

"To Love Another"

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One man loves her... and so does another... One man is fortunate... and the other is saddened... The young princess finds the broken man and tries to heal his heart, and the other is consumed with the emotion of envy... (LinkxZelda)(PG-13)

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1 - Fairy Tales

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## *TO LOVE ANOTHER*

### Chapter 1: Fairy Tales

Princess Zelda sat in the library of her father's great and noble castle. The library was enormous, one of the largest rooms in the castle. There she was, in a large room where in every direction there were shelves reaching to the ceiling, filled with books with yellowed pages and of every topic. Yet there was Zelda, doing such a small thing... just merely sitting on a velvet, plush armchair reading a tiny pocket-book. Though she had carried this book with her all the time, she always read it in the library because the other fairy tales were there.

Zelda was only the typical fifteen year-old at that time, but her thoughts were shifted toward the future of her life. How was she going to spend the rest of her life? How would she run her kingdom when she was put in charge? But most of all, her main concern was who she would wed. She had read the fairy tales about princesses of beauty beyond compare being rescued by a noble prince. After defeating an evil villain he would rescue the princess from her captivity and sweep her off her feet and bring her to his horse where he would ride to his kingdom and stand before her. Stand before her in shining armor, staring at her with blue sparkling eyes and holding her delicate hand in his and accepting her first kiss.

Impa, her attendant, would worry about a young girl such as her thinking about young men all the time and was afraid she would go off chasing boys and dishonor her father. Oddly enough, though surrounded with such strong desires, she would hold back her emotions and only daze... She knew her father would most likely marry her off soon, but for some reason she was not excited... for some reason she wasn't ready; that she hasn't found her "prince" yet.

This particular pocket-book she held all the time was a book she kept secret to herself. Zelda was the

only one who knew of its plot. The only other person who knew was her deceased mother who had given her the small yellow-paged book. She told herself once she meets someone she sincerely trusted, she would tell only them the story so dear to her.

Zelda's eyes scanned the words once again before closing it and holding it to her chest and looked up at the ceiling above her, seeing paintings of angels drifting and holding out their pale and gentle hands. She smiled, her mind completely clouded in daydreams. Her privacy was interrupted when she heard the doors to the library creek and open slowly. Zelda jumped and scrambled to put the book in the pocket of her dress. Her eyes darted toward the entryway to see a boy her age carrying a whole stack of books that piled so high, they went passed his head. He stumbled and stumbled, letting out stutters as he went side to side. Zelda continued to watch him as the pile collapsed in his hands and fell to the floor books flying in the air and landing on him.

Zelda chuckled as she placed her hand over her mouth, "Very nice entrance, Link! Would you care to do it again?" She said before her chuckles turned into laughs.

The boy, Link, had raised his head from the pile of books and his face as red as a rose with embarrassment while his face tingled with a warm sensation. His blue eyes were wide for a moment, before he saw Zelda there sitting on the armchair. He rose to his feet and brushed on his clothes to straiten them. Link had been at the castle his whole life and became a servant as soon as he was old enough to work. His widow mother was Zelda's mother's faithful servant, and they had become close friends. When Zelda's mother died, Link's parent could not bare the loss and became ill to the point where she passed away as well only weeks after. The only person he had now was his little sister, who had become very ill.

She could tell that he was hurt from this, a deep sadness buried within his somber eyes. He would smile, but it was not the smile she wanted from him, knowing that it wasn't from the bottom of his heart, for the only thing that was at the bottom of his heart, she believed, was his deep sadness knowing that he was to be alone in this world. Zelda longed to cry for him, but could not for she cried for her own sadness of the loss of her mother. Sadness was the only thing that joined them together.

"More books have come in, Princess!" Link suddenly said excitedly as if nothing had happened, "They were recently brought into the public and the king requested copies to be brought here. He knows you love fairy tales."

Zelda's face lit with excitement and she clasped her hands together, "Oh, good!" She squeaked, "I do love fairy tales!"

Every time Link came in with new fairy tales she would reply the same, and they would talk with each other as Link placed them on the tables where Zelda could easily access them. This occasion was no different than the others.

"So, Princess..." Link said while holding a stack of books in his hand and placing them individually on the table before its space was filled, "By now your father would have sent you off married with some prince and by now you would be sent to some other foreign land."

Zelda darted her head toward Link as he gathered more books and placed them on another table, "Are you saying you want me to leave?!"

Link stuttered as his gaze darted toward Zelda herself and dropped the books and turning red, he began to wave his hands around frantically, "Why no, no! You're a friend to me, Princess! Well... I mean that... well, I don't mean to force you to do anything... I-"

Zelda chuckled, "Oh, I was just teasing..." She said before stroking her hand over her pocket where the book lay, "It also seems that father doesn't want to send me off so soon. I know, because the age is usually fourteen... but here I am!"

Link smiled at her, finishing his little task before they were interrupted by the doors opening once again. Both of them jolted their heads toward the door where they saw a rather tall young man wearing rather fine attire and neatly combed brown hair. His skin was solid and lightly tan, not a scratch on it, and while his eyes were an emerald green. He smiled once he saw the princess and bowed before her.

"Good-morning, Princess." He said, "I knew I'd find you in the library."

"Good-morning, Patrick." Zelda said in a polite way.

Link shrunk and lowered his head between his shoulders and grumbled. Patrick was a sixteen year-old son of a lord who had sent him to Hyrule Castle where he would learn some skill to fight with the sword. Link could tell that he had an eye out for Zelda and he was rather protective of her, but not openly... As Patrick came in and closed the doors behind him he approached Zelda as she stood and bowed her head in respect. In return he lifted her hand and kissed it. Afterward, he turned his head to see Link peeking from behind one of the tables.

"Oh, the little twerp is here..." Patrick said in an exaggerating tone.

Link grumbled and straitened his knees before staring strait at Patrick. In return he turned toward him and stared right back at him and the contention between the two began. Zelda had noticed the sudden glare in Link's eyes and went in between the two to disperse the conflict.

"You two..." Zelda said, "Please stop, I'd rather not have bruises and black eyes... well, if you were intending that time, I mean."

Patrick looked at Zelda and flashed his pearly-whites at her, giving his charming smile that made her blush before he headed back out of the library. However, before hand he had crossed Link's path and mumbled to him in a low tone.

"Watch your actions, twerp... Zelda isn't yours."

He resumed walking, cape flowing behind him making him look even more dashing. Zelda still was blushing at his smile as his green eyes twinkled. She was interrupted by Link's voice and she briskly shook her head, attempting to bring back her senses.

"Princess..."

"Link, why don't you trust him? He's rather nice."

"I just don't..." Link said stubbornly, folding his arms.



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## 2 - The Saddened Heart

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Chapter 2: The Saddened Heart

Several months later...

All was quiet as the crowd stood watching from afar from where Link crouched himself on the ground burying his head in his arms. Black enveloped all the bodies that were there, all tainted with the grief that was exposed that gray day. It began to rain, but no one moved. First one, then two... sooner or later a myriad of tears fell from the sky. No one moved... but one. The princess Zelda, who stepped forward, eyes filled with sadness as she watched Link cry before her. She could distinctly hear his voice murmuring; it contained a shakiness to it and it broke as if the strain was too much.

"You were there when mother died..." Link began, "Now who will stand by me now that you are gone? Who will stand by me so that I may find..." His voice broke once again as he stroked his hand along the stone wall of the tomb before him, "Happiness...?"

Zelda wanted to cry for him, but she couldn't... something held her back, and she knew not what that feeling was. Suddenly a hand pressed on her shoulder and she turned back to find Patrick staring at her with a look of concern and remorse in his eyes. Zelda turned her head away toward Link once again, her golden hair, now wet, sweeping through the air and fluttering her eyes from the rain which dotted her fair, milk-white skin.

Link's head now leaned against the wall and he once again buried his face into his arms. His sun-golden hair now drenched and tangled while his fair and rather white skin slippery from the falling rain. No one knew exactly how long he sat there crying. The only thing they knew at that moment was that his little sister meant everything to him.

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*Six years later...*

"What's wrong, Princess?" Zelda heard a voice say.

Zelda carried her small pocket book, trying to cheer herself up, but watching Link from above on the balcony in the courtyard sitting under the tree kept her from smiling, not even for a second did melancholy relinquish her. She darted her head back toward where the voice came from and found Patrick there. She turned toward Link again to still find him under the tree. He had just returned from one of his many treks, which he believed could help him forget everything that happened, but every time he came back, he was the same. She let out a heavy sigh, a sigh of remorse and pity for Link as well as for herself.

"I don't know why I can't stop looking at him." She said suddenly, "Maybe I'm trying to look at him as much as possible before he leaves again."

"Perhaps your pity for him?"

"Perhaps..." Zelda said.

"He's taken up the sword to slay those people without justice in Hyrule, Princess... he's no longer a servant of the castle, he is a wanderer, a man with a hollow heart. He is only a servant to his desires." Patrick started, "You can do nothing for him, Princess."

"He's a poor man, his sister was sick for a year and suddenly left him. There's no other answer he can find."

Zelda turned toward Patrick, tears near to her eyes but once again they were held back. She placed the small book in her pocket and stood to her feet, "I know he has chosen that path... for his sister... I know that..." She started, "I knew that, but..."

Zelda went from the balcony and started toward the door, leaving Patrick behind staring in bewilderment in suddenly leaving him behind. She opened the door slowly and looked forward before turning her head to the side so at least she could see Patrick in her peripheral vision, "I want to help him..." She finally said, "Help him escape his grief."

Patrick was confused from the look in her eyes, was that what she truly wanted to say? It seemed that Zelda was held back from saying what she *really* wanted to say, or was she denying it? He left the room as well, finding no interest in there any longer.

Meanwhile, Zelda had indeed made it to the courtyard where Link remained. His arm was placed on his knee while his head was down in a mourning fashion. His thoughts were interrupted by the footsteps of the young maiden, Zelda and he lifted his head and eyed her. It was only a glance before he once again lowered his head toward the ground. He could hear her walk closer to him and Link could feel her warmth from her body, even though she wasn't touching him, when she sat down next to him.

"What do you wish for, Princess?" He said.

Zelda didn't expect him to speak to her so abruptly and it left her in a small state of shock, not only how quickly he spoke, but his sorrowful tone, it was as if he wanted to speak so he can get it over with. She gathered her senses again and stuttered for a moment, finding an answer, but was forced to say,

"When are you leaving again?"

"Soon."

But *when*?"

"Soon." He only replied.

"Link... I..."

