A Dragon's Memory

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Summary

When Link and Volga first meet upon the battlefield, the Legendary Hero and the Scorching Berserker somehow feel like they've met before. The dragon knight agrees to abandon his attack on the kingdom in exchange for one thing--Link!
Chapter 1

The battlefield raged on, a seemingly endless swath of death and destruction. A keep in the south had just gone up in flames, courtesy of a single being. For now, they remained hidden in smoke, circling the ruin they wrought and waiting for the next order. They weren’t about to make the same mistake again, as they had the day before. Some pipsqueak of a knight had joined forces with the Hyrulean general and manage to goad this fierce warrior into a retreat, due to trickery. A growl of disdain curled up from their gut. The Sheikah and the boy would not be able to get the best of them again. But, yet…something about the pup seemed almost familiar. The way that the child’s eyes shone brightly, even when phased by smoke and bloodshed, made a note of memory strain within the mind of this being.

They growled fiercely and thrashed their head back and forth, trying to shake off the feeling, almost like they had just gotten their skull bashed in by a hammer. Now angered, they continued to circle, until their eyes caught sight of the target, and they dove.

At this same time, a trainee soldier had just entered the fray. His sword shone brightly in the sunlight, reflecting how it was unused. Striking real blows felt endlessly strange to the boy, for he had only ever used dull blades in training, and struck not to kill, not to maim, but to hinder only. It was one thing to unleash impressive moves in the training yard in order to impress his fellow guardsmen. It was something else entirely to actually utilize his knowledge in order to defend his kingdom and his liege. His palms were still forming calluses, and sometimes his elbow still popped when he lashed out too quickly in a strike. Suddenly, a bellowing roar and a booming explosion caused the very ground to shake.

Everybody in the proximity halted for a moment, astounded at the noise. It was far too bold to be a mere bomb exploding. No, it was obviously something more.

“Oh no!” His new fairy companion, Proxi, let out a frightened chime. “Look!” She guided his attention towards a bolt of magic rising into the sky, the bright flash of blue being the Hyrulean army’s signal to fall back to their base and protect it. Link stopped himself mid-swing, feeling the tip of his sword lodging itself in a bokoblin’s gut. The creature let out a gurgle as it died, dragging his hand down as it fell. The elfin warrior wasted no time in pulling his weapon free, abandoning his attempt to capture that keep to run back and protect his allies. The young man felt an odd sensation come over him as he sprinted down the field, eyes on the castle. This was the second day of the siege, and the first that the boy named Link had donned the green tunic and blue scarf rumored to be the sign of the legendary hero. It was strange, but he had gotten the feeling that this outfit had been made for him, even though he knew that the garb was something handed down through the royal family for generations. The fabric just seemed to hug his body in the exact right way, the scarf laid on his chest and always remained in the exact right spot. The end of the fabric streamed out behind him like a banner as he ran, making a satisfying sound as it flapped in the wind.

When he finally reached the castle, Link could only let out a small utterance of shock at the sight he beheld. The front gate had been reduced to a smoldering rubble, and all around it laid the charred bodies of soldiers. The emergency fortifications had crumbled, and in some places the mighty stone foundations of the castle seemed to have melted. Someone who could wield intense fire magic had come through here, and that level could not belong to any average sorcerer. There was only one creature that could have wrought this much destruction: a dragon! Link swallowed nervously, fingers tightening and loosening around the hilt of his sword. This was the first day he had ever used a real one, instead of the blunted weapons they used for practice in the training yard.
How was he supposed to defeat a dragon, when just yesterday he had made his first kill, in defense of his life?

A piercing shriek startled the warrior from his reverie, along with a noise that made the ground rumble beneath his feet. At that moment, the already ruined gate burst open even further, sending smoke and rubble blasting outwards. All Link could do was raise his shield to protect his face, catching a stone to the gut that knocked the wind out of him. He fell backwards with a loud huff, squinting through the cloud of dust. Through it, he could almost make out a massive form that glowed like the embers in a fireplace. The body had massive wings, and limbs long enough to kill from a distance. The long tail of the creature was coiled around a smaller human, and Link was able to identify them as Princess Zelda from the silhouette of her rapier, clutched in the hand that managed to escape her bonds. The green-clad young man let out an exclamation of surprise and alarm at the sight of his liege in the grasp of a monster, and struggled to shift the heavy boulder off his midsection so he could stand and fight.

“You…!” A deep, growling voice penetrated the thick cloud, and the enormous shape of the dragon disappeared. In its place, a knight clad in fierce red armor stood, a gauntleted hand now grasping the princess by the throat. The warrior’s helm mimicked a dragon’s head, the silver point of its muzzle extending down his nose, and horns curling above his brow. Something about that shape he had seen, and the sound of that growl, along with the glowing made Link feel almost… nostalgic, if he could call it that. Something deep within his soul told him that this crimson beast was familiar, like a friend he had not seen for many years. But, that was impossible. Link had never met a dragon, or a fierce knight before. The bloodied knight strode forward, his footfalls causing the earth to quiver as he approached the trapped Hyllian. “Green tunic… You are the one.” He raised one foot and brought it down upon the boulder pinning Link to the ground, making him groan in pain once more. “Surrender and come with me without a fight, or I will rend her head from her shoulders.”

“N-No…D-Don’t do i-it…” Zelda clawed at her captor’s grasp, trying to maneuver her rapier in order to strike him in a weak point. The dragon knight merely scoffed, and gave her a rough shake, making her head snap backwards.

“Your Highness!” A panicked voice cried out, followed by a ferocious battle cry. Link glanced over to see Impa, the general of the Hyrulean army, charging at the dragon knight and wielding a blade larger than her own body. She raised it above her head, ready to swing it down and cleave the arm from her opponent’s body, when she suddenly found a blade at her throat. The knight had taken his own weapon, an immense pike, into his free hand and deftly made the Sheikah general stop in her tracks.

“I come only for the Legendary Hero.” Stated the knight. “He leaves with me. Now.” He raised his arm, lifting the princess up high enough that her toes could barely skim the ground. “Humans disgust me. I would have never expected the ruler of Hyrule to be so weak.”

“Release her, you monster!” Impa growled, having cautiously sheathed her weapon. “We will not fall to such cheap intimidation tactics.”

“I will only release your royal whelp when I have my quarry.” The three Hyrulean fighters could feel a heat beginning to grow in the air, coming from the mysterious warrior which held them at bay. “None of you are even worth a true fight.”

“Impa…you must…” The Princess choked out, “must not…fall…” Up until this point, Link had remained completely silent, thinking about his options. Upon hearing the knight’s demands and hearing the princess so desperately plead her general to stay strong, he realized his only course of
action. He reached up, grasping the ankle of the foot that pinned him and the boulder to the
ground. He gave it a squeeze, drawing the attention of his captor. His eyes were completely
obscured by the shadows of his helmet, causing him to look even more imposing. Link stared at
him with complete sincerity, however, and nodded slowly, never once breaking eye contact. He
agreed to give himself up, if it meant the safety of Princess Zelda.

“So it is settled.” The knight lowered the tip of his pike, and then hurled the princess against her
general, knocking both of them to the ground. He hooked his heel onto the boulder trapping Link,
kicking it off before bending down and grabbing the young man by the scarf and hauling him to
his feet. Within his head, the knight could hear his Mistress commanding him, the voice of the
witch drowning out his own thoughts.

*Bring him to me, Volga, bring him to me this instant!* The sorceress Cia’s words burned into his
brain, and her dark magic was forcing him to compel. However, now that he had the boy at eye
level, Volga’s mind was starting to move. Link’s blue eyes bore down at him with determination
and a hint of sadness at having to leave his princess behind. Something about that gaze struck him
as familiar, and long-buried memories began to stir. *What are you stalling for? Volga, I command
you to bring me my hero!* Cia sent a bolt of pain through his skull, making Volga growl and huff
out a cloud of smoke. He clutched his head with his free hand, trying to drive her out. He had no
love for humans, especially sorceresses.

“Remove yourself, witch…” He grumbled low. “I…will not…be controlled!” His mouth opened
wide, and from it burst a stream of flame. Volga spun in a circle, creating a ring of fire around him
and his captive, before crushing the young man tightly against his chest. He bellowed out a roar,
and let a pair of wings burst from his back. They unfurled with a sharp crack, and then with a
mighty flap, he sent himself up into the sky and far from the prying eyes of the kingdom of Hyrule.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The massive dragon Volga did not immediately head for Cia’s stronghold in the Valley of Seers, far to the north of Hyrule Castle. Instead, he turned and flew to the northwest, letting his wings instinctively carry him to his home, deep in the caves of the Eldin Volcano.

*What are you doing?!* Cia’s voice pierced his very being. *Why are you not delivering my hero to me?!

The dragon growled, and hugged the hero tighter to his chest. Within his memories, and within his birthright, he had the feeling that this young warrior was not meant to be sent into the clutches of a witch. No, something about him made the beast become possessive. Something about him made the beast think, “Mine.”

*You are my servant! Obey me!* The sorceress’s voice shrieked as she used her dark magic to cause him immeasurable pain. *Do as I command or I will tear you to pieces!*

Volga shrieked as the sensation wrecked his body, immobilizing his wings. He began losing altitude, plunging down to the plume of smoke coming from the mouth of the volcano. Not like this! He would not fail like this! In desperation, he thrust his stiff wings outwards, trying to slow his descent. As the molten rock came closer and closer, he could feel dark magic beginning to seep out of his body, fleeing as his demise drew closer. Volga shut his eyes for a moment, almost ready to let the force of the fall take him. It wasn’t until he felt the small life in his arms clench up with fear and let out a whimper that his eyes snapped back open. He would not allow his quarry to perish, not like this! With a great shout, he broke free of his imprisonment and began to flap his wings furiously, trying to force himself to slow. The pool of lava was still approaching, but he knew that it would be deep enough to sustain him. No fire could kill a dragon, and neither could molten rock. Fire could easily kill a human, however. He hadn’t thought about that.

As they dropped low enough to feel the searing heat rising from the pool, Volga shifted so that his young hero was facing the sky, and quickly thrust him up and to the side. He heard a crunching noise as Link slammed into the wall of the crater, but he was relieved when he fell to the rocks below, mostly just stunned. He, however, plunged immediately into the magma, and began to sink. The rock seared him almost uncomfortably as he got deeper and deeper into the pool, a minor annoyance. He could not breathe, and his massive form was creating a vacuum that continued to suck him down deeper. Summoning the power of his birthright, Volga withdrew himself, returning to his human form. The closure of the space around him managed to push him back up, and he clawed his way back to the surface of the pool.

To his surprise, the young hero was looking down at him with an expression of what looked almost like concern for his life. He scrambled backwards when the dragon knight burst upwards, exhaling a stream of molten rock before drawing in a gulp of air. He pulled himself to a shallow spot near the edge of the crater and managed to get on his feet, feeling the hot substance pouring off of his body. He looked down and let out a short curse, for the intense heat had mostly mangled his armor. While the metal could withstand flame, the heat of the earth itself was far too strong. “Flimsy craft…” He muttered to himself, beginning to strip off the ruined pieces. To his surprise, only his helmet had managed to escape unscathed. When he finally managed to wrest the metal from his body, his sensitive ears picked up on a small gasp coming from his captured hero. He glanced over to spy the boy staring at him with wide eyes and—a blush upon his cheek? It was then that Volga
remembered that he was standing, completely unscathed, in little more than his underclothes, with molten rock streaming off of his body. “Why do you stare?” He asked. “Do humans have problems with seeing others in states of undress?”

To his surprise, Link nodded, tucking his head down to his chest. He then bolted back upright, a glowing ball of light emerging from underneath his scarf. “Aah!” He exclaimed, nearly falling over backwards.

“Link, are you okay?” Asked the small fairy, hurriedly bouncing about his head, checking him for injuries. When the human brushed her off, she quickly rose to meet the dragon’s gaze. “You! What’s the big idea, trying to kill the princess, and then grabbing us and flying away!” The tiny creature surprisingly showed no fear.

“Calm yourself, tiny creature. To harm him was not my intent.” He huffed, a plume of smoke emerging from his nostrils.

“Then what exactly were you planning to do?” The fairy bobbed up and down, nervously floating back and forth between the dragon and her boy.

“A sorceress…she…” His sentence was cut off by a soft groan coming from the young hero. Sweat was pouring down his face, which had turned an uncomfortable shade of red. His breathing had increased rapidly, and his body was slumping forward. Without a word, Volga strode forward and scooped the Hylian boy into his arms, and carried him through a tunnel carved into the rock. As they got further and further away from the heat, his condition stabilized to the point that he could sit up on his own. The dragon brought him to a chamber that he personally thought was too cool for his liking, but seemed to be a perfect temperature for humans. He set the boy down in an indentation, letting it cradle his body. “I forget that humans require cooler temperatures. Stay here. I will return with water.” He didn’t quite know why he said that, or why he went off to collect things to make the human more comfortable. But, he did it anyways.

He first headed to the chambers inhabited by his trusted Lizard-men, greeting them in their tradition, with a hiss and several swipes of his tail. They were overjoyed to see their tribe’s leader again, especially after witnessing the evil witch Cia forcing him to obey her with dark magic.

“Master!” They hissed in delight, several of the smaller lizards rushing at him with arms full of gifts. They laid their spoils at his feet, presenting him with the weapons and possessions of their slain foes. “Master, we have driven away all intruders in your absence.”

“You have done well.” Volga nodded at them, showing his approval. “You are strong.” He bent down and began to riffle through the pile. A pair of red earrings caught his attention, and when he placed them in his palm, they let off a small sparkle. “Who did you take these from?”

“We seized them from a Hyrulean leader, Master. They protected him from our fire breath, yes they did! But we took care of him, yes, with our tails, yes we did!” The biggest of the lizards looked at him for praise.

“Good. Continue to keep all intruders out.” He closed his fist around the earrings. “I have a decree for you. All of you!” He roared this last sentence, gaining the attention of every member of the lizard tribe. “There is a human here. He wears green, as bright as your scales. You are not to touch him, understand? That human is mine!” Volga spat the word with fire, to make sure that they understood him.

“But, Master Volga…we hate the humans. Yes, we all hate them. Why do we let this one live?”

“Because I command it! Damage him and I shall feast upon you!” He reared back, feeling the heat
of his birthright coursing through his veins. He let himself release that feeling, bringing his body to its true form. He roared, loudly, causing chunks of rock to detach from the ceiling and fall down among the crowd, scattering them. Satisfied that his message was received, he gingerly picked up a chunk of meat and a flagon of water with his tail, in order to bring them to his human.

