

A Royal Pain

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Three kings, two princess, and one cramped little shack. It it even possible to teach goodwill to those that disregard them, or is this meeting fated to end badly? Oneshot, includes onesided Dedede x Zelda and Bowser x Peach.

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Chapter 1 - A Royal Pain

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Notes: This has been posted on fanfiction.net as well. It was taken here for two reasons: One, I'm a shameless plugger. Two, honestly? The quality of the SSB section overall here (art included) makes me cry. A lot. More than ff.net. Trainwreck syndrome refuses to let me run away, though.

I'm setting the general area as a sort of large apartment, in an attempt to get away from the usual mansion stereotype. It's still big enough for all the 'little' extras, like a training arena and an infirmary, but it's not super luxurious and pretty. Besides, that isn't important to the plot, but it does clear up any confusion about what I mean when I say apartment (a lot of people, including me, think of the common apartment buildings scattered in urban areas at first).

I'd appreciate a little bit of concrit on characterization, since I've got a multi-chapter story on the drawing board involving these guys, but I don't want to screw that aspect up. Thanks.

Pale, slender fingers drummed the teacup nervously. This looked like a good idea on paper, but with three hard gazes on her, the possibility that this would go up in flames seemed more and more likely.

Zelda looked at Peach, who seemed oblivious to the tense atmosphere. The other princess was dressed much differently than usual, in a pink blouse with white lace trim, pale purple slacks, sandals, and a red ribbon that held her hair in a ponytail. In contrast, Zelda didn't dress as casually. In fact, all she really did was remove her purple vest, the accessories attached to it, and her gloves. She had even kept her circlet on, for crying out loud. And those in front of them, who continued watching her, had all come in their usual outfits -- even though this didn't mean much for Bowser. So much for an air of informality.

"So?" Bowser piped up, placing his teacup down on the floor. Peach winced a little, probably thinking of it getting scratched or dirty, but said nothing. "Are you gonna start, or what?"

Zelda took a gulp of the chamomile tea. She was going to need it. Getting up and placing the cup on her chair, she turned around to the chalkboard behind her and thought about what to write down. She settled on putting down the first thing that came to mind. *'Manners for Antagonists 101.'*

That was the reason two princesses and three kings were gathered in a large shack that wasn't far from the apartment's garden. This shack was rather musty, and had dust and dried grass all around the floor from having not been touched since the beginning of the Melee era, but it would have to do; holding this in a place the others used more often was a foolhardy idea, given those involved in this.

Peach had been the one to want to teach all the villains (Zelda cringed slightly when thinking about this; she loathed calling people that) how to be respectable people. Zelda was roped into this scheme with no way out, but she convinced Peach that it'd be better to focus on just three people. Originally, it would

have been Dedede, Bowser, and Wolf, but Peach thought it would be nice for it to be all kings; Zelda reluctantly removed Wolf from the list in favor of Ganondorf.

This 'kindness' was quickly 'repaid' as the Gerudo king sneered at her from above his tea cup, waiting until she turned around and caught the look before speaking. "Oh, and you think we don't think of you as...antagonists, either?"

"I...would rather not call you by what everyone else uses..." Zelda faltered, knowing that the word she used wasn't that much better.

Peach got up, placing her empty cup onto the small table between the two groups. "Don't worry about it! That's what we're here for! Making it so that you won't ever be called those things ever again!" She grinned, showing the key difference between the two princesses. Although both were dreamers and known to be off in their own worlds at times, Zelda was more 'in-tune' with the emotions of others, while Peach wouldn't let that break her beat.

"And how would you do something like that?" Dedede questioned, a few crumbs of the cookies he was eating falling out of his mouth.

"There's your first problem," Peach replied, still with a sweet smile. It wasn't known if she meant it now or not, as she was good at hiding that.

"What?"

"Nothing, nothing," Zelda was quick to try and dismiss the matter. "We're not here to discuss petty etiquette. I want to try and work on the big issues at hand. For example, this whole 'holier than thou' attitude that all three of you seem to have."

