from within me." Lynk: "Well, shouldn't be that hard..." Deku Tree: "Such courage, yes I can feel your spirit, you can save me you must destroy the monster underneath, that is feeding on my roots, and retrieve the artefact from it!" Lynk: "Sounds like fun, so let's get started uprooting a monster!" Lynk drew his sword and ran into the darkness of the open mouth of the Deku Tree...

Lynk: "Well, it's definitely dark and somehow empty in here, but what could that monster be... Hey there're some giant spider webs blocking the way down, let's burn them down quickly." Lynk lit the webs; they blazed away with bright light. Afterwards, he started to climb down the roots to what looked like a cave... "Well, where's that thing now? ... Oh I see I'll use the chance while it's feeding to shoot an arrow from a better angle..." So he prepared his bow walked around the room and having finally found a suitable angle where he could aim at its enormous eye he shot the arrow right into it! The thing what looked like a giant spider fell to the ground and recovered before Lynk could get close to it. So he reloaded an arrow while trying to dodge the spider's attacks and shot when he had the time and this time the spider was in range and he gave it a couple of blows to its eye and after several repetitions, the spider finally fell to the ground for good. "Well, that wasn't that hard after all, alluring yes, but not really hard. Now where's that thing?" He walked to what seemed to be the nest and saw a green thing shine through the webs and so he started cutting until he reached for it and finally could retrieve the gem stone. Lynk: "Hmm, I wonder how this will help me getting the flame..." before leaving he cut the spider in pieces just to be sure it would stay there... Moving on, he climbed back up on the roots only to find that the tree's mouth was closed. He tried to knock at it but with little success. So he looked around and saw a way leading upwards, seeing nothing else he felt drawn to it and followed the long path until he reached an altar with a song called Farore's courage drawn on it and with a negative of the gemstone he picked up earlier, so he inserted the stone and played the song, then a flame blazed out of the gem and Lynk thought that placing the sword within, may do something. The flame passed on to the sword and made it longer and more powerful while fading away. "Hmm, interesting, didn't he say I wouldn't find it here, anyway." A voice resounded "Thank you hero for saving me, leave the Kokiri-Emerald in its pedestal and come outside. So Lynk made his way out and the tree said: "Oh great Hero, let me bless you and your patient friends. Also, they asked me to remove the evil locked within, unfortunately thus I cannot but since you accomplished the task and earned the flame I shall tell you, the key is your sword once finished it will have enough power to do so." Zelda: "Pardon me, but didn't you say we couldn't find the flame within these woods?" Deku Tree: "Indeed, I did because, it was inside me. Now let me bless you." A green light fell upon the party and they felt like a heavy burden was lifted from their shoulders. "Behold your new appearance knights of Hyrule, for you young lady: a, female, dark green, Kokiri armour and a gold one for the other." Leldir: "But why gold?" Deku Tree: "Because your strength comes from your golden heart. The hero already wearing one surely asks himself why green, hum? Well, it somehow suits you best... And the lady, dark green means a shifted fate." The tree paused and spoke again: "I have unlocked the next tablet go to the castle and see where your

next target lies.” Lynk: “Thank you wise Deku Tree, I wish you a good recovering.” But the tree was already sleeping... Saria: “You saved the Tree? He really isn’t going to die?” Lynk: “Nope not today.” “Oh thank you, great hero of the forest!” said Saria not holding back a few tears of joy. “Once your quest is over I hope you’ll come again to visit.” said Saria. Zelda: “Oh we surely will!” “But please let me teach you the song I wrote myself, so that if you need you can talk with me from far away!” claimed Saria, so she taught the song to Lynk and Zelda. Afterwards the group thanked Saria for teaching them the song, which they called Saria’s Song..., and then said good bye and left the forest to head to their next destination. Karane: “Let’s head for the Lon-Lon Ranch, the farmer’s daughter is a friend of mine, we’ll surely get excellent horses for a good deal!” Lynk: “Sounds like a plan, it’ll be far easier to move around mounted than on foot. And with our new outfits we’ll surely attract attention but we’re not going to be recognised either...” Lana: “Hmm, at least the Deku Trees blessing cut the binding... We should be safe now.”

Chapter 6: The Horse Whisperer

The five heroes now found themselves walking through the high grasses of Hyrule-Field in south-western direction; soon the hill where the farm had been built upon appeared at the horizon. In this moment Fi appeared out of Zelda’s blade and stated: “Mistress, I calculate if we keep on that rhythm will be there in less than an hour and perhaps being back at Hyrule-Castle before sunset.” Zelda surprised: “Well, if that aren’t good news...” Lynk spoke thinking: “Hmm, don’t you find it awkward that no monsters attacked us for quite a while now... Even though everyone except me and Karane are clothed perfectly to not be overseen...” Leldir feeling screwed: “Hey, that’s not our fault you know?” Lynk making an innocent gesture: “Probably.” As they kept on walking the distance began to shrink until they finally arrived after a few more time killing japes that had to be told.