His human... Something about those words made his chest sear with fulfillment. He hurriedly strode back to the chamber where he left the human, eagerly dropping the gifts in front of him. The boy, who had been dozing, was startled awake by the sudden reappearance of the dragon. His jaw dropped open at the sight, seeing as how Volga nearly filled the whole cavern. Link scrambled backwards a bit when the tail approached him, presenting him with the offering of food. His hand immediately went for the meat, but it hesitated when he realized that it was still raw. He shrunk back, looking defeated. It was then that the dragon carefully placed the earrings in front of him, scooting them forward with his nose. Link stared at them for a moment, immobile, until the dragon pointed at them with his snout and letting out a huff of smoke. With trembling fingers, the boy carefully replaced his blue studs with the red hoops. As soon as they were in place, Volga drew in a breath of air and exhaled a stream of flame over both the boy and the uncooked meat. Link let out a shriek of pain, expecting to be burned alive, but was absolutely astounded when he came away from the experience completely unharmed. He let out a soft noise of surprise now, hands tremulously running over his clothing, amazed at how he was fine.

Contented, Volga took a deep breath inwards and allowed himself to shrink to his human form. He reached out for the sizzling food, tearing off a chunk in his hand. It was cooked well enough that it wouldn’t kill him, and that was good enough. He let his teeth sink in, feeling juice run down his chin and drip to the ground. He pulled off another piece and offered it to the Hylian boy, hearing his stomach growl. He watched in amusement as the human dug in, feeling a sense of contentment rush over his body. He had a strong sentiment that this was right, that this was the way that his life was supposed to be: sitting in a cavern, without his armor, allowing his guard to be down because he was in the presence of his human. “You are going to stay here.” He announced once he had finished his food. He waited for a response, but none came from the human. “Speak, boy. Say something.”

The boy remained quiet, instead letting his annoying fairy companion do the talking. “He doesn’t like talking, so I do it for him.” She bobbed up and down in the air. “And we’re not going to stay here with you!”

“That is not for you to decide.” Volga frowned, most of his face still hidden by his helm. “I did not defy an order that nearly killed me just to prattle with an insect.” The fairy puffed up and began to chime angrily, but the human lifted his hand, allowing her to settle in his palm and begin to calm down. He murmured to her, in a voice so soft that even the dragon’s ears could barely pick up on it. It sounded like he was mimicking a song, something without words. “You...don’t speak, do you.” The dragon slowly came to that conclusion, a heavy sensation beginning to settle in his chest. Something about that did not seem right. “You have a voice; why do you not use it?”

“Don’t tell him anything! The big blowhard won’t understand you anyways.” The fairy, now nestled under Link’s chin, was still quick to shoot out a witty retort. The boy chastised her with a soft stroke of his fingertip, guiding her back to her usual spot underneath his scarf. Then, to Volga’s amazement, he opened his mouth and began to speak. The words he made were not that of the modern Hyrulean language, but of a more ancient dialect, the one that humans used when they worshiped the single goddess Hylia. That language had not been spoken in the recent memory of any humans of Hyrule, and had been nearly forgotten about, except in the smallest villages isolated in the wilderness. Hearing that ancient language opened a new well of memories within the dragon’s soul. He had been there when that language was the primary word among the citizens, and he had lived through the transfer to Hyrulean. Luckily for him, he still remembered it.
“You speak the language of Hylia?” Volga announced in surprise, his tongue immediately forming the words in a way that the human could understand. In his rush of emotion, he reached up and pulled off his helmet, revealing eyes of emerald green which were wide in surprise. The shadows that surrounded them, instead of being merely cast from his helmet, turned out to be many fine scales which surrounded his eyes and then came down in points over his cheeks.

"You do too!" The human exclaimed, mouth falling open. “I’ve never heard anyone speak it outside of my village.”

“I was born in the age where this was the language of everyone. I’ve known this longer than you have been alive.” In a manner that surprised even himself, he allowed a soft smile to come to his face. He ran a hand through his hair, mentally thinking of how the roots were red and how it faded to blond as it reached his shoulder blades. Even when bound, the massive train of hair reached nearly to his feet.

“What is your name?” The boy asked, shifting slightly upon the rock, making himself more comfortable and even getting closer to the dragon knight.

“I have been called Volga for many years. I have another name, older still, but no human tongue can do it justice.” He gazed downwards at the scattering of scales that ran down his arms, ending in fingertips that seemed more like claws. “And what is it that they call you?”

“Link.” Link smiled warmly. His body tingled with warmth as he finally spoke with his own voice, in his own way. “But, I can’t stay here…”

“Why not?” The dragon asked, almost too eager to receive a response.

“I swore an oath to protect my kingdom and its ruler. I’m bound by my honor to return and serve to defend the castle.” Link looked down at his gauntlet, rubbing over his palm. He could feel more calluses forming there. “I need to go back…”

“Wait!” Volga exclaimed, suddenly bounding forward on all fours. His approach caused Link to fall back into a reclining position, with the dragon hovering over him exactly as he would in his true form. “You can’t. I claimed you. You’re mine now.” Heat began to pour off his body, making a sheen of sweat appear on the human’s brow.

“I never agreed to be claimed by you, Volga. You have to let me go.” Link stared back up at his captor with steely resolve in his eyes, determined not to stay anywhere against his will. Or, well, against his better judgement, anyways. The warmth growing in his chest and the flush spreading over his cheeks said otherwise about his will.

“A dragon never lets go of what is his.” The dragon growled low in his throat, fingers curling and uncurling against the smooth stone.

“You cannot do anything against my wishes.” The human braced his hands against the dragon’s chest—oh, that chest—and gave him a firm push. He reluctantly moved away, allowing Link to shimmy out from his trap. “If you ever wish for me to return here and say that I am yours, I would you earn it. Follow me back to Hyrule Castle. Fight for my cause, and help me end this brewing war.” Link stood up, strapping his sword and shield to his back. “When the land is safe, and you have proven yourself to me, will I consider your statement.” His knees were shaking as he made his decree, but he did not falter. He breathed deeply, and began to stride away. Volga remained on his knees on the stone for a moment, just considering what the human had just said. The stupid boy had no idea of how a dragon operated. Once a dragon said something was theirs, it was theirs, forever. There would be no sharing, no lending it out, no separation. He let out a fierce growl of
frustration as Link left, his body returning to its true state. He settled himself on his haunches before bursting upwards, bursting through the relatively thin stone which formed the roof of the cavern and burst out into the night. He flew in dizzying circles around the volcano, announcing his anger to the sky through his voice and his fire.

Chapter End Notes

Well, here's chapter two! To all 30-something of you who actually read this, thanks a bunch, and see you next time.
Link carefully made his way through the brush, trying his hardest to make it back to Hyrule Castle. But, with no map or compass to speak of, he was having a hard time of it. He also had no supplies with him, meaning he had no way to shelter himself for the night. He sighed as it soon became too dark to navigate even with Proxi’s help.

“Come on, Link, I guess we should bed down for the night…” The fairy let out a sad chime. “We can’t get back to the castle in the dark.” The hero nodded in agreement, and stumbled his way over to a large pine tree. Fallen needles carpeted the spongy ground, giving him a relatively soft surface to curl up on. He pulled his sword and shield off and leaned his back against the trunk of the tree, shifting so that his weapons laid across his front, in easy grabbing range. He loosened his scarf, pulling it off of his chest and winding it around his neck and chin, burying himself into the knit softness. He let his fairy companion into his warm nest, allowing her to wrap herself in the end of his scarf and tuck her small body between his shield and chest. He then closed his eyes, breathed deeply, and tried to get some sleep.

He dreamed, during his fitful moments of rest. It was the same series of images, again and again.

A small boy clad in green, and an even smaller red dragon were playing together in a meadow. Suddenly, in a flash of light, the boy was gone, leaving his companion all alone. The dragon sat and waited for many years, growing until he was large enough to wrap around a house. The dragon felt sad and lonely because his friend disappeared, and this lead to an evil force violating his heart and forcing him to do evil deeds. The dragon did not remember himself or his friend, and was only able to obey the evil.

A young man now, clad in the same sort of green, stepped forth to challenge the dragon. It was the same boy, and the dragon’s friend felt his heart break as he could not help the creature. With a heavy heart, he forced himself to strike the dragon down. As it lay upon the ground, a single tear shedding from one great eye, it managed to wheeze out a parting word. “Link…”

Link’s eyes burst open, and he vaulted himself forward, catching his nose against the edge of his shield. He whimpered in pain, clutching his nose tightly, and praying to the goddess that he had not just broken it. When the stinging tears receded from his eyes, he rubbed them clear so as to try and gauge the time. To his surprise, the area around him was filled with supplies. Somebody had built a campfire, and left supplies of food and water upon a clean cloth, large enough to wrap around himself. There was even a series of broad pieces of wood with fabric wrapped around the end, torches to take his fire with him. The young warrior stared at the setup in wonder, unsure as to whether these things had been left for him, or were coincidentally placed there by someone else. It wasn’t until he heard the flapping of gigantic wings that he realized, and allowed a small smile to cross his face. It would seem that he had a new protector.

Link made it back to Hyrule Castle the next day, where he was immediately set upon by General Impa. “Link! Thank goodness you are unharmed.” She clapped him firmly upon the shoulder. “Her Majesty wishes to speak to you as soon as you are able.” Her shoulders stiffened as she examined the young warrior. “By the truth, boy, you look awful.” She chuckled softly, letting her demeanor relax. “Your rendezvous can wait. You look as though you need a hot drink and something to eat first.” He flashed her a grateful smile, and she personally escorted him to the castle kitchens. There,
she allowed him to ask for his favorite foods, a big change from eating whatever he got served in the barracks. He took the opportunity to get a huge tureen of pumpkin stew, along with some crusty bread and fresh milk. Once his appetite was sated, the general escorted him to the tactical chambers of the princess.

Princess Zelda was standing over a long table, eyes focused on a map of her kingdom. Her left arm was bound in a sling, and Link could see the dark bruises around her neck from the force of Volga’s grip. The Hero felt a wave of shame wash over him for even allowing that to happen. He should have been by her side at all times, preventing any harm from befalling his liege. Zelda, however, had a different idea about the situation. “Link!” She exclaimed, pulling her hand off of the map spread across the table. “You’re safe!” She rushed forward to the green-clad hero, extending her arm almost as if she couldn’t believe he were there. “When the dragon knight flew off, we were all worried that you would never return.”

“We almost didn’t!” Proxi flew out from underneath Link’s scarf and hovered at eye level. “We almost got dropped into a volcano!”

“How in the world did you get out of that?” A captain asked, pulling off his blue-crested helmet.

“Wait a minute, brother.” A Goron peered at Link’s earrings. “Are those fireshield earrings? I’ve only heard of a few pairs of those existing, and even then they were reserved for heroes who assist my people.”

“That’s the weird thing about it. After that crazy dragon dropped us—he fell into the lava, we didn’t—he went and got Link those earrings. And some food too. It was…surprising, to say the least.” Her voice trailed awkwardly.

“Tell me, what was this dragon’s name again?”

“He calls himself Volga.”

“I know of that name.” The Goron closed his eyes and crossed his stony arms. “He is the chief of the Lizard-Men, and rules them from deep within the caves. He has been there for at least a thousand years, and as far as I know, he’s never had a quarrel with humans…”

“So why is a neutral dragon working with a witch in order to try and destroy the kingdom?” Impa rubbed her forehead, crossing to the head of the table in order to look at the map. “Eldin Volcano is leagues from here, there surely can’t be anything that he wants.”

“Well, he kept muttering at himself, like he was talking to somebody who we couldn’t see.” Proxi fluttered to the princess. “I think that the witch was doing something to his mind to make him do what she wants. Dark magic, maybe?”

“No one should have to live through that.” Zelda shook her head at the thought. “Should we assist him?”

“Young Highness, that dragon nearly took your head off. Fascination with Link or no, he’s far too dangerous to associate with.” The Sheikah general rebutted, fingers toying with the end of the short braid hanging by her ear. “We should focus on putting him out of commission, so that we can strike a blow to the witch and defeat her.”

Zelda let out a small sigh. “You are the only one who knows much about him. What is your opinion, Link…Link?” To her surprise, the knight had slipped out of the room.
He didn’t know why, but something had told Link to go back into the castle courtyard. It was already swarming with stonemasons and carpenters who were trying to reverse the damage done to the great gate. The area buzzed with energy as noise bounced off the still-standing walls. Link just stood there, listening and taking in his surroundings. For some reason, he was determined to stand in that same spot until something happened. He didn’t quite know what that something was, but his gut was giving him a firm signal with a strong tug going through his body.

The results of his impulsivity soon showed themselves, as a great cry of fear was mustered from the squad of guards positioned outside the courtyard. They stood shoulder to shoulder, spears bristling, and quaked with fear as someone approached. Link charged forward, prepared to draw his blade and defend his kingdom, and was both surprised and relieved that who he saw was not a true threat. His draconic protector had reappeared, having regained a set of armor and his pike. The weapon was clutched tightly in his hand, but its blade pointed towards the sky, instead of towards the terrified crowd, with the smallest end sinking into the dirt, helping to keep him upright. He was not looking for a fight, despite the heat of his blood urging him to take a few swings. When fierce green eyes met blue, a rush went through both bodies. The hero felt a blast of heat going through his insides, and the dragon felt what he could only describe as a pleasant chill.

“Link!” Volga announced, wading through the crowd, brushing the soldiers aside like blades of grass. As he got closer, the hero squinted, and he realized that the dragon knight was not nearly as well off as he thought. His armor, instead of shining like a polished ruby, was tarnished and stained, and within the fine cracks running across the surface Link could see the bubbling remnants of dark magic eating away at the metal. He also had something clutched tightly in his left hand, fist balled as he shoved his way through the crowd. Link rushed forward to extract the dragon knight, getting him into the open expanse of the courtyard. He looked at Volga with wide eyes, tilting his head slightly to the side to convey his confusion. The dragon dropped his clutched item into the hero’s palm, revealing it to be a golden bangle accented by a small chain of golden spheres. “I took this from the witch.” He stated. “She is angry, and will likely try to kill me if I ever return.” His clawed hand went to his head, clutching it as his knees shook violently. “She continues to try…” He groaned, and suddenly fell forward, leaving Link to let out an exclamation of alarm and try to catch him before his face smashed into the stony ground. The hero struggled under his weight but persevered, straining to keep them both on their feet.

“Link, get away from him!” He heard Impa’s strong voice crying out, along with the sound of the entire group of strategists running to the courtyard. Link made a small noise of distress, and conveyed a message to Proxi to translate. The fairy then burst forth from his chest and began bobbing frantically between the two groups.

“Wait! He’s hurt!” Her shrill voice rang out across the courtyard. “Link doesn’t think he came here to do anything bad!”

“She’s right.” Announced Princess Zelda, bridging the gap. “I can feel the dark magic that is hurting him. It’s amazing that he’s still alive…” She reached out to place a hand upon the knight’s armor, recoiling sharply as the dark magic zapped her. “He won’t last long at this rate. Impa, transport him to the infirmary and then call every light mage in the castle. Link, you and I can utilize the power of the Triforce in order to help to save him.” She reached around to pry his fingers out of their deathly tight grip on his pike, handing it off to a captain. “Come, we have no time to lose!”

Begrudgingly, Impa followed the orders of her princess, and threw the knight over her shoulder like he was a sack of potatoes. She hucked him effortlessly to the infirmary and, just as a precaution, used some of the water magic contained within her Giant’s Blade to restrain his ankles and wrists to the frame of the bed. When Zelda frowned, Impa merely shrugged, stating that she did
not trust the knight not to thrash and injure anyone during treatment.

