

Bokob-Link to the Past

By: The17thStatesman

(CW: Transgender Transformation [Male to Female], Monster Transformation, “Uglification,” Mental Transformation, Intelligence Loss, Identity Death, Bokoblin TF, and Unlikely Monster/Human Yuri. *Some cartoonish monster gore, Spoilers for LoZ:BotW.*)

The sun slowly made its ascent over the horizon, rising to illuminate the verdant countryside of Hyrule. The once magnificent and prosperous Kingdom had long fallen into desolation as a result of the cataclysm brought on Calamity Ganon over a hundred years ago, and the unchecked rampaging of his monstrous minions even since had left the land ruined and scarred. Yet even so, the natural beauty of this verdant land remained almost untouched. Not even the monstrous beast’s Malice, the vile embodiment of his wicked will, which tainted the land was able to truly mar it.

Link, the courageous knight of the once great Kingdom, sat on a rock atop a hill in Hyrule Field, watching the sun rise over his final destination, Hyrule Castle... A swirling maelstrom of darkness surrounded the ruined edifice. It was none other than Calamity Ganon himself, trapped within the confines of the castle by Princess Zelda for a century, unable to do anything but roar and seethe in his mindless, impotent rage and being unable to scour and destroy the land as it pleased.

A cold morning wind blew across the plains, causing Link’s locks of blonde hair to flutter gently in the breeze like golden strings. His bright blue eyes burned with unrelenting and unshakeable resolution as his weapon, the Master Sword, the Blade of Evil’s Bane, empowered by the goddess Hylia and able to be wielded only by the chosen hero, stood upright in the soil, his hand tightly gripping its purple pommel.

It had been quite the journey to reach this point. He knew that the Princess had been waiting for him these last hundred years, but there’d been so much to do, Hyrule had frankly been in such a sorry state that it was a miracle there was anything left of it at all! He’d done just about everything that he could, and that was quite a list.

He’d restored the greatest weapons of the ancient Sheikah clan, a quartet of titanic mechanical marvels known as the Divine Beasts. He’d reclaimed rightful ownership of the Master Sword. He’d scattered Calamity Ganon’s minions, including the traitorous Shiekah, the Yiga Clan, to the four winds. He’d even brought hope for a brighter future back to the despondent people of Hyrule, and showed them what it could mean to *live*, and not merely eke out a terrified existence... Not too shabby for a couple months work, especially not for someone who’d just woken up from a 100 year long nap.

He pulled out an anachronistic piece of technology for the medieval society that was most of Hyrule: an electronic device resembling an ornate tablet. It was known as a “Shiekah Slate,” and

it was yet another relic that the eponymous Sheikah designed in their distant past. The Shiekah still survived, as did their relics, but the knowledge on how to create them was all but lost. The Slate was a marvel, containing a wealth of information, the least of which included a map of the entire breadth of the Kingdom.

“What do you think? Will today finally be the day?” A woman’s voice, unheard and its source unseen, asked her three similarly intangible companions. Her tone was confident and bold, and her shimmering figure was just as striking. In fact, *striking* was a particularly apropos word to describe the red haired Garuda woman, Urbosa. She was one of the four fallen champions of Hyrule, slain during Calamity Ganon’s awakening.

For the century that Link had been sleeping, each of their spirits had been trapped, bound to the Divine Beast they were to “ride” into battle. Now they were free, and had lent their full support and guidance to Link in any way they could. They could only manifest themselves to him in the moment when he invoked their powers, but they were always near, watching and waiting to be called upon. In the meanwhile, they had little better to do than to provide running commentary on the heroes’ exploits.

“Oh, I wouldn’t bet on it. I’m *sure* he’ll find something else to distract himself with...” The self-aggrandizing and impertinent Revali, the blue feathered champion of the bird-like Rito people, remarked sarcastically, “Maybe he’ll spend another day fishing, or climbing some new cliff that strikes his fancy... I don’t know how all of you *stand* it, climbing takes so much longer than flying.”

“He’ll go when he’s good and ready!” Boisterous and good natured were two words that described most of Daruk’s kind, the Gorons, and Daruk was a Goron’s Goron. “Don’t complain, Revali, after all, you haven’t been hanging around him even *half* as long as Mipha and I have, and you don’t see either of us whining.”

“Quite so... Though I’ll add that I’ve been here longest of all, hmhm~!” Gentle and refined, the Zora Princess, Mipha, was the last of the four to join the conversation, letting out a soft chuckle as she looked longly at Link. “I wouldn’t mind if this journey went on twice as long either... Though I know that’s selfish of me, especially considering how long Princess Zelda has been waiting.”

“Well, I think he should get on with it alright! Time is wasting, and I’ve been itching to get my well-overdue payback on Ganon, with every last bit of the 100 years of interest he’s built up!” Urbosa expressed her impatience as Link scrolled through the Sheikah Slate.

“You and I both, Urbosa... What is he even looking at?”

Link wanted to make sure he’d been thorough in seeing to as many of Hyrule’s misfortunes as he could before he took on the source of them all. There was no way of knowing how many more advantages or boons he could gather; perhaps he’d missed a Sheikah Shrine or two?

Hylia knows he'd need every single bit of strength and assistance he could muster to overcome Calamity Ganon. But it seemed as though he truly had done everything. He took a deep breath and let out a sigh, clicking off the Slate and rising from his seat as he stretched his arms high into the sky.

No sooner did he reach for his sword however, he heard the familiar notifying chime coming from the Slate and felt it vibrating against his hip. He pulled it back out to see the map of Hyrule dim and slowly scroll across the screen, as a series of lines appeared.

Assessing User Heart Rate...

Assessing User Hormonal Levels...

Assessing User Mental Patterns...

Please Wait...

Please Wait...

Please Wait...

Thank You For Waiting.

Assessment Complete!

User Intentions Verified.

User Preparations Complete.

Final Rejuvenation Treatment Authorized...

Return to Shrine of Resurrection for Administration of Final Rejuvenation Treatment.

Caution: User Participation Optional. But Strongly Advised!

Link wasn't sure what exactly the "Final Rejuvenation Treatment" entailed, but the Slate had never misled him yet, and if it was warning him that it was something he was "strongly advised" to "participate" in, then it was almost certainly worth his time to do so... He just had to hope that whatever it was, it wouldn't take another century to finish. The coordinates pointed him back to the Great Plateau, where his adventure across Hyrule had begun.

He selected the nearby tower, and the familiar sensation of mystical energy flowing through his body enveloped him as his form broke down into a mass of blue shining lights and zipped up into the sky...

Only a few moments later, the swarm of lights descended back to the ground and reassembled themselves into Link's corporeal form. He looked around the scenery of the Great Plateau, and felt an odd sense of nostalgia for it. He hadn't actually returned here since the start of his quest, there was almost no reason for him to. When he'd awoken he thoroughly scoured the entirety of the elevated and isolated region.

Making his way towards the Shrine of Resurrection, he could see that nothing had particularly changed here over the last couple of months. As he began to climb up the ridge towards the small cavern that housed the Shrine, he discovered that this included the caliber of monsters residing here.