"But I *am* a lot better than all the other idiots!" Bowser started.

Zelda just grabbed her cup of tea and slipped back into her chair, taking another big gulp to drown her rage as Peach answered for her. "Not when you can't feel sympathy or goodwill or love or--"

"What would you know about love!?" the reptilian king snapped, causing a long silence to fall over the five.

"...Um, yes, let's try and avoid that subject..." Zelda spoke up, not willing to let this go crashing down just yet. "Perhaps one-on-one chats would work best for this session?"

"But there are *three* kings and *two* princesses," Ganondorf pointed out, the tone of his voice mocking her. "Or, have you forgotten how to count, dear Bearer of Wisdom?"

Zelda's stomach knotted. Dear Din, why did she let Peach talk her into letting him here? She didn't fear him much anymore, but he knew how to chip away at her emotionally by hitting weak points. "We can let someone sit out for a while, and then one of us can switch to him after the chat. Why don't you try some more cookies while I speak with Dedede and--"

"I think," Ganondorf interrupted, getting up to move his chair, "that you girls would be better off working with someone from your world first."

Zelda noticed how he didn't react to Peach going over to Dedede, going to talk to him instead of Bowser. She felt singled out now, but it was too late to do anything else; Ganondorf had now moved next to her, and Bowser was wolfing down the last of the cookies.

"I see, then. Fine, how about we start with this: What is your greatest ambition?" It was a filler question, for Zelda already had a pretty good idea of what the answer was.

Indeed, he replied, laughing, "To rule over 'your' world with my iron fist, of course. Why would you ask something you already knew?"

"To kick off a discussion," Zelda said, trying to sip some more tea, and finding the cup empty. When was the chamomile supposed to kick in!? "Any particular reason why? Jilted over a girl or something?" Although it was very rarely shown, Zelda could snark right back at someone when the situation called for it.

"No. Because your world is filled with pathetic people who wouldn't know a true ruler if he smacked them all on the head. That's why they follow you, kid. Only one with true power has the right to control such a vast land, am I correct?"

Zelda's grip on the empty cup tightened. "What good is mindless power if you lack compassion for those you rule over?"

"Compassion!? Ha! Don't make me laugh, you foolish princess. It was your compassion that made you give up to Zant! That is why you are not a queen, but just a tiny little princess brat with no parents to tell her how to run things!"

Now it was her throat that was tightening. Damn him, *damn him* for bringing that up! She was trying to help at least a little bit, to get to the root of his problems, but he had just turned her words against her to hit her where it truly hurt. This was going downhill fast.

Zelda quickly stood up. "*I think it's time to switch,*" she said quickly, hating the panicking tone in her voice. Not daring to look at Ganondorf's face, she went to the table, grabbing the tea pitcher and refilling her cup, and quickly downed the whole cup of tea. Then, she walked up behind Peach, putting a hand on her shoulder as she finished laughing at something Dedede had said. "Please, *please*, take over Ganondorf for me. He's picking me apart, Peach..."

"It can't be *that* bad..." Peach said, turning around to look up at the frazzled princess.

"It is. Please, just go deal with him, and I'll work on Bowser for you. He would probably find some way to harass you, too, anyway."

Peach sighed, not realizing just how badly the Hylian was shaken up, but got up from her seat, walking over to Ganondorf. Zelda gave an apologetic nod to Dedede before taking the empty chair, pulling it over to Bowser.

Bowser swallowed the last cookie before speaking. "So, he dicked around with you, too?"

"He's done that before with others? That doesn't really surprise me, somehow..." Zelda sighed, sitting down. She hated it when his mindgames succeeded against her.

"You should see what he does to his 'friends'," Bowser chuckled. "So, you gonna start, or am I going to have to start up some chaos to cure the boredom?"

"Um, yes, let's start with the same question. What is your greatest ambition?"

There was a pause, before Bowser answered, "To rule the Mushroom Kingdom and merge it with my own, I guess."