Volga groaned, only partially conscious due to the amount of pain he was trying to survive. Most of his body had gone numb by this point, but one sensation managed to stay, even through the wall of discomfort. His blurry eyes made out a mass of green, the hero clasping his right hand tightly. He stared for a moment and the image started to clear, and he realized that he was part of a circle formed by the hero and the princess. Both of their left hands were glowing with a strong golden light, and their lips were moving along with the words of a healing chant. He let out a soft groan, a little reassurance to himself that he was still alive, before letting his head fall back upon the pillow and closing his eyes. The group prayed to the goddesses to spare the scorching berserker, urging them to prevent his death from the hands of a sorceress so twisted. And, to the surprise of all in attendance, the golden light of the Triforce bathed the wounded knight, and the dark magic that dripped from him began to sizzle. The two blondes suddenly drew their hands back as if they had been burned, but the magic continued to work. All they could do now was wait.

Chapter End Notes

3 reviews in one day? I'm ridiculously honored! Thanks so much to everybody who's seen this so far. (Especially you, Gus...thanks for indulging your crazy fiancee!)

Anyways, this is the last chapter that I had pre-written out before posting. Everything from here on in is going to be live, probably written and posted within the same day. My spring break is this upcoming week, so I'm sure I'll have lots of time.

I'm always open to suggestions and comments, if anybody wants to give them to me. I have a tumblr as well, @Bespectacled-Bunny, if anybody ever wants to bother me there. I link to the new chapters each time I post them.

Okay, that's all. Bunny, out! <3
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

As Volga slept fitfully, he felt another strange dream come to his mind. His mind was bathed in green, but unlike the bright and comforting shade that featured upon Link’s tunic, this was a darker hue, like the depths of a forest. Something about it made him uneasy, for he could sense a dark presence within it. The evil crept into his mind, and he felt his body begin to change. He took on the form of his birth, and saw himself residing within a deep cave, and it was comfortable. He rested within a deep pool of magma, soaking his tired scales.

Suddenly, a great compulsion drew over him. A soft voice was whispering in his mind, telling him to leave his sanctuary and invade the home of the local Gorons, to wreak havoc and feast upon them. This was odd. He had never been interested in terrorizing those creatures, and he certainly had no appetite for their flesh. He preferred his meat soft and red, as opposed to the hardness of stone. There was nothing that he wanted from them.

Go. The voice urged him. They are weak. Crush them, make their leaders bow to you.

No, I don’t want to do that. Volga shook his head, feeling a long mane swishing over his back. They have nothing that I could ever want.

Do it! The voice commanded, repeating endlessly within the dragon’s skull. With each passing moment, it got louder and louder, until it deafened him to even his own thoughts.

“ENOUGH!” The dragon roared out, propelling himself upwards from his pool. In that moment, the evil presence of the voice wormed its way fully into his mind, taking over and beginning to control each movement. The dragon let out a bellow to the sky, and suddenly, he felt a pain in his underbelly. He blinked his eyes, and the interior of the cave had become something else.

“I can’t believe you’re making me haul him around.” A voice grumbled, straining slightly. Volga soon realized that there was a rush of blood flowing to his head, and his body hurt so badly, it was like he had been run over by a team of horses. It took him a minute to realize that what he was looking at was the back of someone’s feet, and the stone floor of the castle.

“Ugh…” He groaned, laying limp within the grasp of the one carrying him.

“You’re finally up!” They grunted with effort and unceremoniously dumped the dragon knight into a small bed. “Did you know that your damn blood can light fabric on fire? You nearly burned down the whole infirmary!”

“Sheikah…” Volga grumbled low within his chest.

“That’s General to you, dragon.” Impa huffed. “Listen, you need to stop trying to incinerate everything.”

He merely huffed at her, not deigning a response to her snide remark. “Where is he?”

Before the general could even open her mouth to respond, the green-clad hero dashed into the room, carrying a set of familiar red armor. “Ah!” He exclaimed, a word of surprise that was universal. He placed the armor down on the floor before rushing to the dragon’s bedside,
observing the bandages wrapped around his form.

“Step away, Link.” Impa placed a hand upon the hilt of her sword and drew upon its water enchantment, forming another set of restraints that would keep the scorching berserker down on the bed. “The dark magic may be gone, but he’s still dangerous.”

Link frowned at this thought, because he had seen things in this dragon that no one else had. He didn’t believe that the soul bound in chains was truly evil.

“I have no quarrel with your kingdom.” Volga grumbled, a puff of smoke escaping his mouth. “My only goal is to return to my home and live in solitude.” That was indeed his ultimate goal, but something else was still digging at his mind. He didn’t want to be in complete solitude like the rest of his life. He wanted to take his prize, his Link, back with him. Once a dragon claims something—or someone—they will never let them go. “Once I am healed, I will take Link and never return here.”

“Take Link? What are you talking about?” Impa’s brow furrowed in intense confusion. “You can’t just take him away because you want him.”

“I have laid claim to this hero. He is now mine, and as such he will come with me.”

She pressed the heel of her hand to her forehead, and shook her head back and forth. “Just…let me get Her Majesty. Link, watch him. If he moves, you have my authority to gut him.” The Sheikah strode from the room.

Link let out a soft sigh before he pulled a chair up and sat next to Volga. “You cannot go around claiming people.” He said in ancient Hylian. “No one here is going to understand what you mean.”

“What’s not to understand? I have claimed you as my own. You know that.”

“And you know that I have not agreed to anything.” The green-clad hero shook his head. “I will not come to a decision until the threat against the kingdom is eliminated.”

Volga strained against his bonds. “Just leave them behind! The witch will never rest. If you live with me, in my caves, I will keep you safe.”

“That idea is foolish, and cease your squirming!” Link frowned, reaching out to lightly whack him on the leg. “If you take me away, you’ll only bring that witch down upon your own home.” He pulled his hand back, staring at the three triangles upon its back. “And now, because I have this… I doubt that I can ever live in peace.”

“I have heard tell of the golden Triforce.” He snuffled, still pulling at the water restraints. “The blessings of the goddesses, and unlimited power...what would a witch want with that?”

“It doesn’t matter what she wants. We need to keep this power out of her hands.”

Volga kept pulling, this time making the bedframe strain. “If your general would deign to release me, I could lead you directly to her lair.”

Link placed his hand firmly upon the dragon knight’s forearm, feeling the pulling of his muscles. “Calm down… I’ll go ask Impa to let you loose, alright?” He pulled away and stood up, walking quickly from the room. He came across the Princess and her General, intercepting them on their way to interrogate the captive knight. Zelda stepped almost shyly into the room while Impa stormed in, examining their captive.
“Well?” Volga demanded, fingers clenching and relaxing as he waited for her to speak.

“I have discussed the situation with my chief council…” Zelda sucked in a breath, trying to figure out the correct way to deliver her news. Before she could finish, however, she was interrupted by her general.

“You will be executed for crimes against the crown, dragon.” Impa’s hand was in its usual place upon the hilt of her Giant’s Blade, and it was obvious that she was itching to unsheathe it and bring it down upon Volga’s unprotected throat.

Link’s jaw almost dropped to the ground in shock at the news. Volga, symbolic dreams aside, was in employ of a witch after the sacred power of the Triforce. His chin trembled with emotion, and quickly he reached underneath his scarf, grabbing Proxi from her hiding place. He whispered furiously to her so she could translate.

The white fairy fluttered up to eye level and began to speak, leaving the Hylian in anticipation.

“Alright...it’s time for you to learn the truth. You don’t know this, but...Link and Volga have a history together. And because of that history, he should not be executed.”

“What do you mean?” Zelda’s hand flew to her chin in surprise. “Link, is this really true?”

Link knew it wasn’t, but he couldn’t just sit by and allow the dragon to die an enemy of the kingdom. So, despite the lie, Link nodded seriously.

“This...changes things.”

“Your highness, this doesn’t change anything!” Impa’s brow furrowed, and she practically snarled at her captive. “Old friendship or not, he nearly tore your head off. He deserves to die.”

Volga started stirring again. “Kill me and you’ll never get to Cia. She’s the one orchestrating these attacks.”

“Cease your incessant squirming, lizard!” She used more of her power to tighten his bonds, rendering him immobile on the bed.

Link let out a growl at her actions, pulling Proxi back to him and whispering to her again. The fairy bobbed back up to serve as his mouthpiece again. “They’ve set up a deal. Volga will behave and lead us to Cia, and Link will remain at his side at all times.”

The Shiekah sputtered in dismay. “That is--you can’t really think--completely unfounded--Princess!” She turned to Zelda in her disbelief.

“It’s...actually not the worst idea we’ve ever had.” The princess admitted, having remained silent through most of the exchange. “I’ll have to go talk to the council, of course, and decide on a way to bind him to us, to avoid treachery...but it certainly might work.” She nodded to herself a few times before turning to face her general. “Impa, do you trust me?”

“A-Above all else, your majesty!” She blurted out, redness hinting at her cheeks.

“As I believe in Link. We shall start with a trial period. Volga, you have three days to prove to me that you can be trusted. If you cannot gain that, you will be executed.” Her normally soft gaze steeled for a moment, before relaxing again. “If you and Link can work together, then we will bring an end to the witch.” She turns to Impa, smiling gently. “Now, free him, and let us recall the council.”
“...As you wish.” With a snap of her fingers, the restraints disappeared, and the two women left the room.

Volga finally got to sit up, looking at where the magic water had left markings upon his skin. “You lied to them.”

“I had to.” Link spoke again in ancient Hylian. “It was either that, or see your head roll through the courtyard.”

“You didn’t have to.” The dragon knight stood up, eyes scanning the room. “My armor. Where is it? I refuse to be seen in public without it.”

“It’s over here.” Link gestured at where he had unceremoniously dumped it in a corner. “It’s...not holding up well.”

Volga sighed, picking through the pile. “At least I can repair it later.” He lifted his helm, tucking it underneath his arm; his green eyes sparked at the sight of the rest of the mangled metal. “We shall bring all this to the armory.”

“We?”

“Like you said, you never get to leave my side again. Make sure I behave.” He turned to the human, giving him a smirk. “I’ll certainly enjoy it.” He scooped the rest of his armor into his arms and strode from the room, leaving the stunned hero to scramble after him.

Chapter End Notes

hahahahaha that took a really long time to write, I'm sorry!!!!! I hope everybody likes it! Next chapter is probably not going to be as intense, because I live for fluffy interactions. See you next time!
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hey, what is this...? An update? Whaaaaaat?

I'm so sorry this took so long!!!!!! Existence has been getting in the way of life. (Also, BotW came out--SO MANY NEW CRUSHES UGH)

Anyways, please enjoy this random fluffy chapter. I'll be back soon with something more substantial! Promise!

Link found himself serving as a human shield for the terrified castle blacksmith, keeping his body between the trembling man and the dragon currently spitting fire directly at a pile of ingots. Volga heated the metal until it became malleable, and then picked it up with his bare hands and began to stretch and pull it, before placing the strands into the cracks in his armor. His arms were red and scaled, human-sized versions of his normal limbs. Using his claws, he remolded the molten metal to match the original patterns, before lifting the full pieces and pressing them against his body, assuring that the fit remained correct.

“I-Is this really necessary?” The blacksmith’s voice could barely pass his lips. “You’re going to set the forge alight!”

“I know what I am doing.” The dragon grumbled in response, currently pressing his cuisse against his thigh, wrapping the metal around himself. “If anything, your forge is too weak for my crafting. Your flames are far too small.”

The smith started to bristle. “Now listen here, you beast! This is the best forge in all of Hyrule, and I won’t just allow you to sit around here and insult it— “

“Shut up, or else I will eat you.” Link came forward and issued a firm slap to the dragon’s chest, the only spot that currently did not have still-hot metal stuck on it.

“What are you doing?” The hero glared sharply at him, eyes delivering the clear message to behave. “I speak only the truth, no need to stare at me so.” Another smack. “Cease that!” Smack. “Alright, alright. If you remove that yammering smith, I’ll be able to finish all the quicker.”

Link looked over his shoulder, eyes softened in apology. The blacksmith threw up his hands in frustration and stormed out, muttering that he was going to tell the General about all that had occurred.

“If you’re going to stay, you shouldn’t antagonize the people who live here…” The Hylian said softly, wiping sweat off his brow. He felt like he may as well melt, it was so hot in the smithy.

“I wasn’t.” The dragon scoffed, now peeling the formed metal from his body. “You have to be tough on people who are beneath you. It’s better for them.”

“Well, that may be the case in your cave, but not here.” He frowned, wiping his forehead with the end of his scarf. “No one in this castle is your underling.”
Volga shrugged his shoulders. “We’ll see.” He dunked each of his armor pieces in a trough of water, cooling them to assure they held their shape. “I believe I have done as much as I can for now. I hunger, and must hunt.”

The Hylian shook his head at the dragon. “You know, we have a kitchen here. It is freely accessible to all residents of the castle. And I guess that means you now too.”

“Your human appetites do not compare to mine. I require much more than all of you would.” He rolled his shoulders, showing off how tight his leather undershirt was. “If there are livestock here, I would take one.”

Link thought for a moment, recalling a ranch outside the town. “Well…there’s Romani Ranch, outside the castle town. Perhaps, if we implore the general’s permission…”

“Then we shall go.” The dragon exited the smithy, golden eyes squinting at the brightness of the sun and the touch of the cool wind. He sniffed carefully. “I can almost smell them now.”

He chuckled a little bit. “Is that so? What do you smell?”

“A hint of cattle, acrid metal, sweat…do not make me wait, Link, or else I may have to devour something else.” He flashed the human a wink, and laughed as redness flushed across his cheek. “Do my eyes deceive me, or are you blushing?”

“Oh, be quiet…” Link quickly headed through the central yard, fidgeting with his scarf, unwinding and rewinding it around his neck. He heard the dragon’s steady footsteps following him to the stable. “Can you ride?”

“I’ve never had need of it. I can fly.” Volga sniffed derisively at the thought of forcing a hooved animal to carry him. “If you wished it, you would never need to ride again.”

Link shook his head, smiling. “I could never say goodbye to Epona. She’s been with me through so much.” They arrived at the chestnut brown horse’s stable within minutes, and the Hylian began to prepare her for travel, rubbing his palms over her body to make sure all was well and retrieving her tack and saddle. Volga leaned against the wall, brow raised, taking all this in. Link’s movements were precise and delicate, showing just how much love he held for this creature. But, after nearly a quarter hour of preening and prepping, his patience wore thin.

“Come on, if you had flown with me, we would have been there by now!” He grumbled, stomach growling nearly as loud as his voice.

Link looked up from where he had been buffing Epona’s hooves. “Pardon?”

“When a dragon hungers, you let him feed. As soon as possible.” Volga stepped close, wrapping an arm around the Hylian’s middle. “In what direction is this ranch?”

“Northwest. Why?”