A trio of Bokoblins were huddled around a small fire near the woods. They'd embedded some sharpened sticks in the dirt around it, upon which some manner of small woodland rodents had been impaled and were in the process of being roasted. While they waited for their meal to cook, the ugly, grubby little creatures were sniffing at the air and scratching at themselves with their claws and crude weapons.

Link couldn't even keep track at this point how many of these monsters he'd slain. It had to be easily in the several hundreds, perhaps over a thousand. Though considering the Blood Moon served as their own means of resurrection, he'd likely slain the same Bokoblin's numerous times.

It had actually been some time since he'd seen this variety of Bokoblin, the weakest variant of the lot. Orange skinned, frail, clumsy, slow and somehow even *dumber* than the rest of their kind; which was no small feat considering they barely even displayed an awareness of their surroundings. Were it not for the fact that they could use tools, albeit only rudimentary ones, he'd have doubted they were even sentient.

He figured they weren't even worth the time or effort it would've taken to slay them. The Great Plateau was so remote and inaccessible that they didn't pose a threat to any Hylians who may have been living nearby, and there was nothing to be gained by killing them since he had no need for their horns or guts or any other vile reagents they might leave behind.

He took his time climbing the ridge to the cavern, it was rare that he slowed down and simply took in the world around him. It was a sobering thought to think it might be the last chance he had to do so once he set out for Hyrule Castle. Of course he was confident in his ability to slay Ganon, but... he had to accept the possibility that he might fail.

The spirits of the champions lingered nearby as Link stood before the cavern and set his sword down beside its entrance. That may have seemed like an extremely foolish thing to do, but in reality the true fool would've been any monster that tried to steal the Master Sword. It wasn't called the "Blade of Evil's Bane" for show, any monster dim-witted enough to touch it would discover that it was akin to sticking their hand in molten lava.

He started to undress, taking off his boots first, then his shirt, and then his pants. As he began to undress, Revali and Mipha both turned away out of respect for his modesty... Urbosa on the other hand, rubbed one of her nimble fingers under her lips, a coy smirk of intrigue on her face as she watched. "Well, well, well. The last couple of months have certainly done their- *Ah-!?*" A large yellow hand, broad enough to grip her entire head in its grasp, covered her face. "Daruk?"

The Goron was covering his own face with his other hand, "C'mon now, Urbosa, haven't you ever heard of a little thing called privacy? Let the little guy keep some dignity, why don't you?"

"Oh, please, Daruk, we fought in a *war* together, you really think it's such a-?" Suddenly, her senses picked up on something drawing near, "Wait, did you hear that?"

The rustling of grass and the sound of slobbering grunts was carried up the hill by the morning breeze. Evidently Link heard it only a moment after the Garuda woman had, just after he'd finished stripping down to his underwear. He turned towards the source of the noise to see the three Bokoblins he'd passed by scampering up after him. "*Uuugghh-!*" Link groaned in annoyance, dropping his pants to the ground and looking skyward before retrieving his sword and shifting into a martial stance.

"Is he really going to fight these mongrels half naked?" Revali asked incredulously.

The first of the Bokoblins ran towards Link brandishing a club, his attack couldn't have been more painfully telegraphed. He spent something like three entire seconds winding up for a pitiful swing that probably wouldn't have even knocked a child off their feet. Link responded with a precise and lightning fast slice through the beast's abdomen. "**Hyaah!**"

"*Ah-!* E-evidently so..." Mipha noted, somewhat startled by his battle cry.

Yes, it certainly *had* been some time since Link fought monsters this weak, so long that he failed to account for just how much *stronger* he'd grown since he stepped out of this cave for the first time. With a single blow, he cleaved the Bokoblin in half as though it were made of paper-mache! A thick slurry of blood and viscera ushered forth from the bisected monster's body as it let out a wail and fell to the ground.

Despite having seen their comrade get quite literally eviscerated before their beady eyes, the other two Bokoblins were undeterred. Maybe they were just too stupid to know fear, or maybe they knew on some instinctual level that they'd come back with the rise of the next Blood Moon if they met their end. Either way, they rushed at Link together, and found themselves cut down in just as short of order.

Not before both of them sprayed even more purple and reddish gunk on Link though. The "battle," if you wanted to call it that, had only lasted a couple of seconds but it'd made a disgusting mess all over the unfortunate hero. Link performed a *Chiburi* swing, casting the blood off of the Master Sword, but getting himself clean was going to be a much less simple affair.

He let out a repulsed groan, this stuff was all over him. This was one of the reasons he preferred to fight with a *shield*. They weren't just fun to slide down mountains on, they kept the viscera off too! For a moment he considered looking for a stream to rinse himself off in, and when that seemed like too much of a chore, and shaking himself off like a dog just seemed too degrading, he instead opted to just head into the Shrine anyway.

Surely, the machine would clean him off! It had brought him back from the verge of death, if it could do that, then giving him a bath should've been trivial. The situation was just as awkward for the Four Champions, none of which wanted to address the nasty state that Link had gotten himself into. Being a hero wasn't always a pretty job...

Link made his way back to the chamber, where the stasis pod was waiting for him. He inserted the Sheikah Slate into the terminal beside it, and was instructed to lie down within it. He grimaced uncomfortably from not only the cold surface of the metallic pod, but the feeling of the Bokoblin goop squishing against his back. He quickly shut his mouth though, not wanting to risk any of that stuff getting into his *mouth*. He'd made the mistake of trying to "experiment" with Bokoblin guts as a culinary ingredient once. Once was more than enough!

The pod glistened with neon blue all around him as he felt a sensation of irresistible drowsiness overtaking him and putting him under. He closed his eyes, certain that when he woke up, he'd be clean and ready to go towards his destiny... He was right on both accounts, but not in the way he anticipated.

Confirming User's Anaesthetization...

Confirming... Please Wait...

Anaesthetization Confirmed!

Proceeding with Vital Scan...

From the digitized stalactite overhead, a thin line of blue light scanned Link's body from head to toe... It paused halfway through, and then started from the beginning again, almost as if it was *confused* at first about the input that it was being asked to process and needed to double check.

Confirming User Identity...

WARNING! Current User Does Not Match Any Pre-Existing Entry in Database!

Performing Heuristic Analysis...

User identified as:

Race: Bokoblin

Gender: Indeterminate... Approximating...

Calculating Approximation...

Approximation Complete!

Results: 56.34% Odds of "Female" Configuration

User Identified as Bokoblin Female...

ALERT! Scans Indicate Severe Blood Loss and Traumatic Injury!

Beginning Emergency Molecular Reconstruction!

The chamber whirled to life as a wide variety of surgical implements began to materialize from its sides and descended upon the unconscious Hylian... He'd been so covered in Bokoblin "DNA," that the scanner had been completely convinced that he himself was a Bokoblin. It had been programmed to restore the occupant of the pod to their "peak physical condition," and so it was going to do just that...

The peak physical condition *of a Bokoblin*...

Hours passed, the spirits of the Champions outside waited patiently for Link to emerge... At least, they were patient at first. Now they were starting to get concerned. "He's been in there a while, you don't suppose that something's gone wrong, has it?" Mipha was the first to break the silence and voice said concern.