"Princess..." Link interrupted her, "You are a friend to me... but there is nothing you can do, nothing you can say... that can 'heal' me if that's what you call it."

He rose to his feet and went inside, leaving Zelda alone under the tall and towering tree. She looked afar into the vast courtyard and saw the tomb Link's sister lay in. The red roses around it were still blossoming and the drops of dew dripped from the ground. Zelda lifted her gaze from the tomb and lifted it to the sky where she could see the sky dyed red from the dying red sun. Must it be like this?

As Link walked in, he came across Patrick, who stood in his path as if not letting him go any further. He had stopped and looked Patrick strait in the eyes. A feeling of distrust passed through him and they stared with uncomfortable glances before one of them spoke in a low tone.

"What did you say to her?" Patrick said.

"I'll leave soon..." Link replied.

"Good choice, twerp." He said, "She belongs to me anyway."

As Link walked away, he was interrupted once again, "Oh, and if you don't mind, if your not leaving tomorrow I wish to test my dueling skills against you. It would be good for you to get *some* sunshine."

His agreement was silence. At that moment, Link didn't seem to care. Zelda was only his friend, not his love. But without realizing it when Patrick said, "she belongs to me anyway", there was a feeling that tugged at his heart- jealousy. However, he only brushed the feeling aside and away from his saddened heart.

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3 - When the Sky was Dyed Red

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Chapter 3: When the Sky was Dyed Red

The next morning Link and Patrick were accompanied by Zelda to ride out to the pasture in front of Hyrule Castle where she would rest and have some sunshine and they would have their duel. Zelda was relieved that day to know that Link wouldn't leave but she did not know how much longer he would stay. Her hair flew behind her as she rode on her white stallion and the wind pressed against her face. It was rather refreshing really. Link and Patrick rode on either side of her and when they had reached the pastures outside of the castle the three of them stopped.

"Shall we rest here, Princess?" Patrick said politely.

"Yes," She said, "Let's."

Patrick had dismounted his horse and held out his arms for Zelda to jump into. Link glared and twitched his eyebrow slightly as he saw her in the arms of another man. Patrick escorted her, hand in hand, to the nearby maple tree and sat her down under its vast shade. Zelda spread her silk white gown around her as she sat on her hip, watching Patrick walk over to Link and turn around and bow to Zelda.

"If you excuse us, Princess. Link and I have agreed to the terms of a duel."

"Very well." Zelda sighed, "No blood or bruises... I wish not to see Link bloodied and broken."

Patrick grunted as he went a fair distance away from Link and placed his hand on the hilt of his sword. Link did the same and both were locked in a concentrated stare which was rather intimidating. For a while the two stared, as the wind brushed across their faces and once Zelda had seen a red flower petal waft across the air from the nearby flower patch, Patrick charged relinquishing his silver blade from the sheath just in time to meet Link's sword.

The two metals scraped against each other for a while before Link suddenly thrust his blade forward, but Patrick twirled around, his red cape flying behind him. The swift move only led into another clash, sparks suddenly flying in the air. Patrick threw Link back with his sword, but he managed to catch himself, boots scraping against the ground giving him the proper resistance. As Zelda watched Link charge forward, sword above his head and clash into another battle with Patrick, she began to ask questions... not aloud but in her mind.

Link...? Is this what you truly want? Are you destined to this thing you call the sword? I want to help you... I know you have chosen the final path of your life, but is there a fork in the path that you can take that will lead you back out of it? I...

I don't know why I desire this of you... It seems only I have lust for you...

Zelda's thoughts were interrupted by a loud clash, louder than the others that had occurred in this fight. She opened her eyes from being half-way open and saw that Patrick had hit Link's sword so hard it flew from his hands and twirled in the air, ringing as if crying out. Suddenly it impaled the ground as blades of grass flew upward and drifted back down again. Patrick took the end of his hilt and drove it into Link's chest where then he was knocked against the ground. From there Patrick moved the point of his blade close to Link's neck. The young man was sweating and breathing harshly as he lay on the ground. He eyed Patrick's sword before looking up into his face.

"Not good enough, twerp..." He mumbled, "It seems the king's knights have taught me better than you."

Link glared at him before the both of them were interrupted by a, "Stop!" Zelda had called out, fear in her voice.

Patrick looked toward Zelda and saw her now to her feet. "I said no blood or broken bones."

He lifted his sword from Link and sheathed it before wiping his hands as if touching something dirty, "Why of course, Princess." He said smiling at her.

She ran over to Link and grabbed his arms to help him to his feet, but once he was standing, he brushed Zelda to the side, clenching onto his chest and walking toward his sword. After flinching he drew it from the ground and sheathed it before turning around once again and walking passed Zelda and toward his horse. She stared where his sword once was, still and shocked, before gasping and turning around to find him mounting his chestnut mare and brushing off the dirt on his tunic.

"Princess..."

Zelda turned around once again to find Patrick holding out his hand and smiling at her. She returned his smile and gladly took his hand as he escorted her back to her stallion and assisted in her mounting her horse. After Patrick had mounted his, the three of them took off toward the castle once again. Zelda looked at Link who rode in front of her. Once again, she was locked in a stare, once again observing his muscular features, golden hair, and smooth skin.

When she had returned to the castle, Link was immediately out of her sight but Patrick had escorted her to her room and kissed her hand.

"Here you are, Princess."

"Thank you, Patri-"

She was interrupted by him kissing her on the cheek. She blushed before he had bowed and walked off, steps fading as they echoed through the stone hallways. Zelda lifted her hand to her cheek and stroked it. For some reason she thought of Link at that moment, which she thought ironic. She entered her room and closed the door behind her, resting her back against the door and sighing before going to the window with red velvet curtains.

Her hand drifted toward her pocket and from it she drew the small book and as she turned toward the

outside world, separated from her by glass, she began to daydream once again. Now that only Link barely itched in now, and Zelda's dazes less of a fantasy and more toward reality.

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Later in the evening, Zelda had grown tired of moping around in the castle, enveloped in shadow and remaining in such a dreary ambiance that she decided to go to the towns for a walk where she would be surrounded by lively people. She had informed her servants of her intents and had refused Patrick go along with her, she wanted to be *alone* in the crowds. Zelda needed time to herself to think.

She had gone into the dress of a common maiden so that her attire may blend in with the crowds' and attention would not be drawn to her as much. As she was bumped around in the carriage she began thinking of Link once again, looking toward the sun that was nearly to the point where it would touch the mountains afar. The carriage went to a stop and the sound of talking and merriment filled Zelda's ears. The door to the carriage was opened for her and she stepped out to the cobble stone streets. She inhaled the air around her and began to walk forward.

Zelda eyed a few of the goods that were being sold, but had no interest in them while other maidens flooded the stands. There were men skipping around arms linked and singing merry songs and there were mothers pushing along their children through the streets to get their grocery shopping over with. All these people had unfamiliar faces to Zelda, however. She straitened her shawl and as she entered the heart of the town she stopped herself when she saw who was in front of the fountain. He stood out like a red rose among daisies... his face so familiar it seemed to glow... Link.

"Link..." She breathed.

Zelda jogged toward him and he turned his head in surprise to find the princess walking amongst common people. He had found it odd that he would meet her in a place like this. Their reflection was in the water of the fountain as Zelda went before Link.

"Why are you here?" She said.

"Why are *you* here?" He repeated.

"I... I only wanted some fresh air."

Link let out a "humph" and turned around and continued to walk. Zelda called for him and chased after him. He had led her to a place of the town where the crowds were less intense and there was a wooden bridge leading from one place to another, a gap in between. From this bridge one could see the sunset and river sparkling with red light. Zelda was reluctant to talk to Link as she walked with him, but when they had reached this place, she let her tongue loose.

"Link... do you really have to keep holding onto the sword no matter what? Can't you let it go?"

When Link had stopped, Zelda went to a halt as well. She had expected him to turn around but he did not, only stare at the red sky. He replied to her, however, and gave her an answer.

"Back then... the sky was dyed this color." As Link spoke and image flashed through his mind.

*He was the fifteen year-old boy, standing on a pasture outside of Hyrule Castle, holding onto a satchel as if going to travel. There was a figure who had given him a sword under the red sky. He held the heavy blade with two hands, still in its sheath.*

"Now that you have chosen this path, you can't go away from it. You can't run from it."

*He stared at the blade, the boy now becoming a man. He looked up and recalled the figure saying those exact words to him.*

"Patrick told me that."

"Patrick...?" Zelda repeated.

"I chose this path for my sister... and to try to forget all the deaths that happened... but it has failed." Link said as he turned his body slightly and clenched the sheath of his sword at his waist, "After six years I still don't know what to do... so as long as this remains I have no choice but to do what Patrick told me and hold on to this sword... and find justice."

Zelda's eyes saddened as the sun sparkled in her blue eyes. The wind blew her wavy bangs across her chin as she saw Link look back at her. He turned around toward her and looked toward her.

"Princess..."

Zelda closed her eyes for a short while, and then decided to change the subject. She opened her eyes and smiled slightly at Link and drew closer to him.

"Link..." She started, "I'm growing rather tired of the title, 'Princess', please... call me Zelda."

Link smiled slightly at her, trying to hide his feelings and nodded, "As you wish..." He said, "Zelda..."

Zelda grabbed his hand and his eyes widened at her action. She began to walk and he, along with her. Together they departed from the bridge and into the towns once more, now growing empty because of the night that was coming to cover the sky with its blanket of blackness.

"Come, Link." She said, "It's getting late... let's return home."

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4 - Believing He Could Smile

Chapter 4: Believing He Could Smile

"Link!!"

The young girl ran toward him, curls bouncing on her face and smile beaming brighter than any other thing. Link held out his arms to welcome her in a warm embrace. Suddenly the image flashed and for a moment, it faded into a blackness. Link looked around... found nothing, then began to call his sister's name.

Suddenly the blackness faded into a room, where he was surrounded by people murmuring and whispering. There were so many he could not move. They were so tall he felt he was just a small existence in the large world until he called out, then they parted. They parted to form a path, a path that led to a bed that was not empty. Link came closer to it, the whispers faded and the murmuring stopped. As he approached his heart began to pound underneath his chest. It was like a burning sensation... an uncomfortable, unsettling feeling. As he at last reached the side of the bed it seemed his heart stopped at that moment.

What he saw was the lifeless body of his sister. Her skin pale and with no color of life in her cheeks. Her lips were now blue and shriveled as her curly blonde hair was now shaggy and contained no life in it. She laid under a deep red sheet covered with blood-red rose petals, laid sporadically on the sheets. Link froze with terror, and it wasn't long until he began to cry... tears immediately swept his cheeks and dispersed when they reached the cold, wooden floor. The air grew closer around his ears and the image of her tomb flashed in his eyes before he tore his eyes open...

