

THE LEGEND OF **ZELDA**

TIMELINE AND ANALYSIS

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1. INTRODUCTION

I just completed all 16 Legend of Zelda games, which were created over a span of 25 years, in about a month. I took notes during my play through of all of these games, noting important lines of dialogue, plot points, characters, locations, etc. The goal of this was to create an overall timeline of all the major events and games in the series. Interestingly enough, shortly after embarking on this quest, Nintendo released an official artbook, the Hyrule Historia (Japanese only). In this book, they actually reveal the secreted timeline. So, my work was basically done. However, I plan to go much more in depth than the book did, but sway my analysis towards the timeline they provide (which does indeed seem legit).

Before I start my timeline/analysis, I think I should point out two important ideas. The first is that these are Japanese games. That is, these games were developed in Japan first, and then translated/localized for the US and other territories. This means that there is the possibility of certain things being lost in translation, of character or town names to change, major dialogue changes, etc, which may impact the exactness of my analysis. The second issue is with the concept of retroactive continuity(retcon), meaning that after facts have been established, designers can retroactively change the truth and alter the series' universe. After playing all the games, this has easily occurred many times, so you may see me point out some of these seemingly contradictory facts, although I'll try to meld them together taking this concept into consideration. Obviously, not everything was planned from the beginning, and over the course of 25 years, 16 games, and many different designers, developers, and writers, not everything will mesh together perfectly as the story and universe evolved and expanded.

With that being said, I will now attempt to layout the overall timeline of the Zelda universe, chronologically, as easily as I can, with as much detail as possible and as little conjecture as needed. I will be basing my information primarily from the games' story and manuals only, with a little bit thrown in from developer commentary, Hyrule Historia, and other similar official sources for support. I will annotate all of my facts, listing where they come from, and any speculation and theorizing from my part will be clearly evident and not stated as fact. I should also note that I'm focusing this essay on Hyrule and its history, so I won't delve deeply into the lore of other areas, such as Termina, Holodrum, etc, but I will of course discuss the games in which those settings are involved and how they affect the timeline. And of course, SPOILER ALERT. I will be spoiling EVERY Zelda game ever made and it might come at times you don't expect it. Sorry.

2. THE ERA OF THE WORLD'S CREATION AND THE TRIFORCE

It is clear throughout the games that the three goddesses; Din, Nayru, and Farore created the land and all that exist in it in the beginning. Upon completing this task, they also created the Triforce, containing three pieces: the Triforce of Power, the Triforce of Wisdom, and the Triforce of Courage. A few of the games make mention of this creation story, while almost all of the other Zelda titles deal directly with the Triforce in some form. The symbols of the goddesses are also very prevalent throughout the series, indicating that they are still very much revered, and they even seem to still be playing a role with their creations.

The first time the creation story is mentioned is in the manual for *A Link to the Past*(*ALttP*). According to the manual, this story comes from Hylian scrolls: The gods descended and created order and life. The God of Power dyed the mountains red with fire and created land. The God of Wisdom created science and wizardry and brought order to nature. The God of Courage created life, through justice and vigor.

Before leaving the world, the gods also created a symbol of their strength; a golden triangle known as the Triforce.

The Great Deku Tree in *Ocarina of Time*(*OoT*) tells a fairly identical tale, but giving names to the gods and specifying that they are women: Before time, there were 3 golden goddesses; Din, Nayru, Farore. These goddesses descended upon the chaos which was the land. Din, the goddess of power; with her flaming arms, cultivated the land and created the earth. Nayru, the goddess of wisdom; poured her wisdom onto the earth and gave the spirit of law to the world. Farore, the goddess of courage; with her rich soul, produced all life forms who uphold the law. With their labors completed, the goddesses departed for the heavens, with the golden, sacred triangles (Triforce) remaining at the point where the goddesses left the world. In *Twilight Princess*(*TP*), the Light Spirit Lanayru also talks of this creation story, giving a very similar account, but going further to say that the goddesses granted power equally to all who dwell in the light.

THE TRIFORCE

The next key point to discuss before really getting into details of the timeline is what exactly the Triforce is and what it is capable of. This happens to be one topic where retcon plays a big factor as the power of the Triforce slightly changes from game to game. I will try to analyze it chronologically from the game release standpoint, and not where the games fall in the timeline.

In the original *Legend of Zelda*(*LoZ*), the Triforce is only composed of two pieces; the Triforce of Wisdom and the Triforce of Power, but this can easily be explained away in the next game, *The Adventure of Link*(*AoL*). In *LoZ*, the Triforce of Wisdom is used to gain access to and reveal Ganon, but that's about all we know, aside from the Triforce having "mystical powers".

In *AoL*, it is said that long ago, the ruler of Hyrule maintained peace using the Triforce. Before the king died, he created a scroll detailing the power of the Triforce, meant for its successor. The scroll states that the Triforce will show its maximum power when all three pieces are brought together, and that not everyone can use the Triforce; only one with strong character and an inborn special quality. At the end of *AoL*, after Link has collected all three parts of the Triforce, he brings them to the sleeping Zelda and awakens her from the curse that has caused her to slumber for many, many years using its power.

In *ALttP*, the Triforce is described as an inanimate object, containing a small, but powerful portion of the essence of the gods, and was meant to guide the intelligent life of the world. Even though the Triforce is supposedly inanimate, it seems to have the power to talk to people and has some will of its own. The Triforce also had the power to bestow three titles to people, giving them great powers. The titles are: "The Forger of Strength", "The Keeper of Knowledge", and "The Juror of Courage". The Triforce beckoned people to seek it out in the hope that someone worthy of these titles would find it. In the Book of Mudora, a collection of Hylian legends and lore, it is stated that the Triforce also "makes mortal dreams come true". Also, the Triforce cannot judge between good and evil. *ALttP* also tells the story of the Master Sword, and how it is resistant to magic and can repulse even powers granted by the Triforce. Although the Master Sword story gets retconned, we can assume it still holds the power to repulse the Triforce's magic, which can technically be seen in Link's ability to bat back Ganondorf's and others' magical attacks. At the end of the game, the Essence of the Triforce speaks to Link, saying, "The Triforce will grant the wishes in the heart and mind of the person who touches it. If a good heart touches it, his good wishes come true. If an evil heart, his evil wishes will come true. The stronger the wish, the more powerful the Triforce's expression of that wish will be." It also appears that the wish will remain true for

as long as the wisher lives.

In *OoT*, Zelda tells a similar tale of how the Triforce grants the wish of the one who holds it in his hands. If it's someone with a righteous heart, it will lead Hyrule to a golden age of prosperity. If it's an evil person though, the world will be consumed by evil. Later in the game, she tells more. The Triforce is a balance between the three forces; Power, Wisdom, and Courage. If the heart of the one who holds the Triforce has all three forces in balance, that one will gain the True Force to govern all. But, if the heart is not in balance, the Triforce will separate into the three parts, and the person will keep the part they believe in the most. If that person wants the True Force, he must acquire the two lost parts. Those parts will be held within others chosen by destiny who bear the Triforce mark on the back of their hands.

In the Oracle series, both *Oracle of Ages*(*OoA*) and *Oracle of Seasons*(*OoS*), the Triforce beckons Link to appear before it, then speaks, saying either, "Link, Link. Accept the quest of the Triforce!" or "Accept our quest, hero!". After this, the Triforce teleports link to the lands of Labrynna and Holodrum. So it would seem that either the Triforce has a mind of its own, or it can be used as a conduit for the goddesses.

In *Wind Waker*(*WW*), the Triforce grants wishes to whoever TOUCHES it, like what has been said in other games, although here, it is very specific that the user of the Triforce must physically touch it.

Lastly, in *Skyward Sword*(*SS*), Zelda/Hylia says the Triforce's power can never be wielded by one, but this seems contradictory to everything else we've seen and soon after saying this, Zelda says that Link, with Power, Wisdom, and Courage, can claim the Triforce; which he later does. Zelda also says that only a select few can wield the Triforce; those with an unbreakable spirit. It is also mentioned that the gods themselves could not use the Triforce; it must be used by a mortal. When Link finally gets the Triforce, he makes a wish, however, he isn't touching the Triforce when he does it, which contradicts previous Triforce lore and rules, specifically, what happens in *WW*. In *WW*, the Triforce is two feet away from Ganondorf when he makes his wish, but because he isn't physically touching it, the wish doesn't come true. Fortunately, this isn't a real issue because in every instance we've seen the Triforce, there is only ever a single person with it making a wish. However, in *WW*, there are multiple people in the room with the Triforce, who have varying wishes, so it makes sense in that case that you would have to be the one touching it, while in others, it's enough to simply be in its presence.

Overall, we can see that the multiple pieces of the Triforce, by themselves, have varying powers they grant their users, but together, the Triforce can grant its bearer a wish of whatever they desire. It would also seem that not just anybody can wield the Triforce, so it would be interesting to see what might happen to someone who tried to use it, but who wasn't worthy. Raiders of the Lost Ark? Another tidbit is that the Triforce appears to be able to be any size it wants; from jewelry-sized, to as big as a person, to even being inside of a person.

Another important item to note about the Triforce is the emblem that appears on the back of certain characters' hands, which tend to be Link, Zelda, and Ganondorf. The symbol is that of the particular Triforce the character embodies. Sometimes, it happens to be that the Triforce actually resides within the person who has this symbol, but this is merely a coincidence and not the reason for the symbol to appear. The symbol means the person possesses a certain sacred power and that characteristic; power, wisdom, or courage.



Triforce Symbol on hand, showing that sacred power dwells within.

The first mention of the symbol on the hand came from *AoL*, from the scroll that Impa gave to Link, perhaps written by the King of Hyrule. In it, he says that he cast a spell on all of Hyrule, where a crest would appear on a young man with strong character who has been brought up correctly, has gained many kinds of experiences, and reached a certain age(16). While this story gets retconned in future games, like *SS*, where Link gets these symbols on his hand, but the story of *AoL* couldn't have occurred yet, we can believe that the reason for why the symbol appears is still the same. This is further backed up by things Zelda mentions, also in *SS*, of the symbol meaning that sacred power dwells within. Also, we see each of these symbols show up on Link's hand only after he overcomes a great trial, where he gains the "many kinds of experiences". This also occurs before Link gains possession of the physical Triforce.

Now that we've talked about that, let's get to the actual timeline of events that occur throughout the series; both events of the games themselves, and events that are mentioned either from the manuals or from bits of dialogue shared between the characters.

3. THE ERA OF THE GODDESS HYLIA

The first event, of course, is that of the creation of the world and the Triforce by the three goddesses: Din, Farore, and Nayru. I already discussed this previously, so I won't repeat myself here.

Directly after this time though, we aren't really sure what happens, or how long until the next event. We do know from *SS* though, which is the first game in the series chronologically, that the goddess Hylia was sent to the land to act as its protector, as well as watching over the Triforce. We'll assume that Hylia came to watch over the land shortly after its creation, although there isn't any real evidence to back this up. The only evidence present is that the goddesses Din, Farore, and Nayru are referred to as the "old gods", while Hylia is simply the "goddess". You could infer one of two things from this; Din, Nayru, and Farore are referred to as the "old gods" because their time has passed long ago, and Hylia has just now taken over, or simply that the "old gods" don't have much influence on life after they created the world, while Hylia went on to protect it for some time, so she would be more relevant and important to the people at the time. We'll pretend though that Hylia took control almost directly after the creation of the

world. Then, we can infer that Hylia's "reign" went on for a very long time; several thousands of years possibly.

In this time, the humans who praised Hylia and became her chosen people, were known as the Hylians. This race of humans is said to have magic infused blood, and were endowed with psychic powers and a great skill in wizardry. They also possessed long, pointy ears, which were said to be used to be able to hear the gods, making them the closest race to the gods, which gave them a high status in society. Shad, a scholar from *Twilight Princess*, says that the Oocca, a race of Cucco-like intelligent animals might have been even closer to the gods though, and may have helped build Hyrule later on before going to live in the sky. It might theoretically be possible as well that these Oocca are actually the Wind Tribe from MC, but that's fairly baseless, aside from both races living in the sky and giving aid to the Hylians.

Anyways, the Hylians and other races, created temples to praise the gods, and otherwise built up civilization. To help watch over the world, Hylia appointed creatures roles to protect various realms of the world. The Water Dragon, Faron, protects the Faron Province, while the Fire Dragon, Eldin, protects the Eldin Province, and the Thunder Dragon, Lanayru, protects the Lanayru Province. As you can clearly see, the province and dragons share the same names. It's probably the case that the regions were named after the dragons themselves. Also note that these dragons appear to be named after the three goddesses, Farore(FAROn), Din(eLDIN), and Nayru(laNAYRU), although I wouldn't assume that they are the goddesses in another form.