The ranch was completely surrounded by a sturdy looking, tall fence that was only interrupted by a massive gate of iron. Before they could even touch the gate a young woman walked by seeing the adventurers and asked politely: “Are you here to buy our famous Lon-Lon Milk or some horses you seem tired and in need of mounts, since you’re here on foot.” Karane: “Malon, it’s me Karane! And yes, we would like to have horses.” Leldir trying to seem innocent: “Hmm and a glass of milk couldn’t do any harm either...” Malon: “Karane! Did you become the knight you always wanted to be? But please come on in!” Karane: “Well nearly, I’m somehow the only one here who hasn’t passed her final exam yet... but here are Lynk, Zelda, Leldir and Lana. Ah and the glowing blue orb hovering over Lynk’s shoulder is Navi.” Malon happily: “Ah, I see. But we can talk later first things first. I go get my father, just stay here in front of the door.” So she went inside and soon after a small and round man with a moustache came out and started: “Hoy there, my name’s Talon, you already met Malon, and my wife’s inside her name’s Gwendoline.” Zelda: “Nice to meet you kind farmer, my name is Zelda and my friends are Lynk, Leldir, Karane and Lana.” Talon: “Zelda? Hmm somehow this name’s familiar, oh I’ll surely remember later on. But Malon said you wanted a few horses right?” Lynk: “Precisely.” Talon pointing to the stable on the right side of the house: “Very well then, if you would please follow me. Malon should come soon after with a glass of our finest milk for each of us.” Zelda: “You’re too kind good farmer.” Talon: “Service, my lady.” The horses were all already inside the stables they all had various colours and several patterns but Lynk’s eyes were drawn to a beautiful fox coloured mare and as he approached Talon said: “Unfortunately this one isn’t for sale I wanted to give this wild mare to the royal family as her being the strongest of all but difficult to tame. Only Gwen and Malon can ride her without getting injured...” Zelda: “Interesting, why wouldn’t you offer

it to me then?" Talon surprised: "Euhm, what I just told you..." As he saw that Zelda removed her hood Talon was suddenly agape as if he couldn't believe his eyes, but then when he was able to speak again: "I knew it! The name seemed familiar but now... Alright but the King must be told that I paid my dues." Zelda started: "Of course, good man." she took out a strange looking blue stone and activated it "Father, respond please." Everyone stood there stunned of seeing the princess talking to a stone and somehow the King's voice resounded from within: "Zelda is that really you?" Zelda: "Yes father, I'm fine by the way." King: "How could you simply leave, your mother and I were sick of worry!" Zelda: "Sorry for that, but father?" King grew suspicious every time she or her mother took that tone was to ask for a favour: "Yes?" Zelda: "Talon, the farmer from Lon-Lon Ranch has prepared a fine gift for you. But I want to take it right now." King: "Wait, what are you doing at the ranch? And what is this gift?" Zelda: "Well, we were exploring with a few friends and we thought we could need some trusty mounts and so we went there first. The gift is a strong mare which we could really use right now..." King: "Fine, I will tell my treasure keeper that Talon has paid his part, in your responsibility. Your mother is out of house today I'll tell her you're doing fine... but please come back home soon." Zelda suddenly feeling sad: "Alright dad, but I can't promise you to stay for too long... Zelda off" Malon came in with a tray on which were seven refreshments on it and seeing Lynk touching Epona without getting turned down she said surprised: "How can you touch her without knowing the song?" Lynk surprised: "Huh? I don't know what this is supposed to mean but she has something fierce and wild in her eyes. Like she would be looking for adventure..." Malon whispered: Just like him..." Lynk: "Pardon?" Malon embarrassed: "Nothing, please take yourselves a drink. It will do you good!" So everyone took a glass and returned at looking at the other horses but Lynk stayed next to Epona and asked Malon: "What kind of song is it she reacts to?" Malon: "Well, it's a song that mother taught me, I shall teach you, since she already seems to like you..." Lynk took out his ocarina and Malon asked: "Are you going to play the song with that?" Lynk nodded and she started singing a beautiful melody that Lynk could recreate with his instrument and Epona suddenly felt the need to get out and nearly destroyed the fence keeping her in the stable! Lynk: "It's alright Epona; I'll take you with me." Zelda: "Since when you know you're going to keep it?" Lynk: "Hum?" Zelda: "I want you to buy me this superb white horse and Epona is yours." Lynk: "As you wish princess." Malon eyes grew big as she heard that and immediately kneeled before Zelda: "I'm sorry your majesty I didn't recognised you." Zelda went down on her knees and said smiling: "It's alright Malon; I wouldn't have told anyone if it wouldn't have been necessary. Just stand up again okay?" Malon stood up not believing her eyes and ears now, she left the stable and stood outside as if she wouldn't understand the world anymore... Zelda: "Poor girl, I hope I didn't scare her too much..." turning back to Talon she asked: "How many rupees for the white one?" Talon: "Since you're the princess and Karane is a friend of my daughter's and so myself, you'll get it at half price, that means 150 rupees." Zelda ordered: "Lynk, your wallet please." Lynk having 200 rupees with him: "At least it's only 150..." Lynk paid for the horse and took Epona out of the stable and waited outside for the others who were following with the horses, they chose. Leldir had a strong looking chestnut coloured horse; Karane had chosen a more elegant looking black horse and Lana with her grey horse, as well as Zelda with her white etalon. Malon then went over to Lynk and asked: "Do you really need to go now?" "Unfortunately, we cannot afford the luxury of staying at the same spot for too long but we'll come back soon." Gwendoline came out of the house, she had the same beautiful red hair like her daughter, with some rations she had prepared and a pie that could be shared and said smiling: "Thank you for the visit, please take this. It's not much but still." Zelda: "That's so sweet thank you but not necessary. Lynk give the woman a tip for the present and the kind service!" Lynk: "Alright,