Link sprung forward from his bed, bathed in his sweat and harsh, uneven breaths passed his lips. As he grew to realize it was a dream, he found himself lying in his soft, silk bed. But the more he realized it was a dream, the more tears streamed down his cheeks. His breaths became even and steady, but it wasn't long until he set his face in his hands and sobbed. The image was still clear as day in his mind... as clear

as the blown out candle next to him on his windowsill. He had cried himself back to sleep.

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The next morning Zelda walked gracefully on the balcony as her blue silk dress wafted in the wind and trailed behind her. The wind blew the red petals from the rose bush into the air and drifted across the fabric of her dress, presenting a fabulous contrast. The ivory curtains blew forward, trying to touch her, but who lay on the bench covered with red silk blankets caught her by surprise for she saw Link just lying there.

She approached him slowly as her hair was tossed by her cheek. The curtains parted for her and she saw Link there, laying down with his eyes gently closed and his hand gently set on his chest. He too was wearing the color blue, a blue tunic with white leggings and a blue cap draped from the back of his head. It brought his golden locks out brilliantly as they glistened in the sunlight. When Zelda had reached Link, a red rose petal had fallen to his face. She moved her pale and bare hand to move it aside, but it slipped and she stroked his cheek with her finger instead as the rose petal brushed away.

His deep blue eyes opened and saw Zelda as she drew her hand back and clenched to it as her cheeks now tingled with a warmth. He stared for a while before he stirred and arose. Zelda's eyes were wide with embarrassment and surprise, she did not expect him to wake up, nor did she intend to. When he saw her, Link immediately turned away, as if afraid.

"Why are you here?" He mumbled.

"I accidentally stumbled across you, Link..." She said moving toward the ledge of the balcony and gently placing her hands on it, "I'm sorry for waking you."

To her surprise, he moved to her side and placed his hands on the balcony as well. There was an uncomfortable silence between them, but it was filled by the whistling of the wind and the rustling of the leaves in the tall trees below them in the courtyard. Zelda sighed and inhaled the air, smelling the sweet scent of roses.

"Isn't it beautiful when the wind blows the roses through the air?"

Link only gave a slight smile, just a twitch of the muscle in his mouth. Zelda had glanced at him and she furrowed her eyebrows for a second and frowned.

"Stop forcing yourself to smile in front of me..."

"Oh," Link said turning his head toward her, "Sorry..."

"Why do you do that?"

Link looked up at the blue sky as the sudden gust of wind blew his locks back, "I'm not quite sure myself... To try to relive my childhood, I guess... the times when I was ignorant..." He started, "I envy little children... they know nothing of heartbreak."

Zelda looked down in dismay, his voice lowered and grew weaker as he spoke until it had finally stopped, but he spoke again as he did when he first began speaking and it caused her to switch her gaze once again toward him.

"But a rose seems comforting... as it passes its sweet sent it reminds you of the things you love." A small smile passed Link's lips as a sparkle of slight joy reflected in the vast sea of sadness in his azure eyes, "That's the only answer I can give you, Zelda."

Zelda smiled back at him. His voice saying her name was like a charolon sounding in a tower at the birth of a new hour. She thought to herself:

*Someday, Link, a thing that you will give me... something that will pass your lips... a smile... a smile from the bottom of your heart...*

*I believe so.*

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5 - The Burning Red

Chapter 5: The Burning Red

"What are you reading, Princess?" Patrick said approaching Zelda.

Zelda sat on a bench next to a table in the library reading her small pocket book. She looked up and eyed Patrick before quickly closing it and placing it in her pocket once again and saying, "Just reading a typical fairy tale... nothing more..."

Patrick sat next to her and placed his arm on his knee, causing him to lean forward. He gave out a heavy sigh and glanced at Zelda, "Why are you so quiet? Knowing you, you'd be excited for Hyrule's anniversary ball."

Zelda clenched her fists uncomfortably, "Why... yes... I am excited actually..."

Why am I like this...?

What is this feeling I have? It's different than what I was thinking before when I read fairy tales when I was younger...

Could it be...?

"You're inviting me, aren't you?" Patrick interrupted her thoughts.

"Why, yes, of course." Zelda started, "I'm also inviting Link... If you don't mind of course."

"No... of course I don't mind..." Patrick replied putting on a fake grin.

Of course he minded. He was not so fond of Link as was Zelda. Their relationship toward each other wasn't as friendly as it would seem. Patrick had seen Zelda with Link quite often lately, though. There was a certain feeling... A nagging voice in the back of his mind that kept reminding that he, himself was fond of Zelda... no... he loved her. And seeing Link with her... was it envy? Patrick lowered his head and sighed before standing up.

"I shall depart to lunch now." He said, "I was due there an hour ago."

Zelda remained sitting down, hands clenched on her knees and hearing Patrick's footsteps fade into the distance. Sooner or later the hinges creaked and the library door clicked closed. Her thoughts turned toward the next night. Zelda didn't expect it coming. She had been worked up over worrying whether Link would return safely or not, and now that he was back... she began to wonder when he would leave again, and try to spend as much time with him as possible so it wouldn't seem a shadow just merely

crossed her path and departed from her. After all, he was a friend to her.

Upon pondering of the ball, she realized she had not given Link a proper invitation yet. She sat there for a moment, then rose to her feet and went for the door. Slowly she traipsed down the hallways until she came upon his door to his quarters. Zelda knocked on the door and awaited a response. It seemed forever, that moment of silence, but she heard Link's voice acknowledging her to come in.

She opened the door and peeked in first to find Link sitting on the windowsill, bathed in the sunlight that crept through. It gave his fair and pale complexioned skin a look of a bright glow. His blue eyes glittered as he turned his head to find Zelda there. She entered in his room and clasped both of her hands together and held them in front of her, as a charming little girl would.

"I'm sorry if you're in the middle of something... but I came to tell you something." She said sweetly.

Zelda sat herself down next to Link and became engulfed in the sunlight as well. She paused for a moment, waiting to see if he would except her sitting there next to him. He did not say or do anything and Zelda continued to speak.

"Hyrule's Anniversary ball is tomorrow. I would like it if you would come."

Link did not answer for a long while, which brought Zelda discomfort until he finally said, "Why would you invite me? I've confined you with burdens of my own." He looked away from her.

"Why say that?" She replied.

"I've seen it in your eyes... you don't cry... because-"

Zelda had not realized that she had took his cheek and cupped it in her palm and turned his head toward her, until he saw his eyes once more. She had shocked herself for a brief moment before she could find her voice and speak again.

"Link... of all the things to say... why say that?" She said, "Yes, I am troubled by your sadness, but-"

"Then you care not for me?"

"I *do* care for you!" Zelda suddenly raised her voice, "It's just..."

Zelda was trying to find an answer. She searched her mind and even her heart, but that answer was hiding, but it wanted to escape; it was like a lost child. Sooner or later, Link's voice finally filled the air.

"I will accept your invitation."

Zelda looked up and was silent for a long while before a smile finally passed her lips. She somehow felt somewhat relieved by knowing that he would come. It meant that he would not leave the next day. Zelda stood to her feet and looked at Link once more.

"Well, I shall see you soon, then." Zelda then turned around and started toward the door.

However, something wouldn't let her go any further. She had felt a tug on the back of her dress and when she turned around, she saw that Link had held onto the fabric. Assuming he wanted to say something else she turned around toward him as he let go of her silk dress and stood up and faced her so they were eye to eye. Zelda was puzzled, knowing that he would have spoken by now, but she sensed hesitation in his actions.

Surprise struck her when he had taken her in his arms and quickly set his lips onto hers. Zelda's eyes widened as she felt his leathery lips brushing against hers and she drew her head back to only look into Link's stunning azure eyes. Gently now, she took his face in her hands, gently placing both her gloved hands on both sides of his soft cheeks and set her lips on his once again.

Link could feel Zelda move under his hands as her hands slowly drifted off of his cheeks and drifted to the sides of his shoulders and run down his muscular arms. Link lifted his hand and stroked Zelda's porcelain cheek with the back of his hand and became overwhelmed by her softness and almost slipped. She was like an angel to him, and he, the same to Zelda.

There in front of the window with curtains a deep red, the sunlight hit them, making both of them glow as they kissed. However, Patrick had passed the door to find it ajar. He peeked in and found the two exchanging their now gentle kisses and his blood boiled with envy. He had moved on since he could not bare the sight any longer.

Zelda had at last come back to her senses and scrambled herself free from Link's embrace, tore her lips from his, and turned toward the door, this time not looking back. The only time when she looked back at Link, to find him in the state of shock as well, was when she reached the door. She stopped, looked back, and said,

"I'm sorry..."

She opened the door and when Link had heard the door close with a click he sat himself on his bed of blood-red sheets, he looked up and sighed as his hand drifted to his cheek. He thought himself foolish at that time and acting too quickly, kissing her didn't mean anything... did it?

As for Zelda, she thought herself rather foolish as well as she paced quickly down the hallway. She sighed heavily to herself, a sigh that sounded rather frustrated. When she reached her quarters she hastily entered in and closed the door behind herself and for a moment she rested her back on its wooden face as Zelda looked up at the ceiling.

She took a step forward and began to pace around restlessly. No matter how much she tried to think of something else, those kisses came back to her mind. She threw herself on her bed and placed a tired hand on her brow and sighed and once again the kiss came back to her. Soon after, she began feeling warm, then she noticed something that she had never felt before. Zelda had felt so safe in Link's embrace, forgetting all the troubles of the world. She kept telling herself she didn't want to kiss him, but there was another thought nagging her on the back of her mind that she longed for him.

6 - Love or Lust?

Chapter 6: Love or Lust?

Zelda sat in her room writing something down on a piece of paper. Morning had passed, and surprisingly she had not seen Link as much. The only time when she saw him was at the dining table at breakfast and lunch, but he was awkwardly quiet. Zelda began to think of him again when she was interrupted when she heard a knock on the door.

"Come in." She acknowledged.

Her door opened with a moan and her servant came in with two dresses in hand. Both were very festive and indeed fit for royalty. Zelda turned around and saw the servant carrying the dresses as she held one in each hand and brought both of them forward.

"For the ball tonight, your highness..." The servant said, "Would you please select one dress so that we may get it ready?"