We don't really know what else happened during this period of time, but we do know when this era came to an end. At some point in time, the Demon King, Demise, with a hate for the gods and lust for power, started a bloody war on the creatures of the surface in an attempt to obtain the Triforce. He escaped from the depths of the earth, creating a fissure in the surface where an outpour of his evil minion army could ascend from. We don't know how long this war lasted, but many were murdered, and much of the land was destroyed. To prevent Demise from getting the Triforce and to save the rest of her people, Hylia gathered the surviving humans along with the Triforce itself on an outcropping of earth, and sent it beyond the clouds, away from the reach of Demise, and protected by a cloud barrier. Hylia then appointed a giant, flying whale named Levias, a sky spirit, to watch the skies, with his main goal probably being to protect that flying piece of land which would become Skyloft.

Afterward, Hylia joined with the other land dwelling races including Gorons, Kikwis, Mogmas, and Parellas, and fought the evil forces, eventually sealing them away, including Demise, but not destroying him. After doing this, peace was restored to the surface, however, Hylia was severely wounded in the battle and could not support the seal that was placed on Demise to keep him imprisoned.

Hylia came up with a plan though, that she set into motion before she died from her injuries. First, she created the Goddess Sword and its caretaker, Fi, for the chosen hero, who would come to be Link. Then, she sacrificed her current form, and gave up her soul to be placed into a mortal, who would become Zelda. She did this so that when these mortals came into existence in the future, they would be able to use the power of the Triforce to defeat Demise.

Before passing, Hylia tells Impa, one of the Sheikah who were Hylia's guardians, to time travel using the Gate of Time to the point where Zelda lives in the distant future and guide her to discover who she really is and realize her task. She is also appointed the role of being Link's guide, and basically cleaning up and looking after everyone, keeping everything safe and on track.

There is a bit of time travel magic here by way of the Gates of Time, which I'll explain later, but suffice it to say that for at least 1000 years, if not many thousands of years, Demise stayed imprisoned and whatever life was left on the surface went on living. We don't know too much about this time period either, but the land of the surface seemed to heal from the tremendous battle that ensued. One thing to note is that at some point, the Lanayru Province went from a lush area with a sea, to a desert. This could have happened after the guardian of the area, Lanayru the Thunder Dragon, died after getting sick, but there's no real evidence to support that, and after you save him, the desert doesn't revert back to being forested. It is also important to note that there were no humans left on the surface, as they were sent up on Skyloft.

So, while the surface was healing, we've got the Hylians on Skyloft in the sky starting up their own civilization and passing around the legend of the battle and the to-be hero, as well as continuing to praise Hylia. Obviously, several thousand years pass and some of these legends get distorted and lost to time, but surprisingly they continue to worship the goddess and much of the prophecy about the Hero of Legend continues to be remembered. It is at this point, thousands of years after Hylia sent up Skyloft, that *Skyward Sword*(SS) takes place.

4. THE SKY ERA AND THE HERO OF LEGEND

Link and Zelda, childhood friends, along with the rest of the Skyloftians, live their lives on a floating piece of earth in the sky. There are various other floating rocks about the sky where some creatures make their living, however, the cloud barrier created by Hylia covers the surface below, both obscuring view and passage. The surface has become a thing of legend, and most people don't know anything about it or if it even exists. No person or loftwing has penetrated this cloud barrier for at least a hundred years, probably never, in the thousands of years the Hylians have been living on Skyloft. Note that these people are indeed Hylians, although they don't know it themselves. They continue to praise a single goddess, but never refer to her as Hylia, whose name is revealed later by an outsider.

Zelda's father, Gaepora, is the headmaster of the Knight Academy on Skyloft, where the knights protect and serve the people. There doesn't appear to be a mayor or other form of government, and Gaepora seems to be held in high esteem amongst the denizens, so it's safe to assume that he is basically the leader of not just the Knight Academy, but the entire land.

Link happens to be a knight in training, and one way to enter the senior class of this institution is to win the Wing Ceremony, which happens to occur the day SS starts. The Wing Ceremony is an annual event that celebrates the goddess awarding her chosen hero, which is a bit bizarre really as that hasn't happened yet I don't believe, unless there was a Hero in Hylia's time that we don't know about, which is possible. I'll assume that's not the case though. Anyways, this marks the 25th anniversary of both the ceremony and the Knight Academy, which is also a bit odd. The reason Nintendo says this is because it happens to be the 25th anniversary of the Zelda series. It would be strange if the Knight Academy is only 25 years old though, as Skyloft is thousands of years old, but so be it. Zelda will be performing the role of the goddess, and whoever wins the event will act the part of the chosen hero. The event is fairly simple; fly around on your Loftwing and capture a statue.

Loftwings are giant birds that the citizens of Skyloft use to fly about. The people say that these birds are a sign of divine protection sent by the goddess. These birds act as guardians, and the Skyloftians, or bird folk, are made whole by their avian counterpart, after they have met and bonded as youths under the

Statue of the Goddess. Link met up with a very rare, thought to be extinct, crimson Loftwing, in which the two shared a very special connection. This doesn't really hold much significance, but who knows, perhaps that red Loftwing of Link's is symbolized on those Hylian shields. Also, the idea of the loftwing in general is slightly interesting, as birds seem to be a very important symbol in the Zelda series, even featured on the main crest, although the origin of this is still unknown. The bird and Triforce crest is shown in this game, but was very likely present in Hylia's time. I believe, from seeing a particular depiction of what I believe is the goddess, that she may have had wings, and possibly other characteristics similar to a bird, thus leading to the seemingly holiness of the species.



Hylian Shield

Link just so happens to be the victor of the Wing Ceremony, so he follows Zelda up to the Statue of the Goddess to partake in the ritual. Zelda sings a song, passed down since Hylia's time, about the chosen hero, while playing on her golden harp, which is said to be like the one the goddess had. Zelda then presents Link with a sailcloth, just like how the goddess gave her chosen hero one long ago. Again, we never see Hylia even have a chosen hero, so it's hard to say if there actually was one long ago, or that the chosen hero is actually the current Link, which would make more sense, but also involve weird time travel paradoxes, which I'm personally okay with accepting. So in this case, the goddess giving her hero a sailcloth didn't really happen long ago, but instead right now. It'll make more sense after I've discussed the time travel present in SS.

Zelda seems quite smitten with Link, and so, after the ceremony, they go on a flight together. Zelda seems like she's going to declare her love to Link, but just before she can, a black tornado appears out of nowhere and brings Zelda and her loftwing crashing beneath the clouds, where no one can venture. Link also gets knocked unconscious. During his sleep, he has another vision, having had one previously, about a terrible monster and a guiding spirit. Zelda, before her incident with the tornado, also had a premonition about the surface and could hear voices calling to her. She had also been increasingly interested in the surface after reading some of her father's old texts. This appears to be a fairly regular occurrence in the series, what with Zelda having some sort of telepathic ability to sense evil.

When Link awakens, he notices a floating womanly figure, Fi, who he follows to a hidden chamber within the Statue of the Goddess, of which only few know about. In this room, the Chamber of the Sword, Fi tells Link that he is the goddess' chosen hero, and that he must save the Spirit Maiden Zelda. At this point, Gaepora shows up in the room, shocked that the legend is coming true before his very eyes. The legend has been passed down to the elders of the people for thousands of years, although bits and pieces had been lost.

At this point, Fi gives Link a tablet that creates a portal that pierces the cloud barrier and allows Link access to the surface, where he can begin his supposed journey to find Zelda, although it's quite more dubious than that. To prepare for his journey, Gaepora gives Link a sturdy Knight's uniform that seniors are awarded, with this year's color fatefully being green. And yes, this particular uniform happens to be the tunic you always see Links wearing.

Link jumps off his Loftwing and lands, with the help of the sailcloth, on the surface at the Sealed Grounds. Interestingly, this is the same place where Demise is sealed and quite possibly where Zelda landed. Also, this is the part of the land that now makes up the Isle of the Goddess, a part of Skyloft. Link quickly learns that the seal on Demise is weakening, and his grotesque form as "The Imprisoned" escapes from time to time, demanding that Link retrap him. Anyways, Link enters the Sealed Temple, previously known as the Temple of Hylia thousands of years ago, and meets an old woman, who remains nameless for much of the game but is later revealed as Impa; the same who Hylia left in charge. Another time paradox appears here, where Impa is shown wearing a bracelet that is given to her at the end of the game in the past by Zelda. Impa has been sitting in the temple for a long time, waiting to be Link's guide. It seems to me that Impa has thusly been waiting for Link for thousands of years as she lived during Hylia's time, and while she has all human features, she makes comments that sound like she isn't exactly human, but some other race; one that, apparently, lives to be very old. It's also semi-important to note that there are two versions of Impa in this time, both young and old.



Young Impa from Hylia's Time



Elderly Impa (Old Woman) from Hero of Legend's Time

Elderly Impa tells Link to set out on his adventure and to find Zelda, who went in the forest towards the Skyview Spring to purify herself. When he exits the temple, and throughout the game, Link meets all kinds of creatures, clearly showing the surface has healed from its battle with Demise so many years ago. One such creature is a Goron named Gorko, who is a scholar of sorts. Gorko acts as a bit of a tutorial and guide for the player, but reveals things such as the legendary Skyloft where Link is from, referred to as the Isle of the Goddess. The legends say it's a mystical, perfect place, where everything is made of gold, the weather is always perfect, and everyone is happy. Obviously, this isn't quite the case, but it does reveal that the races of the surface know about the existence of Skyloft, and how certain truths can be distorted with time.

The first boss of the game is encountered at the end of the Faron Woods Temple, and is the main adversary. This being is the Demon Lord Ghirahim, and he is the one who created the black tornado to snatch Zelda. Ghirahim's goal is to resurrect his master, the Demon King, Demise, and he needs Zelda in order to do it, who as you recall, is Hylia reincarnated as a mortal. You think nothing of it when Ghirahim calls Demise his master, but it's pretty awesome when it's revealed that he is in fact Demise's sword, just like Fi is Link's. Anyhoo, Link and Ghirahim get in a bit of a tussle, which, unseen, gives Zelda time to move along to her next destination. Ghirahim then leaves to chase after Zelda, and Link goes to the Spring to get a hint from the gods of old, who have left a message for him, from the "edge of time".

It is in this message from the gods that we learn that Zelda must purify herself in two sacred springs; the second being the Earth Spring. We aren't told why she has to do this or how she knows to, but we better go follow her. Link makes his way to the second Spring in the fiery Eldin province, and he actually meets up with Zelda and young Impa briefly. Zelda and Link share a glance, but Impa tells Zelda that they can't get together and that she must stay on task. Impa then gets pissy with Link because he was late and doesn't have what it takes to be the goddess' hero. While on her way to Eldin, Zelda got captured by Ghirahim's minions, but Impa freed her. Link should have been there, but he failed. Link is pretty hurt by these words, but it makes him stronger and more determined. Impa and Zelda travel away via a beam of light, and Link is left with another message from the gods. The message says that Zelda is heading to Lanayru, for the Gate of Time and that he should follow.

The Lanayru desert is a pretty interesting place. Firstly, as I mentioned, it used to be a very lush, lively place with lots of greenery, but has since been transformed into an arid region over the course of several hundred years. This area also used to be a huge mining complex, where the workers, super advanced AI robots, mined Timeshift crystals. In the game, these are used to shift the time surrounding the crystals to the distant past. So, anything within the radius of the crystals' power turns in to the past version of that area, aside from Link. It isn't really said HOW far back in the past the crystals work, but when used, the area turns back into the lush environment, which existed "several hundred years" ago. I would assume that it takes you back to Hylia's time, but there's no way to know for sure. One bit of evidence to support this is that when a Timeshift crystal is used, some of the enemies to appear are the red Bokoblins, who are currently summoned by Ghirahim. These Bokoblins in particular are a bit different, but it could be theorized that these were summoned and used by Demise during the war. Also, the larger Timeshift Orbs have the Sheikah eye emblem on them, who were the protectors of Hylia, so it's very probably that they were created during Hylia's time. Either way, it's very clear that the place is now ancient and was a highly evolved civilization at the time.

After going through another temple, Link catches up with Impa and Zelda at the Gate of Time, which is located at the Temple of Time, created by Hylia. While it is referred to as the 'Temple of Time', it is very unlikely that this is the same place as from *OoT*. For one, this place is located in the far west, in the desert, while the Temple of Time in *OoT* is in the center of the map in Castle Town. Just when Link arrives and everyone seems happy, Ghirahim shows up again. Zelda tosses Link the Goddess' Harp, the same one she had in Skyloft. Link then musters up the courage to hold off Ghirahim, giving Impa and Zelda enough time to escape to the past through the Gate of Time. While leaving, Impa destroys the Gate of Time, foiling Ghirahim yet again. He's pretty ticked and flees to find another way to them, while Link must go back to the old lady (Impa) to find out what to do next to reach Zelda in Hylia's time.