here's a violet rupee for your efforts." Gwendoline was surprised at the princess' generosity and accepted. Gwendoline added while Lynk was mounting up on Epona: "I see now, why Epona accepted you. You both have the fire of adventure in your eyes..." Lynk: "I'll take good care of her, I promise. We'll return in better times." Zelda: "It is good bye for now though, thanks again for the hospitality. Everyone's ready?" the four agreed and Lynk said: "See you later..." and with a loud 'Hyyaaahh' he took the lead leaving the ranch followed by his companions. Gwendoline asked her daughter: "Malon, sweetheart, are you alright?" Malon surprised: "Huh? Yes... I'm fine." "Maybe he will be back soon." added Gwen "I can see he impressed you as me." "So mum, do you think there would be a way to marry him?" asked Malon shyly. Gwen: "Well, maybe one day..."

Chapter 7: Bounty Hunters

As Fi accurately stated before they reached the southern gate to Castle-Town before sun set and as they approached to cross the still lowered bridge, a guard stopped them: "Halt, who are you and what business do you have to occur in town?" Zelda whispering to Lynk: "Let me handle this, this matter requires a huge amount of female subtlety..." Lynk nodded and Zelda, still hooded, dismounted her steed and went over to the guard and spoke: "We're the bounty hunters the king summoned to find the lost princess! My name's Hilda and the one in green over there is Ravio. You surely heard about us didn't you?" seeing the guard wasn't still completely convinced she waited for a reaction. After what seemed like some reflecting gestures he finally took up the word: "Hmm, another group of bounty hunters entered through the east gate earlier this day..." but Zelda replied almost instantly: "Well, so I guess the king called upon many available adventurers throughout the realm to ensure the princess returns safely..." even though the guard was still a little bit suspicious but he knew better than to hinder those who had been mustered by the king himself, and so let the group pass. Once on the central square Lynk mentioned wanting to have the horses being brought to the royal stables but how would they be allowed to while keeping low profile? A question where Karane found an answer faster than anyone: "Hilda," she gave Zelda a quick wink "What if we asked one of the guards to escort us to the king? We could get much easier inside and even getting access to the stables..." Leldir not being so sure: "Wouldn't that be risky? The king surely has prepared something since Hilda... talked to him. I can feel it." Lynk seeing where Leldir was going to: "He might blame us for kidnapping the princess..." Zelda shocked: "He wouldn't dare, would he?" she quickly realised that people tend to do weird things once they accumulated enough fear and worry. Lynk stated that he would like to avoid fighting their own soldiers for everyone's sake. A brief silence had installed itself over the company and Zelda broke it with another option: "We're not going into the castle..." everyone surprised: "What?" Lynk continued: "You're sure about this?" Zelda replied calmly: "In fact I didn't anticipated to even stay, we should head directly for the temple of time. It's highly likely unguarded and my father won't suspect us to return there..." Lana concluded: "In order to see what the Deku Tree told us about the tablet and then leave with the excuse the king had given us information of 'their last whereabouts' and so on, but instead of heading there we'll head to our next destination!" It didn't take much time to the rest to agree and so they slandered with their horses through the streets they knew too well to arrive at the temple. There were no guards in sight, so four of them stayed behind the goddess statue to watch the horses while Lynk unlocked the entrance and descended into the depths beneath. Everything was as they had left it behind after the ceremony but one thing had changed a tablet with a red coloured gem had appeared to the North