Zelda hadn't realized the time of the ball had come so quickly. She smiled slightly at the thought and began to examine the two dresses. The first was a deep and beautiful navy blue, the neck line traced with silver as well as the ends of the sleeves, which separated from another part of the fabric that would trace down to the floor, breaking from the shoulders. However, Zelda turned her gaze to the other and began to observe it. It was a crimson dress, with gold lining the edges of the dress, where the fabric ended. Gold lace would intertwine the front of the dress when worn while one pair of sleeves would go around the wrists while the second, overlapping the first, would drape down at her sides at the ends. Zelda's eyes widened at the sight of it... for a flashback had entered her mind.

It was exactly a year ago to that day, the night of Hyrule's Anniversary ball and she stood outside of all the liveliness occurring behind her, standing in her crimson dress. He had left once again on one of his treks and had not returned. She continued to watch in the darkness as if hoping he would come. Suddenly, as if by magic, there he was, slowly traipsing toward her with fatigue in his body and eyes. She let out a slight gasp and breathed...

"Link..."

"Pardon me, your highness?"

"Oh, sorry." Zelda said shaking her head, "That one, please."

Zelda had gestured toward the crimson dress and the servant bowed and placed it over the navy blue and left the room, closing the door behind her. Zelda sighed to herself and sat herself next to the window on her bed and incited on an empty gaze out the window. She would do that often while Link was gone, but had not grown out of the habit once he returned temporarily.

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Zelda would dine at the ball, with her guests. How many people did she invite? Not many, Zelda recalled, most of the people that were coming were nobleman and old friends her father had invited. She sighed as she saw herself in front of the mirror in her crimson dress. The servants had finished the last touches on her dress and hair and by now had left the room. Zelda patted the bun on the back of her head and ran her fingers through the locks on the sides of her face. As she straitened her dress another knock was heard on her door. Zelda went herself to open it, and when she did, there was Patrick standing there. He gasped at her beauty and flushed red before bowing in acknowledgment. When he lifted his head he held his hand out to Zelda.

"The guests are starting to arrive now, Princess... allow me to escort you to the stairs."

"Thank you, Patrick." Zelda said taking his arm.

He was wearing rather fine attire as well, fit for a nobleman or perhaps a prince. The green garb he was wearing brought out his eyes brilliantly and the gold lined on it brought the shining brown color of his hair. Zelda darted her eyes back down the hallway when she heard the music and talking of the guests. Eventually they had come to the stairs on the upper level leading down to the great hall of pure marble flooring, with the seal of Hyrule engraved upon it. Red curtains were draped over the stained glass windows that covered the night and the ceiling reached high, with paintings above telling the creation of Hyrule.

From where Zelda was standing it was rather dark compared to the brightly lit room below with the glowing light coming from the enormous chandeliers. Patrick let go of her hand and glanced at her before proceeding downstairs.

"When I reach the bottom, follow me after, Princess, in your usual graceful manner."

It was this same routine she had rehearsed ever since she was a young girl at these balls. To formally come down and greet the people as they clapped for her. For some reason Zelda did not enjoy the people welcoming her though she had been exposed to it all her life. She saw Patrick reach the bottom of the stairs and look up at Zelda, as if signaling for her to come down. She took the railing and began to move her feet, walking forward into the light.

As she was unveiled from what was considered shadows to this room, the people clapped for her as usual. Zelda eyed the room nervously, looking for Link. She did not see him at first and she continued to go down the stairs in her princess-manner. However, when she was halfway, there he was, sticking out as a soar thumb. She nearly stopped when she saw him staring at her as well. The crowds applause had faded from her ears and it seemed silence had filled the room when she fixed her gaze upon Link.

His mouth was slightly gaped open at her, and she the same to him. He wore a deep red tunic with the structure much like his other ones but more formal and fit for events such as these. His blue eyes contrasted what he was wearing while his golden bangs matched the golden designs on his tunic. A scarlet cape was draped over his shoulders, making him look almost as royal as she, but he was no more than a servant... a servant to the sword.

Before she knew it, Zelda had reached the bottom of the stairs and her hand met Patrick's once again. All the guests, which were many, had gathered to the tables set. Zelda saw her elderly father at the end of the table and was sat to his right. Patrick sat next to Zelda, but all the while her attention was focused on finding Link. When she had found him, he had sat far away from her and she would have to look at an angle to her left to see him. He did not eye her, save one glance, but it was quick before he turned to downcast. Zelda's looked at him once again before she was interrupted by her father's voice and that she had noticed the rest of the crowd had died down in its vast talking. The king stood up and spoke so all could hear.

"My people! This is a day where we remember the dark days of war of the land of Hyrule ended and this land became unified..."

Zelda's father's voice trailed off as she began to be distracted by Link once again, who was the only one besides herself not looking up toward her father. She studied his eyes but was interrupted by the sudden clash between fork and china plates. She shook her head as the servants placed the first course before her. She did not eat as much for such a large event. Eventually, Patrick would start a conversation between himself, the king, and Zelda but that wasn't enough to get Link out of her mind.

After the dining was over, Zelda became lost in the crowds of many dancing couples. She could hear the violinist playing cords along with the harpist as well as other orchestral instruments. As Zelda went through the crowds, many men wanted to kiss her hand. She would allow them, but she would quickly move on. Zelda stopped herself for a second and when she turned around, she had bumped into someone.

"Oh, pardon me, sir-"

When Zelda looked up into the face of who she had bumped into, she saw the eyes of Link and flushed red. He stared down at her, and she stared up at him.

"L-Link...!!" She gasped.

Link paused for a long while and where the silence was filled in with the talking and music around them. He quietly spoke after backing up and holding out his hand. A new song had just begun, perfect timing

for them.

"May I take the honor of this dance?" He said to her.

Zelda glanced down at his hand then back up to his face and lifted her hand until it met his and both of their hands drifted to the sides as Link's other hand stroked down to her waist and she clinging to his shoulder. Zelda eventually found herself in the embrace of Link's warm hands and she drifted side to side along with him. As they progressed in their dance, Zelda began to watch her feet less and lifted her gaze into Link's azure eyes, and began to get lost in its void.

Suddenly the kiss came back to her mind. The feeling of his soft lips pressing against hers and the gentle stroke of his soft fingers lingering on her cheek. Butterflies flew around in her stomach as she stepped along with Link and allowed him to twirl her around. So many words could have been spoken at that time, but neither let a sound pass their lips. As the last chord of the song was played, Zelda found herself against Link, the side of her face resting on his chest. Zelda could hear his heart pounding as his body warmed hers.

Zelda parted from him and for a while they stared into one another's eyes before interrupted by footsteps distinctly coming toward them. Zelda turned her head toward the sound and found Patrick there and she may have been imagining it, but she thought she saw a slight fire of jealousy in his eyes. However, that was soon gone when Patrick smiled and bowed to the princess.

"Lovely ball isn't it, Princess?"

"Yes, it is."

Link almost narrowed his eyes at Patrick when he heard the next song begin and take Zelda's hand for a dance. She had accepted, but looked back at Link as Patrick took her away from him. Link turned around quickly, cape flying behind him and he began to find his way through the crowds. As Zelda danced with Patrick, they talked with each other unlike the dance before when Link and Zelda appeared to astonished to exchange words with each other.

"You have your eyes out for that Link, don't you, Princess?" Patrick asked.

"Oh?" Zelda widened her eyes and shook her head, "Oh, no... He's just a companion to me... a friend."

"Now, now, Princess... surely he must be more than *that* to you." Patrick started, "You gave your lips to him, did you not?"

Zelda reddened, "Y-you saw us...?" She stuttered only to see Patrick nod in response.

Meanwhile, Link watched both of them dancing with each other as his face began to become twisted with envy. He could see Patrick say something and then he had pressed his lips upon Zelda's. Quickly Link turned away and stared off into the darkness of the night as he stood outside the liveliness where he and Zelda had met exactly a year ago. It was sooner or later when he realized his thoughts for Patrick had been of hatred and he had stopped himself with a gasp. His feelings toward Zelda... was it love... or lust?

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7 - No Room in His Heart

Chapter 7: No Room in His Heart

Do I love him? Zelda thought to herself. *No... I should be saying 'does he love me?'* Though it was the day after, what Patrick said the night before at the ball kept nagging her at the back of her mind. She could not get it out of her head:

"Surely he must mean more to you than *that*."

Twisted emotions collided and ran through the princess' mind. Frustration, sadness, confusion... she became overwhelmed as she paced in her room. Running her fingers through her hair and sighing heavily. Suddenly Zelda stopped when she heard a soft knock on her door and she went toward it and set her hand on the golden doorknob before opening it. It was the last person she wanted to see. It was Link.

"Link..."

"Zelda, I've wanted to ask you something... since last night."

"Anything, Link." Zelda said politely, as if it was a casual question.

Link paused for a moment and breathed in deeply, "Zelda, what do you think of me?"

Zelda shook her head and her eyes turned to a look of confusion, she replied quietly toward him, "Link... I don't know what you're-"

Surprise took her when Link briskly grabbed the sides of her shoulders and looked strait into her eyes noticing the deep blue of the sea once again. Link then raised his voice and a sound of desperation was carried in his tone.

"Zelda, I'm asking if you love me!"

That word called "love" made the butterflies in Zelda's stomach fly around and her heart began to pound as she stared into the eyes of the man who had asked her the question. Link's face was filled with seriousness and it only dragged Zelda further into pressure. She could no longer look at him and she turned her head away, fearing her ruin.

"I... I don't know..." Zelda quietly said, her voice shaking.

Link's grip loosened a bit on her shoulders and he looked down, away from her, and bent his elbows as he slouched over.

"Humph..." He said quietly, "If you asked me that question, I would have said the same thing... With these twisted feelings I still don't know what to do."

Zelda lifted his chin with her finger as he let go of her shoulders and eventually their gazes met once again. However, Link quickly pulled away from her soft touch. Zelda was about to touch him again, but she had to force herself not to. Hesitantly she pulled her hand away and lowered it back to her side. Zelda turned around and walked toward her window, where the fiery red curtains hung. She jumped when she felt a gentle hand on her shoulder and she turned around to find Link once again.

"I don't know if it's love." Link said, "I may just be having you for my comfort for my sadness... something I can turn to if I want to forget everything. I'm being selfish."

A stinging pain was felt in Zelda's eyes as she heard those words, "Link... I-"

"Zelda... if you love me, I don't know if I can give you the same in return. I know you have been trying to heal my heart... but no matter what happens, the sadness is still buried within me." Link lifted his hand off of Zelda's shoulder and turned away from her, "Not even you can make me forget..."

