

The Next Guardian (cont)

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Since the chapter counter doesn't want to show 150 and above, this fic is a continuation of "The Next Guardian." It's going to start with Issue 151. Thanks everyone!

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<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/nextguardian/47223/The-Next-Guardian-cont>

Chapter 151 - The Tides Turn

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151 - The Tides Turn

Robotnik and his minions marched into Mobotropolis. It had once been a thriving city; Robotnik had destroyed it and made it into the foreboding city that was christened "Robotropolis." The Freedom Fighters had taken it back. As Robotnik looked across the partially rebuilt city, he realized what an enormous blow it would be if he were to take it back. He smiled evilly as he realized that was exactly what he was going to do. "Those pathetic rodents thought they were rid of me? By a mere parlor trick? Ha!"

Everyone was shocked that Ekyt and Linda had finally admitted their love. Even more shocked when they hugged. And nearly passed out when their lips met. No one could believe the shy, awkward human guardian had fallen for a beautiful echidna girl. Much less admitted it. Sally smiled. All the world loved a lover. "Let's go home gang. And Ekyt, while you're on such a roll, maybe you could mend fences with my father."

They made their way to Mobotropolis. Linda nudged Ekyt and motioned toward Tails and Amy, who seemed like they had made up. "Good to see he's off to a better start than I was in the love department." Ekyt muttered with a grin, still blushing. Linda laughed, knowing full well that she was his first girlfriend. She had given him his first kiss, and had been the first girl (Aside from his family) to actually care for him. And he had reciprocated. After all the mistakes she had made...joining the Dark Legion, breaking up with him, and others...and the fact that her family was a mortal enemy to the guardians, he returned her affection. She remembered when she had gone to find him after he had rescued her (WAAAAYYYY back in issue 6!). She had found him on Mount Fate and had kissed him as a thanks. He was even more nervous back then; that much hadn't changed radically. Of course, she remembered arresting him when he was suspected as the Queen's murderer. He had been innocent, of course, but she had been determined to fix her life, and had arrested him anyway. He had behaved, and did what she asked. She had NEVER had an arrest go so smoothly. She smiled at the memory.

Everyone stopped. "Robotnik...he's done it again..." Sally broke down, seeing her beloved Mobotropolis back in Robotnik's hands. "Hey, c'mon Sal, we've taken it once before, we can do it again." Sonic had a hand on her shoulder, trying to comfort her. "Dad...lost again...all the poor Freedom Fighters who've been roboticized...and all the sacrifices last time...in vain..." Sally was out of it, disbelieving what her eyes were telling her. No one blamed her for that. No one moved as they stared at the city they had worked so hard at rebuilding being burned to the ground. Sonic, Tails, Sally, Rotor, Antoine, Bunnie, and Amy. That was it. They were the only ones left unroboticized.

Knuckles and Ekyt would have helped out, too. Linda-Su, Julie-Su, Charmy, Vector, Mighty, and Espio would all lend their support. But Ekyt and Knuckles were duty-bound to protect Angel Island.

"Members of the Brotherhood, I'd like permission to assist the Kingdom of Acorn in their war." Ekyt asked. "Motion denied. And, you are forbidden to associate with Linda-Su as long as you bear the guardian title." "Why is that?" Ekyt asked wearily. "Protocol dictates that" "Protocol be damned. I did NOT just confess my love to that girl to have my bosses tell me "No way." And I'm going to help the Freedom Fighters. Because I know the next words out of your mouths will be "You're relieved of your

duties. So, have a good one, I'm going to make the right choice by ME, not by you." Ekyt turned to leave the stunned Brotherhood, but stopped and turned around. The Brotherhood thought he had relented.

They were wrong.

"And one more thing- I think you're assholes for making me choose between my love life and my career. And maybe you should wake up and support what few allies we have."

Linda-Su had heard the whole thing. "I shouldn't have lost my cool." Ekyt said immediately, smiling despite it. "I'm sorry, I" Ekyt held her hand gently. "You mean more than that job. Now that we both admitted it...I'd love to have my cake and eat it too, but I'd rather have my self respect, and, more importantly, you." Knuckles came up at this point. "I heard what you did...and I'm glad SOMEONE said it. I never could say those things because my dad's on the council. But you told them what they needed to hear. I'm just sorry you're the casualty." Knuckles said apologetically. "No worries Knux. I know you can more than handle this, you've done it before. Right now, there's a battle being fought, and it has to be won. I'll come back, I always do. I'm like a turd that won't flush to the Brotherhood." They all got a laugh out of that statement.

Sally was leading the group back to Knothole, hoping to find some fighters there. She found Uncle Chuck and a handful of others. The situation still looked hopeless, even with the Chaotix. "Princess, room for two more?" Ekyt asked, Linda as his side. "Of course. But I thought..." "I quit. They gave me some orders I couldn't follow." Everyone was shocked to see that it didn't seem to disturb him.

"Alright, listen up everyone!" Sally called. Everyone's attention turned to her. "There are enough homes for all of, so you can pick your hut. We're going to need those who know the terrain well to gather food and water. And we're going to need some others to gather firewood. Rotor and Uncle Chuck, you're exempt to work on your personal projects."

Ekyt, Linda, Mighty, Vector, and Julie-Su were getting the fire wood. Tails and Amy were to stay with Sally and help her make Knothole Village livable again.

"So you finally bit the bullet and told her, huh? Congratulations!" Julie-Su told him with a weary smile. "Thanks Julie." "So you really quit the guardian gig to help out here?" Ekyt nodded. "And there were other reasons. I would have to break up with Linda, for starters. That's not going to work now that I've confessed to loving her. I've always been protective of her as a regular friend. Now I'm going to be even more so. There's just one thing Julie." "What's that?" she asked.

"What the hell do I do next?"