“We’re going now.” He swept the smaller warrior up into his arms and rushed out of the stable. When he reached a clear area, he allowed his wings to take shape and unfurl with a great snap. He bent his knees and then jumped straight up, propelling himself up into the air. Recalling the first time he had ever flown, Link let out a cry of surprise and clutched Volga’s chest, trying desperately to gain purchase and not fall to his doom.

“I was not expecting this!” He squeak-shouted, trying to be heard over the rushing wind.
The dragon knight threw his head back and laughed, wind streaming through his long hair. “Don’t cower so! You know I’ll never drop you.” All the Hylian could do was make a noise of disagreement and bury his face closer to his chest, bringing another bout of laughter. “We’re almost there.” His flight slowed as he dipped towards the ground, touching down in a great rush of wind. “I can smell the cattle. You had best warn the ranchers now.” He was salivating, feeling his jaw expanding outwards.

The green-clad hero took a few moments to pry himself away from his death grip around the knight, and readjusted to being on the ground. “You could at least warn me before you do that again…” He quickly shook his head. “Right, food. Stay here.” He turned and began walking towards the ranch, bringing Proxi into his hand and speaking in private with her.

Volga moved over to the side of the road and leaned against a fence post, listening intently to the lowing of the cattle in the field. His stomach was practically tearing itself apart in anticipation, as he had not eaten in a number of days. His eyes remained trained on the retreating backside of his claimed Hylian, however, and stayed fixated until he started coming back, after having spoken with the ranchers. He had only just nodded his head when the dragon’s instincts took over, and he pounced upon the nearest cow.

“I-I’ve never seen anyone eat like that before…” Link confessed as they made their way back to Hyrule Castle, on foot. “How did you manage that?”

“Being tortured to the brink of death tends to make one terribly hungry.” Volga shrugged. “I would not recommend it.”

“Oh…” He cast his eyes to the ground. “That was because of me, correct?”

He shook his head. “No. I do things of my own accord. I made a choice to reject the witch, and it lead to my punishment.” He looked down at himself, at the dark lines that still crossed his skin and burned slightly when he thought about the dark magic. “I do not regret it.”

“You don’t even know me, though!” Link exclaimed. “You had me captured, you could have brought me anywhere in the world, and yet you took me to your home, instead of delivering me to her. Why would you do that?”

“I…am not quite sure myself. At first, it was a simple act of rebellion, to fight the magic in my head. But now, it’s something different… I don’t think I could put it into words. I’m not good with speaking.” He clenched and unclenched his hands, staring straight ahead as he walked. “I keep having these strange emotions.” He spat the word out, obviously not used to using it.

“Well, if it makes you feel better, I’ll listen to what you have to say, no matter how hard it may be to get it out.”

“…Thanks.”

They continued forward in silence, soon reaching the castle’s front gates. Reconstruction had progressed further, with the stones that formed the walls having been stacked back to half their original height. Link smiled and nodded at the masons hurriedly scuttling about through the remaining wreckage, remaining glued to Volga’s side to try and detract from any trouble. He thought they had made it through without incident, but then a soldier came running out from the door.

“Hero! Hero!” He called out, spying Link and dashing over. “The council has requested to see you
and the captive. Immediately!"

“Captive?” The dragon knight grumbled. Hadn’t this issue been resolved?

“No time to waste. Go! Now!” The soldier scampered back inside, leaving the two others to confusedly follow in his wake.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Upon entering Hyrule Castle, Volga was clapped in irons. “Is this really necessary?” He grumbled and shifted his wrists, completely tired of humans trying to restrain him. They really weren’t even trying this time. One simple flex and he could pop them apart as easily as breaking an egg.

“It’s an order from the General,” said the guard who was escorting them towards the council chambers. “You are to provide all the intelligence you have on the witch who is mobilizing against the kingdom.”

“The Princess and the General have already vetted him!” Proxi fluttered out from underneath Link’s scarf. “The handcuffs aren’t needed.”

“The comfort of the council is a priority. They trust the judgement of the Princess unconditionally, but he is technically still slated for execution.” He opened the doors to the council’s chambers, revealing a long U-shaped table that followed the shape of the room. In the center was a sculpted map of Hyrule kingdom and its neighboring domains, such as Eldin Volcano and the Lost Woods. Upon the reliefs were set small clay pieces that represented troop placements, color-coded to represent their alignments. Humans were yellow, Gorons were red, Zoras were blue, and some of the figures were purple. These purple ones were stamped with the motif of a skull—monsters.

“What is this?” Princess Zelda stood up from her seat at the center of the table. “Commander, I did not order him to be brought here in chains!” The commander nodded slowly.

“Precautions must be taken, your highness.” He was a sallow man, fittingly named Forewall. “Seeing as how this beast is the reason behind your injuries, I thought it only best to take the liberty to have him restrained.”

Volga let out a snort. “If you truly wished for her safety, you would not have treated me like a prisoner.” With a quick twist of his wrists, he popped the metal apart as if it were paper. The lords and ladies of the council all jumped up in a rush, shouting about how inappropriate the situation was.

“SILENCE!” Impa pounded the scabbard of her blade onto the floor, creating an echoing thud that brought the cacophony to a halt. “Councilmembers, we have been over this. Princess Zelda has decreed that the dragon knight will live, and that he will remain in the company of Link at all times. Now, if any of you would like to counter her orders…” she scanned the crowd “…we may proceed.”

Volga smirked at her ability to quiet a crowd. “The witch’s lair is in the Valley of Seers.” He stepped forward and tapped his finger on the middle of an ancient temple. “The easiest way to get there is through the Lost Woods and then pass through Lanayru Gorge and into the Valley. As he spoke, he started rearranging the enemy models, forming a map more accurate to what he knew. The Gorge was the most heavily guarded area, though the fastest way.

“That path is foolish. You would lead us to our deaths!” Forewall examined his movements over a wrinkled nose.

“What of the tunnels beneath Eldin Volcano? They bypass the gorge, but it will take much longer
to approach…” Impa rubbed her chin, squinting at the volcano model. The upper levels were mostly populated by a few Goron villages, but the tunnels below were home to the lizardman tribes, and Volga.

“The volcano is my domain.” He announced proudly. “Upon my orders, you may pass through unhindered.” Link, who had been silent up until this point, gave Proxi a message.

“Link agrees with the General’s idea. The tunnels are a safer route, and they keep our movements hidden from prying eyes.” She bobbed up and down like a beacon over the top of the volcano.

“Then we shall mobilize through the woods, volcano tunnels, and finally the valley.” Zelda made a few notes with a quill pen. “Council, you are dismissed.” They all got up and started shuffling from the hall, mumbling amongst themselves about troop movements and preparations.

“Princess, may I have a word?” Asked Impa, drawing her liege to the side as the room emptied. “What will you do now? The council is obviously going to demand that you remain here. They won’t stand for you leading troops in the field, especially with your coronation coming so soon…”

Zelda huffed, placing her hands on her hips. “We’ve gone over this so many times, Impa. I will not marry someone they try to choose for me!” She pulled her long braid over her shoulder, playing with the Triforce decoration on the end. “You know what I think about their reasonings.”

“I know, your highness, but…”

“But nothing! There is absolutely no law stating that I must be wed before ascending as queen, so I’m not going to do it! Hyrule’s fate has always relied upon the princess named Zelda, and it shouldn’t matter whether I have someone by my side or not.” She softened now. “And besides, I know how the legends always go.” Zelda looked at the three triangles upon the back of her left hand. “Now that everyone knows Link is the bearer of the Triforce of Courage, you know how they’ll start going on…”

“Your highness…” Impa’s normally hardened gaze softened as well. “You feel nothing for him, do you?”

“Not even in the slightest.” She shook her head. “You have been by my side for so long, Impa, ever since my parents passed away… I would think it obvious how my feelings play out.”

“Zelda.” The general said softly, causing the princess’s cheeks to flush. “If we… when this is all dealt with, I would like to tell you about my own feelings.” She reached out and just barely brushed their hands together. “But I need…I need you—” Zelda blushed even harder now “to focus solely upon the task at hand. If we crush the threat firmly, we’ll finally get a chance to relax.”

“And we can go on that cruise of Lake Hylia like you keep promising.” The princess teased. “I’ll row you myself if I have to.”

Zelda started smiling again. “So…let me tell you about a little plan I’ve hatched.”

Chapter End Notes

heyyyyyyyyyyyy guess who's not dead! I'm sorry this chapter is so freaking short, but I know its better to give you guys a little something just to remind you that I'm still
working hard on this. I love you all and thank you for tolerating me ;-)
Chapter 7

The horses were anxious, pacing back and forth in the yard as the army amassed. Impa overlooked the throng of people from the grand balcony, arms folded firmly across her chest. “I don’t like this plan of yours, Princess.” She frowned, glancing at the changing screen behind her.

“Stop worrying so much, Impa. I’ve got a contingency plan for everything that may happen between here and the valley.” Zelda poked her head out, showing her bare shoulders. “Now, could you help me with these bindings?” The Sheikah sighed and headed over, assisting her liege in tightly wrapping stretchy cloth around her breasts, flattening them down against her chest. A set of Sheikah men’s clothing was hanging over the back of a chair, and its skintight armor required modifications to the shape of a woman’s body.

“I’m still not convinced that everyone will go with it. I’ve been the only Sheikah in this entire country since you were born, and now I’m supposed to have a secret apprentice?” She helped the princess start strapping into the armor, placing careful padding underneath to protect her body and continue to transform the shape. “And don’t tell me that no one will notice that the princess is gone.”

Zelda merely smirked, gathering her long hair and piling it up onto the top of her head, securing it below a white turban. She pulled a few strands out, using them to cover most of her face, and applying a special glamour charm to change her features, particularly making her eyes a piercing red. “Like I said, I have a plan.” She yanked a scarf up over her mouth and nose. “Let’s get moving sooner, rather than later.” The disguised princess picked up her treasured golden harp and strapped it to her back, closing her eyes for a moment to get into character. “From now on, my name will be…Sheik.”

“Princess, in all fairness…that’s a terrible name.”

“S- Shut up!”

In the courtyard, Link was carefully preparing Epona for travel. Her saddle was treated with leather, making it soft, and placed upon a woolen blanket, to keep her body from getting sores. He even rubbed a special butter, made from the oil of plants, into her legs, protecting her ankles from sharp grass and insects. He hummed softly, a special song that had been taught to him by a groom he once knew. “This song has always had a special connection to Epona…if you sing it for her, she will come to you, however far she may be.”

Beside him, Volga was pacing, unsettled by the amount of armed men. He had been presented with a horse, and the creature was obviously terrified by his presence. He was equally disturbed, having never been fond of counting on another being to transport him. “You smell poorly, and I hate you.” He muttered as the horse reared its head, eyes wide in fear. “You are puny too. I would crush you.”

“What are you complaining about?” Link looked at him from the corner of his eye, busy running a currycomb over his mount’s rump.

“I will not ride this thing.” He frowned. “I trust my wings, and my wings alone.”

“You were lent this horse as a gift, and to show that you can actually be responsible for
sommething.” The hero shrugged. “And without a mount, how will you carry your gear?”

“I am responsible for myself and myself alone. I need no shelter that the earth does not provide, and my equipment is my own body.” He frowned, shaking his head slightly. The twitching tip of his ponytail spooked his horse, making it rear up and bellow in fright. “See! This is what I mean when say I do not like this thing!” Link hurried over to try and soothe the horse, petting its nose and making shushing noises at it.

“Fine, fine, then you don’t need to ride.” He sighed, looking around for a farrier to take it away. He waved the young man over, handing him the reigns. “So, are you going to hover over me like some sort of odd bird?”

“Nonsense.” Volga snorted in disbelief. “You’ll be flying with me, of course.”

Link paused and stared for a moment. “You—no. No way.” His stomach sank down to the soles of his boots at the thought of getting dropped into another volcano. He feared that happening again, and while he trusted Volga enough not to purposefully let him go, the idea that the witch could still work her magic upon him was enough to merit keeping both his feet firmly upon the ground.

“We’re not doing that.”

The dragon blinked a few times, eyes mostly hidden behind his helmet. “And why ever not? You must admit, I can get you to the witch must faster than just walking there would. Plus…it would just be you and me.” He said that last part softly, almost whispering it right into Link’s ear, making the Hylian start to flush.

“D-Do not tease me.” He stammered. “We are on a mission…” The rise of fanfare stopped him from speaking any further, all attention in the courtyard being drawn up to the balcony. Princess Zelda stood to address the army, the general and a mysterious youth behind her.

“Faithful servants of Hyrule!” The Princess announced. “Today, you will be setting out upon a mission of great importance. This witch, Cia, seeks to take the Triforce for herself and plunge our beautiful land into chaos. We will not let this stand!” The soldiers cheered loudly. “March proudly now to the Valley of Seers, and protect your home! General Impa will not steer you wrong!” She turned and curtsied to the Sheikah, who stepped forth with the hand upon the hilt of her blade.

“Soldiers! We march north!” With one smooth motion she drew her sword, pointing it at the grand gates. A dull roar of voices rose as the mass of horses and people started streaming outwards into the castle town. The residents cheered as the ranks passed, flower petals streaming down from the rooftops. Impa and Sheik rode close to the tail of the column, on a matching pair of white stallions, wearing tack with the symbol of the royal family. Link rode along in the middle, slipping into his position from his time as an ordinary guardsman without much thought. Volga marched firmly next to him, one hand upon Epona’s shoulder to make sure the two were not separated. He planned upon spreading his wings the moment they left the town, and sweeping his human away with him. The smelly beast could just stay on the ground where it belonged. Besides, it would be easy enough for just the two of them to bring down the witch. Volga had served her long enough to know her weaknesses.

“Hey.” The annoying trilling of the fairy’s voice snapped the dragon out of his thoughts. “You better behave yourself on the road. No weird stuff.” He huffed, blowing a puff of smoke at the vexing insect. “Hey!”

“Don’t lecture me.” He growled at her, annoyed by the fairy acting like Link’s keeper. The hero reached up and grabbed the little ball of light in cupped hands, bringing her back down to his chest and hiding her under his scarf with a soft shushing noise. “She is…going to be a nuisance.”
“She’s not that bad, once you become accustomed to her.” Link smiled softly. “And besides, she’s a big help when I don’t want to talk.” The dragon knight just huffed in response, making him smile.

“So, now that you are here—what are we going to do?” Impa regarded the disguised person beside her. “And what of the other one, from the balcony?”

Sheik grinned, their mask barely twitching to show their amusement. “It was simple enough to create a double. Magic of that strength runs in my blood, remember?” Their voice was dropped low, disguised so that none but the inner circle of the royal house could understand the true person behind the disguise. “This is a secret that only we know.”

The general nodded slightly, raising her voice back to normal levels. “Well, apprentice—are you prepared to see battle?”

“As prepared as I shall ever be.” The young person responded, eyes widening as they saw Forewall reign in his horse to fall into step besides them. “Commander.”

He merely huffed in their direction. “General, who is this young one? I have not seen them before.” He peered closely at the Eye of Truth embroidered upon Sheik’s breastplate. “As I was aware, only one member of the Sheikah still resided in Hyrule.”