At last the tears came, but she was not crying for him, but crying for her foolishness. First one tear trickled down her cheek, then two... then Zelda fell to her knees and placed her hands on her face as she heard the door to her room close and Link's footsteps fade into the hallway. Then the sobs came... she thought he had come back.

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Zelda did not have the heart to leave her room. Neither hunger nor thirst brought her out, for there wasn't any. The pain of hunger was not there, the only pain was the aching in her heart. Her eyes were now a swollen red from tears and her body becoming more and more frail. Her head pounded with pain, but Zelda did not even notice it because of her heart was turned toward Link... and every time it did, the pain kept coming and growing.

Now night had fallen, but she didn't bother to light a candle. Only weak, and dim moonlight leaked through her window, passed her red curtains and onto the floor. Zelda sat on her bed staring at nothing, an empty gaze that she could not cease.

*I thought... he came back... but no matter how much I try... he's still the same Link as before- lost and confused... but this time I thought-*

Zelda's eyes once again began to sting with sorrow and she clenched her fists as tears fell on her hands. She inhaled sharply and let out a small moan. She fell to the soft bed and her head became engulfed in the pillow and it absorbed her tears.

*His sadness is still with him, it fills his heart... and there's no room for me. There's no more room in his heart...*

Zelda's hand twitched as her hair fell over her chin while her perfect feminine body lay on the bed. More thoughts ran through her mind.

*I envy his sadness...*

Zelda squeezed her eyes shut as two more tears fell from her face, and eventually she had cried herself to sleep. However, even in her dreams, Zelda still thought about Link and she would often call out his name in her sleep, hoping that somehow he would come back to her.

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Link sat on the ledge of his window his eyes downcast toward the ground. The moonlight glistened on his pale skin. His fingers twitched before he raised his head, staring into the shadows of the room. From there he looked up to the waning moon, his deep eyes reflecting the dim light. Link looked up, thinking of Zelda...

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## 8 - One Heart Unfolded, Envy Rises

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### Chapter 8: One Heart Unfolded, Envy Rises

"Milady, you must eat..." Zelda's servant said as she walked in the door to find the princess still lying in her bed.

The servant turned toward Zelda and looked at her in sympathy. She knew that Zelda was grieved of Link, but she dare not say a word about it in fear of making the princess feel worse. The servant only gave a brief smile in an attempt to comfort her and spoke again.

"Milady..."

"I don't want to eat." Zelda said flatly.

"Princess, this is not healthy. You must eat if you're going to maintain your strength."

"I have already lost all my strength." Zelda quickly replied, remaining still in her bed.

Zelda's servant sighed and walked out of the room, leaving the princess still lying in her bed. Zelda's lips were dull and colorless while her skin was pale even though the sunlight did not shine on it, for she was in the shadows behind her opened bed curtains. Her servant had come in with breakfast on a tray, which was a rather light meal, and placed it on the night stand next to her. However, Zelda did not move her hand to eat it.

Meanwhile Link walked through the halls of the castle, slowly traipsing with his head hanging down. He traced his hand along the wall, feeling the course texture of the brick and every now and then, his hand would run along a crimson banner, feeling a far more smooth texture. However, Link's heart was more of being course than of softness, and it seemed his hand was almost unworthy to stroke the cloth of the hanging banner.

He stopped when he saw a pair of feet in his way, and he looked up to find Patrick there standing in front of him. For a while they stared, an uncomfortable silence in between exchanging glares.

"What did you say to her?"

"I'd rather not talk about it." Link said rather coldly.

Patrick observed the look in Link's eyes and grew suspicious of him once more. Eventually, Patrick had lost control and clung to the collar of Link's tunic.

"This is your last chance, twerp... You had *better* leave now before you break Zelda's heart even further. Or something bad might just happen..." Patrick started, "Now what did you say to her?!"

Link shifted his blue eyes toward Patrick. Once he saw that those eyes were staring directly into his, he jumped a little in shock to find how piercing and cold they were. The frown on his face and pale skin made him look intimidating, but deep inside his heart he cried, but no tears would come to his dry eyes and an emotionless gaze veiled his soul.

"Why don't you ask her." Link said removing Patrick's hand from his tunic and departing from him.

Patrick darted his head back to expect Link to be doing the same, but it seemed that he wasn't even there to Link. He gritted his teeth and started down the hallway.

Was this the pain of love? Zelda knew not her thoughts as they twisted through her mind. She heard the door to her room creak open and she darted her eyes toward it, unconsciously hoping it was Link, but instead it was Patrick. Zelda sighed and laid her head back down. She could see that Patrick shook his head in shame, and without a word he walked to her side.

"You haven't been outside." He said flatly.

"There is no reason for me to..." Zelda murmured.

Patrick sighed and turned his back to her and approached the window. The sunlight bathed his fair face before he had turned his face back toward Zelda, "Is it Link?"

Zelda nodded. When Patrick said that name, a pain and ache struck Zelda's heart, and she felt as if it was to tear apart. As if to hold back that from happening, two tears fell from each of Zelda's eyes as she squinted them shut. The princess inhaled deeply before she gathered the strength to speak... not only speak... but talk of Link.

"He asked me if I loved him."

"And...?" Patrick urged her.

"I didn't know..." Zelda started, recalling Link's face and his voice... how he clung to her shoulder, "He told me he was in pain... and I'm the only medicine for that, and that... is why he desires me. He does not say that is true love... and therefore he cannot love me." Zelda touched her hand to her face and sobbed, "Why does it have to be so painful...?"

Zelda looked away and spoke softly, "I was afraid of what he was going to say next... that he might brush me away from him, and the thought of not being with him is unbearable."

Patrick twitched his eye in irritation, and he growled with annoyance. He turned completely and found Zelda had at least sat up and he walked to her and briskly placed his hands on her shoulders and projected his voice loudly.

"Stop living in a fairy tale!" Patrick said to Zelda's surprise, for her eyes were wide and she had gasped in shock, "The fairy tales you live with are merely a dream... an ideal! We can't go through life expecting to have smooth skin still... we receive cuts and bruises, and maybe broken bones." Patrick lowered his voice slightly, "Even if you are a princess... you cannot find your true love easily." He continued to say, "Link is not your true love."

Patrick looked into Zelda's eyes for a while, and with that, he turned and left her in the room. A dead silence followed as Zelda turned toward the door.

*Do I love Link...?*

Zelda turned her head toward the window and observed the light pouring from the window and onto her wooden floor. Her locks fell to the sides of her face as her hand was weakly draped over her lap, palm facing up. Zelda's legs feebly hung off her bed, nearly reaching the cold floor, leaving the warmth of her bed.

*I... want to help him... I... want to see him smile...*

Zelda lifted her head, her locks now falling back to her shoulders and revealing her deep sea-blue eyes.

*There is some hope, Patrick... I have found him... after so long, now it's clear to me...*

Zelda imagined Link lifting his strong arms to her side and pulling her in. His hands stroked her back and became lost in her hair. The warmth of his embrace brushed the cold of her body away and then... then she felt his lips touch hers once more, the edge of his hair falling on her brow.

*I love him... and I can't deny that I want to see him again... and lead him with my smile.*

Tears fled from her eyes and spotted her white nightgown, "I love him..." She finally said to herself, "I do, I love Link so much."

She stood to her feet and quickly walked out of her room and headed toward the balcony that looked down to the gardens. A breeze of wind wafted her nightgown slightly to the side along with her shimmering gold hair. Zelda, as she had expected, saw Link sitting under the tree near his sister's tomb. He did not look at her, but she gazed at him and found that Zelda could not lift her endless staring from him.

"Princess?" Zelda heard a voice behind her say.

Once again there was Patrick and Zelda ran to him and fell to his chest. She cried out to him, her voice muffled by his rich clothing and said-

"I love him, Patrick... I love him."

Patrick widened his eyes in astonishment before he clung to the back of Zelda's head, and looked passed Zelda and down to the gardens where he saw Link. He twitched his eye once again and gritted his teeth, now clenching to Zelda's hair as she cried in his arms, the fire of envy boiling in his veins. He had a desire for Zelda that he could not deny.

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## 9 - Forever

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### Chapter 9: Forever

Zelda's thoughts did not alter throughout the rest of the day, and her body was restless when night came, causing her to be sleepless. She had gone to see Link once again in the gardens before, but he was no longer there. Once again, she found herself sitting in her room, once again looking out the window clenching onto her small pocket book. Zelda anxiously stared out the window hoping she would see someone walking toward the castle under the faceless and dark moon. Then, as if by magic, there he was, coming from the left side of her window view.

Zelda gasped and ran to the hallway which led to the courtyards, expecting to find him- Link. Her slippers fell off her feet without her noticing them, she was so desperate to see him once again and tell him at last how she felt. Her golden hair flew excitedly behind her and her white nightgown whipping in the air while her bare feet padded against the ground as she trotted. She had at last reached the hallway to find Link's shadow, before his figure would hit the light of the torch. Zelda's heart skipped a beat with excitement when she saw him and a slight smile ran across her face- a smile of relief.

"Welcome back-" She stopped herself suddenly as her wavy, uncombed hair flew in front of her.

She gasped in horror, as her eyes widened with fear and Zelda backed away. Her hand flew over her mouth as her eyebrows twitched with fear. Confusion clouded her mind once she had set her eyes on the man. Link had taken a step forward, when she had stopped, going under the torch's red firelight fire light. Blood ran down his forehead and down his chin while a little dripped from the tips of his fingers. A trail of red blood was left behind him as a result of it running down his legs as well. Link's clothes were partially torn with horrible wounds revealed underneath. His eyes were dull and wounded when he finally looked up at Zelda, and looking upon the frightened maid.

"L-Link...!" She gasped, which were the only words she managed to say.

Zelda had immediately taken him up to treat his wounds. Her hands covered in ointment, stroked his scarred back, tears nearly filling her eyes. She had wiped off all the blood, using many different cloths to do so. She remained speechless as she put on the last bandage and at last the tears overflowed and she leaned her forehead on his back. Link looked back at her and silently said,

"Zelda..."

She was crying for him... at last. Once she had lifted her head from him, Link stood up and put on the top portion of his tunic and took up his sheath and shield.

"Have you eaten anything?" Zelda said to him, as if to comfort herself.

Link didn't reply to her, and didn't even look back at her before he left the room. Zelda gathered up the

medical supplies and placed them on a nearby surface and let her hands fall on her dresser. She stood still a while before she covered her face with her hands.

"No... I can't ask him what happened," She said with her words muffled, "but I've never seen him look as pitiful as that..."

