

Flash Portraits of Link: Part 6 – The Search for Sages and Medallions

written by Maggie Sullivan | December 26, 2014



Objective: Save the Sages, find the Princess, save the world.

You wake up, always waking up from dark where your world comes into color. It's all blue, water of the lake blue. But when you focus, and black becomes white and color, you are really surrounded by water on the floor, water falling from the ceiling and you are standing on a platform etched with the triangles and you wonder if you're dead, if you failed because there's no one around you...maybe this is the waiting place before the ascension to the gods, to immortality, toward the end of the ends and that will be it. No further lives of fighting to endure. No more monsters, no more Princess...she ran, not of her own will, but she, you, hadn't planned on him finding out. But he did, he found out and won...what kind of Hero lets the villain win? And there is suddenly blue eyes on you, kind, old eyes of light and calm and blue wisdom, and your fears of death, though maybe a welcome thought, a longed for end, are no longer important. You are alive, you were just sleeping, and now you're awake, in the same reality you were living and nothing about your mission has changed. The playing field may have, but your part to play hasn't run its course. Time is on your side, always on your side, and Time will lead you to victory. Now take his light, find the other sages of time, the ones that came from older ones who locked this darkness up before, and somehow it got out, re-manifested itself in this desert king who rides his dark desert steed into a darkness he has created. His eyes are as black as they are red. You remember them, from your dream, from your meeting with him, the way his maniacal laugh shook your bones violently. Find the old ones, the newer old ones, so you can merge their powers to yours so you can really evolve into the final stage of your Hero persona, the one you've always been, always meant to be, though you're still not quite sure what that looks like yet. You're also just glad that the sword you worried would still be too big and heavy now fits perfectly in the palm of your hand. Maybe this was destiny's plan all along.

Inventory

Special Item

- Light Medallion: You did nothing to deserve this aside from perseverance and, of course, being the Hero of Time. Only one worthy of that name could have pulled the sword, and the sudden aging process has turned you into a hero worth looking at, and that is enough to start with. So with that, he will simply tell you to push on, to not lose faith or heart, and to never give up, though perhaps that is all easier said than done.

Who sneaks in the shadows behind you when the blue light drops you off at the Temple of Time where the past, the present, and the future are all combined into one stream that is easy to row up and down? Red eyes, hidden in darkness, and silent. You barely even notice, your mind focusing on what seven years later even looks like. But hairs on the back of your neck stand and you pause and turn and draw and stop. Breathe, ready. It's so natural, like water. Red eyes that aren't harsh or dark, but familiar in a strange way, almost ruddy and you're a little wary, but less stiff, less alarmed, and he tells you he's been waiting for you and you can't quite place how you know him, what makes this new face so familiar. The world has been waiting for you to bring the light back. But how does he know? He's a new one of the old ones who followed the actions of shadow warriors, of the bodyguard who teaches key songs, of the people who protect the Royal Family and this world, who hide secrets and hints for heroes to find and learn from. He tells you where the darkness lies and the new sages sleep because you haven't, couldn't figure that out entirely on your own. But you had inklings, saw things on your travels as a child, places that would be important to you at a possible later time in bringing organization to the chaos. You have a heading, you need to go, and time is of the essence.

Inventory

Weapons

- Hookshot: The gravedigger got his wish. In the seven years you spent in stillness and sleep, he has been busy dying and exploring. His soul has found its way into underground labyrinths that he has floated through, gotten lost in, and learned to find his way out again, their peculiar turns left, their twists up, delighted in the complexity of it all and making it a game for unexpected grave robbers. Keep up with him, and he'll give you the toy he took to the grave with him, but fall behind and you may encounter one of the creatures he himself encountered on his original tour of his eternal home and be lost to the world of the living forever. The rules only reminds you of your grave robbing childhood nights and the decision that it seemed silly for dead people to bring their earthly possessions to the grave when they would never be able to use them again. It almost feels a little selfish, but you're not one to judge and you haven't said no to a challenge yet. Besides, you're simply happy that his spirit is at ease and enjoying its new found freedom, no matter how twisted the game and his means of sabotage may be.
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There's a gift for you at the ranch and the girl with the sad eyes, who after seven years did grow up pretty and abused because her father was driven out and the bitterly overworked farmhand was consumed by the dark side of greed and took control of the ranch and now overworks his pretty farmhand, keeps her away from her horses, and its all she can do not to cry as she milks the cows and cleans out the stalls. She tells you her pony is grown and beautiful, but to be given to someone else, but that's not what she wants and something inside of you wants to bring her into your arms because you are a man now, no longer a boy, and as a man you can do something like that and have it mean something, because even if you can't love her—though deep down a part of you does anyway because she's kind hearted and pretty and you liked listening to her sing years ago, though she won't sing now because her heart is breaking for her home and her horses and her lazy father, and when you tell her it will be okay, that you will set things right, and bring her father home again, it's then all she can do not to kiss you on the spot because it would be a lie to say that she hasn't thought about it since the last time you visited, and with the way a girls mind changes as they get older, seven years was long enough for her to think of you and make the whole thing more than it would ever be—you're as good as your word and you set things right because you don't want to see her sad anymore. When you beat the bitter farmhand at his own game because you somehow felt naturally comfortable in the saddle, and when she sees you on her rust colored horse, she will smile for the first time in years and that will be enough for now, though you know as you leave, she will never stop loving you because you're all she's ever wanted in a man and then some, so no one else will compare, and if she must marry, she will settle and be happy enough, though not as happy as the future she will plan and keep secret with you and your children who will work hard, live simply, and ride horses till the sun sets.