"Well, it took the little guy a hundred years last time, so... A coupla hours really isn't that bad by comparison. I'm sure he'll be out soon!"

"I wonder what he even needed to go back in there for in the first place..."

"Oh, perhaps a haircut?" Revali remarked in his typical snide tone, "Hold a moment, I think I see him." His keen vision, innate both to his kind and honed from his years as an archer, allowed him to spot a shadow figure emerging from the darkness. "O-or I see something." He squinted his eyes, something didn't seem right here.

"You do? Where?" Daruk narrowed his eyes as well, leaning in closer to the cave entrance and holding his hand against his forehead to block out the sun, "Oooh, I think I see 'im too, there's the little g-guh-? *Whaaa-huuuh!?*"

As a pair of two-toed orange feet stepped out into the sunlight, it became immediately apparent to all present that something had gone very, very wrong... They were certain that Link was the only one to go into that cave, but they weren't so certain that he was what had come out.

What *had* come out was a rather unusual looking Bokoblin. That is to say, that by *Bokoblin* standards, she looked unusual. Starting from the top of her body, she had the usual bald head one would expect to see on a Bokoblin, though rather than having a horn right on top of it, it was closer to her forehead. Her eyes were noticeably less buggy, setting properly in her skull rather than bulging out. They held a familiar blue color, though they lacked a certain *spark* of intelligence that they'd previously had.

Sitting in the middle of her rather squat face was a pig-like pink snout, which sniffed at the air habitually, as if in constant search for something. She had a very wide mouth, with a large purple tongue and a small number of broad, flat teeth. A pair of particularly large and flat piggish ears protruded from the sides of her head. Compared to an ordinary Bokoblin, her lips were poutier, almost *sultry* in a strange sense, undeniably feminine, but the stark contrast to the rest of her facial features just made them stand out more.

She had long, almost gangly arms that ended in three-fingered hands with long nails. A visible pot-belly, the kind endemic to Bokoblins, was visible on her torso, though it didn't seem anywhere near as unhealthy or distended; in fact her skin was relatively taut. A pair of large naked breasts were prominent on her chest, somehow both firm and perky enough to barely sway when she moved, but still sagging enough to hang down a fair degree.

She was walking with terrible posture, but she lacked the distinctive “hunchback” that other Bokoblin’s possessed, it was apparent that her squatting, almost “knuckle dragging” stance was a matter of choice and comfort rather than biological necessity...

The champion’s jaws collectively dropped in disbelief as one by one, they realized that the only clothing the Bokoblin was wearing were a set of underwear, the very same set that Link had been wearing when he entered the Shrine, that left only one real possibility...

“For the love of-! Sweet merciful Hylia... You’ve got to be kidding me!” Urbosa facepalmed.

“O-oh... Oooh nooo... I- I think I’m about to find out if a spirit can *faint*.” Mipha sounded like she was on the verge of being sick.

“Well, there goes the Kingdom! Stick a fork in us, we’re done!”

“Now just hold on a rock-munching second, all of you! Don’t you go being so glum, I’m sure that this can be fixed!” Daruk tried to keep the faith, but he had no clue what he was up against.

The Sheikah had truly built an amazing device, capable of *complete* molecular reconstruction! Unfortunately, it had worked much, *much* too well in this case. There was essentially nothing left of Link’s mind in his, or rather in *her*, body... The Machine had reconstructed her brain, and that meant that all of her knowledge, all of her memories, and the vast majority of her intelligence had all been lost and replaced with a near blank slate in her new form as a Bokoblin.

Sure, many of Link’s memories had been preserved in the Sheikah Slate, but they’d mean nothing to her, she couldn’t figure out how to watch them, and even if she did by some miracle, she barely had any concept of “language” left! She was an instinct driven creature now, just like her kin, only *she* didn’t have the benefit of coming back from the dead every Blood Moon. All she really knew was that she liked shiny things, tasty things, and pokey things that could help her get more shiny and tasty things...

Well, there *were* some other instincts she had, that she didn’t understand. Instincts that were driving her to do some very complicated stuff, to save a very important person to her. She didn’t really know who she was, but her face and her plight was etched into the very depths of her soul. The Shrine of Resurrection hadn’t been able to touch *that*.

“This is an absolute travesty, what in the world are we going to *do*?”

“Err, Mipha! Can’t you heal this or something? Put ‘im back to normal?”

“Heal him? *Heal* him...?” Mipha repeated, as the situation was causing the demure Zora to lose her cool, “What exactly do you want me to heal, Daruk?” She asked rhetorically, flying closer to the Bokoblin and gesturing at her. “Do *you* see any injuries? I most certainly don’t! I can not heal this, for there is nothing for me to heal! He, or rather I suppose *she*, is simply a Bokoblin now!

There's nothing my powers can do to change that fact. I can 'heal' her as much as I could heal *you!*"

"Alright, alright, you've made your point... Sheesh! Well, then we've gotta figure something else out. Urbosa, you got any bright ideas?"

Urbosa pinched the bridge of her nose, "If I did, I guarantee I would've shared them by now. I suppose we can always hope that the power of the Divine Beasts is enough to seal away Ganon, as we originally planned."

Revali folded his wings, "You know, perhaps she's capable of more than we're giving her credit for in this form. Beaks up, everyone, Link may surprise us yet." His tone was painfully sardonic.

Link, even more oblivious to the presence of the spirits than usual, looked around, trying to get her bearings. She picked up her own clothes, not recognizing them as anything more than weird rags. She pinched them in her fingers before discarding them in favor of something much more interesting that caught her eye: the shiny pretty piece of metal lying against the rock face, glistening in the sunlight of the noon!

She scampered over and picked up the Master Sword by its hilt, only she was holding it in something of an awkward grip, clearly no longer fully understanding what a "sword" was. She rotated it in her hands, "Oooh-ing" and "Aaah-ing" at it. She sniffed along the length of its blade, then opened her mouth and tried to gnaw on it.

"Bleeeh-!" She gave her assessment, sticking out her tongue in disgust, okay, whatever this thing was, it really didn't taste good. Then, she got the idea to jab forward with it... She poked at the air with the blade almost like a spear or a skewer. Now *that* felt right!

"See, look at that! She remembers how to sword fight, why, she's even holding the pointy end in the right direction... Ganon isn't going to know what hit him."

"Revali, I really don't need your- Wait, hold on a moment. Link is holding the-?" Something occurred to Urbosa, "She's holding the Master Sword! How is that possible!?"

Mipha, still nearby to Link, noticed a glow coming from the back of her palm, she let out an incredulous gasp, "I can't believe it! It's-!" The other champions all crowded around the Zora Princess to see what she could see, and they were similarly astounded and flabbergasted.

There, on the back of the Bokoblin's hand, clear as day, was a glowing golden triangle, which could only symbolize one thing. The Triforce of Courage. *That's* why she could still pick up the Master Sword! Even though her body and mind had been completely reconstituted, Link's *spirit* still remained, the spirit of the *hero* chosen to wield the Master Sword and defeat Ganon! She may have been reduced to a bumbling troglodyte, but she was still worthy...! *Somehow*, she was still worthy.