Another interesting talking point to bring up here in relation to Lanayru is the idea of Hyrule. It is quite obvious that in the past, this area was superiorly advanced and civilized, having these robots working all

over the place, and having the Temple of Time itself. Also, there is a giant statue at the Temple of Time of what is now referred to as the Royal Crest; a bird with wings outstretched, with the Triforce above it. This symbol is used by Hyrule's Royal Family, but I'm going to assume that the symbol was adopted later and that Hyrule in fact did NOT exist during Hylia's time, and that it was later created sometime after the events of SS.



"Royal Crest" Symbol found at the Temple of Time in Lanayru.

Anyways, Link goes back to the old lady, and learns a song for the harp; the Ballad of the Goddess. This song and harp have mystical powers, including the effect of revealing an inactive Gate of Time, the last of its kind. The gate can become active again by first purifying the Goddess Sword with three sacred flames, turning it into the Master Sword, and then hitting it with a Skyward Strike. Each of the flames, interestingly, represents one of the three gods of old; Din, Nayru, and Farore. Impa doesn't really provide much help in finding these flames, although she does suggest that clues to doing so are hidden in a sacred song that the people of Skyloft sing.

This sacred song happens to be the one Zelda was singing before the Wing Ceremony, which sets Link on a path to activate a special beacon at the Light Tower on Skyloft, which creates another portal to a blocked off portion of the sky inside a Thunderhead. Inside of this massive cloud, aside from crazy looking, bird-like creatures, is the Isle of Songs. At this floating island, Link separately learns three songs that lead him to three trials, which will be discussed in depth later. I will say that each of these trials occur in the "Silent Realm", are named after each of the Old Gods, and after completing one, Link gets a sacred gift, which will guide him to a flame.

Link finds the first flame guarded by Faron, the Water Dragon. The dragon was appointed to guard the woods and given the flame by Hylia herself. Link imbues the Sword and Fi with Farore's Flame. After doing this, a mark of the Triforce appears on Link's hand, with one piece glowing. With each subsequent flame Link acquires, an additional piece of the Triforce pulsates with light.

After getting his first flame, Link must travel back to the Isle of the Songs to learn a new song, which leads him to another trial, and then to the flame. Nayru's Flame was guarded by a group of those friendly robots on their ship, which was overtaken in the past by pirates. It's somewhat interesting to learn that

these robots would be protecting a flame, which, with other dialogue, leads me to believe that the Thunder Dragon, Lanayru, may have created these robots. They seem to be held to high esteem and are very technologically advanced, and hold many roles. To be able to hold these roles, it's likely that someone of importance put them in charge, and Lanayru is the most likely choice. They also have a desire to help the sick Lanayru, and who wouldn't want to help their creator? Also, Faron protects the first flame, and so it would make sense that the other dragons protect the other two, although we don't really see this. It could be that Lanayru put the robots in charge of protecting this flame, as they are of his creation, especially if he was getting sick and couldn't protect it himself.

Once the second flame is acquired, Link goes through the process again to find the third, Din's Flame. This is the final flame, and with it, the Goddess Sword is transformed into the Master Sword. So, this would seem to be the true creation of the Master Sword, but Fi didn't really make a big production about it, like it was no big deal. Also, this task was said to be "purifying" the sword in the flames, instead of some other constructive verb, like tempering or forging. This made me feel like perhaps the Master Sword existed in the past, but then it was damaged or concealed for some reason unknown.

Now having the Master Sword, Link goes back to the Sacred Temple, activates the dormant Gate of Time, and travels to the past to meet up with young Impa and Zelda. It is here in the past that we learn about Hylia's plan and all that has been happening. At this point where Link traveled to, Hylia has just trapped Demise, and recently sent up Skyloft. Zelda was purifying herself in the springs to regain her memories as Hylia, as she possesses her soul. With her goddess abilities, she imbues the Master Sword with power, making it the TRUE Master Sword. A similar act is also done in Wind Waker.

Zelda, having the knowledge and memories of Hylia, also reveals Hylia's devious plan to stop Demise. Basically, like I previously stated, in order to wield the Triforce, one has to have an unbreakable spirit and possess power, courage, and wisdom. Link didn't quite have these characteristics yet, so in order to gain them, he had to face all the trials and challenges that he did on his adventure to save Zelda. So, Zelda was used as a tool of seduction, so Link would go full force and face these trials in order to save her, to become this hero who could wield the Triforce and then use it to destroy Demise. Without the goal to save Zelda, Link would never have risked so much and gone through these experiences to gain these characteristics, so he wouldn't be able to use the Triforce. This is a very interesting revelation, and one that shapes the very idea of the character Zelda. She isn't just a girl who needs to be saved, but an object that is used to create the Hero who is worthy to wield the Master Sword and/or Triforce.

Feeling pretty guilty, yet wanting to continue with Hylia's plan, Zelda traps herself in a deep slumber to maintain the seal on Demise for thousands of years, to the present, so Link will have time to get the Triforce. This was the first use of time travel semi-paradoxes I mentioned. It is only because of Zelda that Demise stayed trapped for these thousands of years, but it is just now that she is maintaining the seal, although it is in the past. So, at the beginning of the game, Zelda is there on Skyloft, but the seal is being maintained by her...technically, it's not a paradox, but it's interesting and informative to see that this is how Nintendo does its time traveling, which seems to be fairly consistent in other games, where characters make mention of events in the past that the player does, but have yet to actually perform themselves.

Link's mission now is very clear, so he returns to his own time to seek out the Triforce, while Impa stays in the past to watch over Zelda, which it appears she still does as the old lady in the present. Unfortunately, it seems as though nobody knows where the Triforce is, including Impa, though it is thought to be on Skyloft somewhere, hidden by Hylia when she sent it up into the sky. Link searches and

asks Gaepora, who points him in the direction of Levias, the sky spirit. Levias also doesn't know exactly where it is, but says there is a hint to finding it in the Song of the Hero. However, Levias only knows one part of the song, while the three dragons know the other parts. After gathering all pieces of the song, Link can open up the final Silent Realm trial, from which he receives a sacred gift that opens the way to the Triforce.

The Triforce is locked away in a labyrinth underneath the Goddess Statue, and Link must acquire each piece separately. After doing so, Link is teleported to the top of the Goddess Statue, where the Triforce is shown to fly out of his chest. At this point, Link closes his eyes and wishes with all of his heart for the destruction of Demise. The Isle of the Goddess begins to shake, as it separates from Skyloft and falls to the surface, in the giant cavity at the Sealed Grounds, where The Imprisoned/Demise is yet again escaping. The Isle of the Goddess crushes and destroys Demise. Everyone celebrates, and Zelda awakens from her thousand year nap, with no need to keep the seal active any longer. But alas, there remains a threat. Ghirahim breaks up the party and captures the weakened Zelda, taking her through the Gate of Time to the past where Demise lives still and is ready to be revived.

Once in the past, Ghirahim starts the ritual to revive Demise to his true form using Hylia's/Zelda's soul. After Link valiantly tries to stop the process, it is too late, and Demise returns, transforming Ghirahim into his trusty anti-Master Sword. Demise then makes some comments about the human race, and how he is surprised that one would stand against him, and a child at that. In Hylia's time, all the humans seemed to scurry about in fear, praying to their goddess to save them. He then gives Link time to make sure he wants to do this, saying that he has waited for millennia to get his hands on the Triforce, and a few moments longer wouldn't hurt.

Hearing that the process to completely consume Zelda's soul takes time, and that she can still be saved, Link courageously follows Demise to some dimension/realm where they can fight alone, without distractions. Link makes quick work of this big, red-headed Demon King, defeating him and making his sword and Ghirahim disintegrate. Before falling, Demise first compliments Link, saying that he fought like no human or demon he has ever known. However, even though he might have been defeated, his hate will never perish and will be forever reborn. He says that Link and Zelda's descendents, with the blood of the goddess and spirit of the hero, will be eternally bound to this curse; an incarnation of his hatred following their kind, dooming them. During the fight, Fi gives the following diagnoses of Demise: "This eternal being has conquered time itself. It is the source of all monsters. According to tales passed down through generations, it appears differently in each epoch and to each person who lays eyes on it." So, it is this hate that is later reborn in characters like Bellum, Malladus, and of course, Ganondorf.



Demon King Demise



Ganon



Demon King Malladus

Demise is eradicated though, and what is left of his consciousness is absorbed and sealed away inside the Master Sword. Having completed his task of defeating Demise, again, Link places the Master Sword in a pedestal inside the Temple of Hylia, in the past. Fi says her goodbyes and remains to sleep within the Master Sword as well, forever. Young Impa must stay in her own time to protect the Master Sword and make sure the last of Demise continues to deteriorate within the sword without escaping. She confirms that she is a Sheikah, Hylia's chosen guardian, a people who have been tasked with watching over the Master Sword and ensuring that the evil spirit within cannot break free and destroy the world. Impa also says that she will watch over the Triforce, and mentions how the power of it is too great, and corrupts people, so that the existence of it must stay hidden from history. Saddened, Zelda gives Impa a bracelet for her to remember them by. Before Zelda and Link go back to the present, Impa also says she'll take care of the Gate of Time; when they return, the gate disappears. Link and Zelda are also greeted by the

old woman, who is wearing the bracelet Zelda gave her thousands of years ago, confirming that it is Impa. However, shortly after the reunion, old Impa disappears in a flutter of light. It doesn't really say what happened here; I would assume that her job is finished as Demise is defeated, but what exactly happened is unknown. I'm thinking either she died in the past, or maybe some spell was broken that had kept her alive, but now that she's not needed she can die. It could be that she was transported to the Sacred Realm, as the effect of her disappearing is similar to that of Link going into the Silent Realm.

As the game closes, we see that Skyloftians and their loftwings can now come to the surface, and that Link and Zelda both decide to stay and make a life there, watching over the Triforce, which is still floating above the Statue of the Goddess. We also see the Master Sword still in the pedestal.

5. THE ERAS OF CHAOS AND PROSPERITY

It is at some point then, after the Hero of Legend and Zelda from SS decided to stay on the surface, that the Hylians repopulated, built up their civilization, and Hyrule was established. We don't have a timeline for this period at all, but I would assume it would take some time for humans to reestablish themselves on the surface and create a kingdom. It probably started out small, building off of the Knight's Academy. However, once the people, both Skyloftians and races of the surface, learned that Zelda was the goddess Hylia reborn, they probably praised her and let her lead. This isn't hard to imagine, as the three dragons assigned by Hylia still lived in the present, and they would have a lot of sway over everyone as protectors of the regions.

The following events I will describe in this section are all canon, but the placement of them in the timeline is not concrete and hasn't been officially stated. I theorize that they belong here, as it is one of the few locations that are possible, and is the most logical.

After living peacefully for some time, trouble began to brew in the land. Word began to spread about the Sacred Realm and the power of the Triforce. People started to desire this immense power, and soon, a great battle ensued to gain possession of the Triforce. Greed spread through the people, and friends became enemies. Among those living in the light, interlopers appeared who excelled at magic. These sorcerers tried to establish dominion over the Sacred Realm using a powerful magic; the Fused Shadow. I believe this group is also the same that used the Majora's Mask in its hexing rituals. There is no other shadowy evil tribe presented in the Zelda series, and Majora's Mask and the Fused Shadow share a similarity in the design of the eyes. Also, Majora's Mask bestows wicked and evil power to whoever wears it, transforming that person, which is exactly what the Fused Shadow does to people who live in the light who touch it, like the bosses in *Twilight Princess*. It is also said in *MM* that the "ancient ones", which could refer to the goddesses, sealed the mask away in shadow, fearing its misuse. And, that's exactly what happens to the dark interlopers.



Majora's Mask



Fused Shadow

After this tribe gained control of the Sacred Realm and killed many others who attempted to do the same, the goddesses had to act. I theorize some more here, saying that somehow, the protecting dragons from *Skyward Sword* are killed. Either they are killed prior to the dark interlopers showing up, which gives them the opportunity to do so, or they were killed by this group. It's also possible that they simply weren't needed anymore and left the land. Either way, they are no longer present. Instead, the goddesses allow these dragons to be reborn as the Light Spirits, also named Faron, Eldin, and Lanayru. The goddesses then ordered the Light Spirits to intervene and stop these interlopers. The Light Spirits sealed away the great magic the sorcerers used, including the Fused Shadow, and separated it into four pieces. Later, they give these pieces to the races amongst the land to protect and keep separated.