Zelda nearly sighed out loud. Why so many power-hungry fools? "So why can't you just make a contract with Peach or something for a joint leadership?"

Again, Bowser had to think for a bit. "...I-I've tried that, ya know, but..."

"But what?" Zelda pressed further. She didn't think that Bowser was telling the whole truth, if at all, but she wasn't going to say anything about that just yet.

"I mean...listen, do you think anyone there really trusts Koopas? I've tried changing my ways, but they won't let go of the past! Do you know what it's like, facing that kind of prejudice?"

Zelda would have said that prejudice was not the word he was looking for in this context -- that would imply he hadn't done anything to the Mushroom Kingdom first to provoke that response -- but she was interested in what he had to say. She'd tell him how fake it was sounding at the end. "No, I don't, actually, but it must be so painful..."

"It is, princess, it is. The hatred runs deeper than one might expect. I was trying to be a close ally of Peach, but the moment I said something wrong, Mario showed up, beat me into a pulp, and on top of that, demonized me in the eyes of her people! Now I can't go shopping for groceries without being accused of trying to kidnap her!"

Zelda was about to signal him to continue this sob story, but Dedede cut in. "Ha! That is total B.S.! Don't start that 'Pity me, for I am misunderstood' crap! We all know the real reason you're such a jackass!"

Zelda smacked herself in the forehead, as Bowser replied with, "And what would that be, *Your Highness?*"

Dedede smirked. "You have the hots for Peach. You want in her pants badly."

Zelda, who had had her suspicions about this already, looked over at Peach, mentally pleading her for help; out of the corner of her eye, she saw Bowser stand and make his way over to Dedede. But the pink-clad princess was still talking to Ganondorf with much more success than Zelda had, and she hadn't heard anything anyone else had said. Zelda couldn't keep herself from mentally cursing out

Peach. Good thing she hadn't inherited any telepathy powers like those many princesses in her bloodline had.

A loud yell caught Zelda's attention, and she looked back just in time to see Dedede stumble back, clutching his cheek in pain. Judging from how Bowser's hand was balled into a fist, he had just been punched in the face.

"You're a goddamn liar!" Bowser snarled.

"Then tell me why you keep kidnapping her, and yet you never harm her and actually tell your subjects not to be too rough with her," Dedede said with a sneer, not knowing when to quit.

This time, Zelda saw the second punch connect, and although Dedede made no verbal reply this time, she yelped, and started to rush over. "Stop it, both of you!"

Bowser ignored her, keeping his glare on Dedede, who wiped some blood off the corner of his mouth. "That is none of your concern, you pesky chicken!"

"*Penguin!*" Dedede snapped. If Bowser had a shirt, he'd have probably grabbed him by the front of it. "We are a regal race, I'll have you know!"

"And yet who's the true king by blood here, and who's the wannabe?" Bowser countered.

"Break it up, you two! This is foolish!" Zelda tried to grab Bowser's arm and pull him back, but he yanked his arm out of the way and pushed her back a few feet with his tail.

"Stay out of this, princess. Unless you'd like to hear about this king's hypocrisy?"

"What are you talking about?" Dedede growled.

"Why, about your own princess troubles, of course!" Messing with one's mind wasn't a thing exclusive to Ganondorf, it seemed.

Dedede's eyes widened. Apparently, this information being made public would not be good for him. "Bastard, don't you dare!"

It was too late to stop Bowser, who had started speaking by the end of that sentence. "He's been pining for a girl himself ever since he got here, and is too much of a coward to even make a move on her!"

"Oh, please tell me it's not Samus," Zelda grumbled, knowing how popular she was with the men.

"I said *princess* troubles, girl," Bowser corrected, smirking as he watched Dedede's furious expression.

"...Peach?" Zelda looked over at the other princess, who was still blissfully unaware of everything they were saying.

"One more guess, Zellybean."

Zelda was about to tell him not to call her that, but her mind kicked into gear. She was the only other princess around. "...Me!?"