"I'm beginning to suspect that Hylia has some kind of twisted sense of humor..." Urbosa grumbled as the Bokoblin looked out on the horizon towards Hyrule Castle, and felt an inexorable pull towards it. Something, someone was waiting for her there, someone who needed to be rescued, and that someone was none other than-

Her beloved mate, of course~!

"Gyaaahaaah!" She let out a resolute cry and started to make a beeline for her destination.

"Well..." Daruk scratched his head, "Seems like the little guy- er, girl, is still goin' for it! Now *that's* what I call the heart of a hero! Look alive, champions, I got a feeling we're all gonna have to be on our A-game with our powers to pick up the slack for Bokob-Link here."

"...Did you just call her 'Bokob-Link'?" Revali did a double take, glaring at the Goron with an expression of disgust.

"Hehe, yep! Just thought of it, pretty catchy, huh?"

Revali tightened his wings like fists, "Of all the-, oh, you're going to *catch* something alright, you gravel-brained-!"

"Revali, the last thing we have time for right now is squabbling, just let it go!" Urbosa interceded between the two of them, "Our top priority has to be staying close to her!" pointing them back towards "Bokob-Link" and gesturing for the other champions to follow her... "Like it or not, she's *still* the only one who can seal Ganon away, and Daruk is right, she's *definitely* going to need every bit of help we can lend!"

As their spirits floated alongside Bokob-Link on the outset of her journey, something quickly became apparent. Revali noted with a long sigh, "She's going to run the entire way there on *foot*, isn't she...?"

"That's definitely what it looks like." Daruk scratched the side of his head, "On the bright side, at least she's taking the most direct path there!"

"Of course, the most *direct* path... Mipha, get ready, our 'heroine' is about to be in dire need of your healing powers." Urbosa warned her younger counterpart.

"What makes you say that, Urbosa?" The Zora asked, perhaps a touch naively.

"I'll field that one if you don't mind." Revali stepped in and answered, "You *do* recall that there's only one way off of the Great Plateau, don't you Mipha? And that it's a rather *ill-advised* means of travel for earthbound folk like yourself and our dear... 'Bokob-Link,' yes?"

Mipha thought about it for a moment, and then her eyes widened, doubly so as she realized that Bokob-Link was running straight towards the edge of the Plateau without a care in the world. “Ah, I see your point. W-well, let’s not rush to be so pessimistic! She may not currently possess the, um... *literacy* needed to operate the Sheikah Slate, but surely she still has enough sense to use her paraglider!”

As Bokob-Link bravely charged forward, she bravely charged right over the edge of the Plateau, like it wasn’t even there, letting out a surprised yelp that rapidly began to fade as she tumbled out of sight and plummeted down towards the ground like a stone.

“Evidently she does not.”

“Oh... Oh, dear...!” Mipha suddenly rushed forward over the edge of the cliff after Bokob-Link, to make sure that she’d be there right at the moment of impact with the harsh, unforgiving ground, to make sure the impact wasn’t fatal... Or to be more specific, to ensure that she didn’t suffer the *consequences* of the impact that undoubtedly *would* be fatal.

“Chalk another one up for the pessimists.” Rivali clapped his wings for himself, “My, we’re just running up the board at this point, aren’t we?”

Fortunately, the rest of the journey back to the castle from the Great Plateau was a relatively brief and safe one ... Most of the monsters and guardians along the way simply *ignored* Bokob-Link, as though they couldn’t recognize her as anything besides one of her own. Those who *did* take notice of her seemed to regard her as a mere oddity. The real lucky break was just that no Hylians encountered her. The Champions didn’t even want to think about what *that* might’ve resulted in.

Bokob-Link, in turn, paid no heed to anything or anybody else either; absolutely single-minded in her goal of reaching to the highest chamber of Hyrule Castle. She was so adamant and determined to get there that instead of negotiating with the interior of the castle, she opted instead to simply *scale* the walls of the building! One advantage of her transformation seemed to be nearly limitless stamina...

She finally reached her goal, the Sanctum, the place where Calamity Ganon had been restrained for the last hundred years, confined to a vile blood red cocoon that pulsed and beat like a massive heart.

Princess Zelda had been fighting to keep him here for every single moment of those long hundred years... Ceaseless and without rest, the only thing that allowed her to continue her seemingly endless vigil was the hope that Link would one day return to rescue her and finally put an end to Ganon. From where she was, she couldn’t see and she couldn’t hear, but she could *feel*... She felt Link’s spirit, she knew that it could only be his!

He'd come for her, he'd *finally* come for her! At last, all of her efforts were vindicated... No sooner did she feel his presence, so close to her and yet so far, than did her strength finally give out. "*Link... Link... I'm sorry...but my power isn't strong enough... I can't hold him!*" She apologized, even after all this time; after enduring a trial that would've broken anyone else, all she could think about was how she still wasn't *strong enough*. Hopefully, Link would be strong enough for them both.

Bokob-Link heard a voice speaking to her. She couldn't see where it was coming from, and she didn't really understand a word it was saying, but she did understand two crucial things about it. 1. It was the voice of her beloved mate! And 2. She was upset, she was *terribly* upset... Bokob-Link wasn't going to tolerate someone making her mate feel bad! She'd find whoever was upsetting her, and use her new pokey-shiny sharp stick to make them regret what they'd done!

Calamity Ganon tore free from his prison, a repulsive and horrifying scorpion-like monster, a hulking behemoth made of flesh and Sheikah technology, bound together by pure malice. The beast roared in unbridled fury at the Bokoblin before him.

So utterly consumed was he by mindless hatred and disdain for the spirit of the hero, that the absurd fact that it was a Bokoblin of all things, one of its very own minions and the weakest of the lot no less, was standing forth to challenge him didn't even register. All he knew was that the thing before him was his hated enemy, wielding his most hated sword, and that before he crushed all of Hyrule to dust, he would start with this pitiful thing standing in his way!

The monster's awakening destroyed the cracked and damaged floor beneath them, sending Ganon and Bokob-Link tumbling down into the Astral Observatory, the hapless Bokoblin bouncing off of Ganon's head and scrambling to her feet after landing on her floor, waving the glowing sword in her three fingered grip somewhat less than threateningly in his face.

But all accounts, it shouldn't have even been a fight. The two opponents were so clearly mismatched that to even *suggest* the pitiful sniveling little gremlin who didn't even understand what she was fighting, let alone how to fight it, had any chance of winning should've been the height of folly! Calamity Ganon should've crushed her flat, or sliced her in half, or blasted her to dust in an instant...

And yet...

When the dust settled, when all fell silent, it was Bokob-Link that stood victorious. The Divine Beasts had unleashed their wrath upon Ganon, just as planned and as promised, and wounded him gravely, but not mortally. From there the Champions were just getting started, and had to continue doing most of the heavy lifting on Bokob-Link's behalf.

Mipha kept her healed as best she could. Daruk shielded her from blow after vicious blow. Urbosa rained down as many bolts of lightning on Ganon as she could muster. And Revali

jettisoned Bokob-Link into the air to let her keep wailing on him whenever he climbed up onto the walls out of reach.