East showing Death Mountain. Lynk went back to the surface looking grim he said, before anyone could ask, that their new target was Death Mountain, deep in Goron controlled terrain. Lana surprised: "Gorons, are you sure about that?" Lynk replied: "Yes, the tablet couldn't be much clearer..." Lana continued: "Well, I know for sure that they are a kind people and their leader Darunia is normally generous but their tribe has become hostile against Hylians lately, the reason for it, I don't know." Leldir was smiling: "Well, there's only one way to find out, the sun is setting we'll be able to build a camp in the protection of the night!" It didn't take long and they were at the east gate where a guard was about to close the way out but Karane stopped him: "Please, kind guardsman we need to leave the city, we're on a bounty mission for the king!" The guardsman impatient said: "Well alright go through but quickly!" Karane replied gently: "Thank you sir!" and so they left the town behind, them heading in the direction of the setting sun.

Once the sun had disappeared past the horizon, they stopped to rest. Lynk gave the command and every one stopped beside him: "We have advanced enough for today. We shall rest here, and Lana can now answer the questions we asked her earlier this morning." Lana got nervous: "You sure it is safe?" Leldir: "I agree with Lynk, but we should keep our emplacement secret." Zelda: "Lana, you know the spell for the long duration shield?" Lana: "Euhm, yes..." Zelda: "Well, we can cast it together and I'll bind it to one of the gems on my tiara which are filled with mana I didn't need for days." Lana: "Wait that means we can save our spare mana?" Zelda: "You didn't know?" Lana: "I'll sure try it out; I do have a gem with me..."

Once the camp was shielded and the fire lit Lynk asked Lana: "Well then, first explain us why the hut was standing in middle of nowhere and you seemed to know we were coming..." Lana reluctantly started: "Well... it all started in the hidden village, close to the desert border, my sister and I lived in. A few weeks ago when a strangely cloaked man arrived, he announced himself to be the priest Agahnim and was looking for the strongest wizard of the realm to make him his apprentice and the one was destined to live in Hyrule-Castle." "Agahnim, are you sure about that?" asked Zelda not believing her ears, "It would seem so why?" replied Lana. "Well, because my father exiled him a few months ago when he was found holding a weird ritual with dark magic and so couldn't be trusted anymore as our high priest." explained Zelda, "Yeah, I remember that." added Lynk. "Hey! This guy must be really bad..." cried Navi out, "Thanks Navi we knew that, but please Lana continue." hissed Lynk. "Alright, hmm, oh right. My sister and I were quite adept at the ways of bending the energy to our will and so we decided both to ask Agahnim about the upcoming tournament he was going to organise. It was then I could have a look in his eyes they were radiating evil when I backed away he only had eyes for my dear twin. She grew fascinated by the things he showed her and thanks to them she killed many mages of our village even those among the best. I tried to prevent her from killing our former master but she didn't take it well and is now chasing me for I am the last living sorceress ..." Lana couldn't hold back some tears and Karane went to her side and hugged her in comfort. "Well, at least we know what were up against... I'm so sorry for your loss." Lynk said sounding sad. Lana was sobbing and they decided not to question her any further, letting that out had paid a heavy toll on her. After trying to comfort Lana a loud silence had installed itself but before anyone could figure out why, Lana raised from her sitting spot, nearly sending Karane flying and casted a magical barrier deflecting two darkness filled arrows. Dark Zelda rising from her hiding spot: "Aww, to bad these would have made such a beautiful bloodshed!" "Hey, but I know you" said Dark Lynk glaring towards Lana, seeing no one was responding he added "The master's girlfriend is seeking you... Oh how happy they will be if we bring them all of your heads!" finished he laughing in