After sealing away the Fused Shadow, the goddesses banished the sorcerers who tried to rule the Sacred Realm, chasing them out of Hyrule and into another realm. This realm is described as the antithesis of Hyrule, where the sun shines bright, and its citizens became shadows that could not mingle with the light. This realm became known as the Twilight Realm, and from it, none could return to the world of light. The people of this realm became known as the Twili. Although the goddesses forbade the Twili from returning to the world of the light, they left one link between the light and dark worlds; the Mirror of Twilight, passed to the protectors of Hyrule, who were the ancient sages. Through their time in the Twilight Realm, Zant says the Twili regressed, so that they knew neither anger nor hatred or had any desire. This was compounded by the fact that the Twilight royal family resigned themselves to this substandard existence.

It is also in this time period that we see the first mention of the ancient sages, or Wise Men. There are six of them, each representing an element; Water, Spirit, Shadow, Forest, Fire, and Light. These symbols show up in *Skyward Sword*, from a structure from Hylia's time, so it is possible that there were sages around during Hylia's era, but they could merely represent the elements themselves, without there being sages present. There is no mention of sages during Hylia's time, and there doesn't really seem to be a need for them either, as the goddess, along with her appointed dragons, would probably be enough

to protect the land. However, it is said in almost every other Zelda game, aside from SS, that it was the sages that created the Master Sword, so perhaps they were the ones to truly forge the Goddess Sword, thus living in Hylia's time. It is possible though, that the ancient sages, perhaps the first of their kind, were appointed when the Hero of Legend and Zelda came to live back on the surface, to help them rule. Being the main leader of the Knight's Academy, which basically ruled over Skyloft, Gaepora may have been given the role of the Sage of Light, later changing his name to Rauru, who also took the form of an owl, Kaepora Gaebora. Being of a group of people who call themselves the 'Bird Folk', it could make sense that that would be a form he would choose.



Gaepora



Rauru, Ancient Sage of Light

Aside from this crazy speculation that isn't really important, we know the sages at some point later, perhaps after the dark interlopers were cast out into the Twilight Realm, sealed the Sacred Realm. This could have been done to protect the Triforce from further intrusions and to help hide it from mortal knowledge. These sages built the Temple of Light at the very center of the Sacred Realm to house the Triforce. This is probably the first Temple for one of the elements, with all the others being built outside of the Sacred Realm in Hyrule, thus, giving extra importance to the element of Light. Within the Temple of Light is also the Chamber of the Sages, where presumably they would go to council with each other and otherwise do their sagely duties. The sages then built the Temple of Time in the real world to protect the entrance to the Sacred Realm, sealing it off from intruders. The Sacred Realm was further protected in the Temple of Time by the Door of Time, which could only be opened by placing 3 spiritual stones and playing the Song of Time on the Ocarina of Time. Once inside, the Sacred Realm is locked even further by the Master Sword, which can only be picked up by the one it deems the Hero of Time.

It is also possible that the Temple of Time was built over the ruins of the Temple of Hylia, otherwise known as the Sacred Temple, located at the Sacred Grounds. This is where we last see the Master Sword resting at the end of *Skyward Sword*. This also would lead to *Twilight Princess* in the child timeline where no one has touched the sword, where the sword is still seen resting in the ruins of the Temple of Time, in a location known as the Sacred Grove, which is very similar in name to the Sacred Grounds, with both being located in forested areas. This would also follow with the alternate timeline where again, no Hero has touched the sword, leading it to be in the Lost Woods, which is very similar to the Sacred Grove and

also in a wooded area.

No matter its location, after constructing the Temple of Time and sealing up the Sacred Realm, the ancient sages also built the Kingdom of Hyrule around the temple to protect it further, using the soon to be Royal Family as its guardians. We don't know much else about the sages after this, until we see Rauru in *OoT*, who seems to be the last remaining ancient sage alive.

Some time after creating Hyrule and establishing their Kingdom, it is likely that the Royal Family distributed the Spiritual Stones seen in *OoT* as well as the pieces of the Fused Shadow to the various races of the land for them to protect, and possibly as a way to show them that they are equal and on the same side.

6. THE FORCE ERA, THE HERO OF MEN, AND THE NEXT LINK

A long time after Hyrule was created, the world was on the verge of being swallowed by shadow. When all hope seemed lost, the tiny Minish, or Picori as the humans call them, appeared from the sky, bringing the Hero of Men the Picori Blade and a golden light. It's never said exactly what this golden light is, but it is shown to be a single triangle, so I believe it is the Triforce of Wisdom. One reason is because it states that the Hero of Men, a Link, drove out darkness with "wisdom and courage". We know that Links always get the Triforce of Courage, so this golden light must be the Triforce of Wisdom to help Link out. To further back this theory up, after the Hero of Men prevailed over this evil, the golden light was embodied with the princess, who held it inside her. And of course, we know that the Zeldas always hold the Triforce of Wisdom. So, while this 'golden light' could be the entire Triforce or something else entirely, I believe it is the Triforce of Wisdom only. Although, it could easily be something different completely, thus giving more meaning to the 'Force Era' designation, as it is a newly acquired item. Argument aside, after the Hero of Men saved the day, the people enshrined the blade with care, keeping it safe inside a chest, which locked away the evil.

Throughout the years, contact with the Minish became less and less frequent, and they moved into the realm of legends, a people only mentioned in fairy tales. After a "long, long time", the events of the *Minish Cap*(MC) take place. Here, we see Princess Zelda and Link living in Hyrule as childhood friends again, although they occupy different castes. Today happens to be the day of the annual Picori Festival, which is in remembrance of the Picori who brought the blade to the Hero of Men to help repel the monsters. It is said that once every hundred years the mystical Minish Door opens, linking the human world to the Picori world.

Shortly before the festival, Vaati, a Minish himself, was an apprentice of a famous, master of Minish lore and sorcery, Ezlo. Ezlo had created a hat that grants any wish to its wearer, and was going to present it to the humans. However, Vaati was greedy and had desires of becoming an unstoppable sorcerer, so he took Ezlo's hat, cursed and transformed him into another hat, and became human-like in size and appearance. Vaati heard about this 'light force' and knew that it was a source of limitless magical power, so he went to Hyrule to seek it out.

Vaati entered into the sword competition, the winner of which gets to touch the legendary Picori Blade. After successfully triumphing over the other contestants, and being presented the blade, Vaati breaks it and opens the chest that contained the evil, in hopes of getting the light force. The evil and monsters that have been locked away since the Hero of Men sealed them escape, and Zelda protects herself via an

aura of light. Vaati mentions that she is the princess who holds the 'power of light'; a mysterious power that is said to flow in the bloodline of every royal lady in the family since the day the Picori gifted the humans the light. To stop Zelda from getting in his way, Vaati turns her to stone and then apparently not connecting the dots and realizing the power he is searching for is in Zelda, leaves to look for this Light Force elsewhere.

King Daltus, the King of Hyrule at the time, reveals that the Picori are indeed real and not just some legend, and that only the Royal Family knows the truth about their existence. Believing that the Picori Blade can break Zelda free of her stone curse, the king gives Link the broken sword and sends him off on a dangerous adventure to fix it, as the Minish only show themselves to children, and he trusts they can fix the sword.

While Link goes on this quest, Vaati disguises himself as King Daltus and takes over the castle, turning people to stone, and otherwise causing mayhem. In *Four Swords Adventures(FSA)*, the account of this is a little different, due to continuity issues, but it also mentions that he kidnapped many girls from their homes, which we don't see in *MC*.

While searching through the forest for the Minish, Link meets the talking hat Ezlo, who Vaati had his way with. Ezlo decides to join up with Link to find Vaati and remove both the curse on himself and Zelda. He guides Link through the world of the Minish, showing the portals that he can use to shrink down to Minish-size that were used long ago. It is also noted that the Minish haven't had any contact with humans for a very long time and that humans can no longer see the Minish as they once could. However, the Minish still work unseen, trying to make humans happy, as it gives the Minish energy.

Link meets up with a Minish blacksmith who lets him know that he will need the four elements, crystalline form of the energy in the world, in order to reforge the broken blade. These elements are earth, water, fire, and wind. After getting these elements, Link goes to the Elemental Sanctuary hidden in Hyrule Castle behind the Minish Door that opens every hundred years, to infuse the fixed blade with the elements. Doing so, gives the blade the power to split the holder of the sword into multiple parts, leading to the later games *Four Swords(FS)* and *Four Swords Adventures(FSA)*.

In getting the final element, wind, Link runs into some interesting people. The first is the ghost of former Hyrulian King, Gustaf, who ruled "countless ages ago". He asks Link to save Zelda, his descendent, and also Hyrule. He presents Link with a Kinstone, a key, to reach the Palace of Winds, where the Tribe of the Winds resides, as well as the wind element. The Tribe of the Winds used to live in Hyrule in the Wind Ruins, but have long since moved to be among the clouds. Using their magic, they moved their palace into the skies. They apparently watch and know all that happens on the surface.

After getting this last element, going back to the Elemental Sanctuary, and infusing it, the Picori Blade becomes the Four Sword. With this blade, Link unlocks a door that tells the legend of the Hero of Men and where the Light Force is hidden. Vaati followed, and now knows that the light force is within Zelda. Link must battle his way through the twisted Dark Hyrule Castle, which was transformed by Vaati, and rescue the king and Zelda. Vaati comes close to draining all of the light force from Zelda, which would have made him like a god, but Link stopped him just in time. Although Vaati did get some of the light force, Link was still able to fell him, and save the princess. Not shown in *MC*, but it turns out that Vaati was sealed within the Four Sword after his defeat. While much of the castle was destroyed, and many people died, Zelda was able to use the power of Ezlo's hat as well as the little bit of light force that was left within her to make a wish and fix that which had been wronged. The hat then disappears, and Ezlo,

now back to normal, leaves through the Minish Door to his world.

At some point in time, probably soon after the events of *MC*, the people built a shrine for the sword, the Four Sword Sanctuary, which was constructed in a remote part of Hyrule.

Also, they give Vaati the title of Wind Mage, which in Minish Cap, he is not. This is due to the fact that the Four Swords games were created before Minish Cap, and Vaati's origin appears to have been changed. It is also said that the body of the one who touches the Four Sword will be shattered to pieces. This is seen a bit in *MC*, but in *FS* and *FSA*, the effect is a bit different, where Link cannot put the pieces back together until the end of his adventures when Vaati is again sealed.

At some point in the future, long after the first encounter with Vaati, the seal on him began to weaken. We know it's been awhile since *MC* because Zelda speaks of the legend of Vaati and his first attack, and how a hero, Link from *MC*, arose and saved the people from destruction. Sensing this weakened seal, Zelda brings her childhood friend Link to the sword to check on it. Vaati has indeed escaped from his seal and, sensing her power, captures Zelda in hopes of making her his bride. He then flees to the Palace of Winds, which was a place in *MC*, but apparently has turned into Vaati's castle.

Three fairies come to aid Link and tell him to pick up the Four Sword, thusly splitting himself into four, with which he can use the combined power to defeat Vaati. The fairies then tell Link to visit the Three Great Fairies who can give him passage to the Palace of Winds, so he can save Zelda.

At the end of this adventure, Link defeats the Vaati and seals him in the only sword that can contain this Wind Mage, the Four Sword. Link then places the sword back in the pedestal in the Four Sword Sanctuary and returns to his normal, one-person self.

7. THE ERA OF THE HERO OF TIME

An era later, and we get to the most interesting part of the series, with *Ocarina of Time*(*OoT*), and the introduction of Ganondorf. It also gets pretty confusing, as the timeline splits into not just two, but three separate universes.

Some time shortly before the events of *OoT*, there was a fierce war brewing, which has been deemed the Hyrule Unification War. Not much is known about this war, including how long it raged, but it seemed to be bloody, and ended in the King of Hyrule unifying the land. One day, about ten years before the beginning of *OoT*, a Hylian mother escaped the fires of the war with her baby, Link, the soon to be legendary Hero of Time. They ran into the forbidden Kokiri Forest and the gravely wounded mother pleaded with the Great Deku Tree, the guardian spirit of the forest, to take and watch over Link. Sensing a great destiny in this boy, the Deku Tree accepted and took him into his home.