Someway, somehow, with significant help from her allies, enough of the hero's spirit, enough of her inner courage, managed to shine through to allow her to triumph. It was such a preposterous outcome that Ganon was too stunned to do anything about it! Perhaps, in another world, where things had gone the way that Link had originally intended, Ganon might've shed his mortal form and assumed the purest form of his hatred and malice, the Dark Beast Ganon... But being overcome by such a pathetic wretch as what Link had become was enough to make even something as mindless and rage-driven as him hesitate.

That moment of opportunity was all of the opportunity that Zelda needed. She broke free from her constraints, appearing just as young and beautiful as the day she consigned herself to this fate. She was still dressed in her white and gold gown she'd last worn as she tore herself from Ganon's form in a ball of golden light, an act that destroyed the monster's failing body and reduced him to his pure spiritual essence.

Channeling the power imbued within her as the inheritor of the goddess's spirit, and the wielder of the Triforce of Wisdom, Zelda restrained Ganon's soul in chains of golden, blinding light and rent it asunder, banishing it to the darkest depths from which it came! Hopefully never to be seen again, but at the very least, not for another 10,000 years.

The act took everything out of Zelda. In truth, she had no idea after all she'd been through that she had anything at all left to give. With her duty finally done and Hyrule finally saved, she collapsed and fell into unconsciousness. She never felt herself hit the floor, because before she got the chance, a pair of hands reached out and caught her... As she slipped into a well deserved rest, she smiled, her expression both relieved and apologetic towards her savior, whom she presumed had also just been the one to catch her. The last thought before everything faded away was of him. "*Link...*"

For the first time in a century, Zelda slept and dreamt... It was a hazy and shifting vision, as dreams almost always are, but in it, she dreamed of the future that might await her. The future that she and Link might have together now that she was finally free and Ganon was at last defeated. The poor princess was unfortunately in for quite the rude awakening once reality came crashing back.

As she came to, she could feel the gentle tickle of grass on her skin, the warm glow of the sun on her face- Oh, how she'd missed the sun! After a hundred years of dreadful darkness, she'd have been happy to stare right at the sun until she went half-blind! She felt what she thought was a warm breeze blowing across her face. But after a few moments, she realized that it was a bit too short and humid to be a breeze. It was more like someone, or something, was breathing on her.

Come to think of it, she hadn't been able to focus on it at the time, but something about Link's spirit had felt... *off*, when he entered the Sanctum. Just how or why she wasn't sure about; these kinds of things were difficult to describe and even more difficult to explain. However, as soon as she opened her eyes, any thoughts she might've had on that were blown clear out of her mind by the sight before her!

Zelda found herself quite literally face to face with a Bokoblin, its wide lips spread into something that she could only hazard a guess to be a smile. Its eyes were staring right into hers, and as the nostrils of its snout widened, it became obvious what the source of that "breeze" she'd felt was. "*Aahh-!*" Zelda yelled in surprise, scampering back away from the creature and quickly finding her back against a tree. "Where did-?" She looked back and forth for any sign of- "L-link! *Link!* Where are you!?" She shouted out for her knight to come to her aid once more.

The Bokoblin started to jump for joy, raising its hands to the sky and turning around in a circle as it hopped around, its ears perked up high and wriggling. Where *was* Link!? He hadn't seriously left her all alone, had he? Maybe they'd gotten separated somehow after Ganon was defeated?

Zelda tried to take advantage of the seemingly distracted state of the Bokoblin in its reverie, trying to slip away, only for it to immediately notice and start running towards her with its grubby hands, as it lunged at her, the princess braced herself. "Oh, well, *this* is just splendid! I finally escaped Ganon, and not a moment later I get caught by another one of his minions! This is absurd!"

The Bokoblin grabbed Zelda in its arms. "Grrr-! Let *go* of me!" She struggled and twisted to try and escape. She did *not* spend a hundred years struggling for this! She *knew* that Bokoblins had an appetite for Hylian flesh, the thought of ending up this creature's lunch made her blood run cold, and the Bokoblin in question certainly looked excited to see her. "I am not some *snack* for you to-! Wait...!"

It struck her just how *different* this Bokoblin looked from the others she'd seen, and she certainly had a large sample size to compare him against, or *her* it appeared, judging by the pair of what were undeniably breasts on her chest. The first and foremost thing she took notice of were her eyes. The eyes were the windows to the soul, and she knew the soul whom she was gazing into intimately. She knew it, but she couldn't believe it. Her own eyes going wide as saucers, "L-link...? Is that *you*?"

Bokob-Link had no idea what her pretty, pretty mate was talking about, or why she was acting so strange, but she didn't really care. Maybe she was just hungry? At least she was safe now! Oh, how happy she was to see her mate~! She started to shower her with kisses all over her face, her plump lips smacking against Zelda's own as well as her cheeks. Frankly, Bokob-Link's lips were almost big enough to cover her entire face at once. Then she started mixing in licks of her long purple tongue, like some kind of overly affectionate puppy.

“O-oh my! Thi-! *Link!*” Zelda tried to push her away, no longer out of fear but rather confusion. None of this made sense, and she couldn’t think straight with the Bokoblin she now was pretty sure was, in fact, Link, slobbering all over her. “Stop-! *Stop!*” She eventually got a moment’s reprieve as Bokob-Link hugged her tightly and nuzzled against her, making a happy rumbling noise like a purr as she rubbed her face on her.

Zelda spotted the Master Sword crudely holstered in her loincloth made out of the remains of her undergarments. The fact that she was carrying the Master Sword unharmed was all the confirmation she needed. “H-how in the world is this possible? Did... Did Ganon do this to you somehow?”

Bokob-Link let go of the Princess and took a step back from her, just taking a moment to admire how lovely she was. “Link, can you understand me at all?” Zelda asked, to which Bokob-Link tilted her head to the side. She knew her name, but she didn’t really understand much of the other words she said after that.

“This is just-? What am I supposed to-? How do I-?” Zelda pressed her hand to her forehead, pacing back and forth in the grass as she tried to come to terms with all of this. Maybe she was still dreaming or something? No, no, that didn’t make sense. She looked back at “Link” and spotted that she still had her Sheikah Slate. “Oh! The Slate! Maybe it can explain this!”

“Err, Link? May I look at your Shiekah Slate?” She knelt down slightly and pointed to the tablet. Bokob-Link’s eyes followed her finger down to her waist, at the weird flat thing she was carrying around ever since she woke up. She didn’t really *know* why she kept it. It didn’t taste very good, all it did was make a bunch of weird noises and show a bunch of silly pictures that didn’t make sense to her. But she kept it, because something about it seemed important, it was like she knew on a spiritual level.

“*Eeh?*” She pointed at the device, making a sound of curiosity.

“Yes, the Shie-kah Slate!” Zelda nodded and enunciated the word carefully, holding out her hand, “Can. I. See. it?”

Her mate wanted to see the weird flat thingie? Well, if she wanted it, then she could have it! She’d give her anything she wanted, all the pretty things in the world! She offered the Slate to Zelda, who took it gratefully from her hand and tried to look through its logs for any information that might explain Link’s condition.