a disgusting way. Everyone recovered and Lynk shouted unsheathing his sword: "We already beat you once, we'll do it again!" Karane continued: "You're outnumbered! Surrender now!" Unknown: "We surrender? What imperfect sight of the situation..." letting out a moaning that could freeze your spine and showing himself a strange looking man with white skin with some black diamond shaped decorations and white hair came out of the bushes. Dark Lynk: "Now you decide to show up..." "Indeed, your last results were not bad but not perfect as I would like them to be... So the master wanted me to see that the perfection would be achieved by my hand. Oh, I haven't even presented myself; you can call me Lord Ghirahim!" Said he sticking out his long ruby coloured tongue. Ghirahim spawned a black rapier with a snap of his left hand fingers and was readying to charge when he vanished in a cloud of smoke coloured gems to appear behind Zelda, unfortunately for him she was ready and parried the back stab with ease while Karane and Lana were taking care of Dark Zelda the two boys jumped blade drawn onto Dark Lynk but he dodged the attempt. Dark Zelda aimed an energy ball at Karane, but Leldir reacted quickly, pushing her out of harm's way. Ghirahim after having exchanged a couple of blows with Zelda suddenly retried a back stab but instead of stabbing he grabbed her shoulder, realizing she was to be kidnapped Zelda casted a quick 'Nayru's Love' throwing back the assailant. Ghirahim was panting: "Such...power...But how? No, this is not possible. The master must be told. Retreat you two!" The three vanished in the shadows leaving the heroes snapping for air. "Just how powerful have they become?" asked Lynk and Zelda replied: "I don't know but this guy, Ghirahim was it? He's no regular enemy." "Is every one alright?" asked Lana having her breath back. They nodded although the knights were having trouble recovering. Zelda then ordered: "We need to stand guard! Not even our shield managed to hide us. I want two people awake for each shift I take the first with Lana and the last with Lynk! Leldir and Karane you take the second!" They all nodded since they couldn't speak clearly. Once they got hold of themselves, they ate something quick and went on to sleep. Lana whispering to Zelda: "How long do you think have they been watching us?" "I don't know Lana, but we have to get rid of them. Otherwise we'll be constantly assaulted. Not even our protection spell hindered them." "Hmm, they must have tracked us somehow... But I don't think Cia was able to track us. It must have been someone else." claimed Lana, "Either way, we should clear our thoughts. Let us talk about other things for now." said Zelda smiling again. Lana surprised: "You really have to tell me, how you get your smile back so quickly!" for the rest of their shift they spoke about girl matters...

Later...

"Leldir, wake up!" said Zelda and Lana was waking up Karane. The exhausted magic wielders went on lying down a bit. Leldir wanted to make conversation but didn't exactly know what to say, but eventually came up with something: "Karane?" "Yes?" answered she, "Hum, in the battle from earlier... whispered Leldir shyly. "Thanks' for saving me..." said Karane blushing. "There's been something I wanted to say but..." started Leldir but Karane interrupted him "Leldir, I'm so very grateful for your teachings and for taking me with you..." said Karane her cheeks becoming as red as the morning sun, Leldir continued: "I didn't meant that, hum... how do I express that at best... I really was scared of you getting hurt... If anything had happened to you I..." Karane suddenly her face filled with tears: "I... think I know...what you want to say..." Leldir embarrassed but hopeful: "And?" "My heart somehow says, 'yes' but do you think this is really the right time..." but she got interrupted by Leldir putting his finger on her lips: "I couldn't dream of a better moment; the moon and the stars shine in their most beautiful white light over us fulfilling our guard duty together..." but he stopped to kiss her. Karane realising what was happening first wanted to step back but didn't, she knew she

wanted that for quite some time... After Leldir released her of his grip she said: "It was wonderful... though we should restrain it for now..." "My sense of duty, and my principles told me the same." claimed Leldir, hugging his beloved...

Later...

Leldir was waking up Lynk and Karane Zelda, after the switch had been completed; Lynk sat down next to Zelda and whispered: "Why not, have some quality time together, it's been too long since the last time..." "You're seeing through my ruse..." admitted Zelda. "Well, it was obvious that you had something to tell me... otherwise you may have made different groups." concluded Lynk and he added: "To be honest, I have a confession to make... if I'd be granted one wish, like in those stories of the land of sands..., then it would be to have you love me as I love you..." "Lynk... I..." Zelda was blushing but then added "I...too..." but before she could finish Lynk's face was already very close to hers and seeing slowly the distance vanish Zelda close her eyes... Lynk thought 'for once nothing interrupts that moment, nothing hindered me... it must be the stars and the wilderness...'

The wisest thing to do was not to go further than kissing and hugging in the wilds not to mention the other members of the group sleeping... thankfully the princess' wisdom stopped Lynk before he went too far given the circumstances. "I'm sorry princess, I got carried away..." sorely admitted he. "It is fine, I thought you wouldn't dare ruin a princess' honour but still..." said Zelda giving Lynk a wink. "Hum, of course not princess..." said he rolling his eyes, Zelda only shook her head and decided not to scold him for inappropriate behaviour for she as well did enjoy this moment, a moment of freedom she never felt back home.