Warning: Ride cautiously in areas where chickens may be roaming freely. Galloping over a chicken will cause the rest of the flock to fly after you with deadly intent. (Birds of a feather flock together.)

Inventory

Special Items

- Epona: She is another one of those whose heart has been broken in pieces, but there is nothing you can do but console this soul with warm companionship and trust, though she is exceptionally distrusting of anyone but her red headed singing girl, even though that girl has been lost and may never come back in the woman who walks mindlessly around the ranch now if things continue the way they have been, and there's a man in black who has ridden a black steed that wants to take her, pair her with his steed, and breed them, and she's miserable in the corral that once never had gates so that horses could roam freely around the ranch and now keeps her prisoner, settling her fate to be carted off to another cell, another form of prison, and she will cry out for her red headed singing girl, wishing to be comforted in a time of great distress, but instead, no one comes and so she has become wild inside with fury and sadness and refuses to be touched by anyone, biting and kicking and screaming and she will die doing this if she must, if it means not leaving the ranch, her home. Then, she will see someone in green and there's something about him that seems familiar, but she won't let him come near her because men have not been nice to her and there's nothing different about him on the outside aside from his clothes, but that means nothing in the long run. It's not until he calls to her, plays a song that eases the tension in her stomach and legs and she goes toward him, lets him swing himself onto her back because his call is safe, his call is home and happiness of years past and that's all she wants. She wants peace and comfort and home, and she doesn't think that's too much to ask for. His weight feels good on her back, his soft whispers in her ear and the stroke of his warm, strong hands on her neck soothing, and this will settle her more, comfort her heart with familiarity before she will be challenged to fly like the wind, and if pushing her legs to go faster and faster is all that stands between her and her freedom, she will run laps and jump obstacles till her legs break, but when push comes to shove and freedom is on the line, there isn't a wall too high that desire can't jump if the need to be free is strong enough and he will let her roam alone blissfully while he goes off on his own for periods of time and she vows she will forever run to him when he calls her sweetly with the song that beats in her heartstrings because he is kindness and strength and honesty.

The forest is sick and infested with carnivores and you pity the people, your kin, because they have never known darkness, never known destruction, never known death and now you know the forest will never be the same because before when they were impenetrable, they are now scarred and forever changed, no longer naïve and childlike in mind, looks, and stature. And you worry about your friend, the girl with green hair and you wonder if she is an elder, always believing she was wiser than she looked, albeit her inability to physically age past a childish stature. You try calling her through the sound of music in the wind, but her voice is faint and far and you worry. You worry about being too late and you wonder if its because she matters that the stakes are raised and that you know failure is not an option. You go to the spot, your special place, and you can feel her presence and you know she's close, but there is a shadow looming in the back, farther back than you can get to, so you look for an opening where shadows might flee to and when leaves fall around you, you look up and you see an opening leading back. You know that's where you need to go, where the monster waits for you. When you grapple to the broken landing, you can feel the shadows enveloping around you. There's something familiarly horrifying about the shadow, and its only when you see those red eyes on a black steed that you are on guard and ready for him, but that's when the atmosphere changes and you realize those red eyes aren't alive with power, they are dead with them, green skin falling away to reveal frightening lime white bone and you realize this is just a mimic, an imposter so similar it would have been hard to tell the difference before the eyes and face revealed their dead selves. He will copy the king of consumption and power and lob pure energy of death at you that you will bat back at him, catching him off guard more times than none because as the mimic, he is slower than his real self, more likely to embrace mistake because death is the only thing he has room to be passionate for. But you'll dash away the parts of its soul you can reach with your sword and he will be too weak to sustain its form, submitting to the power of your courage and determination and falling away back into shadow, but there is a voice who laments disappointment in the phantasm, and the voice you know is real death, real power, and you watch the shadow be cast into the shadows of shadows to forever be lost in blackness as his evil voice flees the trees.