It didn’t take her very long to stumble upon the archive for the “Final Rejuvenation Treatment.” Her brow furrowed as she read it over, “Oh no... Oh, *no*...” She shook her head in dismay, “B-but how did it? How could the Shrine make this kind of *mistake*? I just don’t...? How was it even *capable* of doing something like this to you!?” She asked incredulously, gesturing back to Link who was distracted watching a dragonfly flutter by her face... Only to lash out with her jaw and snap down on it almost like a frog.

"M-maybe we can undo it...? Or maybe we can't, I..." Zelda let out a long sigh, her head felt blisteringly hot as she watched the dreams of the life she'd envisioned with Link all go up in smoke... Her heart raced and pounded in her chest. "I don't- I don't know what to-!" Link, the boy that she'd been so close to, the stalwart knight who she'd fallen in love with, who'd been by her side and fought to protect her even at the cost of his own life. Was he lost to her forever?

Everything that had happened to him, to the entire Kingdom, all because of her; was this just another casualty of her failure? Had she cost him even his very self!? "Oh, Link-! *Link*, I- I'm sorry, I'm so..." Zelda gasped as she felt those long arms wrapping around her again from behind. Bokob-Link still didn't know what her mate was upset about, but she didn't want her to be upset. The big scary thing that was hurting her was gone now, she should be happy!

Zelda looked down, and saw the Triforce of Courage alight on the back of her hand. She gently pressed her own hand, illuminated by the Triforce of Wisdom, against it... She started to realize that maybe it didn't *matter*. Because, no matter how much she did or didn't remember about herself, she was still Link, *somewhere*. She'd still defeated Ganon, saved her, and saved all of Hyrule. So what if she was a Bokoblin? He had never abandoned her, he'd always been by her side and come to her aid when she needed him. Now it was *her* turn to return the favor.

"Hmm, many of your memories are still stored on the Sheikah Slate." She thought aloud to herself, as the princess's emotions cooled, her more *scholarly* side began to surface. "Wait a moment... Oh, perhaps this is a great opportunity!" She turned in Bokob-Link's arms to face her, and put her hands on her shoulders. "I've had so many theories about Bokoblins that I never got to test in the field because of the danger they posed. But you're no threat to me at all, are you, Link? Now I can find out if perhaps Bokoblin's can be educated, domesticated- who knows? Even *civilized*!"

"Oh yes, yes-yes-yes!" The Princess's infectious energy spread to Bokob-Link, who started to excitedly clap her hands. "Bokoblin's have shown signs of tool use, early language adoption, even culture... All primitive to be sure, but who knows where the potential ends?" She was talking a mile a minute, "Wait, but I may be getting ahead of myself. I need to understand more about what happened to you, after all, this is the first time I've ever observed such..." She looked Bokob-Link over from head to toe, "*feminine* features on a Bokoblin."

"I need someone who's better versed in Sheikah technology, but who-? Oh, think, think, think-!" She paced in circles around Bokob-Link before striking her fist down onto her palm, "Purah! Of course, oh, but is she even still alive? Sheikah are long lived, but a century is *still* a dreadfully long time." She looked through the Sheikah Slate once more, searching through the small number of active settlements across the Kingdom, and eventually stumbled upon her tower in Hateno Village.

"Alright, Link! Come on!" She offered her hand to the Bokoblin with a smile. Bokob-Link reached her hand out to accept it, before suddenly swooping Zelda up and sweeping her off her feet into

a bridal hold. “Oh-!” She let out a surprised yelp, before grinning and letting out a giggle, “Haha-! Well, alright, if you insist, then I’ll need to follow my instructions. Let’s see... instructions, will you respond to...?” She consulted the compass on the Sheikah Slate and pointed in the direction of Hateno, “-me pointing the way?”

Bokob-Link understood well enough that she was being given an instruction, if her mate wanted to go somewhere, she’d gladly take her wherever she wanted to go! She just hoped they could go somewhere private soon~! She planted another loving kiss on her mate’s face, before starting to make her way towards the road across Hyrule Field with her beloved in tow.

“Hmmm...” Zelda rubbed her chin with her hand contemplatively. She had always been a touch eccentric in her pursuits and interests, sometimes to the point where she surprised even herself. As she laid in the Bokoblin’s arms, face still damp from her affection, and gazed up at her face, this was certainly one of those occasions. “I think... I think I could actually get *used* to this.”

All the while, the spirits of the champions had been watching and waiting, to see if they’d need to do something to prevent this from turning into a disaster. “Princess Zelda sure is a strange one, I’d have never known she would go for someone like... *that*.” Revali balked.

“I guess it truly goes to show that love is blind...” Mipha mused, a wistful tone in her voice, this certainly hadn’t gone the way they’d all expected, but Ganon was defeated and the princess was safe, that was what really mattered.

“Do you... suppose we should stay a while longer before we... You know. Just in case?” Urbosa folded her arms and asked the other champions.

“Naaah, I think we can leave this one up to the Princess. She’ll take it from here!” Daruk gave his vote of confidence to Zelda, a sentiment that seemed to quickly be echoed by the others. “I think it’s about time that we all got ourselves some well-earned rest...”

Zelda’s arrival in Hateno Village instantly became very *awkward*. The atmosphere was one of contradictions, joy from witnessing the defeat of Calamity Ganon and the return of Princess Zelda (Who they all recognized even though practically nobody living there had ever actually seen her before in their lives.), mixed with the fear and confusion at her monstrous escort.

The sight of a Bokoblin in the village was usually cause for alarm, but Zelda eventually managed to convince them that not only was the Bokoblin not a threat to them, but that she was in fact that hero who’d saved them all. Convincing them was made a bit harder by the growls and snarling glares that Bokob-Link threw towards anyone who got too close to the Princess, but she was quick to assure them that she was just being overly protective, and she quickly chastised her to stop being mean to the good people... She found that treating her much the same way she’d train a dog was proving to be very effective.

Naturally, Zelda had to contend with hours of skepticism and accusations that she'd gone insane from her long imprisonment, but she eventually managed to get through to them that Bokob-Link was who Zelda said she was. The villagers weren't really sure how to accept that, or if they accepted it at all, but they couldn't deny that the Bokoblin accompanying the princess was much more tame than the rest of their beastial kind.

The commission was enough to bring Purah down from her tower, alongside her research assistant, Symin. After convincing her of the validity of her claims about the Bokoblin's identity by presenting her with the Sheikah Slate's log as proof. The deceptively youthful supercentenarian immediately flew into a huff, "I can't *believe* that Linkie went and got himself turned into a Bokoblin... and didn't tell me about it first!"

"All of that precious, once in a lifetime data about how the Shrine of Resurrection works, lost!" She lamented completely missing the point...

When they managed to get away from the crowd of astonished onlookers, all wanting to see the returned princess, the first question that Zelda had for the Sheikah scientist was a straight-forward, "Can you change Link back?"