Roughly 9 years after this, Ganondorf Dragmire, who goes by many titles including Mandrag Ganon, meaning Ganon of the Enchanted Thieves, the Gerudo King of Thieves, and the King of Evil, began his quest for power. He is of the Gerudo people of the desert; a race of women who birth a male once every 100 years, and by law, that man is to be made their king. While the Gerudos are thieves, they don't steal from women or children and never murder, however, Ganondorf didn't have a problem with either of these proclivities. Having lived in the desert all his life with his people, he grew bitter and jealous of Hyrule. The desert was harsh; searing and burning during the day, and frigid at night, bringing nothing

but death, ruin, and suffering. The green Hyrule was different though, and so he coveted it. With a growing hatred, and understanding of the Triforce, Ganondorf set out with his followers, skilled in the black arts, to find it and use it to rule not only Hyrule, but the entire world.

Ganondorf arrives at Hyrule Castle, swearing his allegiance to the King of Hyrule. After he has fooled the King, he has free range to go around Hyrule searching for the Spiritual Stones which will give him access to the Sacred Realm where the Triforce lies. He goes to the three areas around Hyrule searching for the stones and talks with the heads of the Kokiri, Goron, and Zora races, using intimidation and violence to try and force the stones from them, but is unsuccessful.

After getting cursed by Ganondorf for refusing to give him the Kokiri's Emerald, the Great Deku Tree summons Navi the fairy, and tells her to bring Link to him. The Deku Tree tells Link of his destiny to lead Hyrule to the path of justice and truth and stop Ganondorf from entering the Sacred Realm and obtaining the Triforce. After putting Link through a test to break his curse, proving his courage, the Deku Tree gives him the Emerald and tells him to find Zelda, the Princess of Destiny. Shortly after sending Link on his way, the Deku Tree succumbs to Ganondorf's curse and dies.

After exiting the forest, Link runs into an owl named Kaepora Gaebora. This feathery fellow seems to know a lot about Link and his destiny, and gives him advice and encouragement along his journey, telling him that it is his fate to encounter and overcome the many hardships that will follow. A gossip stone found in Hyrule says that Kaepora Gaebora is the reincarnation of one of the ancient sages, most likely being Rauru, the Sage of Light.

Link makes his way to Hyrule Castle, sneaks in, and meets with Princess Zelda, who says his name seems somehow familiar. Zelda reveals that she has been having a premonition of Link and Ganondorf, and tells him about the Triforce and Sacred Realm; a secret that has been passed down by the Royal Family. Zelda's plan is to protect the Ocarina of Time while Link gets the other Spiritual Stones. Then, they will obtain the Triforce and use it to defeat Ganondorf. Impa then teaches Link Zelda's Lullaby, an ancient melody passed down by the Royal Family that has mysterious power. Impa is a member of the Sheikah tribe, and is responsible for protecting Zelda. She says she was born and raised in Kakariko Village, so it is unlikely that she is the same Impa from *Skyward Sword*, although this fact about Kakariko could have been retconned.

After visiting Death Mountain, Link finds out about another one of Ganondorf's attempts to get the Goron's Ruby, the Spiritual Stone of Fire. The Gorons, like the other holders of the stones, didn't cooperate, so Ganondorf blocked off Dodongo's Cavern, which houses the Goron's main supply of food, and filled it with monsters. After defeating the monsters, Link is awarded the Goron's Ruby and becomes a hero amongst the Gorons.

The last stone has been entrusted to the Zoras. Again, Ganondorf was unable to acquire the stone, and in his anger, he made the Guardian God Lord Jabu-Jabu sick. After finding a note indicating Princess Ruto is inside Jabu-Jabu, King Zora XVI allows Link to enter to find her. Having saved the Princess, Ruto gives Link Zora's Sapphire, the Spiritual Stone of Water that she is only supposed to give to the man she would marry.

Having retrieved all of the Spiritual Stones, Link makes his way back to the castle to meet up with Zelda to get the Triforce. However, at the same time, Ganondorf suddenly attacks Hyrule Castle, to look for the Ocarina of Time. Shortly afterwards, the castle surrendered. Impa and Zelda, foreseeing the attack, get

on a horse to escape the assault, and spotting Link, Zelda throws him the Ocarina of Time, trying to protect it. Zelda had left a message inside the Ocarina, teaching Link the Song of Time. It is now Link's responsibility to protect the Triforce, so he goes to the Temple of Time and places the three Spiritual Stones and plays the Song of Time to open the Door of Time. Inside the door lies the legendary Master Sword, stuck in the Pedestal of Time. This sword is the key to the Sacred Realm, so Link lifts it out of the altar, but something unforeseen happens; Link's spirit is teleported to the Sacred Realm, and for seven years, it is trapped within the Chamber of Sages. At the same time, Ganondorf and his gang of thieves followed Link into the Sacred Realm in search of the Triforce. All in this band of thieves lusted after the Triforce, and in a battle, Ganondorf fought his way past them all to claim it for himself.

Being trapped, Link could not do anything to prevent the events that were unfolding. Ganondorf made his way into the Temple of Light and got his hands on the Triforce. However, his heart was not in balance with power, courage, and wisdom, so the Triforce split in three, leaving him with only the Triforce of Power. Even though he only had one piece of the Triforce, it was enough to allow him to take over Hyrule and become the King of Evil, starting a dark age of his rule. His evil power radiated from the temples of Hyrule, transforming it into a world of monsters. To enforce his reign, he revived an ancient dragon, Volvagia, on Death Mountain to eat the Gorons as a warning to other races not to oppose him. Ganondorf also completely destroyed Hyrule Castle and built Ganon's Castle on top of the ruins. Also, as Ganondorf conquered the Sacred Realm, it began to reflect what was in his heart, transforming it into a world of evil. Ganondorf was not satisfied though, wanting to gain complete mastery of the world, so he started looking for the two others who held the pieces of the Triforce, to gain its true power.

After seven long years of Ganondorf's tyrannical rule, making Hyrule a land of monsters and fear, Link awakens in the Chamber of Sages, within the Sacred Realm. He is met by Rauru, the ancient Sage of Light. Rauru informs Link of his current circumstance, and how he is now the Hero of Time, chosen by the Master Sword. While at the age of 9, Link was too young to be the Hero, so his spirit was sealed in the Chamber of Sages for 7 years, until he was 16. This aging is a guess by me, backed up by a few lines from *AoL*, where a Triforce symbol appears on Link's hand on his 16th birthday, and the scroll he later reads says this would happen to a person of a certain age. This means that Heroes have to be of a certain age, which seems to be 16.

Rauru informs Link that his own power is waning, but with the Power of the Sages combined, they can use the Sages' Seal to contain and trap all the evil power, including Ganondorf, in the void of the realm. However, Link will have to awaken the five other sages first. Being of age, Link can now return to Hyrule, and when he does, he is greeted again, this time by Sheik, survivor of the Sheikah. Later, we learn Sheik is actually Zelda, who is in disguise to hide from Ganondorf. Sheik tells Link about the Legend of the Temples, passed down by the Sheikah, which states that an awakening voice would come from within the Sacred Realm to call on the sages who dwell within the five temples, but because of the evil power in the temples, the sages cannot hear the call. Once the sages are awakened, they can fight with the Hero of Time to bind the evil and return light and peace to Hyrule. Sheik then teaches Link a song to transport him quickly to the Temple of Time and then sets him on his way. One interesting thing to note is the instrument Sheik uses, which is a golden harp that looks exactly like the Goddess' Harp from *SS*. It would seem that after the events of *SS*, Link returned the harp to Zelda, who then passed it down to her descendents and the Royal Family for generations to come. Or, it could be, because we only see Sheik use it, that it is entrusted to the Sheikah tribe to protect.



Zelda, with the Goddess' Harp



Sheik, with an identical golden harp

Link makes haste to the first cursed temple in the forest. After going through it and defeating Phantom Ganon, Saria awakens as the Sage of the Forest. Also, lifting this curse allows the Deku Tree Sprout to grow, who will one day become a great big tree, hopefully, perhaps becoming the Deku Tree from Wind Waker. This sprout also reveals to Link his true Hylian origins and once again reaffirms his destiny.

Link then goes to Death Mountain, to the Fire Temple. After defeating Volvagia and saving the Goron race from being eaten, Darunia awakens as the Sage of Fire.

More destruction in Hyrule, as a monster in the Water Temple has caused Zora's Domain to freeze over, trapping most of the race under water. Sheik saved Princess Ruto though, who then went to the Water Temple to fight off the monster. Link joins up and defeats him, melting the ice and restoring Lake Hylia, as well as awakening Ruto as the Sage of Water.

Next up is the Shadow Temple, near Kakariko Village. When Link arrived in Kakariko, Sheik is there ready to battle a shadowy evil which was sealed beneath the city's well. Impa had sealed this spirit down there, I would assume sometime within the last 7 years, as the well wasn't sealed previously, where Link gets the Eye of Truth. The spirit grows too strong though, breaks through the seal, destroys much of the town, and escapes to the temple. Link chases after it, defeats it, and awakens Impa as the Sage of Shadow.

The last sage is guardian of the Spirit Temple in the desert. Link must first travel there as a child to get an item for the to-be sage, Nabooru, the 2nd in command for the Gerudo, who wants to destroy Ganondorf's hideout. She says how Ganondorf is evil and that she will never bow to him. Unfortunately, she is captured by the witches Koume and Kotake, or Twinrova as they are collectively named. Twinrova also happens to be Ganondorf's surrogate mother, and at an age of about 400 years old. Link travels back 7 years to the future, defeats Twinrova, and rescues/awakens Nabooru as the Sage of Spirit.

Having awakened all of the sages, Link returns to the Temple of Time, where he finds Sheik, who reveals herself to be Princess Zelda, the 7th sage, leader of them all. Zelda goes over the plan, saying the six sages will open the sealed door and lure Ganondorf to the Sacred Realm. Zelda will then seal the Sacred Realm from this world, trapping Ganondorf. To help Link, she gives him the Sacred Light Arrows, given only to the chosen ones, which are capable of penetrating Ganondorf's defenses. Ganondorf then shows up, capturing Zelda. He knew that if he let Link wander around, Zelda would finally show herself.

Link goes up to Ganon's Castle to face him. After defeating Ganondorf the first time, Zelda is released from her crystallized prison. Zelda mentions that Ganondorf didn't have a strong, righteous mind, so couldn't control the power of the Triforce. However, with his last bit of strength, he tries to bring the tower crashing down on Link and Zelda. Out of the rubble crawls Ganondorf, who transforms into the beast Ganon. After a tense battle, Zelda holds down Ganon using her power, giving Link the opportunity to strike the final blow using the Master Sword, which glows with special power. Then, the six sages, from within the Chamber of the Sages, open the sealed door and send Ganondorf, the Evil Incarnation of Darkness, into the void of the Evil Realm.

As Ganondorf is sealed in the Evil Realm, he curses the sages, Zelda, and Link, and vows to exterminate their descendants when the seal is broken and he is free. It is important to note that Ganondorf also retains the Triforce of Power.

Zelda then speaks to Link, apologizing for the tragedy that has befallen him and all of Hyrule. It was her doing, with her young naivety in trying to control the Sacred Realm, that she couldn't foresee the consequences. To make up for her mistakes, she asks that Link lay down the Master Sword and close the Door of Time. Then, using her sage powers, she can use the Ocarina of Time to send him back to his own time, before these awful events took place.

During the credits, everyone is seen rejoicing over Ganondorf's defeat and the end of his reign of terror at the hands of the Hero of Time and the sages. There are two glum faces though, that being King Zora and the Kokiri Mido. These guys are probably upset about losing Ruto and Saria, although they live on as sages.

Back as a child, Link is returned to the Temple of Time. Navi, having finished her quest, leaves Link. We then see Link show up in Hyrule Castle to meet Zelda like he did near the beginning of the game, although the reason for his visit is quite different.

8. TRI-TIMELINE

This leads us to the split timeline. There are two obvious timelines:

Child Timeline: Link sent back to his childhood, able to relive his lost 7 years

Adult Timeline: Link defeats Ganondorf, sealing him in the Evil Realm, and becoming a hero. He then disappears.

However, there is a third timeline, which I will deem the 'Alternate Timeline', that I believe is created more so as an attempt to fit the overall storyline together from old games to new as opposed to a well thought out plan from the beginning. You see, every single game created before *Ocarina of Time* is placed in this Alternate Timeline. Pre-*Ocarina of Time*, the developers had this one idea of what the game was and how the story fit together. Then, I believe the creators started working on *Ocarina of*

Time, their first 3D Zelda game, and wanted it to have an epic story about Ganon and the Triforce and the Master Sword, and everything important to the Zelda franchise. However, to accommodate this, they had to retcon a variety of things and change the universe so that they could fit everything together in *OoT*. So, the old story from the previous games couldn't exactly fit in with this new title and future titles that would come. One of the main flaws with the old story came in Ganondorf's origin tale in the manual of *ALttP*. I believe this story is the reason the creator's had to concoct this additional timeline stemming from *OoT*. The story gives a different telling of how Ganondorf came to possess the Triforce and how he was sealed away, which wasn't done by Link originally. Thusly, this branch of the timeline states that in *OoT*, Link, the Hero of Time, failed to stop Ganondorf and was killed. Ganondorf then came to possess the other pieces of the Triforce.