“Lady Impa sent for an apprentice many moons ago, my lord.” Sheik bowed their head slightly. “There are still a few offshoots of our tribe, scattered amongst the lands. However, I regret that I did not arrive in time to assist in the defense of the castle.”

He sat back in his saddle. “…Hm. Well, are you trained?”

“I am trained in the Sheikah arts, just as my lady is trained.” They touched their golden harp, plucking a single note from the strings. “And I may channel these arts through the harp of the goddess.”

Forewall thought for a moment. “Her majesty has a very similar harp…”

Impa took over. “It is mine. I gave it to her, since I much prefer my blade.”

“Yes, quite…carry on, then.” He shrugged, touching his hand to his visor. “General.” With a quick tap to his horse’s sides, he advanced back to his normal position.

“That was too close.” Impa shot a quick glare at Sheik. “Next time, stay quiet, and let me do the talking.”

“Alright, alright…”

The army continued moving for a day, halting suddenly at the edge of a massive forest. The commanders immediately started buzzing in confusion and looking to Impa for answers—this forest was on no map. Indeed, even the soldiers who grew up in the town closest to the area had never heard of his forest, or seen it before. While the higher-ups tried to figure out what was going on, the knights and footsoldiers were stuck in one place, and decided to begin setting up their
Volga stood around, watching as Link dutifully unpacked his tent and started setting it up, practically just a scrap of white cloth that was stretched out upon some poles. It hardly looked like it could keep out a stiff breeze, much less any sort of weather. When the hero turned the other way, he quickly stepped forward and knocked the flimsy contraption over, the poles clattering as they hit the ground. When Link looked back, he groaned in dismay and started picking everything up. The dragon knight slyly took this opportunity to examine the hero’s rear. He wasn’t sure why he hadn’t before, it was adorable. His legs were lean, with distinct muscle build on his inner thighs from so much horseback riding. And that backside! If it were compared to a fruit, it was certainly a peach. For a moment, he imagined himself sliding his fingers over the round surface, giving it a playful squeeze— Link looked up at him, shocking him out of his thoughts. Those would have to wait until later that night, when he was alone.

“Have you ever put one of these up before?” Link asked, his tent still a crumpled mess on the ground. “I’m having trouble.”

Volga shook his head. “You don’t need it. You will sleep next to me, and I will keep you warm. If it rains, I will shelter you with my wing.”

“Thank you, that is kind of you.” Link smiled softly. “Though, if you want to sleep as you truly are, we may need more space.”

“I can find some.” With a swift motion, he reached out and drew the Hylian to his chest, wings snapping out from his back. Just before he took off, he heard a sharp call of “WAIT!” Irritated, he released the object of his affection, wings disappearing. “What does that Sheikah want?”

Impa rode up carefully, horse picking its way through the mess of tents and ropes. “You’re not going anywhere, we need you.”

“I am certain you can make due without me, general.” He grumbled.

“Don’t tell me your keen senses haven’t realized that this forest is strange. It sprung up as if overnight, and no one knows how far it goes.” She hopped off her steed. “You need to get up in the air and give us a size estimate. This is throwing off all of our plans.”

Volga huffed in displeasure, looking at Link to object. The hero merely nodded in agreement at what Impa said, as she certainly had a point. “…Fine. You’ll all need to step back though.” When he had sufficient space, he let his wings spread out again and launched himself into the sky.

From above, the forest seemed almost endless. It stretched from just a few miles beyond the castle almost to the base of Eldin Volcano, covering a region that normally was plains. Upon closer inspection, all the trees seemed to be of the same species, with eerily similar heights and growth patterns. They blanketed the area with an unbroken swath of green, and not a single bird called in alarm when the dragon’s shadow moved over the boughs. “Too quiet.” Volga muttered quietly to himself, eyes almost hazing over from how boring everything looked. Having seen enough, he wheeled around to return to camp.

Just as he was approaching the outskirts of the forest, something intense and bright filled his vision. He rolled to the side just in time to avoid whatever had just been launched at him—it looked like a ball of electricity. He cursed as more of them came up from between the trees; they were definitely being shot at him. He flapped his wings quickly to try and escape the onslaught, barreling down towards the ground at a high speed. He landed heavily on his feet, seizing his spear in his left hand and grabbing Link with his right. “Be ready.”
Before their eyes, two massive walls of white energy appeared from the edge of the trees and extended towards them, spreading apart to form a clear path and shoving all the other soldiers away. A single figure appeared from the darkness, too far away to make out their face. “Step away from him!” They cried out, in a woman’s voice. A noise like the rustling of pages rose up and they came rushing forwards, propelling themselves with little bursts of energy. The mysterious attacker turned out to be a young woman wearing white, with hair of shocking blue. She held a spellbook in one hand, and used it to terrifying affect, volleying more lightning at the dragon. “I will not allow Cia to get her hands on the hero!”

Link grabbed his shield, leaping in front of Volga. The metal attracted the electricity, and the scorching berserker could only watch in fear as the Hylian collapsed on the ground, body shaking as tendrils of magic coursed through him.

“Link!” He cried out, dropping to his knees as the object of his affection convulsed. His hands tightly grasped at his shoulders, trying to hold him down until the pain passed. Amazingly, he did not faint, a testament to his strength. Volga now glared at the sorceress with a snarl, prepared to launch himself forwards and tear her limb from limb.

This sorceress, though, looked utterly confused. “Wait…he protected you?” She nearly dropped her book. “This isn’t like Cia at all, what’s she playing at?”

Impa stepped forth, using her sheathed blade as a barrier between the two parties. “No one is playing at anything. The dragon knight is, for some reason, on our side.”

“Impossible.” The sorceress whispered. In the span of a blink, she used her power to jump forward, appearing in front of Volga. She reached out and tapped his head, a little flash of blue magic appearing at her fingertips. “I don’t believe it…you broke her spell…”

“Stop being cryptic and tell us what you want.”

“Of course, where are my manners!” She straightened up, putting on a cheery smile. “My name is Lana, and I have much to tell you about as I lead you through my forest.”
Chapter 8

Every time the sorceress Lana even glanced at Link, Volga felt his hackles rise. Her looks were quick, fleeting, and every time their eyes met she would look away with a blush. The dragon could almost smell the changes in her body, and the rush that kept going through her. He was tempted to snarl whenever she came close, holding his spear ever the tighter. He wasn’t quite sure why, but something about her kept making the primal fire inside him scream “witch.”

“Okay, everyone!” Lana announced, clapping her hands together after chattering with the general for a moment. “I’m sorry about making this little detour.” He turned away from the army and brought out her spellbook, placing it opened on the ground and plucking out a few loose pages. She carefully positioned them like the point of a star, with the book at the front, facing the trees. She then produced a wooden spear from what seemed to be a magical pocket, planting it on the ground and then looking through a blue jewel implanted in the head. She spoke through it, “Okay, Great Deku Tree, we can retreat now! These guys are good!”

A rumble rose up from the depths of the forest, sounding almost like a great chuckle, and the trees began to shrink back. Volga snapped his wings outwards and took to the sky, watching the forest reduce to its normal size. Now, instead of stretching to the base of the volcano, it was back to the dozen hectares it had always covered. He came back down, landing in a cloud of dirt.

“That was a powerful illusion.” The knight stated, examining the torn-up ground.

“That was all real, dragon.” Lana frowned, cleaning up her casting materials. “And don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing.”

He frowned, eyes hidden behind his helm. “Your meaning?”

“I know everything about Cia. How she thinks, how she acts. You’re not here because you want to be.” She clapped her book shut. “You’re not under her spell anymore, so how have they bound you?”

“By the stones, must I explain this to everyone these days?” He huffed at her. “I stay to assist the army because I wish to watch that damnable witch burn for what she did to me.”

“…Uh-huh.”

“Believe me, or do not, it is not my concern what you do. But know this—I remain here of my own volition.” He breathed in, an interesting scent making his nostrils flare. His tongue flicked out, grabbing more of it. “Ah…so, that is how you know so much of magic and the witch.”

“I-I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Lana squeaked, eyes wide like saucers. “Cia and I hail from the same magical clan, that’s why I can tell what her spells are.”

Volga merely smirked at her. “Then tell me…why do you two have the same exact scent?”

Almost immediately, a magical page slapped itself over his mouth. “You can’t tell anyone.” The sorceress looked like she was about to jump out of her skin. “You can’t tell anyone. I’ll—I’ll put a spell on you!”

He pursed his lips at her, puffing out a flame that pushed the paper away enough for him to grab it and crush it in a clawed hand. “I am not your plaything.”
“But what about what you just found out?” She hissed, fishing the paper out of his hand and trying to smooth it back out. “No one will trust me if they find out.”

“No one necessarily trusts you now, after you attacked us. What exactly is your motive here?”

“I’m going to stop Cia. You’ll see.” Tucking the page back into her book, she flounced over to Impa and the commanders. “It’s time to leave!” She announced, completely ignoring the Sheikah’s flabbergasted look. “Come on, chop chop, do you want to get through this forest or not?”

Impa put her foot down, quite literally, stomping hard in the dust. “No. Night is only a few hours away, and have you ever tried moving an army’s worth of horses through a forest at night? We’re staying put until morning, and that’s it.”

Lana tried with all her might to get the army to move on, but the general’s word was law: no one was going anywhere.

Link spent the hours before sunset cooped up in the medic’s tent, being spoon-fed health potions and covered in poultices to soothe the rashes he received from spasming on the ground. Every time he tried to avoid the spoon or shy away, Proxi would fly out from her spot under his scarf and jingle at him, even going so far as to bounce off the back of his head to make him behave.

“Please, just take your potion…” Said the medic, their hands trembling. “He won’t leave until you walk out of here under your own power, and he’s scaring the troops…” They gestured over their shoulder at Volga, who was crouched in the corner of the tent, glowering. The general aura of disdain pouring off him was so great that it could practically be seen manifesting as a black aura pouring off his body. “Please…”

With a sigh, Link forced himself to sit up fully and take the potion bottle in his own hands, bringing it to his mouth even as his limbs shook. The medicine felt like a rush of relaxation flowing through him, helping the tremors stop. With a great intake of breath, he threw his legs over the side of the cot and forced himself to stand. His knees wavered for a moment, drawing Volga to his side in an instant. The Hylian threw his hand out, refusing the help. As the hero chosen by the goddess, he had to maintain some aspect of his pride, after all. He stumbled his way out of the tent on his own two feet, boots dragging in the loose dirt. Once he was in view of the sky, he looked up, squinting at the sunset, before his knees shook again, making him stumble. In almost a flash, the dragon knight appeared at his side, planting his spear in the ground so the hero could grab onto something. His gratitude at not being coddled was nearly palpable, and the silent show of support continued until Link reached his tent, which was still just a pile of sticks and fabric on the ground. He let out a heavy sigh, his body not in the right shape for reassembling the blasted thing.

“You are not sleeping there.” Volga decided, meeting the hero’s eyes. “I will be your shelter for the night.” He wrapped his arm tightly around the little Hylian and—after checking to make sure no one else was going to come up and tell him to do anything—he stretched his wings out and took off.

The dragon touched down in a clear spot still within sight of the main camp, but far enough that the myriad of campfires looked only like embers.

“Here.” He sat down, contented. “This spot is suitable.”

Link nodded in agreement, whispering a few words to Proxi before letting her flitter back over to
the main camp. When he didn’t speak any further, Volga thought to try and fill the silence.

“Link…thank you, for shielding me.” He spoke softly, as though gratitude were a foreign concept to him.

“I didn’t want you to get hurt.” The Hylian replied. “It was instinct, truly, but all the same…I had to protect you, because I felt like, at some point, I wasn’t able to…”

Volga stood up, closing the distance between them with a single stride. “I…never wish to see you in pain like that again.” He reached forward towards Link’s hands, stopping short just before they touched. Link didn’t pull away, so he took that as a sign that he could continue. Comfortable, far away from prying human eyes, he pulled off his gauntlets slowly, following them with his helmet. His golden eyes reflected the faint light of the moon, and Link was awestruck at how mystical he looked. He reached forward, scaly hands meeting calloused ones. As their skins touched, both their hearts jerked suddenly, making their pulses race and heightening their senses. Their fingers tentatively intertwined, and then squeezed together.

“Link…I don’t think I need to remind you of just how important you are to me.” The dragon knight said quietly, almost struggling to put his feelings into words. “Human ways are foreign to me, everything I think and feel runs deep within my bones, in my fire. And right now, it is screaming at me to protect you.” He squeezed the Hylian’s hands tighter. “From this point on, I shall not allow harm to befall you. My wings shall be your armor, and my claws your weapon. My body is yours to command, to do with as you wish, as…” He glanced away, almost looking shy “as is my life, if you would have it.”

These short, poignant words stunned the hero, and started to redden his cheeks. “Are you confessing to me?”

Volga blinked a few times, caught off guard. “These things are not secrets; my desire to be with you is very open.”

“That’s not what I mean.” He shook his head. “What I’m trying to say—and I think I know what you are trying to get across, but I would still like to hear you say it properly—” he was stumbling over himself, heart pounding like a drum in his chest “are you trying to tell me that you’re…i-in love with me?”

The dragon paused, the silence filling the Hylian with dread. From his expression, it was obvious that his mind was racing, trying to analyze what all that meant. “…Love?” Their hands were still together, intertwined. “I have offered my life to you. Do you not believe me?”

“Of course I do!” Link exclaimed. “Of course I believe you, especially after all I’ve seen you do for me.” He smiled, only the barest hint of doubt in his eyes. “But, you do know what I mean…”

“Oh! You wish to know if I intend to take you as my mate.” Volga leaned forward, fingers gently caressing the hero’s chin. “I must admit, in all my years, I have never considered the possibility before…” He smirked, feeling the smaller man’s pulse starting to race. “But, since I have already given you my life…I may as well add my soul to that, shan’t I?”

Link couldn’t deny the attraction he had developed for the dragon knight, so this offer made him feel almost giddy. Frankly, he was a bit of a romantic at heart, having grown up watching the kids in his village falling in and out of love with each other. He even had a faint memory of one of the younger girls insisting she was his fiancée, just because she gave him a pretty rock…

He shook his head, focusing again on Volga’s expectant face, which was close to his—almost too
close. Startled, he leaned backwards, taking a step and unintentionally tugging on Volga’s hands. He lost his balance, and the red-armored knight caught him, holding him in a dip. They stared at each other for a moment, adrenaline racing, gold eyes boring into blue.

“I keep forgetting just how amazing you smell…” The dragon whispered, causing a great blush to rise on Link’s cheeks. The Hylian blinked slowly, trying to calm his beating heart. He moved closer to his knight, counting down the moments until their bodies would meet, and—

In those few seconds, there was a whirlwind of change. The air crackled with energy, making every hair on Link’s body stand on end. Before he could react, Volga had burst into his true form and curled protectively over him, hissing loudly as a bolt of lightning shot out of the otherwise clear sky and crashed into the ground not ten feet away from them.