To which Purah replied with an equally straight-forward, "Nope!" After a beat, she elaborated, "Sorry to burst your bubble, your highness, but the "Final Rejuvenation Treatment" is called '*final*' for a reason! It was only meant to run once... Besides, we don't even know what caused it to change him like this in the first place! Maybe we could at least turn Linkie back into a Hylian if we knew that, but it *still* wouldn't be the same Link you knew."

"That's... about what I expected to be honest." Zelda exhaled with a resigned grin, all the while Bokob-Link was still wrapped around her, hugging and cuddling her with a big dopey smile on her big dopey face. "Well, then..." She moved onto her second question as she gently rubbed the top of Bokob-Link's bald head, "Do you think you can help her...?"

"Help her *how*?"

"Help her... acclimate? Integrate? Remember more about who she was?"

"Ooh! That kind of help!" Purah rubbed her hands together, "Maaaybe, *maybe*~!" She looked around at the mess of half-baked contraptions that was her lab, "I've got some ideas that might help stimulate her brain a little bit. Gonna take some time though, and there's no guarantee they'll work."

"That's fine! I'm sure that I can teach her at least enough to get by." Zelda was hopeful, even enthusiastic about her prospects. "I have numerous hypotheses about the potential intellectual capacity of Bokoblins. Out of all of the so-called "monstrous races," I've always held they had the most potential. You know, I once read an old manuscript about how the Zora were once a feral, river-dwelling race before they evolved into the form we know today! That's what inspired

me to ask if perhaps other currently hostile races could become domesticated. Especially now that they are no longer bound to Ganon's will."

"Perfect! I'll set up a little classroom for you and you can put your pedagogic procedures into practice poste-hate, princess!"

Symin was notably less enthused than his superior and his liege, "I'm sorry, w-we're really going to have *that* living here?" He gestured skeptically at Bokob-Link, who'd started poking around at the scrap electronics on a nearby table. "In our lab? Our lab that's full of very ancient and very *fragile* artifacts...?" As if to vindicate his concerns, Bokob-Link stuck her tongue out to touch the exposed wiring of an ancient core, receiving a nasty shock for her trouble and then proceeding to chuck the thing out of a nearby, thankfully open, window...

"Oooh, it'll be fine, Symin! The princess will keep her under control!"

"I just hope it's toilet-trained..." He grumbled.

"Hey! Don't be rude! She may look different, and act different and *be* different, but that's still Linkie! Don't call her an 'it!'"

"O-of course, Ms. Director, I apologize, I- I meant no offense, I hope that *she* is toilet-trained."

Fortunately for everyone, she *was*...

A few weeks later, Zelda stood in front of a black board with a piece of chalk in her hand. Bokob-Link was sitting, rather fidgety, at a desk. It'd taken quite some effort to get her to stay in one place and focus, but with enough prodding and pulling her back every time she tried to wander away, she'd eventually learned to sit still. Zelda was holding the Sheikah Slate that she'd now claimed for herself in her hands, and was dressed in her casual attire, consisting of a blue and white shirt and black, skintight pants with tall leather boots.

It wasn't exactly easy to find attire for Bokob-Link, and it was even harder to convince her why she needed to *wear* them, as she didn't seem to have an innate sense of shame regarding nakedness. Regardless, a stretched out Hylian Tunic at least provided her with *some* modicum of modesty.

Zelda was doing her best to introduce Bokob-Link to some basic and core concepts of mathematics, science and phonics. Education was practically a lost science in Hyrule, the concept of a "school" was something that existed almost entirely in old books now. She considered it a small miracle that the literacy rate hadn't plummeted. Progress was... slow. To say the least, it would be more accurate to say it was abysmal, perhaps non-existent.

She wasn't going to give up though, trying to teach an easily distracted student who arguably didn't comprehend a word she was saying was a walk in the park compared to what dealing with

Ganon had been like. Purah was doing the best she could to design something to speed things along as well. Her most promising prototype was something she called the "Intercranial Stimulator." It was a series of metal probes that would be surgically implanted in Link's brain and charged with Sheikah energy in the hopes of enhancing her brain functionality.

Zelda made it clear that she didn't want to resort to cutting Link's skull open as anything besides a last resort. As she was struggling for the fifth day in a row to get Link to grasp the concept of the number "one..." A breakthrough suddenly came in the form of a knock on the door.

"I'll go and get it..." An exhausted Symin went to answer. Having Bokob-Link live with them had turned out to be a draining experience for him as he was constantly having to clean up any mess that the transformed hero made of the lab. As he opened the door, he received quite a start, "Oh dear Hylia, not another one!" He cried, running from the entrance and hiding himself in the back of the lab.

The "Bokoblin" in question was not actually a Bokoblin at all, though one could be forgiven for thinking of him as such. He was a rather unusual looking man, with beady eyes, a large and bald ovular head, wide lips and purple skin that had presumably been dyed to look that way. He was dressed in equally scratch attire, a patchwork robe of dark fabrics, along with a pair of blue gloves with fingers ended in claws that looked to be part of some kind of costume, and a pair of blue and beige striped underwear.

"Um, pardon me, excuse me, I hope I'm not intruding if I- *Oh my word!*" The man caught a glimpse of Bokob-Link and went ballistic, "It's true! It's *truuuuee!* The rumors were really true, I can't believe it! This is amazing! Spectulaaar!"

The odd man barreled into the room and towards Zelda and Bokob-Link. Zelda was a bit alarmed, but quickly surmised what the man must've been here for. The word of her return had spread quickly, and even weeks after the fact, people were coming from far and wide to Hateno in the hopes of catching a glimpse of their returned monarch. "Oh, yes, yes. Hehe, it's true, I really am Princess Zelda, and I have indeed returned to-"

"What's that?" The man cut her off, "Oh, my apologies, Princess, but you are not the one I came here to see!" He then got down on his knees and started fawning over Bokob-Link, looking like he was on the verge of tears, "*She* is...! I'd heard that the Princess had taken on a monster companion, but I- I didn't think such a wonderful thing could've really happened!"

"Such a *gorgeous* specimen too! A truly monstrous monster, I'm quite envious, your highness!" He remarked as he reached his hand towards Bokob-Link's face.

"Um, s-sir, I would be careful if I were-"

"Hyaahk!" When his fingers got just a bit too close, Bokob-Link lashed out and tried to take a bit out of it.

“Woah! Hahaha, oh my! Such a lovely one!” With razor sharp reflexes, the man retracted his fingers, “You needn’t worry for me, Princess! A true lover and advocate of monsters like myself wouldn’t have made it nearly this long if I didn’t know how to stay safe around them!”

“A... lover and advocate of monsters?”

“Yes, indeed! Allow me to introduce myself, your highness.” The rather distasteful looking man bowed to the Princess and offered her a warm smile, “My name is Kilton, you’ll find no bigger fan of monsters anywhere in Hyrule, perhaps not even the world! I’ve studied them for years and years, and I’ve come to offer my services in any way that I can towards your noble goal of monster and Hylian co-existence!”

Kilton folded his hands together, “Why... just the *thought* of Bokoblins and Moblins and Lizalfos being as common a sight in Hylian towns as Zora, Gorons, Garuda and Rito. It’s almost more than I can bear!”