The next evening, Zelda sat across the dining table from Link, who had a full plate of food in front of him but wouldn't take up the fork to eat. Zelda ate slowly, keeping her gaze on Link. There was dead silence between the two, and Zelda squirmed in her seat, and became restless and uncomfortable.

"Link... please eat... even if it's just one bite..." Zelda said when she broke the silence. There was a pause for a while, "Please?"

As if forcing himself to, Link took up his fork and ate a little bit of the cold dinner before him that was left untouched until that moment. Zelda had finished her last bite as Link took only a small sip from his chalice and placed it back on the table again. Once again, his hands retreated to his lap, but they did not stay there for long. Link had stood up from the table and looked at Zelda with his hard gaze, startling her a bit.

"Zelda..." He said before turning around, "Come with me."

Zelda paused for a moment before she stood up as well and quickly caught up behind Link. They left the dining room and the dining table covered with the crimson cloth, with red roses in the center. The candles had finally blown out on their own as if they were afraid of the burning fire place, as its embers flew from the leaping flames as the wood crackled and snapped. Zelda looked back at the room once more before following Link once again.

Zelda did not bother to ask Link where he was taking her, but she went along anyway. He had first taken her to the stables where the horses patiently waited in their stalls. There he had taken his fair mare, Epona, and brought her out to where Zelda was waiting. He did not even bother to put a saddle on her, he only held his hand out so Zelda could take hold of it and he had mounted her on the chestnut mare. Zelda found herself tightly clenching onto the white mane of the horse and her heart began to patter as Link mounted behind her and wrapped his arm around Zelda's waist, making sure she would not fall off.

Sooner or later, she felt a slight wind against her face and her hair tossing up and down. They rode off the castle grounds and onto the cobble stone streets of the town. People passing them eyed them and the tall and strong mare. The talking of the crowds was vast and chaotic. However, Link seemed to be heading to a more quiet part of town, he had headed to the back alleys and there he had dismounted and helped Zelda off as well. There he tied Epona's reins to a post and continued down the alley. More and more thoughts of Link clouded Zelda's mind... it confused her that every second she would be thinking of him and yet, she would never tire of him.

Eventually they were in sight of a river, and a small bridge going over it. They had been there recently, but this was also the place where the two had first met as children. The two never really saw each other in the castle before that moment, however this was the place where they first saw each other eye to eye... and spoke to each other face to face... Link looked out toward the river and placed his hands on top of the side of the bridge that kept him from falling over. Zelda stood a ways away from him, but still

watched.

"Link... what do you want to tell me?" Zelda said, breaking the silence.

Link stared for a while longer, listening to the soothing running water of the river and looked down toward it, watching a fish jump from the river and splashing down to the water once again.

"Zelda... I just wanted to thank you for what you've done for me..." Link started, "And I'm sorry for earlier... it was most uncalled for to treat you that way... especially since you are of royal blood."

Zelda went beside Link and began to look at the river as well. She had seen a bird now take the fish in its talons and fly off, feathers flying from it and drifting toward the water where the fish had been. Zelda looked toward Link, who still faced the same direction as before.

"Link..."

"Zelda... I'm leaving tomorrow..." He said, "And I won't come back- you'll never see me again..."

Zelda looked at his hands then looked at hers. Her heart pounded with longing, and she began to wish for things to be different. Two words crossed her mind. Two lying words that are an empty hope of a thing that would never come true, when something had already taken its course... "what if?"

"I see... I won't stop you, but Link..." She managed to say, "I won't take my eyes off of you and your battle... ever... I know the wounds in your heart have become scars that would never heal, but I want you to be happy... I know I can't change the way you are, or who you are, but know this: If you do come back... I will always welcome you with open arms, and you'll be home again." She looked toward him, "That is my promise."

Link's mouth gaped open and he turned his head toward her to find her sweet smile, but sadness behind her eyes. Could she be saying to him, "I love you"? Link closed his eyes as his lips only twitched into a smile. He took her into his hands, and now they stood hand in hand on the bridge, as he lifted his eyes toward her. He lifted his hand to her pale, soft cheek and stroked it with the tips of his fingers. Zelda lifted her hand to his that touched her cheek and stroked it. He had amazingly soft skin, it was so soft it could only challenge the fairness of hers. Suddenly, his deep, soothing voice filled her ears.

"I've been so confused all this time, Zelda, and there are still no more answers." He said, "But I wish for you to be happy as well, Zelda... and if this makes you happy, I will stay, even if it costs my life." He said drawing closer to her, "Stay forever..."

Zelda was confused at the conditions of Link staying with her, but those thoughts vanished when he drew closer and closer. Suddenly the air vanished between their lips as Link reverently kissed Zelda's lips. The leather texture of Link's lips made Zelda's heart flutter. She felt his hands move to her back and pull her in as close as possible, as if to protect her from danger. This kiss was much different than the last, this one was more honest and compassionate and Zelda's body felt she could stand there, under the setting sun with Link forever.

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12 - The Truth

Chapter 10: The Truth

Zelda was once again reading her fairy tale when she had heard the doorknobs on the library doors turn and moved her head to that particular direction to see the doors opening. She placed a ribbon on the page she was currently reading, closed the book, and stuffed it in her pocket. Her servant appeared in front of the library door and bowed slightly to Zelda.

"Your father wishes to see you, milady."

"I'll be there in a moment."

Zelda arose from her chair and brushed the wrinkles out of her silk dress before following the servant out of the library. The day was sunny, and much sunlight leaked through the windows, revealing floating dust flying through the air as the princess walked down the hallways. The servant had led her to the throne room and gave her an excited smile which Zelda found rather odd. As the servant stepped aside and opened the doors for Zelda, there was the sight of her father sitting upon his throne, surrounded by tall marble pillars and a red carpet leading to where the king sat. Zelda stepped forward as she heard the doors close behind her and now could only hear the sound of her own footsteps thumping against the ground. She at last was before her father and she bowed slightly to him, out of respect.

"You called for me, father?"

"Yes... Zelda, I need to inform you of something."

Zelda looked up from the ground and faced her father. A hint of guilt was in his voice that confused her somewhat and she listened intently.

"I should have told you this so long ago, but I was afraid to let you go... I'm selfish, you might say." The king started, "However, hearing of your heartbreak of Link has grieved me. So I-

"Father," Zelda interrupted, "It is sorted out. Everything is fine now-

"I care not. He has done this to you more than once." Her father suddenly interrupted, he sighed after a moment of silence and continued on, "You must never see that man again."

Zelda's eyes widened with disbelief. She returned his reply with begging words, "But... he's chosen to stay here... Link isn't going to leave anymore!"

"Zelda, I understand your feelings for him, but if you stay with him, he will surely return to his old ways, and eventually stray off forever." He continued, "That is why I need to tell you that you are going to be wed to Sir Patrick, and set off with him to his father's castle."

Tears filled Zelda's eyes and she ran toward her father and knelt at his feet, taking his large hand in hers and looking up at him, begging.

"Oh, please, father, I wish not to never gaze upon Link again! I love him! I *love* him!!!" Zelda screamed.

"This cannot be avoided, you were betrothed to Patrick since you were fourteen years of age... and to love another is dishonorable."

"No, Father!!!" Zelda shook his hand restlessly.

However, the king threw Zelda back from him, "Enough!" He shouted, breaking the noise and releasing another cursed silence, only filled with slight sobs from Zelda as she lay on the ground covering her face with her hands as her blond hair flew over her shoulders. The king stood to his feet and gently set a hand on her side and lifted her chin toward his face. Zelda's eyes were swollen red with grief as wavy locks of hair drifted in front of her face and her mouth slightly opened with her red lips parted.

"I want you to live a happy life, my daughter." Her father said, "You are a lucky princess, be grateful. I believe you will be happier with Patrick and not with Link, who will come and go."

Zelda closed her lips and furrowed her eyebrows before abruptly getting up, stumbling, and stomping out of the throne room without giving a second glance to her father. She slammed the doors behind her and deeply breathed. Eventually tears once again filled Zelda's eyes and she blinked before falling back to the door and resting the back of her head on it. Link came to her mind and did not leave. The thought of finally going to Link and saying good-bye pained her so, but she knew that moment had to come. Zelda forced herself to take a step forward, and she went to go to the courtyards... to see Link.

When she had at last reached the point where the courtyards were in sight, she saw him from a distance right where she expected him to be. Link looked up at the sun veiled by the leaves of the tree he sat under as his bangs were brushed back to the sides of his face. His blue eyes twinkled as the branches in the tree swayed from the sighing wind. Rose petals began to fly in the air as the wind blew slightly harder to the point where it seemed almost threatening. Zelda raised her voice and called for him.

"Lin-"

She was suddenly stopped by a hand suddenly covering her mouth and pulling her back. Zelda gasped with sudden fear and fell backward from whoever pulled her backward and her vision blackened as she saw the rose petals flying above her, and she fell unconscious from sudden shock. He was too far... no one could help...

Zelda suddenly felt herself squirm as she laid on her side and started to return to her senses. She lay on something uncomfortably hard, and a pain shot through her shoulder when she moved and an unpleasant itch was surrounding her wrists, keeping her from using her hands. At last Zelda opened her eyes and for a moment, there wasn't even a difference, it was so dark, however, her eyes adjusted and

she turned quickly toward where she had noticed a flickering light. Zelda, now managing to be sitting up, noticed a dark figure behind the flickering light, which were a small candle flames burning in the darkness. She furrowed her eyebrows.

"Who are you? I demand you let me go!"

"No need to worry, Princess, you shouldn't fear me, and after all..." He turned his head toward her, face being revealed in the small lights, "you and I will be wed soon..."

Zelda widened her eyes, "Patrick?!" She gasped, "What are you doing here? Why did you take me away? Where is Link?!"

"So many questions..." Patrick sighed before standing to his feet and slowly traipsed toward Zelda, "You and I, I'm sure the king already informed you, were already engaged to each other when we were fourteen years of age. I was promised to you before I had come to your castle to learn swordsmanship. However, Link was in the way, and took advantage of you... when I should have had you..."

"But *why* did you kidnap me, when you already are bound to be with me?" Zelda said trying to break free from the ropes at her wrist.

Patrick chuckled, "Try to break free all you want, it won't work," he started, "You will be freed from them as soon as Link receives his punishment..."

"Punishment?" Zelda asked curiously, not taking a liking to the sound of the word when she noticed Patrick's voice had grown darker.

"Of course now is his last chance to turn around and run away even though I have given him the path of the sword to stay away forever, however..." Patrick sneered, "If he comes for you, it's obvious that he still wants you... it is dishonorable to take a woman who is already bound, so I will punish him with death and take you away to be my bride."