The theoretical problem with this branch is simply that Link didn't die in *OoT*. This scenario is never presented, unless you die and it says 'Game Over'. This means that Nintendo could basically create any number of alternate timelines to fit their stories, where they can decide, maybe in *Wind Waker*, Link got eaten by that big bird and never saved Tetra, or maybe in *Minish Cap*, Link got turned into a stone as well and Vaati ruled the world. However, like I said, I don't think that that was Nintendo's intention. I think they simply had an old story that they wanted to change with their biggest release in the series, *OoT*. The reason the branch here is that 'Link dies and is unsuccessful' is because of all the older games in where a Link didn't even exist, so they had to come up with some valid reason for that to be the case. I think it would have made more sense to simply say Link died as a baby in the Unification War, but so be it.

We'll start with the Child Timeline, where the Hero of Time is sent back as a child to relive those 7 lost years, undoing everything that happened in *OoT*.

9. THE CHILD ERA (CHILD TIMELINE)

After defeating Ganondorf in *OoT*, Zelda sends Link back in time 7 years to before the events of the game where Link picked up the Master Sword and lost out on his childhood. In this timeline, it is assumed that nothing from *OoT* happened and Ganondorf didn't curse the Great Deku Tree or hurt anybody and is still running about, plotting his attack on Hyrule. At the very end of *OoT*, we see Link show up in Zelda's little garden to meet her, and the game fades to black. I believe it is at this point that Link warns Zelda about everything that had happened or would happen in the next 7 years if they don't do anything about Ganondorf. Having had premonitions about the evil Ganondorf and Link himself, I would assume Zelda would be inclined to believe him.

From *TP*, we know that Ganondorf invaded Hyrule in hopes of establishing control over the Sacred Realm, just like in *OoT*, but was then captured. In all his fury and might, he was blind to any danger, and thus, with the help of young Link's warning, he was exposed, subdued, and brought to justice. Having helped to secure Ganondorf's capture, Link was free to embark on another adventure. Link sticks around Hyrule for a little while though, but no longer than a year or two in total after returning to his own time before embarking on a secret, personal journey in search of Navi, who had left him after he was sent back to his childhood. Zelda is a bit disappointed to hear that Link is leaving, cherishing their time together. She then gives him the Ocarina of Time to hold on to until the day comes when they meet again.

Some time in between when Link gets sent back to when he leaves on his search for Navi, the Skull Kid has a bit of an adventure of his own. The Skull Kid was seen hanging out in the Lost Woods in Kokiri

Forest, and it is commented upon that perhaps that is what happens to people who get lost in the forest. There isn't too much information about the Skull Kid in *OoT*, but he doesn't like grownups and thinks his face is plain and not unusual. This leads him to later desire the skull mask from Link to make him look tougher.

It is possible, but never confirmed, that both the Skull Kid's and Link's journey during the events of *Majora's Mask*(*MM*) take place in the Lost Woods. The wooded area that Link is traveling through seems mysterious, there are fairies present, the Skull Kid is there, and Link is searching for Navi, who resided in Kokiri Forest, very close to the Lost Woods. Also, at the very end when Link is back in the forest, you can hear Saria's song playing. So, I will assume that this is the case to simplify things, but it isn't a major factor either way.

So, Skull Kid is wandering through the Lost Woods and makes his way to the mysterious, parallel world of Termina, where he somehow becomes friends with four giants who act as guardians to the land. It is very possible that this takes place years before the would-be events of *OoT*, as it seems to be a long tale. Told by Anju's grandmother, the giants are the protective gods of Termina, and one year, during the Carnival of Time, an annual event, they tell the people that they will split the land into four worlds and protect them from outside each world. Skull Kid is upset by this news, wondering why the giants have to leave him. Feeling neglected and angry, Skull Kid starts making trouble for everyone. Eventually, the people of the four worlds can't stand it anymore and pray to the giants for help, who respond. The giants tell Skull Kid to leave Termina or they will tear him apart. The Skull Kid is very frightened and saddened by this and losing the giants as friends. Crying in the rain, the fairies Tael and Tatli meet him, cheering him up. Soon, they become best of friends.

The Skull Kid was still playing tricks on people though, and one day, he ambushed the Happy Mask Salesman and took Majora's Mask from him. He started wearing the mask, which slowly used its dark power to transform him. Shortly thereafter, the Skull Kid, using the power of Majora's Mask, trapped the guardian giants inside other masks and placed them on beasts who guarded temples in each of the four worlds.

Then, Link somehow acquires Epona and leaves Hyrule to start on his journey. After wandering through the Lost Woods for some time, he runs across Skull Kid and his fairy friends. The fairies scare Epona, who bucks Link off, rendering him unconscious. This gives time for the Skull Kid to scavenge through Link's possessions for some goodies. He finds the Ocarina of Time and takes it. Link starts to come around, and the Skull Kid takes off on Epona. Halfway through the chase, Link falls down a mysterious hole, sending him to the land of Termina. Skull Kid uses the power of Majora's Mask to turn Link into a Deku Scrub, and then runs off, leaving behind Tatli, one of his fairy friends. Tatli decides to join up with Link until he reunites with the Skull Kid.

Entering the main town of Termina, Link meets with the Happy Mask Salesman. He tells Link of Majora's Mask and how he wants it back. He proposes a trade, in which if Link can recover his Ocarina, then the Salesman can transform him back into a human, and then in exchange, Link must return Majora's Mask to the Salesman. However, the Salesman must leave in 3 days, which is good timing as the Skull Kid is bringing the moon crashing down in 3 days as well; the day of the Carnival of Time.

At midnight of the third day, the Clock Door opens and Link goes to meet the Skull Kid on top of the Clock Tower and retrieves his Ocarina of Time. Using it to play the Song of Time, Link can return to the first day in the three-day series again and again. After doing so the first time, Link goes to the Happy

Mask Salesman to get turned back to normal. Disappointed that Link doesn't have Majora's Mask yet, he reveals the history of the forsaken object. He says that it is an accursed mask from legend, in which an ancient tribe, possibly the dark interlopers from *TP*, used it in hexing rituals and caused all sorts of troubles. The Salesman went to great lengths to get this mask and desperately wants it back, before something terrible happens.

Wanting to help the Salesman and save Termina, Link travels to each of the four worlds to rescue the giants from their entrapment inside the masks and uses their combined power to stop the moon from crashing into and destroying Termina.

After successfully freeing each of the giants, Link returns to the Clock Tower on the day of the festival and uses the Ocarina to play the Oath to Order to call on the giants. They show up and stop the moon from crashing. The Skull Kid faints from the call of the giants, but Majora's Mask comes to life, saying the Skull Kid had a weak will and heart and couldn't handle his power. It detaches itself from the Skull Kid and goes inside the Moon, which then "consumes" Link.

The inside of the Moon is very peaceful actually; it houses a very green grove, with a large tree in the center. There are four kids playing around the grove; each wearing a boss mask, while a lonely kid sits at the tree sporting Majora's Mask. If Link has collected all of the masks, he can play with the other kids and charitably give them up. When he meets with the one wearing Majora's Mask, he will mention how Link has no masks, so gives him the Fierce Deity's Mask, which seems to be the antithesis of Majora's Mask. After defeating Majora, the moon returns to its place and Termina is saved.

Link wakes up in Termina Field just outside of the main town, with the Skull Kid, fairies, giants, and Happy Mask Salesman. The giants say they haven't forgotten about the Skull Kid and were still friends with him, making the Skull Kid ashamed of himself and the way he acted. The Salesman then gets his mask back, and says that the evil has left it. Link leaves Termina, having saved the land and people from destruction, and is last seen back in the Lost Woods, continuing on his journey to find Navi.

We never see what happens to the Hero of Time after these events, but it is very probable that he shows up in *Twilight Princess* as the guiding Hero's Shade. He is seen here as a ghostly figure with a damaged right eye, which we could assume was lost in some unseen battle. Unfortunately, Link never got the opportunity to pass on his knowledge to the next Hero, so his spirit wanders the land, waiting for that chance.

Some time shortly after Link's adventure in *MM*, Ganondorf, who had been captured thanks to Link's warning, was set to be executed. The sages, overestimating their abilities, attempted to put an end to Ganondorf's evil magic by slaying him at the Gerudo Prison. They thrust the Sword of the Sages into his belly, however, with the Triforce of Power, or at least the inborn sacred power within, he was able to survive the blow. He then escapes his chains, kills the Sage of Water, and takes the Sword of the Sages. With some quick thinking, the other sages use the Mirror of Twilight to banish Ganondorf to the Twilight Realm.

10. THE TWILIGHT ERA (CHILD TIMELINE)

At least 100 years later, the events of *Twilight Princess*(TP) take place.

Before the direct events of the game, the character Zant appears. Zant was a servant of the Twilight royal family for many years. He continued working for the family believing that he would be next to rule the Twili. However, the people would not acknowledge him as their king, as they saw the lust for power in his eyes which is what caused them to be trapped in the Twilight Realm in the first place, and because of this, he was denied the magic powers that the king is awarded. With this act, hatred and despair built up inside Zant, and because of these intense emotions, Ganondorf, also sealed within the Twilight Realm, was drawn to him. Ganondorf fed off the Twili and Zant's anguish and hatred, awakening him and allowing him to grow strong. In his pain and desire for power, Zant accepted Ganondorf as his god. Ganondorf then houses his power within Zant, giving him all the dark magical abilities that Ganondorf possesses, with the intent of using Zant to return to the world of light. With this amazing power, Zant took control of the Twilight Realm, transforming the Twili into shadow beasts and turning the peaceful place into an evil one. Zant then turned his power against Midna, the Twilight Princess of the realm's royal family, transforming her into an imp. Ashamed by her appearance, she fled her people. This allowed Zant to become the King of Darkness. Zant began to rule, following Ganondorf's one request; to merge shadow and light, and make darkness. Soon though, Midna came up with a plan to use her people's ancient magic, the Fused Shadow, to reclaim the Twilight Realm from Zant.

At the same time, Zant starts invading the Light World, starting with the blessed kingdom of Hyrule, transforming it into a world of shadows, ruled by creatures who shun the light. Zant and his Twilight Monsters stormed Hyrule Castle, and forced Zelda to surrender, lest her people be destroyed. Due to her surrender, Hyrule was covered in Twilight, and without light, the people became as spirits. Within the twilight though, the people live on in fear, unaware that they have passed into spirit forms. Zelda though didn't succumb to the twilight, and maintains her human form, due to the power of the gods that dwells within.

The shadow beings from the Twilight Realm then raided other parts of Hyrule and stole the light from three of the four Light Spirits. After stealing the light, the land is transformed to these Twilight Realms.

While this is going on, there is a new Link living in the farming village of Ordon. His mentor, Rusl, has been preparing a special gift to present to the Hyrule Royal Family; a shield. He suggests Link go instead of himself, as Link had never been. Before this day comes, a group of hunter monsters come and assault the village, kidnapping the children and knocking Link unconscious. The leader of this group, King Bulblin, uses a horn to create a Twilight portal, where Twilight Monsters can come to steal the light from Ordon, the Light Spirit. When Link comes to shortly thereafter, he gives chase, but runs into a Twilight Door, where a hand of a Twilight Monster grabs and pulls him through, into the Twilight Realm. The Triforce symbol on Link's hand glows, scaring the monster, who drops him. Link then morphs into a wolf and faints due to the transformation. The monsters grab and drag him to a prison cell in Hyrule Castle, and seeing this transformation, Midna decides to follow Link. The Twili have long believed that the Hero would appear as a divine beast, so Midna thought she could use Link to return her world to normal, not caring about what would happen to the world of light.

Midna has plans to use Link to gather the other pieces of the Fused Shadow, already possessing one that was passed along through her family, so she helps him break out of his prison. They make their way

through the sewers and finally arrive at a tower where Princess Zelda is. Zelda is surprised to see Midna, and asks her if Link was the one she was searching for. Zelda then gives Link the backstory to what has happened, and shows interest in Midna and why shadow beasts might be searching for her. Link and Midna escape from the castle before the guard shows up, and Midna teleports him back to Ordon.

Link is strong balled into doing what Midna says as he is on his own quest to save his village's children. He also needs Midna to pull him into the Twilight Realm, which is now spread across the land of Hyrule. When Link gets back to his village, outside of the Twilight or darkened Realm, he remains in the form of a wolf, and Midna is presiding in his shadow.