As the first sun rays touched the ground they quickly ate from the rations the farmer's wife gave them and left quickly the camp site. Halfway between the Village, situated at the foot of the mountain, and the camp site a horde of bublins riding on warthogs ambushed them in rocky terrain. The attackers were hidden behind big rocks that surely must have come down by the volcanic activity of the region, once they moved out it was like a rain of thorns had hit the group and Leldir got hit on the left shoulder, Karane immediately got to his side slaughtering one of the riding duos. Lana shot energy balls and used 'Nayru's Love' to protect herself. Lynk took out his bow and quickly shot the bublins off their mounts leaving the pig like creatures uncontrolled, running randomly even bumping in for them friendly units. Zelda charged towards the remaining groups with a magical shield and her rapier straight in front of her and pierced a few down. Leldir managed to get the last kill with his right handed sword. All but one bublin had been killed and Lynk rode for him, not to kill him, though, but to catch him. Seeing the small creature in range he jumped and the monster fell to the ground, Lynk holding him ordered: "Who's your master? Who gives the orders? Talk now!" but the captive did not say a thing for he didn't understand hylia. "Lynk, I think it's no use, we're not going to get any information from him." remarked Zelda, Lynk then immediately beheaded the green one with one smooth slice of his enhanced blade. "Lynk was that really necessary?" asked Karane "You saw what they did to Leldir?" replied Lynk. "I'm alright, it's just a scratch." said Leldir reassuring and he added: "Lana can take care of this easily." Lynk mumbled: "Fine..." It didn't even take five minutes and Leldir wasn't bleeding anymore. "You were lucky, had it hit two inches to the left, you wouldn't be able to use your arm anymore." remarked Lana. "Well, I thank the Deku Tree for the

stronger chainmail..." concluded Leldir. That said they climbed on their steeds and continued their way to Kakariko-Village.

Later...

Arriving at the gorge leading to the village they saw a great black gate blocking the way. "Well, that looks tough." stated Leldir, but before anyone could say another word they heard a loud grunt coming from behind them. Surprised they turned around and noticed astonished, that he was there. He was big, bald and green, his horned helmet looked like it had tasted blood and the huge grey warthog he was riding on breathed like it was thirsting for blood. King Bublin: "It was you who killed a lot of my people back then in the sewer, just as you did now with my riders..." the party was agape witnessing the bublin's ability to speak but then Lynk yelled: "You were planning on attacking the city weren't you?" "I cannot reveal the masters plan, but no we weren't we were waiting for you..." said the vile creature, "...and finally we have found you." added he blowing in his battle horn to call for reinforcements. They appeared from behind the hill, at least a dozen of similar duo's they already encountered earlier. The battle begun as Lynk ordered: "Move out! Let them witness their own doom!" Lynk directly went for the king while the others diminished the riders till they were no more. Lynk, seeing that the infamous lord wanted to call for help again, loaded an arrow and shot the blasted horn out of the monster's hard grip. Unfortunately, the warthog was very fast; somehow Lynk and Epona couldn't catch up! Then he noticed a glittering on the oaf's belt, not thinking twice he released another arrow and it cut the belt clean! The creature was acting weird, as if it didn't noticed the belt had let the keys fall down and Lynk thought 'Let's end this!' and he loaded a bomb-arrow and hit the gigantic pig from behind. The steed stumbled upon its own feet and sent its rider flying to the ground. Zelda had seen the keys and stopped her horse to pick them up. The rest of them joined Lynk and dismounted as they wanted to engage the assailant in ground combat. As they approached an ugly laughter broke out from where the King had fallen down, he got back up on his feet raising his huge axe and swinging it around demonstrating its sheer force. First the group was reluctant but then decided to attack him from all sides, encircling him they all used their available ranged weapons and spells, for he could not withstand many of the projectiles. As he grew weak, Zelda shouted: "First you plan to invade my home, then a friend of mine gets hit, and now you tried to kill us yourself...My patience has its limits!" and shooting a light-arrow right between his eyes, he was done for. The steed lethally injured succumbed to its wounds soon after. Zelda claimed: "Well, I got the keys. Who wants to visit the village?" they all turned their heads towards the princess who was obviously proud of herself, no one said a thing but they nodded.

Finally able to use the first key, they unlocked the way into the gorge not knowing what was awaiting them.

Chapter 8: Village of Shadows

Finally they reached the village nestling in the canyon. But at first glance it looked like it was deserted. "Hmm, something's odd..." remarked Karane, Fi appeared and spoke in her monotone scientific voice: "Mistress, Karane's senses are not lying. I dowsed the area for similar creatures we encountered before. The results are, there are 30 of them hiding; and even so have I dowsed for survivors, I think they are held captive. I suggest we take the monsters down before they can spot us!" Zelda: "Thank you Fi, this information was crucial!" "Ha! I guess that's a job for me and my not so glowing bow!" exclaimed Lynk joyfully giving Zelda a wink.

Lynk was now hiding behind a rock...