“What was that?!” Link exclaimed, tapping on the dragon’s wing. The beast merely growled low and refused to release him, eyes scanning the sky for the source of the attack. He could almost smell the magic from far off—of course. The sorceress. He frowned, figuring that she had shown her hand. She was shaping up to be yet another obstacle, much to his annoyance. Volga snuggled downwards, brooding over his little Hylian. Link realized after a moment that he wasn’t going anywhere until morning, so he cut his losses and was lulled to sleep by the rise and fall of the dragon’s side.

In the morning, the army packed up their camp and moved out, lead by an oddly nervous sorceress. Her eyes glanced wildly here and there, watching for any motion in the trees. She kept stopping them suddenly, practically jumping out of her skin when a leaf so much as rustled. Impa lost patience with the blue-haired woman acting so skittish, and soon stopped reacting to her signals. The general pressed on, ignoring Lana’s frightened twittering.

“I told you, we have a reason to only move at night.” She hissed, looking up at the sky, squinting at the few beams of light that penetrated the trees. “This sunlight is bad news.”

Impa shrugged her warnings off. “I am not going to deal with our horses breaking their legs on this terrain in low light. We move on, and my word is final!”

“I warned you…”

“What?” The general turned upon the sorceress, fire in her eyes, ready to court-martial her right then and there, when the younger woman let out a piercing scream, pointing up at the canopy. Impa looked up and saw nothing, furious at being deceived. “I swear to the goddess, if you do that one more time—!”

She was unable to complete her threat, due to something massive falling from the treetops and slamming into the ground, the tremor nearly knocking her from her horse. She turned to the source of the attack, and a single word slipped out from between her lips.

“Gohma.”
“Gohma!” Impa roared, snapping into command mode. “Shields in front, get a line of pikes behind! Archers form up and aim for that damn eye!” She wheeled her horse around, charging through a gap in the ranks.

If there was one word to describe this creature, Link thought, it was ugly. The thing stood as high as a house and skittered about on six legs. Its mandibles were shielded, and clamped together before its single, bulging eye every time someone even looked in its direction.

“Look out, Link!” Proxi flittered worriedly around the hero’s head. “You need to hit it in the eye!”

“Thanks, I figured that.” He groaned in response, trying to focus on preventing Epona from bucking him off. “That thing is enormous!”

Lana finally pulled herself together, opening her book of spells. “Okay, Gohma…it can shoot beams from that eye, so we have to be—” The monster fired over their heads, setting some of the trees behind them ablaze. “…careful.”

Link looked over to Volga, who was champing at the metaphorical bit to just charge forward and start stabbing. His spear was quivering in his grasp, and his tail had burst forth, nearly raising a cloud of dust as it furiously lashed back and forth. “Let me kill it.” He growled, his voice dropping to his chest. “I want to sink my spear into that ugly carapace. These things scare away the good prey near my mountain. I want to kill it.”

The archers loosed a volley, arrows thudding into the dirt all around the monster. It slammed its mandibles together, and when the arrows bounced off they sounded like hail on a windowpane. The pikes advanced slowly, creeping along behind the wall of shields. With one swipe of a massive leg, it shattered the tips of the spears, and on the swing back it sent the shield-bearers flying. The sudden wave of airborne soldiers spooked the first lines of horses, which all bucked their riders. Link clung tightly to Epona with his legs, but he slid backwards from his saddle when she reared up, falling on his back into the dirt.

Impa barely remained mounted, turning around to shout another set of orders. “Dammit, get the riders out of here! And bring more spears!”

Lana darted away from the general’s side, her spellbook open in her hands. “There are people at the Great Deku Tree!” She shouted out, book flashing yellow in her hands. “We need to go help them!”

The general looked at her, then at the rest of her ranks. “Fine! All footsoldiers with Lana! Spears and shields, with me!” She dismounted, handing her reins off to Sheik, who nodded and went to help the sorceress funnel the ranks to the second location.

The soldiers remaining formed up quickly under Impa’s orders, clumping up and forming a formation not unlike a porcupine, with shields locking together to form a dome and spears sticking out from the overlapping spots. The domes slowly inched their way around the monster, encircling it and preventing an escape.

Impa raised her arm to signal another attack when a massive burst of scales and flames rushed past
her, slamming heavily into their foe. Volga let out a ferocious roar as he tried to sink his teeth into the Gohma’s carapace, wings flapping wildly to keep up his forward momentum. The dragon ignored the general’s orders to retreat, making her fume.

“This is the exact reason I wanted him executed.” She grumbled to herself, watching the dueling giants bowl one of her troops over. “Control him!” She looked over at Link expectantly.

Volga let out a howl of pain as a clawed leg slashed at his belly, retaliating by shooting a burst of flame at the Gohma’s eyeball. It screeched as the heat seared its weak point, dropping its guard just enough for its opponent to get between the shields on its mandibles and force them apart.

Impa, thinking quickly, pulled her sword from her sheath and shoved it into Link’s hands. “Think fast, hero.” With barely enough time to position his grip on the hilt, the general lifted the hero up and threw him at the monster. He screamed as he soared through the air, landing heavily on Volga’s back. The dragon hissed, but positioned his head downwards. Link raised the massive sword over his head, charged forward, and swung it down, stabbing the blade directly into the monster’s eye.

The shriek it emitted nearly ruptured the eardrums of those around it. The Gohma fell heavily to the ground, quivered slightly, and with a last gush of blood, stopped moving.

Link stumbled backwards, his borrowed weapon still lodged in the carcass. He wiped a spurt of purple blood off his face, spitting some out of his mouth as well. Volga stood up and shook like a wet dog, sending the Hylian falling to the ground. He landed with a huff, staring disgruntledly at the dragon knight, who slowly shrunk back to his human form. “That was a good kill.” He flashed the smaller man a toothy grin, extending a hand to help him out of the dirt.

Impa stormed over to retrieve her blade, planting her foot on the monster’s shell to use as leverage. “Go against my orders one more time and I’ll put you down myself.” She growled. “Do you have any idea how many of my soldiers you could have just gotten killed?”

“I am not here to preserve your numbers.” He shook his head. “I am here to destroy the witch.”

“She didn’t send that.” She wiped as much blood as she could off her sword. “And we need people in order to kill her! You can’t do it on your own.”

“I just need Link.” Volga gnashed his teeth in displeasure.

“Don’t you get me started on just how strange your obsession is.” The general shook her head, using her foot as leverage to get her sword back in its sheath. She looked over at Link. “Just what happened between you two?”

The hero just shrugged in response, not quite sure himself of what exactly happened. He looked between the two, letting out a huff of annoyance.

Impa sighed. “I’ll go signal the troops to get moving again. You two, stay put.” She stormed off, following the trail left by so many hobnailed boots, leaving Link and Volga on their own.

Link looked over when he heard a crunching noise. Volga was doing something to the carcass—pulling off chunks like someone would pull apart a crab to eat. The dragon knight looked over after a few moments, something sticking out of his mouth. “What?” He mumbled. “Hungry.”

The hero could only stare at him slack-jawed. “You’re eating it?!” He exclaimed when he got his bearings back. “It’s raw! And you don’t know where it’s been!”
“This is a revenge eating.” The dragon chewed loudly, swallowing the piece of foul-smelling offal. “Give me a few minutes and I’ll be finished.” Link had to turn away in disgust as he continued, overwhelmed by the smell and the sounds of crunching. By the time Impa returned with the rest of the army, Gohma’s shell was all that remained. Volga, now in a pleasant haze, sat down at the foot of a tree in a beam of sunlight and leaned back with his eyes closed.

Impa rode up to him, stopping so that her shadow fell over his face. He opened one eye in annoyance but said nothing. “We’re moving out. No need for you to come along.”

“Fine then, leave your guide behind.” He shrugged, folding his arms behind his head. “You might be able to make it through the mountains without my help, if you can spend so much manpower fighting off the lizard tribes. But then what? You don’t know where the witch’s fortress is, much less how to actually take it.”

“We will manage.” She frowned, once again. “Just as we have managed until now without your help.”

Link came over, grabbing Impa’s horse by the reins and leading it slightly away. When the general protested, the hero shot her a fearsome glare, which he then turned to the dragon. The message was clear enough: stop fighting.

Impa huffed. “Fine!” She pointed through the trees at the mountain rising beyond. “We move to Eldin Volcano!”

Chapter End Notes

This Link empty

YEET
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As the army made its approach upon the volcano, Sheik held a parchment map out in front of them, plotting a safe route around known monster camps. They had sent scouts out to confirm no ambushes were waiting, and to their surprise, they did not come upon a single lizard.

“This is far too concerning for a mere coincidence.” Said the young warrior after the final scout reported back. “Why is the way so clear?”

“We haven’t met up with any Goron patrols either. Normally they send one forth from the village in order to help make the journey smoother.” Impa frowned up at the small stripe that was the mountain path. “Why aren’t they here?”

Volga looked up at the summit of the volcano. “Do you hear that?” He sniffed the air. “Stop the horses.” His pupils widened, gold eyes glinting beneath his helmet. “Stop them now!”

Sheik was the first to reign in their steed. “Do it!” The authority in their voice almost gave away their true identity, and immediately prompted the general to halt the troops.

As the command worked its way back through the ranks, an acrid smell rose from the summit. Black smoke began to belch from the mouth of the volcano, scent of sulfur wafting down and making those on the front lines start to gag. The mountain let out a shudder and ejected a series of rocks that crashed down around the base, raising a plume of ash.

“That puts a lid on our plan for using the tunnels.” Impa frowned, assuring no one was injured. “The only other way through is the mountain pass, but it’s narrow and under constant surveillance.”

Volga’s eyes remained fixed on the volcano. “Something’s gone wrong in there. I’ve passed three separate scent markings that haven’t been refreshed in at least a week.”

“Now is not the time for a squabble between lizards! We have something far more pressing to deal with.” Impa summoned a messenger to her side. “Tell the commanders that we’ll be taking the mountain pass. And have them keep the mages in high alert in case we get another shower.” The messenger scampered off, leaving the general rubbing her head. “Forewall is never going to let me hear the end of this…”

“Give the word and I will eat that scrawny little man.” Said the dragon knight. “He is ineffectual as a commander, and I do not like him.”

The normally stoic general cracked a grin at his offer. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

“But, that will only be after I figure out what’s going on in my home.” His hand tightened around his spear. “No eruptions should be happening right now. The volcano was dormant, it should not have awoken for another decade.”

“I too am curious as to what is going on in the mountain.” Sheik added. “And I have long wondered about what it is like inside the tunnels. The maps we do have are…less than illuminating.”

Volga glared over at the young warrior. “It will be intensely hot inside, and I cannot guarantee your
safety."

“My safety is my own responsibility.” They looked pointedly at Impa, red eye narrowing just slightly. “I do not fear monsters.”

“Those are the least of your worries.”

While the leaders were discussing strategy, Link was further back in the line along with his unit. Legendary hero be damned, decorum had to be adhered to, and that meant riding with the rest of his soldiers. He couldn’t tell what was going on, and was trying to piece together the new plan of action from snippets of whispers that moved their way back through the ranks.

“The mages are going to get us through the tunnels!”

“A Goron attaché is on its way to show us a secret path!”

“There’s no way we’re all gonna make it past in time. We’re all gonna die.”

That last one made Link frown sharply, pulling up on Epona’s reins. He broke rank, intending to move up front and tell them to make a decision and start moving again before the entire mountain fell on them. When he got to the edge of his block, the air took on the distinct scent of rotting eggs. Epona’s ears went flat against her head and she started side-stepping, her nostrils flaring wildly. Link leaned forward to try and comfort her when the volcano let out another belch, shooting boulders skyward. Epona let out a terrified scream and bolted off into the woods, ignoring the yanking on her reins and the heels digging into her sides.

She dragged Link deep into the woods, stopping to pant heavily. A patch of clover caught her attention, and the hero dismounted to let his steed have a nibble.

He couldn’t see the army anymore, and he couldn’t hear them either. By a rough estimate, he had been swept about a kilometer from the group. His commander was going to have his hide for desertion, and Impa would tan it further. He could practically hear their voices in his head, tearing into him for not being able to keep control of his mount.

As if Epona was trained to stay in place while a volcano erupted! She was a trained warhorse, not a statue! No, Epona was far too clever for that. She knew where Link wanted her to go, sometimes before he told her. Her horse sense had also never been wrong about where to find the freshest grass and coolest water. Yes, she was a good horse, and she knew, especially when her master spoiled her with carrots and soft blankets.

When she had eaten her fill, Link moved to remount, humming the tune he knew she loved so well. A crackle from the trees behind him made him pause and turn to look, one foot still in the stirrup. He glanced backwards, and when he didn’t see anything, he continued his movement.

The thing he didn’t see was two Lizalfos quietly breaking a glass vial, and sending a stream of black magic towards him. The spell swarmed around him, slipping into his nostrils and mouth, and making him fall backwards, one foot still linked in the stirrup. The last thing he heard before succumbing was a muffled cackle, and something about telling the witch her spell worked.
The second explosion was a general symbol to abandon all procedure and start running. Impa took charge of funneling the men through the entrance to the pass, her booming voice carrying over the panicked neighing of the horses. “Form up, ranks three by three!” She was shouting. “Don’t stop moving!”

Volga climbed upon a nearby rock, one he knew the southern scouts used as a perch. The three-clawed marks worn into the surface were obscured by a layer of ash, confirming his hunch that his tribe was either dead or had been removed.

He looked out over the sea of horses and riders, scanning the wall of blue and white for a single point of green. When Link didn’t appear, his stomach sank. His ears soon picked up on a frantic jingling noise, and he spotted a dot of white light bobbing up and down above a brown steed.

“Link!” Volga exclaimed. Epona had been grabbed by a steward who was frantically trying to calm her and get her moving in line. The dragon let his wings unfurl and flew out to the terrified animal, startling her even more when he landed heavily. “What happened?” He growled, snatching Proxi out of the air. “Where is he?”

“Link got grabbed!” The fairy squealed, letting her round body rest in the dragon’s hands. “Epona got spooked, ran off, and then—”

“Then what?!”

“Lizards got him!”

Volga snarled out a curse, dropping Proxi on the saddle. He leapt back up into the air, hovering just high enough to get back out of the stream of bodies. He stormed his way over to Impa and Sheik. “Link’s been captured.” He growled. “I’m going into the mountain to fetch him.”

“Damn!” Impa spat. “Fine, you two get moving. I have my hands full here.” The general reached out to grab her apprentice’s hand. “Come back to me alive, understand?”

The young warrior squeezed back tightly. “I will. Promise.”

The dragon knight growled in annoyance at their little display. “Come on. Fastest way inside is through the air.” He shoved his spear into Sheik’s hands and then grabbed them underneath their arms. With a wiggle of his tail, he thrust himself skyward again.

Link awoke in darkness, chained to a rock. He shifted his head—good, his Fireshield Earrings were still there. A few Lizalfos were standing guard just outside the chamber he was in, and he could hear them chittering amongst themselves. Fear began to settle in his chest as he pulled on his bonds. They were strong—he had no chance of forcing himself free. His hands were behind his head, the rock serving as a backrest—no hope to flip himself around to get his hands in front of him either.