Inventory

Weapons

- Fairy Bow: The Poe sisters, four spirits who were sacrificed to the

shadows of the forest and became lost within them, their souls extensive despair gathering the shadows around them as a veil to give them their specter like form, disappearing when arrows and stones disperse their shadows and it takes more much energy to keep their form, bring the shadows back once dispersed with every blow, but you know it is their anger and suffering that makes them strong in the first place. You feel compassion for them, understanding that their grudge binds them solely to making unaware visitors of the forest follow in their suffering, they are part of what makes the lost wood so lost, and having no room for peace you will bring it to them in the only way you can see it, through a second death, and it is with blow after blow that it takes longer for them to bring their shadows back and the final blow makes them cry in anguish before their flame of hatred for man and life is extinguished and a lightness fills the room and you know their souls have ascended to the gods because they were pitied for their past and condition, and you'll say a prayer for them because you are not so hateful of monsters that you cannot respectful in the end of how souls are born good and turned evil by others, so you say a prayer and it is this forgiveness of their dark actions and respect for their once good nature that shows the most courage.

Special Items

- Forest Medallion: Upon the shadows defeat, your green friend returns to the world of air as an awakened Sage and you thank the goddesses that you made it in time and she'll look at you, smile, and slowly slip something over her neck and into your palm as she tells you *we will always be friends* and you know that she knows how you can never come back to stay with her, and she's saddened by this, but she's always known and only now has accepted it, but this hurts too. You want to please everyone even though you can't, but you will always be there for her, come to her aid when peril arises, and you will always be her friend. You walk away toward the rest of your destiny as she falls into a contentment of guardianship over the leaves she can feel dancing in the wind of her veins.

Miscellaneous Items

- Bottle #4: The bow is your favorite weapon to use because there is an amount skill required that gives you the sense that not just anyone can use it. You need precision of eye in tracking your mark, you need timing and patience to wait for that perfect shot before you take it, and strength to be able to pull the bow back—in a way that you find incredibly graceful and impressive-looking on foot, but even more so on horseback because of the additional factor of staying on the horse upright in full gallop, which makes this skill invaluable, unique, and extremely cool as you run down large Poes throughout the land that haunt trees, poe bushes and stone walls to sell to the man in the broken castle market who likes to collect their remaining spirit flames—and keep the arrow in line with your target before loosing it and striking the target with a force that blows right through it. Oh yes, you know just how cool you look when you use it, and so, you tend to use it

often.

You want to visit your wooden father, the only one you failed to save even though he knew he would die, and you still live with the regret of the outcome. *What if I...what if I* you think, but you know he would tell you that it wasn't your fault, that this was how he wanted it. But you pay your respects, assure him your courage is steadfast and always growing, and when you bow your head, wondering if he had grown smaller since you had last seen him seven years ago, you feel a rumble beneath your feet and later will be glad your head had been bowed as you were thrown backwards, rolling effortlessly back onto your feet as a stout, thick sapling with eager eyes and a fidgeting mouth, playing with a strand of wheat as though it were human, emerges from the ground and greets you as the new forest tree of wisdom, and you know then and there that even in the face of chaos there is life after death, rebirth in a cycle that will continue to absorb the past through new roots instead of letting the past be forgotten like chipped bark off a tree. He knows things about you, things only his father tree knew and never told you, but maybe he knew this was coming, that eventually you would be told about your past, your real past, before the dream of blackness. He tells you of a mother who sacrificed her life to protect her child from a war now buried deep beneath the green grass, and you realize that the trees around you were simply refuge, not home, your body continuing to grow rather than stay childlike and that itself should have been an indicator of how different you really were back then. As you listen, maybe you blank and wonder what your mother looked like, if she had blonde hair and blue eyes like you, or if you got those from your father and she had brown hair, hazel eyes, eyes of curiosity and your father had the eyes of clarity and bravery and was a warrior who died in battle. You ponder these for a moment before coming back into focus again, but the last thing you wonder is whether she sang you lullabys at night under the stars and moon as the sapling tells you to go on, to believe in what is coming, that you'll persevere. You take one step, then another, walking your path of today and the path of your ancestors.