Dedede didn't deny this, but he wasn't about to fall into a blushing, weepy confession either (although Zelda could have sworn his cheeks were flushed, but that was more than likely the rage speaking). Instead, he reached behind his back, pulling out his giant hammer from seemingly nowhere. "You're meat, Bowser. You're goddamn *meat!*"

"Bring it, fatass!" Bowser taunted, embers spraying out of his mouth as he spoke.

Zelda had little time to reflect on what had just been said, as now the angered penguin had lunged at Bowser. There had always been friction between them ever since the events that took place during the Subspace invasion, but they hadn't fought this viciously before. They weren't aiming to kill, but judging from the claw swipes, jethammer-induced explosions, and increasingly loud swearing, leaving the other horribly mangled was probably the intention.

Zelda looked back at Peach once more. This time, she finally had started paying attention. However, when she made eye contact with her, she sent an accusing look, as if Zelda was the one who was supposed to be responsible for keeping them in line, and not Peach. Ganondorf was just plain amused at the whole scenario. Zelda suspected he may have even picked up on the conversation, given his grin. Great, blackmail material. Just what the King of Evil needed to have on his side.

But now wasn't the time to ponder such things, as the fighting pair had rolled into the table, knocking it over. Zelda noticed there was a bit of blood on the floor where they had been previously, but she didn't know whose it was, nor did she even care.

Because they had also broken *Peach's goddamned china tea pitcher*.

She only had a few moments to start running over before Peach started screaming. "THAT WAS A PRICELESS PITCHER PASSED DOWN FROM MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER! *IR-RE-PLACABLE!*"

Zelda grabbed the nearest fighter, which turned out to be Bowser, and pulled him away, as Peach forced Dedede to his feet and began to whack him with her frying pan (hammerspace was a concept she too had mastered, as the pan had apparently come out of nowhere). A cacophony of voices followed this.

"This is exactly why I didn't want you two to fight!"

"Let go of me, *Zellybean!* I'm going to rip out your Prince Charming's goddamn entrails!"

"Ow, ow! Peach, what the hell!?! Are you getting a visit from Aunt Flow!?"

"*How dare you!*? First you destroy a family heirloom, and then you have the gall to insult me like that!?"

And Ganondorf watched this all, laughing at the mayhem that had erupted.

Bowser finally decided not to play nice with Zelda anymore. "Hands off, wench!" With that, he withdrew into his shell, spinning rapidly to get Zelda away from him.

In a twist of events, this sent her right in the direction of Peach and Dedede. The latter was able to gain some distance from Peach, but turned to look at Zelda at just the wrong moment. She crashed onto him, her mouth hitting up against his beak.

Now, had this been one of the romance novels Peach liked to read, this would have made Zelda fall in love with him instantly, and be followed by a sappy story that ended with them married with two-point-four kids and ruling over their merged kingdoms happily.

But, thankfully, this wasn't.

"Ow! Ow, shoot, that smarts!" Zelda cried out, having fallen onto the floor after the impact, her vision flooding with stars for a few seconds. She held her mouth in pain, and could taste the coppery tang of blood on the inside of her lower lip. Her teeth had likely hit it during that incident, which would also explain the dull ache on the bottom front teeth.

She could hear more shouting, and Dedede had run back to Bowser for round two, except now Peach was getting involved. And Ganondorf wouldn't stop laughing at her and she was bleeding onto her hand and this was probably the worst day ever and--

And she smelled smoke.

Zelda slowly turned around as silence fell across the room, aside from a whimpering Bowser. The three had stopped in the middle of the battle, with Peach's foot on Bowser's tail and Dedede in mid-swing, hammer aimed at both of them. They too were staring at something. A leg of one of the wooden chair was in flames, and that fire was spread over the chair quickly. In fact, some of the dry grass scattered all around the shack floor was catching fire too. This was just one fire hazard waiting to strike from the start, given how they put Bowser and Dedede in the same confined, flammable space... *How did they not know this was doomed from the very beginning!?*

"Oh, for the love of Nayru!" Zelda groaned, before getting up. "Come on, don't bother snuffing it out now, just move!"