Link ducked his chin down to his chest. “Proxi?” He asked. When the fairy didn’t answer, he exhaled slowly, starting to think about options. Because he had heard something about a witch, he knew he wouldn’t be killed—at least, not yet, and not here.

He needed a weapon. His sword and shield were nowhere to be found, probably confiscated along with the hunting knife he kept hidden underneath his belt for emergencies. He looked further down at himself—his entire belt was missing too!
The sense of powerlessness became overwhelming, making his heart pound heavily, alerting him to the feeling of his blood flowing through his body.

Think. He had to think. They were going to feed him at some point. He would inevitably be moved to the witch’s stronghold, either by magic or by foot. That was good. Movement meant opportunity. Opportunity meant freedom.

The swish of a reptilian tail against the stone floor made him perk up, instinctively associating the sound with Volga. He had almost forgotten about his devoted dragon! He smiled at the thought of someone facing all odds to save him. It brought a sense of security that somebody knew he was missing, and would not stop until he was found.

He settled backwards, squirming until he found a vaguely comfortable position, and started counting down the minutes until he was rescued, or could escape on his own.

Volga set Sheik down on a cliff leading to a narrow entrance. The heat made the air around them shimmer, and the young warrior could feel sweat starting to soak their clothing.

The reek of human sweat made Volga’s nose wrinkle. “The heat inside will kill you. If you have means to stay alive, use it now.”

“Right.” They reached into a small pouch on their thigh, removing a single blue scale tied on a cord. They slipped the cord around their wrist and tied it tight. “And thusly, the goddess Hylia gave domain of the water to the lord Jabun, who ruled it wisely.” They finished their short prayer with a tune from their golden harp. The scale around their wrist began to glow, surrounding them with a cool, blue aura. “There. The heat can no longer affect me.”

“An impressive display, royalty. Don’t look surprised, I can smell who you are. And frankly, I don’t care right now.” The dragon peered down the entrance tunnel. “Just don’t die so that the Sheikah doesn’t kill me.” He sniffed the air. “This tunnel is clear. Move.”

They walked through the narrow passageway, the dragon stomping in the lead. When the sounds of his movement started to echo, Sheik reached out to stop him. “So, what is the plan here?” They hissed.

“I’m going in there to reclaim what is mine. I’ll cut down anything in my way!” He growled back.

“That sounds like a good way to get Link killed before we find him. We need to strategize.” They urged. “Don’t do anything stupid.”

The dragon simmered for a moment before relenting. “Fine.” He inhaled deeply. “The scent is faint, but I can tell he’s still here. Bear left as you go downwards, he’ll be in one of the prison chambers. There will be a heavy guard presence.”

“I’m trained in the Sheikah art of stealth. They’ll never see me coming.” Sheik pulled a tiny seed from their pouch and threw it on the ground. There was a bang, a puff of smoke, and a flash of light—they were gone.

Volga let out a huff, trying to clear the scent from his nostrils. He was tempted to follow them down and rescue Link himself, but he knew all too well how fierce the lizard tribe could be, and figured the sneaky approach would be the better one for saving the Hylian.
So, he took up his spear and pushed forth, readying himself for a fight. He regretted that he was going to cut down his own kin, but found a rationalization in the fact that they were traitors.

He butchered the first patrol he came across without a second thought. They went down quietly, barely letting out a squeal before slumping to the ground in a pool of their own blood. They were scrawny and young—they must have been from the clutch that hatched just before the witch came.

He continued through the tunnels of his home, alarmed by how much they had changed. The rooms where they normally kept food were barren, no livestock carcasses drying from the ever-present heat. Instead the sandy floor was littered with small bones and rocky skins, the remnants of some Gorons. Volga nearly gagged at the thought of eating one; the low ratio of fat to bone and the tough hides made Gorons a poor source of food. To see his people in such a desperate state was beyond his pity—he was furious.

He ran to a larger chamber and shed his human form allowing his scales and wings to burst outwards. The top of his body brushed against the roof, but the restrictions on his movement were barely even an afterthought. The ceilings got higher closer to the heart of the volcano, and that was exactly where he was headed.

Sheik moved cautiously through the tunnels, sticking to the shadows when they could. So far, no alarms had been raised. It seemed like their infiltration was going smoothly.

They slipped into a crevice as a Dinolfos prowl by, sucking in a deep breath to squeeze in all the way. When the reptile was gone they worked themselves out, slowly exhaling in relief. Trained or not, fighting a lizard twice your size was no easy feat.

Their luck held up until they found the chambers Volga had described. An atrium opened up into five smaller rooms, with strong but crudely-formed chains embedded on boulders or into the walls. Only one of these chambers was guarded, and the sword, shield, and belt tossed haphazardly outside assured Sheik of who was imprisoned there. But how to get him out?

There were four Lizalfos outside the door, each wielding a ferocious, clubbed tail and carrying curved knives. Sheik, in turn, had a single kunai knife and a harp blessed by the goddess. This was going to be a real piece of fruit cake.

They grabbed a seed from their pouch and tossed it down an adjoining hallway, arcing it so it would explode just past the entrance. It startled the lizards and they jumped up, rushing towards the bang. Sheik took this opportunity to creep forward, leaping on the back of the closest foe. They got their elbow around its pointed snout and wrenched it backwards. It began growling and trying to hit Sheik with its tail, but the knife in the young warrior's hand was too quick. The gurgling nose and telltale sound of a body hitting the ground alerted the other three, who all rushed the warrior with weapons high.

Sheik stepped back and threw their knifed, A clubbed tail knocked it away, leaving them weaponless. They cursed, grabbing their harp and taking up a defensive strategy as they figured out what to do next. Getting something sharp was at the top of the list, right underneath staying alive.

They leapt backwards into a roll as they dodged a wide strike, pinging one of the strings of the harp as they fell. A tiny shock buzzed through their fingers as the note faded, and their face practically lit up. The harp was far more than a tool of worship—it could be used to save lives too!
Sheik popped back up to their feet. The lizards around them were all wearing metal armor, so electricity was the best bet. They plucked out a song that invoked thunderstorms and howling rain, raising a storm up around them. Lightning arced outwards from this aura, jumping to the approaching Lizalfos.

The noise they made as they were electrocuted would haunt the young warrior’s dreams for nights to come. The gurgling shrieks emanating from their throats was disgusting, and Sheik could only watch as they spasmed on the floor. After a few agonizing seconds that seemed to stretch out forever they lost consciousness, and were eliminated by a few quick strokes of a knife. Sheik promised themselves, as they cleaned their weapon, that they would try to stick to blades whenever possible. No enemy deserved a death as gruesome as that.

They grabbed a key off one of the bodies and ran into the now-unguarded cell. Link looked up with a startled grunt and drew slightly back, unable to see who had come in.

“Hush! It’s me!” Sheik said, light glinting off the key. “I’m here to get you out.” They rushed over to release the hero. “Your things are outside. Volga came with me, but I don’t know where he is.” As Link stood up, the floor rumbled, as if a great weight had been slammed down. Something far away roared, loud enough to make debris drop from the ceilings. “I suppose that answers that.” They sighed. “We should leave before he tears down the entire mountain.”

Link nodded furiously, strapping on his weapons again. He looked around, trying fruitlessly to get his bearings. The shaking was getting stronger by the second, and neither could tell if it was a dragon battle or the volcano preparing for another eruption.

“Come on!” Sheik rushed forward as the biggest tremor yet wracked the caverns. A crack appeared on the ceiling, spreading out into the prison chamber Link had been restrained in mere minutes ago. The stone creaked and then burst open, a mass of scales and fire crashing down onto the ground. Volga snarled at the gaping hole, eyes narrowing, fire spitting from his nostrils. The two Hylians, who had been knocked backwards by the force of his impact, could only watch as a second dragon with black scales peered over the edge of the gap, flames gathering in its maw.

“Well, fuck.”

Chapter End Notes

Special shoutout to my wonderful Gus for being able to answer weird medieval army questions, like "would a warhorse be able to stand still as a volcano is erupting?"

also Epona is best horse 10/10 would reccomend
Chapter 11

The black dragon growled as it crawled down through the hole it made, burning globs of saliva dripping from its maw. The weakened stone crumbled under its clawed wings as it lowered itself, causing it to stumble onto its two legs. It moved like it wasn’t sure how, almost as if it wasn’t used to its own weight. Volga’s keen eyes caught on, and when the other dragon approached he lashed out with a claw, catching the edge of a plate and pulling it clean off. The piece of armor thudded heavily against the ground and made the black dragon wheel back.

“It’s…wearing armor!” Sheik observed. They looked over at the dead Lizalfos, most of them crushed under debris from the ceiling collapse. “If I can just get their weapons…” They started backing away from their hiding spot. “Cover me!” They called as they dashed away, rolling behind a boulder. They couldn’t immediately find any of the knives and hoped the battling dragons wouldn’t come too close.

Link prowled out to the space between the dueling dragons and Sheik, sword and shield in hand. Unsure of how exactly to fight this foe, he carefully blocked stray bursts of fire and tossed rocks, batting them away with broad swings of his right arm.

Volga was having trouble righting himself from under the other dragon. Despite the enemy being smaller, it was much heavier, and when it pushed him through the floor a falling boulder pinned one of his wings to the ground. The one respite he had was that the black beast was stupid. It kept blasting him in the face with bursts of flame, not realizing that the red dragon was completely unaffected. Volga started battering its underbelly with his back feet, trying to claw off more of the metal armor to expose its soft underbelly. His foe pulled back slightly, giving him the chance to tear away another few pieces of its shell.

The black dragon raised its head, readying itself for another strike. It flinched when a rock came flying, seemingly from nowhere, and collided with the end of its muzzle, clipping one of its fangs. It hissed in discomfort and recoiled when Link threw another rock at its head, catching it in the eye. The dragon turned its attention to the two Hylians and began dragging itself over Volga’s body, catching the boulder with the tip of its wing and pushing it for leverage. The boulder rolled just far enough for Volga to give one last strain and yank his wing free, growling in discomfort as part of the delicate membrane ripped.

“Link! To me!” Sheik commanded, urging the green-clad hero to step behind them. They had found a few knives, and had one poised in hand to throw. The first one bounced off the metal covering its nose, and was summarily brushed aside. “Over here, ugly!” They shouted, waving their arms to keep the dragon distracted. “Come and get some!” They had two knives left. The metal armor had given them an idea, but it was far too risky in such a confined area. “Help me get that thing off of him.” They hissed under their breath to Link. “Get me a clear space.”

Link nodded, quickly gathering a few more fist-sized rocks. He dashed forward and dodged between annoyed snaps of the dragon’s jaws, alternating between pelting it with the rocks and being a general nuisance. Sheik continued to shout as well, occasionally twinging their harp to draw its attention. In frustration, the dragon slowly hauled itself off of Volga and pulled into the center of the chamber, thrashing its tail in annoyance. There was a wrought iron ball on the end of it that reminded Link of a chandelier, and made him wish sorely for one of the Clawshots he had seen the scouts training with in the past.

Volga freed himself from the rubble and pushed himself upright, groaning. He could feel blood trickling from between his scales at the spots that the black dragon’s claws had pierced, and even
more coming from the injury to his wing. He was unsure of his flying ability, and at this point
didn’t want to test it.

The black dragon suddenly let out a piercing shriek and wheeled back, a hilt protruding from where
its eye used to be. Sheik let out a cheer of success just to be knocked back by a flailing sweep of the
tail, smashing into the wall and sliding down behind a boulder. Link threw himself out of the way
and rolled a few times, popping back up and drawing his sword. The dragon pulled back and bared
its fangs, the glow of flames beginning to crackle in the back of its throat. Link threw his shield in
front of him and crouched down, bracing himself for—

The blast of fire never came. Volga had pinned his foe down by the tail, claws threaded through
the gaps in the decorative ball. He yanked ferociously on it and the black dragon lost its stance,
slamming down on its stomach against the rock floor. The force of the impact knocked off more of
its armor, revealing a hideous eyeball, blinking wetly from the joint between its wings. Volga
snorted in disbelief and yanked hard on the tail again, pulling it closer to himself. He dragged it
until he managed to stand upon the black dragon’s back, bending his muzzle down to rip away the
remainder of the armor. The other dragon flailed its head and neck in rage, snapping at Link like an
animal caught in a trap. Volga sent Link a pointed glare, an invitation to hurry up and kill this thing
before its flailing tore more of his belly open, please!

Link didn’t need to be told twice. The next time the dragon snapped at him he jumped straight up,
landing on top of its snout. He flailed wildly, trying to keep his balance as it thrashed below him,
taking a few steps forward and making sure to step on the hilt of the knife. The dragon howled in
agony and laid still for a moment, allowing Link to carefully jog down its extended neck like an old
log, stopping at the furious eye. He spun his sword around so the tip pointed at the ground, took a
depth breath, and plunged it downwards.

A blast of energy knocked him backwards, sending him slamming into Volga’s chest. The dragon
stumbled back but kept his footing, wrapping his wings forward to shield him from the onslaught.
Furiously hot magic spewed from the wound and made a terrible squealing noise that slowly faded
away, like air being let out of a balloon. When the noise stopped, Volga huffed in approval and
settled his wings back: the dragon’s body had shrunk, and was now nothing more than a withered
skin.

Link pulled himself out from between Volga’s paws, spitting out a bit of blood that had dripped
into his mouth. Dragon’s blood—disgusting! It burned his tongue like a hot poker. He furiously
wiped at his mouth with his hands, trying to get the taste out. Volga let out a low chortle of
amusement at the sight, but winced as his injured wing brushed his side. The Hylian spat a few
times on the ground before turning to the dragon. “Are you alright?” He asked hoarsely, reaching
out to pat him on the end of the snout.

Volga nodded a few times, unwilling to change forms with such injuries. He flicked his forked
tongue a few times to smell the air, and with a satisfied grunt he determined that the threat was
properly dealt with.

“Thank you.” Link gasped, quickly checking himself to make sure that the blood covering him was
someone else’s. Satisfied, he circled the deflated body and pulled Sheik out from where they had
gotten wedged between the wall and the rock. They were alive, and merely stunned from the force.

They rubbed their head, groaning at the pain erupting from the back of their skull. “You do
speak…” They muttered. “I couldn’t figure out why you were so quiet.” Link looked crestfallen,
not wanting to let too many people know about it. “Ancient Hylian. I should have guessed you
don’t speak modern Hyrulean.” The hero blushed in embarrassment, trying to wave off their acute
determinations. “I can tell you don’t like talking much. Don’t force yourself to do anything for me.” He smiled weakly in relief before checking their body for injuries. Satisfied when he found nothing overtly life-threatening, he helped pull the young warrior to their feet. “What was that thing?”

None of them truly knew, and had no time to dwell. Volga was anxious to regain control of the volcano, and with a huff and gesture he bid the two Hylians to climb up upon his back. Link sat up just before the joint of his wings and Sheik wrapped their arms around his waist, letting out a yelp as the massive being stood up fully. The dragon stuck his neck out and sank his teeth into the corpse’s neck, hauling it up with him. He cautiously flexed his wings and growled in pain as the injured one stretched—he would have to climb out of the mountain normally. He began to claw his way upwards, towing the dead dragon along as a trophy, and a warning—the king of the volcano had returned.