'Hmm, if I shoot them from the streets they'll probably catch me before I could kill one... what to do? First I let fly the Hook-Shot to climb on this round building, I'll have a better view!' Thankfully the item didn't make much noise and Lynk found himself on the roof. He saw a hole in its centre and looked down; there were two guards and what appeared to be several villagers including a man of the cloth. 'Hmm I shoot the two guards and then jump down, tell the prisoners their hero's here and ask them if there're any other villagers captive within the village. Sounds like a plan.' So he loaded an arrow, shot the first one and before the other could react he was down too. Fortunately the prisoner's mouths were bound with fabric otherwise their screams would have revealed Lynk's presence... He jumped down and whispered: "Be quiet every one, or you'll draw their attention. I'm here to rescue you! Please nod, if there are other prisoners held captive somewhere else." They all nodded. "Do you know how many?" asked he further, the man in robes nodded five times. "Alright, I'll just cut quickly the ropes but please should no monster show up, do not move!" They agreed and Lynk made himself to work and left through the same way he entered using the hook shot. He looked around, there was a guard standing behind a window, another one on the other side. 'Alright, just jump down, go from hiding spot to another and when they're not looking, enter the house from the broken window below and killing the bublins inside...' and he did that for nearly all of the houses but the last one, not having found any villagers yet he thought 'Here, there should be the five missing villagers and as he counted the last five guards... The house had no front window where he could see through but there was a bomb sign before it. 'Oh... no...' he thought walking around and finally having found the sole side window of the building he saw three guards roaming at the first floor 'the other two must be watching the prisoners above, I see the stairs. But something's odd there's light coming from above... oh no, I see the upper floor has its own door and the ground must be some kind of metallic grid, but hold on there's a fence where I could... oh lucky me!' This time it was the Claw-shot that went flying and gripping to the first floor fence it pulled Lynk upwards. Entering the building from the upper floor he noticed, that there were neither prisoners nor guards up here 'Huh? No villagers? But I checked every building... and if I go inside I'll be spotted and the captives will be doomed.' Stepping back from the open door he looked around when Navi squeaked: "Lynk! Look!" flying above the back of his head, wondering what could have irritated his blue puffball he turned around and saw the building on the ridge which looked like a guard tower... 'I just hope I'm ready for this... Now, there I can climb my way up over the roof to the lower ridge but then the way seems to be lacking of any cover. There'll be surely at least a guard on the top overlooking the area...' Lynk approached the edge of the balcony and could spot the guard who was looking towards the tower approach. 'Maybe I can shoot him from here, anyway I can't see another way...' After a bit of aiming and waiting for the foe to be in a better angle, finally the poor bublin, who he

was to near to the edge, fell to the arrow falling straight off the ledge! Lynk needed to react quickly this wouldn't go unnoticed so he rushed the way up. The guards on the lower floor of the bomb store heard the heavy steps on the roof and immediately started to investigate, the guard still living within the tower went out to investigate what had caused this unusual sound and saw Lynk running uphill, immediately he let out his alarm scream and wanted to head back to execute the villagers but Lynk and his bow were faster! However, the other guards send one of them to investigate if the other prisoners were still there and the remaining two went after Lynk. He let out a sigh of relieve when he saw the prisoners were still in one piece! Lynk was still panting due to his sprint from before and having left the door open he hadn't realised the bublins arriving behind him. Silently it let down his club on Lynk's head who fell to the ground unconscious and slightly bleeding! Now, the green monsters were going to go after the hostages but suddenly two knives were flying towards him, killing him instantly and the alarmed second one rushed in to meet his doom.

While Lynk was doing his stealthy job, Lana complained jealously: "That's so unfair; he gets the most fun of us all..." Leldir trying to comfort her: "Don't worry; I too had my portion of being beaten by him in every infiltration exercise back at the academy..." "What happened back then?" asked Karane, "Well, these exercises were meant to enhance our stealth skills and Lynk somehow always got to the goal and back out of the fortress, that we were supposed to guard, without being seen or even heard... But the most frustrating part was that when it was my turn to infiltrate, Lynk always found me very early but never interfered until I passed the others and I nearly had reached the goal. Lynk sprung right out of the nowhere and well the sparring couldn't go more wrong since I was way too surprised the first time..." explained Leldir. "So you say if there's a guy in this realm who is able to sneak past all of these guards and take them down without being seen and having no prisoner killed, it is him?" asked Lana, "Pretty much," started Zelda, "Leldir is surely remembering the rescue mission exercise where I had to play the kidnapped princess..." "Oh... Yeah I don't know but he has simply a talent for this, we only noticed that she was outside the fortress an hour later he had rescued her..." remembered Leldir embarrassed. Lana then thought 'Oh my... he would make such a perfect protector, but I know how Zelda and he are looking to each other... Wait am I jealous? Maybe a little bit...' and she sighed. "Lana, you're alright?" asked Zelda, 'as if you didn't know...' thought she and then replied: "Yeah, I'm just... surprised he is so skilled..."