After acquiring the Ordon sword and shield from the village, Link heads to the spring where Ordona, one of the four Light Spirits, gives him some information. These Light Spirits protect Hyrule at the behest of the gods. He tells Link that he was transformed by the power of shadow, and that the shadow being he just defeated came to steal the power of light that these spirits wield. If Link cannot recover the light to these spirits and revive them, then the entire world of light will fall into the hands of the king who rules the twilight. Ordona then tells Link that those transformed by twilight usually cannot recover their original form, but by returning the light to Faron, it might be possible for Link, as he is the only one capable of saving the Light Spirits and returning the land to normal.

Link then gets pulled by Midna into the Twilight Realm outside of Faron Woods to go return the light to the Light Spirit, Faron. Faron gives Link a Vessel of Light which he can use to collect the tears of light from the dark creatures and return them to Faron. Collecting all of these tears will restore the light to the Light Spirit and dispel the twilight in the region, returning the land to its light-filled state.

After Link accomplishes this task, Faron is revived and speaks to him again. He says that it was a sign that Link was transformed into a beast when he entered the Twilight, instead of a spirit. This signified that Link has the powers of the chosen one within him, and that they are awakening. Link's awakened form is that of his normal, human appearance, but he now wears the green tunic, which once belonged to the ancient hero chosen by the gods. He says that the ancient hero's power, that slept within Link, is now fully unlocked.

Faron then goes on to mention a dark, forbidden power locked away in the woods, that the Light Spirits locked away long, long ago. This is part of the Fused Shadow, which Midna is searching for. Because of its nature, it is a power that should never be touched by those who dwell in the light. However, Link must get this power to match that of the King of Shadows, to help the land of Hyrule.

Throughout his adventure, Link comes to find these howling stones, with the eye of the Sheikah on them. By being in his beast form, Link can howl to play a song to attract the Hero's Shade. This character appears as a bright yellow wolf, as well as a skeleton warrior, who teaches Link many sword techniques. Through their encounters, it is made apparent that this entity was a former Hero himself; a Link, who shares a bloodline with the current Link. I believe it was revealed in the Hyrule Historia that this character is indeed the Hero of Time, although there are no real clues to indicate thusly in the game.



The Hero's Shade, formerly the Hero of Time



Sheikah Stone used to call the Hero's Shade

After learning a skill from the Hero's Shade, defeating the boss in the forest temple, and recovering a piece of the Fused Shadow, Faron tells Link to head west to find another Light Spirit, Eldin, in Kakariko Village, where the Ordon children are as well. After recovering the light to this area and reviving Eldin, he tells Link that the next Fused Shadow is on Death Mountain. The Ordon kids, Beth, Colin, Talo, and Malo, then spot Link and excitedly run over to him, knowing that he would rescue them. They tell him that those monsters left the kids for dead, but the Shaman Renado of Kakariko found them. Renado also mentions that the friendly Gorons now refuse humans up onto their mountain and use of their mines. Not heeding the warning, Link treks to Death Mountain.

After making his way up the mountains, he challenges the village elder to a sumo match to prove his strength. Link impresses the elder, who then grants him access to the next dungeon. In the dungeon, Link finds the Hero's Bow, a treasure left in the Goron Mines by a Hero of the past, with the Gorons protecting it ever since. It's very likely that this bow belonged to the Hero of Time, as he acquired the Hero's Bow in *MM*, and a bow of the same name isn't seen in any other Zelda game until *WW*. Later, Link runs into the next boss, Darbus, the Goron's patriarch, who was transformed into a foul beast after touching the Fused Shadow. After defeating him, Darbus returns to normal and Link gets the second piece of the Fused Shadow. Link is teleported back to Eldin, who tells him to travel north to visit the final Light Spirit, Lanayru, where he will also find Ilia, the Ordonian Mayor's daughter.

Link makes his way to Castle Town, and finds Ilia in Telma's Bar, caring for a sick Zora child, Prince Ralis. As a wolf in the Twilight, he can't speak to her, but he finds the location of the next Light Spirit, who resides in a spring at Lake Hylia. Arriving at Zora's Domain, he discovers that it has been frozen over, trapping the Zoras, just like in *OoT*. Link warps over a giant volcanic rock to thaw the area, saving the Zoras, and restoring the flow of water throughout Hyrule, which gives him access to the next Light Spirit. Before leaving, the ghost of Queen Rutela shows herself, telling how she was executed by the dark ones as they raided her village, as a message to the Zoras. Right before this happened, she sent Ralis to Hyrule Castle to warn Zelda about their fate, and now she rightfully fears his life is in danger and asks Link to save him. In return, she will give him the Zora Tunic, which is necessary to get the last piece of the Fused Shadow.

Link finally meets Lanayru and must collect the tears of light. After doing so, Lanayru, the last Light Spirit, is revived and reveals the history of the Fused Shadow. She then warns Link to its power, saying that such great power will come to rule and corrupt men. Link, heeding this warning, cautiously sets out to continue his quest.

First, Link travels to Telma's Bar, and decides to bring Prince Ralis to Kakariko where Renado can hopefully help him. He meets with Ilia as well, but it turns out she has amnesia and can't remember anything about her life or Link. Ilia somehow escaped from the monsters, found Prince Ralis injured, and brought him to Telma's Bar earlier. After arriving at Kakariko, the ghost of Queen Rutela shows up again and leads Link to the grave of her husband, King Zora. Buried along with the King is Zora Armor, which the King made specifically for the chosen heroes. It is likely that this is King Zora XVI from *OoT*, as the King from *Oracle of Ages* seemed to be at least 400 years old, showing that they live long lives. Also, the King from *OoT* gave the Hero of Time a Zora Tunic as well after he was unfrozen by Link. With the Zora Armor, Link can explore the Lakebed Temple and get the final piece of the Fused Shadow.

After getting this final piece and returning to Lanayru, Zant shows up. Lanayru confronts him, but is easily subdued, casting the land back into Twilight. Zant throws Midna around a bit, and says that his magic isn't the old, ancient magic of their tribe, but instead, it is the magic of his god, Ganondorf. Link then gets a bit of this mysterious magic stuck within him while trying to protect Midna, which later allows him to change between beast and human form at will. Zant reveals his plans to merge the light and dark worlds together, and Midna refuses to cooperate and lend Zant her power to complete his plan. Irritated, Zant somehow allows Lanayru to come back, whose light shines brightly, bathing Midna, a Twili who isn't meant to walk in the Light. This effectively bleaches Midna, almost killing her. Lanayru teleports both Link and Midna to safety and then advises Link to council with Zelda to help him return to normal.

After reaching Zelda, the dying Midna selflessly asks her to help Link break his curse and find the Mirror of Twilight, as he is the one who can save the Light World. The only magic that can save Link is hidden in the Sacred Grove in the Faron woods. This is the Master Sword, the blade of evil's bane that was crafted by the wisdom of the ancient sages. After witnessing Midna's selfless acts, Zelda feels very guilty, knowing that these dark times are a result of their own deeds and only Midna has reaped the penalty. Zelda therefore saves Midna by giving her a gift of some sort, perhaps her life force or the power of the gods, the Triforce of Wisdom. Either way, Zelda disappears, and Midna returns to her normal, spunky self. After exiting the castle, Ganondorf, who has been reborn, creates a barrier surrounding the castle, which disbars them access until later.

Link and Midna then head off to the Sacred Grove to recover the Master Sword and break the magic curse on Link keeping him in his beast-form. A kid, possibly the Skull Kid, plays a little game with Link and leads him to the secret part of the Sacred Grove where the Master Sword is kept. This area, while deemed the "Sacred Grove", might be the Lost Woods, as it shares some characteristics with it, as well as its theme being Saria's Song. After successfully completing a puzzle that bars entrance, Link gets his hands on the Master Sword, whose light/magic causes Link to return to his normal form.

After getting the Master Sword, Midna asks Link to help her find the Mirror of Twilight, which leads them to the Gerudo Desert. Once at the top of the Arbiter's Grounds, which was once a prison, they come to the Mirror Chamber, where the duo discovers the Mirror of Twilight has been fractured. At this time, the five sages present themselves, saying that a dark entity, who houses an evil power, lurks in the twilight. Recall that Ganondorf killed the Sage of Water previously, and it seems that no other replacement has

been awakened yet. They tell Link and Midna that they, at the command of the goddesses, have guarded the Mirror of Twilight since ancient times. They say that the magic that fragmented the mirror was a dark magic that only Ganondorf possesses.

The sages then give the backstory to Ganondorf and his execution and point Link in the direction of the three shattered fragments of the Mirror of Twilight.

The first piece is found on Snowpeak, which was found by a pair of Yetis. After looking into the mirror it transforms the female Yeti, Yeta, into a beast. This shows that these pieces have a dark power similar to the Fused Shadow that can corrupt those who possess it.

The next piece is back in the Sacred Grove, in the past, which doesn't make much sense. Rusl tells Link that the ancestors of the Hylians created this temple. Link goes back to where the Master Sword slept in the pedestal, and stabs it. This opens a door, which transports Link to the past, where these ruins are now new and are shown to be the Temple of Time. The entrance to the actual dungeon is behind where the Master Sword lies, up a mystical staircase which opens up by striking the pedestal yet again. After going through the temple, getting the Dominion Rod, otherwise known as the Rod of the Heavens, and defeating a boss, Link gets the second piece of the mirror.

It is interesting to note that this Temple is indeed called the Temple of Time, and the lobby of the temple, along with the pedestal room, looks almost identical to the Temple of Time in *OoT*. It would also make sense that the Master Sword is still in its pedestal, as the Hero of Time, the only one capable of lifting the sword from the pedestal, doesn't exist in this timeline. The young Hero of Time left Hyrule in search of Navi, in *MM*, and for whatever reason, never becomes this Hero again. The only thing odd about this Temple of Time is its location, in Faron Woods, surrounded by what seems to be the Lost Woods. In *OoT*, the Temple of Time is located in the center of the overworld, in Castle Town. The only thing that makes some sense is that the developers wanted to mesh the world of *OoT* with other games where the Master Sword is seen laying in the Lost Woods, for instance, in *ALttP* and similarly in *Oracle of Seasons*. In fact, *OoT*'s Temple of the Time location is the only discrepancy in regards to the Temple and the sword throughout the entire series.



Master Sword resting in the Sealed Temple at end of SS



Master Sword resting in the Temple of Time in OoT



Master Sword resting in the ruins of the Temple of Time in TP

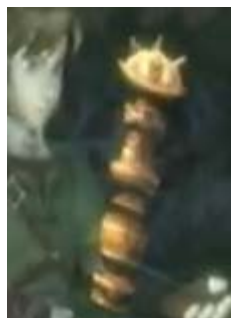


Master Sword resting in the Lost Woods in ALttP



Master Sword resting in the Lost Woods in OoS

The last piece of the mirror is up in the heavens, but Link has to figure out a way to get there first. This takes him on a bit of a journey. First, Link finds a lost item of Ilia's, a wooden statue of a Sheikah eye that was given to her during her captivity. Returning it to her jogs her memory a bit. She tells Link that whoever gave it to her was confined with her, and it is this person who eventually saved her. The statue belonged to the tribe that protected the Hylian royal family long ago. These Sheikah worked in secret and lived in a lonely, forgotten place. Unfortunately, the tribe dwindled in the prolonged wars.



Wooden Statue, featuring the Sheikah Eye

After going to this village, Old Kakariko from *OoT*, and clearing it out of enemies, Link meets Impaz, an old Sheikah woman. She recognizes Link as a hero, and explains to him that she is the last resident of the village, and that her name comes from Impa, who created the village long ago. She also mentions that by royal order, she cannot leave Old Kakariko until a certain person arrives. She then talks about Ilia and a charm she gave her, which Impaz returns to Link. Link brings this to Ilia, which fully restores her memory. Then, Ilia helps Link to understand who that messenger is that Impaz is waiting for.

Realizing that it is in fact himself, Link goes back to Impaz and shows her the Dominion Rod he got from the Temple of Time, meaning that he is the messenger to the heavens, the one Impaz has been waiting for. Among the legends of the Sheikah, there is one from the time when the Oocca maintained contact with the royal family. The Dominion Rod was handed down from the Oocca to the messenger to the heavens and was used only when the royal family needed to communicate with the Oocca. The Sheikah have been guarding the Ancient Sky Book that was to be given only to this messenger. This book is written in the ancient sky language and has the power to reactive the Dominion Rod, among other things.