Patrick chuckled with delight at the thought of his glorious triumph and Zelda stared with disgust at him, as she grimaced at his intentions, but at the same time overcome with fear knowing that Patrick had battled with Link before, and won.

"How dare you, Patrick..." Zelda said coldly.

Patrick's chuckles had stopped and he turned his head toward Zelda, piercing her with his green eyes, "Ah, yes... I think you should know this before we marry... but... I am not Sir Patrick, son of Lord Edward."

"What?" Zelda gasped.

"The *real* Patrick, died six years ago... when I first came to reside in your castle." Patrick said, "Look around you."

Zelda did as he had told her and found herself in an empty hall, much like the one back home, except seeming much smaller and less elaborate. The windows were broken and the transparent curtains blew inward, trying to grasp whomever came near to them. The moon was cold, pale, and restless as it poured its ominous light through the cracked windows and onto the hard floor. The wind blew and gave an uncomfortable howl, shaping the curtains to be what they were.

"This is the castle where Lord Edward resided with his son, Patrick." He started, "I saw you once, and fell in love immediately. When I learned that Patrick was to go to the castle to learn swordsmanship, I took advantage and slew them all... the servants, the lord, and yes... even Patrick. I came and told the king that Lord Edward desired that I marry you, and he fell for it, the old fool, but he took longer than I expected to give the news to you. But now the time is come! Once I kill Link and we are wed, I will kill your father, so we can rule Hyrule! And I trust you won't say anything... because if you do, I will take you away to a far away land where you cannot be reached by anyone but me."

"Who *are* you... really?" Zelda asked.

"I am the Assassin Lord... the greatest killer to ever roam Hyrule. You should feel honored, Princess Zelda, you are going to marry one of the most famous men to ever live in this kingdom. Like Link, I too am bound to the sword... but in a different way."

Zelda had gotten a sickening feeling in her stomach as she saw the impostor Patrick turn around chuckling to himself and returning to the candle flames. He looked up out one of the windows and to the night sky.

"It's almost the time before dawn... if he chooses to come, Link will be here soon..."

In her heart, Zelda didn't want Link to come, but on the other hand, she did so he could save her from this madman. Hopelessness and restlessness filled Zelda's heart as she watched Patrick casually sit against the chair where the lord must have sat all those years before. She closed her eyes and prayed that someone would help her...

Meanwhile, Link sat in his room looking out the window and to the same sheet of darkness that covered where Zelda resided. He held a small paper in his hand, clenching it to the point where it had so many wrinkles and creases in it.

"It's almost time to leave..." He told himself, before glancing at the paper, which written on it was a note, which read:

If you do care much for Zelda, then come to the castle of Lord Edward to see her again. I expect you carry your sword with you.

-Sir Patrick

Link's sword was at his side as he anticipated the time to leave. He narrowed his eyes with disgust, knowing that he was correct about his suspicion of Patrick's true black heart all these years. Now he was

paying the price of it with Zelda being in danger.

"Is it destiny for me to rescue her?"

Link paused for a moment in reflection. As he stroked the sheath of the sword next to him, his sister came to mind... She was the only one to help him through the pain of the loss of his mother with her smile... After she was gone, there was no one... Suddenly a familiar voice came to his mind.

"I won't take my eyes off of you and your battle... ever... I know the wounds in your heart have become scars that would never heal, but I want you to be happy... I know I can't change the way you are, or who you are, but know this: If you do come back... I will always welcome you with open arms, and you'll be home again... That is my promise."

No one... Link thought... was a lie... There was someone for him... there always was. He looked down at his fist and clenched it tightly, thinking how much of a fool he was to not realize something that was on the surface this whole time. Zelda did love him... and he loved her. Slowly the clouded confusion in his mind vanished and Link rose to his feet and took his sword in hand. He turned toward the outside world, confidence now in his eyes.

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## 13 - The Love of a Madman

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### Chapter 11: The Love of a Madman

The moon was getting lower and lower as the minutes that seemed as hours slowly crawled by. The impostor Patrick could see Zelda eyeing the entrance to the hall anxiously, her gaze fixed upon the darkness. He sneered and ran his fingers back through his hair and chuckled as he crossed his legs and leaned his other elbow on the arm of the chair he sat in.

"You are so helpless... such a dramatic girl..."

Zelda didn't reply to him, only continued staring. She knew if Link didn't come... Hyrule will *surely* fall to whereas if he does... there would still be a chance. Her heart pounded underneath her chest as she waited, her tied wrists resting on her lap. Patrick sighed and grew rather impatient with her.

"Why do you want him to come? In fact, what makes you *think* he'll come?"

"He loves me," She started, "unlike you... you are different than him... you want me without giving up anything you previously had. Link, on the other hand, has suffered without complaint."

Patrick narrowed his eyes at Zelda, rushed over to her, and took her by the neck, "*Shut up!* You should not be speaking to your husband-to-be in that way." Patrick shook her, "He has driven my life crazy! Knowing that you have been in his arms, covered his lips with yours, and tended to his heart. What of *me?* I have taken lives... taken things to get where I am now! Have you considered what I went through?" He breathed heavily from speaking loudly, "That is why he needs to be punished..."

Patrick threw Zelda to the ground as she gasped for air. She coughed for a brief moment and after taking in heavy breaths, looked up at Patrick, to find something more than desperation and desire in his eyes... insanity. Lines were visible under his eyes as he gritted his teeth with anger. Suddenly, a creaking from the other end of the room was heard, and the faint thuds of footsteps were heard after the groaning sound of the door occurred. Zelda's eyes grew wide for a moment, and her face became as a light. There was Link, stepping from the shadows and onto the middle of the floor.

"Link!" Zelda gasped as she lunged forward toward him.

Patrick hastily drew his sheath and quickly put it in front of Zelda, and locked his gaze on Link, "I will not give this girl to you!" He projected his voice to reach Link, "I'm giving you one last chance to turn back..."

However, all Link did was look at Zelda, smile softly and say, "Stay there, Zelda... it'll be okay."

Zelda was surprised at the calmness of his voice, but she did not know that seeing her there alive relieved Link greatly. He was protecting her.

"Very well, then..." Patrick said drawing his sword and throwing the sheath on the ground so hard, that the sound of its collision with the floor startled Zelda as it echoed throughout the hall.

Both stepped to the side, so one was on either side of Zelda and after Link slowly drew his sword from its sheath, the blade whispering as it was withdrawn, and a light shimmering down its shining steel, there was a long silence after the sound had deafened into the emptiness of the room. Though nothing was said, the moment was intense. The suspense grew and grew as the two wielders of swords kept their gazes locked on each other. Link's bangs fell in front of his eyes as they shimmered in the moonlight and a sneer formed on Patrick's lips. Zelda's red lips were parted, and a single drop of sweat had formed on her brow, then slid down the side of her cheek and to the bottom of her chin, where it hung for a moment. Once it had at last grown too heavy, it fell and dispersed on the top of her hand. Once the individual droplets spread apart, Patrick charged forward with unthinkable speed, far surpassing his performance before in the last battle.

However, Link immediately raised his sword to meet Patrick's and jumped to the side to parry. However, Patrick had just barely read his move in advance and swung his sword to the side to meet Link's sword once again. The two ran sideways, swords scraping against each other and sparks flying in the air. Link eventually took the offensive and threw Patrick to his side against the wall with such force, there was a deep rumble and some fragments dropped from the wall. Link had jumped backward and lifted his sword to the side as a finishing stance. Zelda widened her eyes at his power, still feeling the rumble in her body.

*His sword is much more precise than before... it shows no hesitation... and his eyes...*

Zelda looked closely at Link as he straightened his knees and looked back at Patrick with stunning blue eyes.

*...They are much different than before... I wonder if Link found the answer he was looking for?*

Zelda smiled at the thought, but it soon vanished from her face when she saw Patrick dart from the cloud of dust and charge at Link with his sword, ready to thrust it into his body and impale him. However, Link quickly reacted and stepped to the side, but he felt a stinging pain in his side. As Patrick continued to move forward, Link looked at his side and saw blood pouring down his waist. His distraction was broken when Patrick came swinging around once again. The two continued to violently tear at each other, jumping, striking, parrying, blocking... only a minute of the battle had passed, but it had seemed much longer. Link had taken the bottom of the hilt of his sword and drove it into Patrick's stomach just after dodging one of his attacks. Patrick had let out a groan when the wind was pushed out of his lungs and he went on the ground holding onto his side. Just as Link was about to strike him down, Patrick grabbed a couple of glass shards from a nearby shattered window and threw them at Link, and scrambled to his feet. Luckily Link had covered his face with his arm, but the pain came nonetheless. Blood trickled down, as he proceeded to block another one of Patrick's attacks.

However, the unexpected came for Link, and Patrick had come behind him and just as he was about to bring his sword backwards into Link's neck, he had brought up his own sword to block the blade with the hilt. However, both were shaking as the clattering of metal was heard. Link's eyes were wide, and his teeth were gritted as he tried to hold off Patrick's lethal attack.

"Do you think you can reject your punishment? Such a foolish coward!!!" Patrick had bashed his head on the back of Link's head, causing him to collapse to the ground.

Link had dropped his sword when he found that a dizzy sensation came over him. Before he had time to recover, Patrick had taken his foot and kicked him in the side, causing the wind to blow out of his lungs.

"You came in between us! You drove my life crazy! Stepped all over it, like it was nothing! And now I've been intoxicated with insanity, and I yearn for her touch, but at the same time knowing *you* have taken her in your arms!"

Patrick had grabbed Link's bangs and pulled them backward, lifting him off the ground as blood poured out of Link's mouth and Patrick proceeded to drive his fist into Link's stomach, still pulling on his bangs. Link could hear the shrieks coming from Zelda as Patrick screamed his own words and tears suddenly came to his eyes as his voice was choked with sobs.

"Scream, suffer!!! Know the pain I've gone through!!! Know my longing for her!!!"

He threw Link on the ground and took up his own sword as Link turned over to reach his own. Just as Patrick was going to strike, Link had dashed to the side out of Patrick's range. He breathed heavily and coughed, staining his hand in blood before softly speaking.

"I knew you had a longing for Zelda... however, your love is different than mine." Link started as he gradually lifted his sword from balancing himself with it, "I long for her to be happy, and in return she healed me. I know my life is shared now... both she and I have exchanged things for each other... and I love her... the answer to how my life should be lead, is by Zelda's smile."