He dragged the body past what remained of his legions, taking a sick pleasure in the shock displayed on their faces. When they reached the lip of the mountain, he dropped his prize at his feet, stepping on its head in a show of power. He reared back and spread his wings out, flames crackling in his jaws. Link had the nous to elbow Sheik in the ribs and prompt them to cover their ears as Volga let out a ferocious roar and brilliant burst of flame, shaking the entire mountain to its roots. The entirety of the world seemed to stop and stare at that moment, even the busy line of soldiers rushing through the pass.

Link’s ears were still ringing as Volga tossed the enemy’s body down into the lava pit he had nearly fallen into weeks ago. The dragon huffed in approval as it sank down, and started picking his way down the cliffs. He reached the Goron village before his legs slumped out from underneath him and he knelt down, sides heaving from effort. Link slid off his back and crashed to the ground, ignoring as a soldier tried to help him up, scrambling forward to the dragon’s head. He knelt down beside him and rested his hand on his snout, concern written on his face.

Volga flicked his tongue out a few times, eyes closing in contentment at the touch of Link’s hand. After a few moments he pushed himself back up to his feet, bringing his head down and nuzzling the green-clad hero briefly before turning his eyes back to the mountain. His resolute look said it all—he had unfinished business there. With one last soft gesture of affection he departed, leaping up over the gathered crowd. His wings shot open like he was going to fly, an action borne of instinct, but he could not catch the air. He landed heavily and decided to climb back up the cliff face, using the closest building as an assist. His claws sliced through the rock and sent more than half the structure collapsing to the ground, making him growl in annoyance and scrabble for a better hold. The army could only stand in awe and watch as he picked his way back up the cliff and disappeared over the mouth, tail whipping back and forth.

“I’ll…make sure to send some masons to help fix that.” Sheik muttered to Link under their breath. “But do tell him to stop ruining buildings.”

“You two!” The unmistakable voice of the Sheikah general rang out through the village. She stormed towards them, the fury rising from her body in waves. “Debriefing. Now.” Seizing the two by the backs of their collars, Impa dragged them into the nearest structure. “Hylian army business, out!” She barked at the singular Goron inside, who let out a yelp of surprise and rolled out the front door. She dropped her subordinates down onto a bench and took to pacing in front of them. “Do you two have any idea what happened here?”

“We fought a dragon and reclaimed a volcano, general.” Sheik rubbed their ears. “I think I have a head injury, so perhaps if you could not shout…?”
Link groaned internally, preparing himself for the inevitable lecture about controlling his charge that he was about to receive.

To his surprise, no scolding came. Instead, Impa let out a heavy sigh, clapping her hand down on Sheik’s shoulder. “I’m…so relieved you’re alright.” She breathed heavily. “If anything had happened, to either of you…”

Sheik smiled up at the general, gently rubbing her hand. “It’ll take more than a couple of dragons nearly dropping a mountain on my head to kill me.”

“Two dragons…Hylia protect us.” Impa sighed. “At least the Gorons had canons, in order to destroy rubble coming at the troops. Without them, none of us would be standing here.”

“The fact that another dragon even existed is troubling me. Volga was the only one, for how many years—hundreds? Longer? What made another one move in now, of all times?” The young warrior rubbed their chin as they thought. “We obviously would have seen it coming. Literally, we would have seen it!” They growled in frustration.

“It was another trick from the witch, and now it’s dead.”

“And what’s stopping her from just finding another one?” Their nose twitched, the scent of old blood and monster stench had seeped its way into the cloth of their mask, and it was getting annoying. They yanked it away from their face, gasping out a clear breath.

Link made a surprised noise as he put two and two together, realizing who had saved his life. He moved from his seat on the bench and took a knee before the princess, bowing his head in shame. Some knight he was, forcing his liege to take up arms just to rectify his careless mistake.

Zelda frowned, reaching out to touch Link’s shoulder. “Don’t…please don’t tell anyone what I’m doing. The commanders would throw a fit.”

“And let me supplement that with an order: keep your mouth shut. No one can know.” Impa nudged his foot with her toe. “Princess, does anyone else…?”

She sheepishly tilted her head. “Volga found out just by smelling me.”

“He needs to keep his scaly mouth shut. Make sure you tell him, when he comes back.” Link nodded at her. “Good, that’s one less thing for me to deal with.” She stepped around him to Zelda’s side, reaffixing her mask. “The fact of the matter is that you’re safe. We’ve lost valuable time, but we made up for it by reaching the Gorons. They’ve pledged a battalion to our cause, along with explosives to breach the keep.”

“We’re so close now…” Sheik stood up, extending a hand to help Link off the stone floor. “But I think we’ve seen enough excitement. Let’s move again come morning.”
That night, by the fire, Link was approached by a sorceress. Lana walked up tentatively, hands fiddling with a golden accessory hanging from her shirt. “Is this spot taken?” She asked, gesturing to an open patch of ground next to him. The blonde nodded, patting the dirt. She knelt down carefully, sitting on her knees. “Thank you.”

Link stared at the flames, unsure of what to do next. He hoped she wasn’t looking for a deep conversation, for nuances tended to be lost when spoken by a fairy’s jingling voice.

To his surprise, Lana said her next in Ancient Hylian. “I don’t think we’ve been properly introduced yet.” When he gaped at her in shock, she only chuckled a bit. “I’m Lana. I’ve…heard a lot about you.”

“…Link.” He inclined his head in respect. “You joined us back in the weird forest, right?”

“Yeah, after I made most of it.” She produced her tome of spells and flipped to a page illustrating a tree with a face. “The Great Deku Tree told me that an army was approaching, so I worked first, asked questions later.” With a wiggle of her fingers, one of the pages detached itself from the binding and floated up into the air, where it folded itself into the same tree. “Imagine my surprise when I didn’t find an army of monsters, but the royal forces!”

Link reached up, mesmerized, and poked the floating paper. It wiggled under his finger and reshaped itself. Suddenly Link was staring at a copy of his own face that mirrored his expressions. He and the paper blinked at each other and then laughed. “I like this!”

Lana laughed, almost too loud, and then suddenly looked away. “It’s—it’s just a little spell.” She ran her fingers through her ponytail. “Hardly anything.”

“Any spellwork is impressive.” The hero nodded. “There were no magic users in my village.”

Lana suddenly blurted out, “They all miss you!”

“Huh?”

“Everyone in your village. You’re practically a legend, around there.” She flipped through a few more pages, until she found a sketch she had made. “The fact that the son of a farmer from Oikkri is strong enough to become a royal guard is one thing. But to be the hero? The one from actual legends?” She showed him the drawing of his village, and a quick caricature of his parents smiling. “Well, that brings more joy than I can say.”

Link reached over to touch the page, charcoal smudging over his fingertips. “That’s…” He pointed to a house off to the side. “Mine.”

“I passed through your village recently. I wanted to go to the castle, after hearing about my sis—my clanmate’s plan. I had to warn you.” Lana’s head drooped a little bit. She ran the edge of her fingers over the pages of her spellbook. “They’re so very proud of you.”

The hero sighed a bit. “The person from your clan, the witch…why does she want me? I’ve asked Volga before, but he just growls and goes ‘she’s evil!’” He mocked the dragon, making claws with
his fingers. “No one has actually told me anything.”

“No one—no one even told you what she wants?” Lana’s jaw almost dropped to the ground. “Are you serious?!?”

“I think that everyone in the army knows, except for me.”

“By the goddesses.” She grumbled, rubbing her forehead. “Alright, let me break things down for you. What do you know about the Triforce?”

He thought for a moment, brow furrowing. “It is a golden power, that takes the shape of three triangles, given to Hylians by the goddesses Farore, Din, and Nayru. It grants wishes when touched.”

Lana flipped to a blank page in her spellbook and took one of the feathers out of her hair. The tip was sharpened and stained black with ink—a quill pen. She licked the end and began to draw. “Each piece of the Triforce corresponds to a certain value. Like power,” her ink turned red, drawing Din’s symbol in the top triangle “wisdom,” blue for Nayru, on the right “and courage.” Green symbolized Farore. “And traditionally, the inverted triangle in the center is used to honor Hylia.”

Link started pulling off his left bracer and glove, showing off the mark that had appeared on the back of his hand barely a month ago. “I have the left triangle.”

“I’ll get to that in a moment.” She traced symbols onto the paper with her finger. “What do you know of the great war?” Link shook his head. “Well, in the ancient past, humans went to war over the Triforce, trying to gain entry to the sacred realm where it lies. Each of them wanted its power for themselves.” She prodded the book, and the Triforce illustration began to glow. “In order to prevent chaos, the goddesses split the Triforce into pieces, and hid them across the land.” Her drawing broke apart, and slid across the other pages.

“So why did it appear on my hand?”

Lana smiled at him. “The goddesses chose three souls to reincarnate over the eons, to guard the power of the Triforce, one of which is a shining princess. The second is always a man from a desert region.” She looked at him expectantly. “And the other?”

It took a moment for realization to spread across Link’s face. “Right, that’s—the chosen hero!” His expression slowly morphed into glee. “It’s me; I have the Triforce of Courage!”

“Yes, you do.”

He let out a little laugh of disbelief. “That’s why I accidentally blasted Volga with golden light when we first met!” A pause. “And why I could suddenly shoot beams out of my sword.”

Lana had to muffle a laugh with her hand. “Y-You blasted him?”

“Not on purpose!” He shook his hands in front of him. “I had to protect Impa.”

“She certainly doesn’t seem the type to need protecting. She can use a sword with her feet.”

He laughed. “I know!”

“Okay, back to the topic at hand.” She breathed in deep, trying to regain her serious demeanor. “Cia desperately wishes to get her hands on the Triforce, for reasons I cannot yet say.”
“Well, at least that explains why she keeps trying to capture me.” He crossed his arms over his chest. Something was telling him that her obsession went deeper still.

Lana sighed, snapping her book shut and tucking her quill away. “I have my doubts that a full assault is the best plan of action. From what I have sensed of her magic, it is going down a dark path, one that I cannot predict the end of.”

“Things are going to be fine.” He placed a hand on her shoulder, seemingly oblivious to the shudder and blush that started to spread through her in unison. “I trust in my commanders to pick the best strategy.”

Lana didn’t meet his eye. “And what of the dragon knight?” She held her book to her chest. “He was swayed by her magic once before. Who’s to say he won’t be ensnared again?”

He patted her shoulder once. “I don’t think it will come to that.” Link slipped his glove and bracer back on, trying to stifle a yawn. “Anyways, it’s getting late. I should rest so I’m not sleeping in the saddle tomorrow.” He got up and dusted the dirt off his trousers. “Can I say one more thing?”

“Of course.”

“You don’t need to worry so much! We’re gonna take her down!” Link flashed the sorceress a quick smile, before retreating towards his tent. He missed the deep red color that splashed across her face.

Volga’s tail was thrashing. He beat it against the ground in fury, trying to exert his frustrations before they burst forth upon the Lizardfolk that still remained. While the betrayal was upsetting, it was not a surprise. If anything, it seemed inevitable—he had only broken free of the witch’s magic with the help of the Hylians. His kin were not nearly strong enough to fight it off, nor could they even dream of defending the mountain from a beast such as the black dragon. If anything, he was almost, almost proud of them for doing what they needed to survive. There came a time to fight until your last breath, but against an evil facsimile was not that time.

No, the thing that bothered the dragon the most was the stench. The accursed creature had made itself at home in Volga’s nest, as evidenced by the shed scales and gnawed bones scattered about the warm indentation in the floor. His tail thumped down again. How could something smell so terrible? Every time he breathed, his poor nostrils were assaulted by the reek.

It was entirely unacceptable!

“Massster…” He twitched his head to the side, sensitive nose detecting a trace of blood. “We bringss tributessss!” A Dinolfos, a big brute by the name of Fangs, laid an Eldin ostrich on the ground behind his leader. A few other lizards crept in and presented their own gifts of food, dropping carcass after carcass just outside tail-sweeping range.

Volga paused in his agitated motions, turning around to smell the food placed by his rear. Yes, these were nice. He could crunch these things whole, leave nothing behind that would need cleaning. They were much better to eat than Gorons.

“Are…are you pleased?” Fangs retreated a few paces, smart enough not to raise his master’s ire. His tongue flickered nervously, tasting the air. “The othersss have gone hunting for more.”

The dragon stuck his snout into the pile, rooting through until he found a suitable meal. The boar
disappeared down his gullet in two snaps, and once his stomach was no longer roaring in anger, he
shrank in on himself. He spat out a tusk and rolled his shoulders, still stiff from getting thrown
through the floor. He had to keep his wings out, they were still too tender to fully retract. “If I ever
catch you eating Gorons again, you’ll wish you never hatched.” Fangs made a low groaning noise
and shrank back a step. “How many of you are left? And where’s Claw?”

Fangs swished his tail a few times. “They…died. In the initial attack. Most of usss did.” His
swishing stopped, and he thumped the spiked tip against the ground seven times. “We are thisss
many tribesss left.”

That was only around seventy individuals, less than half of their former numbers. Volga felt a pang
building up from the depths of his chest—what did that mean? It reminded him of the sensation his
fire caused, but something was different. He reached up under his chestplate to scratch his
stomach. The feeling didn’t go away, making him scratch harder. The more it confused him, the
more bothersome the itch became, until he was worried his claws would tear through his
gambeson. He tore his hand away, wishing that the feeling would leave, that he could force it from
his body and worry about it some other time.

With a frustrated cry, he whipped back around to face his nest. His movement sent a ripple of scent
through the air, reminding him of how the black dragon had barged into his home, laid waste to his
kin! For the goddess’s sake, it had slept in his bed!

He ground his heel down into the ground hard enough to crack the stone. “Gather every Dinolfos
left alive. We report to the human camp at sunrise.” His body began to itch, like his scales were
ready to burst through his skin. “I shall have my revenge.”

With that order he allowed his true form to rip forward once again, nearly tossing Fangs across the
room. Volga inhaled deeply and then breathed a stream of fire into his nest, trying to burn away the
stink of corruption. He focused the assault upon a singular point until the stone glowed cherry red,
sides heaving with effort. The moment he felt recharged he began to spout flames once again. He
would not be satisfied until he had fumigated the entire chamber. When this burst, shorter than the
last, came to an end, he turned to look over his shoulder, casting a withering look upon his kin, as if
to berate them for still being there. Fangs bellowed in alarm and scrambled backwards, pushing the
other Lizalfos away, trying to herd them out of the room. Volga remained silhouetted by the
flames, ruby glow flickering over his scales like blood.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies! First, I would like to say, thank you so much for staying with me
into another year! In the next chapter, we will FINALLY have Cia make her
appearance, and then the plot is going to get interesting. Things are gonna get real fun
:) Be prepared for large-scale battles and magical shenanigans!

Also! I now have a tumblr devoted purely to writing! Check me out here!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!