Suddenly...

Fi: "Mistress, a bublin guard is heading to our direction; I calculate the scream we heard earlier was an alarm sound!" Zelda: "So Lynk did...?" Lana: "I take care of him; Lynk surely has got the rest down!" Lana took her book and casted a lightning bolt that let the monster smoking on the ground! Lana: "These guys don't even withstand a single hit..." "Obviously but we still don't know if Lynk's in trouble! Let's head to the village!" ordered Zelda.

Arriving at the heart of the village they saw a silhouette with a claymore coming out of a house to the right. Unknown: "Well, it's been a long time princess!" "Wait... I know that voice! Impa are you there?" asked Zelda confused, "Indeed your majesty, your friend did excellent work! He was even faster than I and my Sheikah friend... Although she had to rescue him because he got a little bit careless to the end..." explained Impa, "Really, is he alright?" asked Zelda and a flash illuminated the air. A Sheikah fighter stood there were the light faded and she said: "Well, he's unconscious but should be alright, the villagers are carrying him down as we speak." "Well, thank you but do you also

have a name?" asked Zelda. The woman looked to Impa who nodded and then continued: "You may call me Sheik." "Nice to meet you Sheik, even though I suppose you already know me, my name goes by Princess Zelda." said the royal. "Indeed, I know. Impa told me many stories about your common past." explained the shadow warrior.

Lynk woke up when he was being carried down the stairs of the bomb shop, shocked he moved and sent the two who were holding him flying fortunately there weren't many steps left... "Huh? Where am I? Oh! Sorry!" apologised he and continued "Hum? Weren't you supposed to be bound on the ground and I to free you?" asked he and a villager with a strange metallic thing on the head started to complain with a grunting voice: "Huh? Weren't it for the Sheikah, you would have been as done for as us kid!" 'Huh? Sheikah, here?' thought Lynk. Without saying another word he stood up and left the building alongside the villagers. The grunting man started to talk to what seemed to be Impa: "Hum, that lad is some whirlwind, when he woke up he sent the two of us who were holding him flying down the stairs of my shop!" Impa taunted laughing: "Finally met someone stronger than you, Burns?" "Ack, I'm just wasting my time! I go back checking on my bombs!" exclaimed Burns. "Impa did you...?" asked Lynk shyly, "No kid, it wasn't me. It was young Sheik who got you out of trouble." replied Impa. "Yeah it was me handsome!" said Sheik in a nasty tone, "Hold on, you want to tell me, I've been saved by a..." "A girl is that it?" replied Sheik sharp. Lynk never felt as embarrassed as now and his friends were trying hard not to laugh but since the villagers started laughing no one could hold back... "Great Hero huh, who had to be saved by a lovely and strong gal?" taunted Zelda "Thanks for spilling more oil to the fire, princess." scolded Lynk sharp. "Besides, I'm the only one who is allowed to startle you without fearing any resistance..." replied Zelda. "Are men really dominated by women or is it just me?" asked Lynk, "That's just a feeling..." squeaked Navi sarcastically, "Hmpf, thanks Navi." said Lynk slightly angry and still embarrassed. "You're welcome" exclaimed Navi in her highest tone! "Anyway, you should rest, for you had a long journey behind you." said Impa showing towards a building on which was written 'Eldin Inn'. "Impa, there's something I have to ask you." started Zelda. "Go on princess." said Impa, "Did you hear a thing about bounty hunters, looking for me?" continued Zelda, Impa's face suddenly darkened: "Well, actually, seeing that you're alright and a few hyrulean knights accompanying you... I see that this whole kidnapped princess thing is as true as your kidnappers... However the King sent out the Sheikah-Tribe to find you..." "Why would father do such a thing?" asked Zelda shocked, "Well, the reason why, is that he is worried." explained Impa and Shiek continued: "And he want's your kidnappers dead..." Impa retook the word: "But that's not all of it the King's been acting strangely since you left, like he was possessed... He suddenly ordered a lot of pending executions for tiny mistakes; his advisor is also on the list for advising him against such folly." "What? How...father..." Zelda's face saddened and she started worrying about the welfare of the realm. "And he told me the only thing that would undo his decisions would to bring you back to the castle and to execute the missing knights..." explained Impa with grief... "No, I can't let this happen! Lynk, we need a plan!" ordered Zelda "Just my thoughts princess!" exclaimed Lynk wanting to keep his head!