“Uuhh...” Zelda looked off to the sight, a bit overwhelmed, before clearing her throat, “W-well, I certainly appreciate your offer- Kilton, was it? H-however, at the moment, all of my efforts and research are focused primarily on the education of Bokoblins, a-and more specifically *this* Bokoblin, right here.” She lovingly wrapped her arms around Link, who she’d grown much more comfortable around since the day that they “met.”

“Oh, of course, of course! Bokoblins are the perfect starting point, make no mistake! Allow me to go and fetch you my research journals! This is just so exciting!” Utterly giddy like a child in a candy store, Kilton ran back out the door to a large patchwork blimp that served as his home and place of business, the Fang and Bone.

...Zelda had been a bit nervous at first that Kilton was just a loon. But upon reading through the journals she provided him with, she discovered that he was actually a loon who knew his stuff when it came to monsters! The insights he provided into the behaviors of Bokoblin’s was invaluable and allowed her to break through the brick wall she was running into trying to get Bokob-Link’s education started... Progress was still painfully slow, but it *was* progress, and Kilton made good on his word to help any way that he could.

A few months later...

“Alright, Link, one more time...” She gestured to herself, “My name is Princess-?”

“Zzz-zuuh-eel-duuh?” Bokob-Link slowly and painstakingly sounded out her name, still getting used to using her vocal chords for anything other than growls and yelps.

“Yes, I’m *Zel-da*! Very good, and *you* are...?” She asked as a follow up, pointing at the Bokoblin.

“Luuuhh-iinkuh?” With some struggle, she managed to vocalize her own name as well.

“Yes, that’s right! You’re *Link*...!” She’d realized how important clear and constant positive reinforcement was, even things that seemed incredibly simple for a Hylian were a challenge for a Bokoblin. “Now, I want you to point, point with your finger. Who is *Zel-da*?” After a moment, Link lifted her hand and pointed one of her large fingers at the Princess, “Yes! And who is *Link*?” Link scratched at her side, seeming confused, before flinching in her chair out of realization, and pointing her finger at herself. “Yes, very good! That’s right!”

She decided that since they were at the end of the lesson for the day, she might as well try to push her a bit further, “Okay, now, Link... Can you show me, who is *Pur-ah*? You know Purah?” Link let out a low grumble that Zelda had come to understand meant she was trying to concentrate, and eventually raised her finger towards the diminutive Sheikah fiddling with some kind of helmet-like device.

“Yes! **Yes!** That’s right, well done, Link! Well done, that’s earned a treat!” She reached into a burlap sack on her hip and pulled out a dried Hightail Lizard and wriggled it in the air tantalizingly for Link, grabbing her attention before tossing it to her.

The Bokoblin girl eagerly licked her lips and leaned out to catch the thrown reward, catching it in her mouth and loudly munching on it. Another quickly learned lesson was the kind of things that Bokoblin’s enjoyed eating, of course every Bokoblin was different, but in Link’s case, she’d been found to have a taste for dried lizards. Kilton was a regular sight at the Lab now, kind enough to retrieve whatever reagents or ingredients that Zelda needed, alongside assisting in some of the lessons.

Link was still a long way off from anything approaching literacy, and math remained a pipe dream while she was still trying to master the concept of object permanence, but she wasn’t as clueless as she’d been in the beginning. Zelda had been trying to show her the stored memories on the Sheikah Slate, hoping they might spark something, but to no avail.

She seemed to recognize Zelda, but didn’t yet comprehend that there weren’t actually little people inside of the screen, but rather that it was a recording of previous events. Zelda mostly accepted that even if Link was one day smart enough to be able to grasp such an abstract concept as her having been the one in the recorded memories, she’d always view those memories from the perspective of an outside observer, rather than experiencing them as she’d lived them.

“One of these days, Linkie, I’m gonna figure something out to kick that little Bokoblin brain of yours into overdrive!” Purah promised as Symin walked by with a stack of books in hand just in time to see Zelda giving the Bokoblin a proud, congratulatory kiss.

“I love you, Link, and I’m proud of you... You’re doing great!”

"Your highness, you know that I have all of the respect in the world for you and what you're doing, but I still can't understand how you can actually *kiss* Link like that."

"Hmhm~! She actually has quite good hygiene. Her diet is very similar to a dog's after all, mostly bones and protein. Beauty is more than skin deep." She scratched around the edge of the horn on Bokob-Link's forehead, causing her to coo and tap her feet on the ground in delight. She *loved* to be touched there. "Though, I might just have strange tastes too." She added cheekily.

"I have to admit though... Speaking of dogs." Zelda sighed, "Part of me is concerned as to whether or not anything I'm saying is really *getting through* to her. Is she genuinely understanding the words I'm saying, and that *she's* saying. Or is it simple conditioning? Associating certain behaviors with rewards, without actually comprehending the underlying meaning behind them?"

"Mmmnn-!" Suddenly, Link pulled away, an intense look of focus on her face. It looked like... she was trying to *say* something. "Luuuhh..."

"Hmm? Yes? What is it, Link?" It was still an extremely rare occurrence that she said anything of her own volition.

"Luuuh... Luuh-iiinkuh..." The Bokoblin tightened her fists, her nostrils flaring as her brain ran at full blast, "Luuh-iinkuh. Luuuhhv. Z-zuuh-eel-duuh!"

"Goddess Alive...!" Zelda's jaw dropped, "That was a- Link-! That was a *complete sentence*! Subject, Verb, and Predicate! This-! I love you too! Oh my goodness, but this is such a *breakthrough*! I- I need to record this." She started to run towards her notebooks, "I need to record this right, *yipe-!*" But she was cut short by Link catching her by the back of her hood and pulling her back, pouting surprisingly cutely at her, her ears flopped down against the side of her face... She may have been struggling with her education, but she was definitely learning *other* things over time.

"Link, I-" Zelda tried to protest, but as soon as she looked into her eyes, she relented, "Okay, *fiiine*! We can go lay down for a while." She smirked as she rolled her eyes, "you've been working very hard and you've earned it!" Link smiled from ear to ear, giggling as she picked the princess up in her arms and started to carry her away...

"Oh, Link... I-" Zelda wrapped her arms around her "mate's" neck, "I hadn't realized but, until now, I wasn't even sure if you knew what I meant when I'd say the word 'love,' I suppose that's what made it so easy for me to say it, and I-"

As Link set Zelda down on the bed they shared each night, she showed off another thing that she'd learned... She loved the sound of her mate's silly mouth words most of the time, but there were times when she wanted her to stop, and the way she did that was by pressing one of her fingers to her lips and going, "Sshhhh!"

Zelda blushed, embarrassed, “P-perhaps you’re right. Some things don’t need to be said, don’t they?” She acquiesced, laying back down on the bed as her Bokoblin partner leapt onto it beside her and snuggled up with her tightly.

It wasn’t the future that Zelda had envisioned, but it didn’t need to be. She was free, Hyrule was safe, and Link was by her side. It didn’t matter how smart or dumb she was, no matter how long it took, she’d help her reach her full potential, just like how Link had helped her reach her own. No matter what happened, Link would always be her knight.