The five quickly left as the fire spread even more. It seemed the lessons had *literally* gone up in flames.

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"...always having to treat deep cuts or broken limbs or *something*! Can't anyone in this apartment not get hurt for just *one* day!?"

Zelda just sighed as Dr. Mario finished cleaning up her cut on her lip, listening to him rant on in his Italian accent. She was drained physically and emotionally, and the smell of burnt wood lingered around her. Whether that was coming from her or just from the still smoldering remains of the shack outside

remained to be seen.

In the infirmary with her were Peach, Dedede, and Bowser, all of which had been wounded a lot heavier, especially the latter two. Ganondorf had gotten away from any sort of injury, and was likely laughing it up somewhere else. Probably telling people rumors of what he had seen today, that jerk.

Zelda shook her head, placing a hand on her temple. Dr. Mario looked back from the sink, where he had been washing his hands. "Headache, too? Do you want me to check you over for possible brain damage?"

"No, no, I'm quite alright. It's stress-related," she grumbled, sneaking a glare at the other three.

"Alright, but if it persists, come back to me as soon as possible," Dr. Mario advised, before walking to the other side of the room, attending to Pit, who had a few bad cuts from a spar with Link.

Zelda took the chance to get up and walk over to where the others had gathered. The first thing Peach said was, "So, same time next week?"

"Goddesses, no!" Zelda replied, flopping down into a chair. "We burnt down an old shack and a tree, and Dedede and Bowser are going to be out of commission for a while because of that fight. The only way to top all that is murder, and I'm not exactly a supporter of that, you see..."

"Who says I'm not going to continue the spars as soon as I get out of here!?" Dedede sat upright in the chair he was in. Apparently, he didn't care about the bandages around his chest and arm, which covered claw marks, or the rather bad black eye and bruises all over his shoulders and back. "I've got a lot of fans, in case you haven't noticed, and I can't keep 'em--"

"I say so," Zelda interrupted, "and so does the doctor. And if you try sneaking into a fight, then so help me Din I will give you much worse injuries than you have now so that you will *stay Put*."

There was no time for a snappy comeback, as Bowser had teasingly 'oooooh'ed at them. "Having an argument with your girlfriend there, turkey?"

"The same goes for you," Zelda said coldly, getting up. Bowser too had all kinds of bruises all over his body, many with burns on them. He also seemed to be missing a few teeth, and while he had the ability to grow new ones, it was still insult to injury. "And, girlfriend? Please, I have much better judgment than that; no offense, Dedede, but you don't exactly act your age, and this is coming from someone who's several years younger than you."

"What are you talking about!? I didn't start the fight!"

Zelda ignored the blatant lie and kept talking to Bowser. However, she now had a dangerous smile on her face, which was a surprise to everyone, coming from a young woman who wasn't known to have spiteful tendencies. "Besides, would you like me to tell Peach what you've said?"

"H-hey! That's a dirty move, princess!" Bowser seemed scared of this prospect.

But Zelda didn't care, and just helped Peach up out of her chair; the other princess hadn't been hurt badly, aside from a busted elbow that had already been stitched up earlier. "Come on, we can talk over ice cream, my treat," Zelda offered. Peach giggled, wanting to take any gossip she could and not realizing it involved her. Without saying goodbye, the two women left, their quiet chattering and laughing fading quickly.

"Wow," Dedede commented as the door closed behind them. "My respect for her's gone up tenfold, after that can of ownage she's about to open on yo' a--"

"Shut your fat mouth!" Bowser snarled, delivering another punch to Dedede's face.

"Hey!" Dr. Mario snapped, rushing over to check to see if Dedede's injuries worsened because of this. "No fighting in the infirmary!"

Bowser just cursed loudly, slumping back into his chair. "Dammit, this recovery period's gonna be hell with all this crap going on. Royal pain in the @\$\$, if you ask me."