Zelda's heart fluttered as if the strings of her heart were being plucked and played as if it was a harp. Her eyes widened and her eyes shimmered in the glittering moonlight as a hand drifted toward her lips and whispered Link's name.

"What is this 'exchanging' nonsense you speak of?!" Patrick said gripping tighter onto the hilt of his sword and his veins becoming nearly visible under his skin, his eyes had now been completely consumed by insanity, it seemed no life was in them now, "What of me? What have I to give? There is nothing... NOTHING!!!" At last the tears came to his eyes, but they had dried up when he began to walk toward Zelda, "My love is an empty shell, you say... fine then... however... you must still receive your punishment... I will send you to a living hell."

Patrick's gaze turned toward Zelda, carrying gleaming hatred, "I will kill her... then myself so I can join you, leaving you all alone in the world... with a hollow and cold heart of ice... a soulless body... the only thing that will keep you living is an empty memory long lost."

He was next to Zelda now, staring down at her with his sword above his head. Terror filled her eyes as her mind told her to break free from the ropes, or perhaps run, but her body refused... her legs were frozen and numb and her hands trembled. The blade shimmered but a little before Patrick sent it down. Just then Zelda had heard a cry coming from Link and in an instant a flash brighter than usual filled her eyes and Link was now in front of her. She could see his legs trembling as his sword was outward, as if

he had just struck something.

Patrick was now on the ground, blood pouring from his wounds and motionless. His blade lay beside him, covered in the blood of his enemy, and the blade broken in two, but still sharp. Link had turned around toward Zelda with a worried glance, dropped his sword and slowly reached out toward her hands and slowly began to break the rope with a dagger he kept in his belt.

"Forgive me for handling you in these bloody hands, Zelda..."

He had broken the rope, making sure that he would not harm her gentle and delicate hands. Just then he stood up and turned toward Patrick and slowly began to walk toward him, carrying no sword. He heard Patrick suddenly exhale deeply and from then on, began to breath heavily. However, no surprise came to Link's face as he saw Patrick slowly get up, legs trembling.

"Why... didn't you finish me there...? You used the flat side of your blade on purpose..."

Zelda looked toward Link's sword, and found that little blood was on it, not nearly enough to be evident that Link had inflicted a fatal wound. A cold silence filled the air for a moment, and Link dropped to his knees and hands fell to the ground.

"I couldn't kill you... knowing that you have suffered as I have... however, I cannot have you kill Zelda, but if blood must be shed tonight, please I will take her place."

Patrick snickered and slowly stumbled toward Link, holding onto his broken sword and breathing heavily, barely getting out his words, "So... you've finally made your decision..." Patrick had raised his sword above his head and looked down on Link.

At that moment, a cold breeze blew, and Patrick's eyes widened as he felt a chill run down his spine. There was Zelda, in front of him now, embracing Link, who lay his head against the side of her face, his soft hair brushing her cheek. A cold tear ran down her face, and touched Link's scarred skin. His eyes widened slightly and he longed to wipe away that tear, but his hand was frozen and stiff. Patrick had dropped to his knees as well, as if kneeling to this power before him. A true love between a man and woman... a complete selflessness.

"Why...?" He managed to say, "Is this to be my fate... to never *truly* love and be loved...? Now that I see you before me... Zelda... you choose him?" Patrick looked at his blade and saw his reflection, and what he saw was a man rotten to the core.

He raised the broken blade to his chest and impaled himself before falling backward to the cold ground. Link looked up to find him there and rose to his feet, still clinging onto Zelda. He looked down on Patrick as he saw his eyes slowly drift away.

"I find that I cannot compete with this power before me... this is the only answer I can find." Patrick said before coughing, "So... this is the love of a madman... the love of the Assassin Lord, Roy..."

Then and there, he let out his last and long breath and his chest stilled and died there, a slight smirk on his face.

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14 - The Smile

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### Chapter 12: The Smile

"So... Patrick was an impostor?" The king said, sitting on his throne rubbing both his eyes with his forefinger and thumb, "He was Roy, the Assassin Lord of Hyrule?"

"Yes, milord." Zelda's servant said bowing her head, "He had taken Zelda away, I knew not of his intentions, but milady informed me that Sir Link saved her, and Patrick had slain himself."

The king remained silenced in the throne room, the remains of the servant's voice echoing throughout the large hall. It was early morning outside, however, it had been raining a dreadfully long time since the sun began to rise. The sky was a dull grey from the heavy clouds covering the sun's rays. Droplets pounded on the windows, as if wanting to enter into the throne room. The silence was broken with a heavy sigh coming from the king.

"Perhaps I have been foolish." He started, "It seems Link does care for my daughter... so much that he would risk everything for her and even die for her and he has done so over these past six years... how blind I was." He looked to his side to see the rain still pouring down in great abundance, as if repaying for all the tears that were spilt these past six years, "Please inform the princess that she will wed Sir Link, and give her my most sincere apologies."

"Yes... your Majesty."

Zelda had just reached the door to Link's room when the servant tending to him had come out carrying all her supplies. She glanced at the princess and stopped to find a concerned look on the princess' face.

"How is he?" She said eagerly.

"He has a strong will to live, milady. He's broken his fever, so he'll be just fine."

Zelda hastily opened the door and stepped in, but stopped herself when she found a figure lying in the soft bed before her. Now slowly she closed the door behind her, closing off the distant murmuring outside the room and entering into a silenced room where the only noise was the rain knocking against the window. Zelda did not keep her eyes off Link, who lay in the bed, eyes gently closed and golden locks falling to the sides of his face. Bandages were on almost every part of his body, and what covered

most of them were his white garments placed on him after he was freed from his previous bloody attire and a white sheet that was revealed when the red comforter was drawn back.

The princess gently took Link's hand and placed the other on top of it, having his in between her hands. She rubbed each of his fingers while looking at his angelic face and observed his dull yet perfectly carved lips. She laid his hand back down so it draped over his stomach and she stood up to leave. Before she began to head out she stroked his bandaged cheek with the back of her hand.

"Rest, Link..."

When she turned to leave, her hand was grasped and Zelda turned around letting out a light gasp to find Link holding onto her. His piercing and gentle blue eyes gave butterflies in her stomach and she continued to stare at him.

"Please... don't go, Zelda."

His fingers intertwined with hers and pulled her gently toward him. She willfully came closer to him and she sat on the foot of the bed. Link let go of her hand and tried to sit himself up, but grimaced from the pain in his stomach. Zelda quickly leaned forward and held his back so he wouldn't fall over.

"Link, you mustn't sit up! You'll open your wounds..." Zelda said worriedly finding Link once again grasping onto her free hand.

"I'll be fine, no need to worry about me."

Link took deep breaths to regain his energy that he had lost from trying to sit up so suddenly, and for a moment there was silence. Zelda still found him grasping her hand tightly as if he were a child carrying a precious toy. Link suddenly turned his head away from her, and looked out the window where the dreadful overcast remained.

"Zelda... when you embraced me..." He said as flashbacks of the fearsome battle raced through his mind, "...why were you crying?"

Zelda remembered as well, the warmth she had given to Link to protect him from Roy's blood-stained sword. The coldness that was still in him... the tear that rolled down her cheek... it all once again came back to her.

"I was worried..." She said, "I thought I was going to lose you, and that thought gave me a little taste of the living hell I could have been remaining in this hour..."

"You... shed tears for me..." Link gently said as he lifted her hand to his chest, "Dear Zelda... please do not worry... my heart still beats, and it beats for you."

A smile crossed Zelda's lips as she looked into his adoring eyes. She felt the heart that she had tended to with her own hands, and she could see that in Link's eyes he was truly grateful to her. The rain outside began to lessen as Link drew himself closer to her and gave her many kisses on the lips, and after three kisses they parted for a second and exchanged smiles. Zelda curled her fingers around the

back of his neck and pulled him in, this time for a deep and slow kiss. Link's lips covered hers with a leathery smoothness and he could smell her rose scent as he brushed her lips. When they parted, Link lowered his head so he was now resting on her lap. Zelda lifted her hand and ran her finger along his long and narrow ear. She gave another smile.

"Patrick... I mean Roy was right about one thing, Link..." Zelda started, "Our lives aren't perfect fairy tales... we receive trials and sufferings... but that is what brought us together, Link. The fairy tale I always read... it is the story of how my mother met my father... I always read the end, because that's the best part, but the beginning is miserable... I suppose I didn't want my life to be like that..."

Zelda ran her fingers through his golden hair and then stroked his cheek. Oh, how Link enjoyed the caress of this angel. Her touch was as if it was a dream, and at times he thought if he was dead, because it seemed he was in heaven, safe in Zelda's embrace... and her voice... it was so soothing and gentle to his ears.

"In the past... both you and I have suffered on our paths... but those paths led to a crossroad, and now we share the same path... and have grown to love each other."

"I do love you, Zelda." Link finally said, his heart beginning to pound, "Thank you so much for everything you've done for me..."

Zelda's hand froze at his statement and she fluttered her eyes. Did he just say that? Her heart pounded underneath her chest... he had never said that directly toward her before. Yet, here he was, confessing all his feelings in just four words, "I do love you". Her muscles eased and she looked out the window to find the rain had at last stopped, and she whispered.

"I will always love you as well, Link..." She looked at him, "Don't ever forget that."

Link looked up at her and smiled, as the sun at last broke through the grey clouds and began to shine through the window. His grin widened as he continued to look at her and he closed his eyes and fell asleep on her lap. Zelda looked down and smiled at him. She knew this would happen. Link had just given her a smile from the bottom of his heart.

The End

of

To Love Another

"I know he has chosen that path... for his sister... I know that... I knew that, but..."

"Someday, Link, a thing that you will give me... something that will pass your lips... a smile... a smile from the bottom of your heart... I believe so."

"I won't take my eyes off of you and your battle... ever... I will welcome you with open arms... and you'll be home again..."

"In the past... both you and I have suffered on our paths... but those paths led to a crossroad, and now we share the same path... and have grown to love each other."

"I do love you, Zelda. Thank you so much for everything you've done for me..."

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A/N: Thus, one of my definitions of "love" (yes, I believe there's more than one... such as friendship, and obsession over one thing etc.) Basically I'm saying it doesn't always include the, "Oh, I love you! Let's make out!" Sometimes it's just caring and service:D You know what I mean? Well, it's finished! Now "Patrick"/Roy can get what he wants.

Hyrule Master: (Hands "Patrick" a bowl of Lucky Charms)

"Patrick"/Roy: (GASP) LUCKY CHARMS! They're magically delicious!

Hope you enjoyed!