After going back to New Kakariko Village, Link uses the Dominion Rod to discover an ancient Sky Canon that was used to reach the sky city where the Oocca live, however, it is now in disarray and nonworking order. Link goes to fix it, and can then reach the heavens where the last piece of the Mirror of Twilight lies. After going through another dungeon and defeating the dragon that is wreaking havoc on the city, Link gets the final piece of the mirror and can then use it to gain access to the Twilight Realm where Zant is conspiring.

After seeing the sacrifices that Link and Zelda have made, Midna knows she has to save both the Twilight and Light worlds. Link and Midna then go through the portal created by the mirror, arriving at the Palace of Twilight. After working through some areas, Link acquires a Sol, which is a sphere of light that illuminates the world of Twilight, like the Sun. The power of these orbs is the source of life in this world, being comprised of pure power. With this power, the curse on the Twili cast by Zant is broken and they return to normal.

Soon, they come face to face with Zant, and he tells his sad tale of disappointment. Then, the battle for the Twilight throne begins. After this fight, Zant, with fleeting breath, goes on to say that Ganondorf has been reborn in this world, and how Ganondorf will revive him endlessly. But in his weakened state, Zant is quickly dispatched by Midna with a fraction of the power from the Fused Shadow, who is very angered by what Zant has had to say. She was surprised at the power of the Fused Shadow though, and I don't think she quite intended to blow Zant up; oopsies.

Then the duo heads back to Hyrule Castle to take down the barrier surrounding it. Midna uses the power of the Fused Shadow to transform into a huge octopus-like beast, wielding a giant trident. She scales the barrier and thrusts the trident in it, making it crumble to the ground. This allows them access to the castle, where Ganondorf is waiting.

Midna and Link make their way through Hyrule Castle, to the throne room, and meet Ganondorf, with Zelda's lifeless body hovering inside the Triforce statue. Ganondorf says that the Twili have long amused him, as they defied the gods with such petty magic, and were easily cast aside. He says the Twili had some skill, but lacked true power; the absolute power of the Triforce. Ganondorf then goes to possess Zelda, with Midna trying to, but failing to stop him.

After Link reflects Zelda's magic a few times, shaking up Ganondorf, Midna uses the Fused Shadow to kick Ganondorf out of Zelda's body. Ganondorf isn't through yet though, and quickly transforms into Ganon. After dispatching Ganon again, we see Zelda's life force leave Midna and return to Zelda's body. At this point, or perhaps throughout the time since Zelda gave her power to Midna, the two shared consciousness and now both understand each others' despair and struggles. However, there isn't much time for talk, as Ganondorf starts moving about. It is now that Midna appears to sacrifice herself, using the Fused Shadow to teleport Link and Zelda away, and then attacking Ganondorf. A huge explosion is seen coming from the castle, destroying it, but shortly thereafter, we see Ganondorf on his horse in Hyrule Field near Link and Zelda, crushing the Fused Shadow that Midna wore as a mask.

Zelda then calls on the help of the Light Spirits, who teleport them away momentarily to give them the Light Arrows. They get back to Hyrule Field and race around on Epona, hitting Ganondorf with Light Arrows and then peppering him with hits from the Master Sword. After a few blows, the final battle begins, with a man-to-man sword fight, with Ganondorf wielding the Sword of the Sages. After some dueling, Link thrusts the Master Sword through Ganondorf's stomach, in the same wound caused by the sages all those years ago. Ganondorf has a few words before his death, saying that it doesn't end here, but it looks as though the power of the Triforce has failed him, and he dies standing up in the middle of Hyrule Field, with the Master Sword stuck in him.

Although presumed dead, we see Midna on the horizon, with the curse on her broken as she is in her true form. She is accompanied by the Light Spirits as well, so it is possible they had something to do with either bringing her back to life or removing the curse. The three go back to the Mirror of Twilight, and it is clear Zelda and Midna have a new found appreciation of one another, saying that Light and Shadow cannot exist without the other. While Midna heads back through the Twilight portal to her people, she sheds a tear of light, which shatters the Mirror of Twilight, proving that she is the true ruler of the realm. While she would like to see Zelda and Link again, she probably chose to break the mirror so another horrible incident couldn't happen again.

Near the very end of the credits, we see the Master Sword back in the pedestal at the Sacred Grove, but there's no way to know if this is really at the end of the game, or just a scene from earlier before Link obtained the sword. We also see the throne room from Hyrule Castle, in perfect condition, so again, either this is a scene from earlier, or the castle has been repaired from the damage from the battle, which seems somewhat unlikely.

11. THE SHADOW ERA (CHILD TIMELINE)

(I really think this story belongs in the Alternate Timeline, but Nintendo doesn't seem to think so. For one, the Dark World is present, which is only ever seen in the Alternate Timeline. Secondly, there are also the Knights of Hyrule, again, only in the Alternate Timeline. There doesn't really seem to be a reason why this game would fall in the Child Timeline, other than 'Why not, it has the fewest games so far'. But perhaps this gives credence to my Dark Mirror theory.)

Some unknown amount of time later, probably another 100 years or so, *Four Swords Adventures*(FSA) takes place. For a time, there was peace, but then dark clouds covered Hyrule as an evil approached, filling the people with fear.

A new Ganondorf has been born, who is not the same from *OoT* or *TP*. He has grown into an adult, and appears to harbor the same hate and power as his predecessors. Desiring to rule the world, he comes up with a plan. His first step is to cause a diversion by releasing Vaati, the Wind Mage, who has been sealed in the Four Sword. To do this, he steals the Dark Mirror, which long ago was placed in the Forest of Light for protection. The mirror reveals the wickedness within a person and brings it to life, which Ganondorf uses to create the Shadow Links who start terrorizing the land. Legends say a dark tribe was sealed away within the Dark Mirror long ago after they invaded Hyrule. This sounds similar to the Mirror of Twilight, and while there are various reasons to believe the two objects are different, I think they are the same, or at least, the Dark Mirror is a piece of, or has the same properties as the Mirror of Twilight. While the Mirror of Twilight was technically destroyed in *TP*, *FSA* was created before, so it could be a retcon or perhaps the Dark Mirror is a duplicate Mirror of Twilight. While the Twili weren't technically sealed WITHIN the Mirror of Twilight, they were sealed BY it, so it would make sense that the legend would be a bit twisted by time. Also, the mirror is said to reveal the wickedness within a person and bring it to life, which the Mirror of Twilight seemed to do with Yeta from *TP*, transforming her into a giant beast after she gazed into it. In addition, the Dark Mirror is used in part as a portal to the Dark World, and the Mirror of Twilight is used as a portal to the Twilight Realm, which I theorize in more detail later, are actually the same.

After taking this Dark Mirror, Ganondorf then steals the trident, a magical weapon, from the sacred, forbidden pyramids in the Gerudo Desert, making him an outlaw to the Gerudo people. He uses the power of the Trident, the Dark Mirror, and his own sacred power to absorb the powers from Hyrulians to make himself stronger, becoming the King of Darkness. He does all of this in the shadows, not alerting the citizens of Hyrule to his plans.

Perceiving an evil presence in the land, Zelda calls for Link to come to Hyrule Castle. When he arrives, he is met by Zelda and the six shrine maidens who guard Hyrule. I would theorize that these shrine maidens are actually descendents of the sages, just like in *ALttP*. They are also seen transforming into fairies, which is done in *OoT* by the Sages at the very end during the credits. Zelda is worried about the seal that binds Vaati in the Four Sword, so she gets the maidens who guard the portal to the Four Sword Sanctuary to open it so they can investigate. However, when the portal is opened, Shadow Link appears, who then captures both Zelda and the maidens. Link gives chase to the Four Sword Sanctuary, and is tricked into taking the sword from the pedestal, thus splitting himself in four and releasing Vaati, one of Ganondorf's plans. Vaati then creates a tornado that sends Link flying away, as well as robbing the Four Sword of its power to vanquish darkness.

When Link comes to, he is met by Kaepora Gaebora, who tells him that he will need to collect Force Gems in order to restore the Four Sword. He also mentions how Vaati and the Shadow Links are poisoning the land and destroying much of Hyrule. Soon thereafter, it is learned that the Four Sword has various abilities, including the power to see and enter the Dark World. In *FSA*, the Dark World is a mirror world of Hyrule, but different, and it seems that the children that have been disappearing from Hyrule end up here. Also, it seems like the Four Sword might be able to grant some minor time traveling abilities, although it might just be a gameplay mechanic with no real canonical significance.

With Kaepora Gaebora's guidance, Link travels across Hyrule in search of the six maidens, which he must rescue. Across his travels, he also meets with the Knights of Hyrule, who have been tasked with guarding four sacred jewels, which are the four elements from *Minish Cap* that created the Four Sword. These Knights have been cursed though, with the jewels being used as portals to the Dark World, where the Knights are imprisoned. Link must rescue them to obtain the jewels and cut off the portals. After

collecting these treasures, Link can use them to open the path to the Realm of the Heavens where the Palace of Winds lies.

After acquiring all of the jewels, Link brings them to the Four Sword Sanctuary which returns the Tower of the Winds to the surface, which is where Zelda is being held. Once inside, Link defeats Vaati, and the Palace of Winds starts crumbling, as it was Vaati's magic that built the place and kept it stable. This also causes the Tower of Winds to collapse, and Zelda and Link cannot escape, but are thrown into a battle with Ganon, who is now a beast and no longer the human Ganondorf. He is now officially Ganon, the King of Darkness, ancient demon reborn and wielder of the trident. Zelda uses her power, with the power of a special bow she gave to Link to seal Ganon away inside the Four Sword, with the help of the six Shrine Maidens.

Link returns to the Four Sword Sanctuary to put the Four Sword back in its pedestal, and in so doing, returns to his normal self with the four parts combining into one. Hyrule is saved yet again, and as the shrine maidens cast a barrier around the sword stopping others from disturbing it, the Child Timeline comes to a close.

12. THE ADULT ERA AND THE ERA WITHOUT A HERO (ADULT TIMELINE)

The next part of the split timeline is the Adult Timeline. This section occurs during the timeline when the Hero of Time from *OoT* defeats Ganon as an adult. He then gets returned to his own time, but this timeline follows the events after Ganondorf was defeated.

Although the Hero of Time doesn't exist anymore, as he was sent back, he was still revered and celebrated as a hero. We see the people of Hyrule celebrating Ganondorf's defeat directly after *OoT*. They continue to praise the Hero of Time's actions regularly, telling stories of his courage and heroism for generations, transcending him to the heights of legends. The saga tells of this hero, who traveled through time and appeared as if from nowhere wielding the Master Sword to seal Ganondorf away. The Royal Family built statues within Hyrule Castle to memorialize his efforts, and there was even a hidden shrine built underneath the castle to house the Master Sword, with stained glass images of each of the sages that the Hero of Time awakened, who helped seal Ganondorf away. The pedestal in which the Master Sword was placed also acted as a key to seal away both Ganondorf and his dark magic.

When Link was sent back in time to be a child, his Triforce of Courage was split into 8 shards and hidden throughout the land of Hyrule, because traveling back in time separated Link from the elements that made him a hero. I guess his actions were reverted, so to speak, and he did not have what it took to possess the Triforce anymore. These pieces remained hidden until the Hero of Winds embarked on his adventure much later.

Unfortunately, many generations after Ganondorf was sealed away by the Hero of Time, a fell wind began to blow across the kingdom, and this great evil that was thought to be forever sealed away once again crept forth. He was somehow revived and returned to Hyrule pretty pissed. He started causing chaos again, and killed Laruto and Fado, who were two sages that prayed to the gods to maintain the power within the Master Sword. Ganondorf then stormed Hyrule Castle in another attempt to rule the land. The people believed that the Hero of Time would come again to save them and defeat Ganondorf, but he did not. The King of Hyrule at the time, Daphnes Nohansen Hyrule, tried but could not defeat Ganondorf with his power alone, so he left the fate of Hyrule in the hands of the gods.

When the gods heard the peoples' pleas for help, they chose to seal away Ganon and all of Hyrule. I believe they did this because there was not a Hero, and they wanted to seal away Hyrule until there was such a Hero who could save it. Before sending the flood though, the gods chose those who would build a new country and commanded them to seek refuge on the mountaintops. These included people from the Royal Family and from the Hero's bloodline. The gods also tasked Zelda and her ancestors with protecting the final piece of the Triforce; the Triforce of Wisdom. The King of Hyrule took a small piece of the Triforce, while the rest was guarded by Zelda, and later passed down in the form of a necklace to her descendents. Then, the gods brought about a torrential downpour of rains from the heavens, and the kingdom was buried beneath the waves.

Hundreds of years later, after the memory of Hyrule had vanished leaving no one left alive who knew what happened to the kingdom and giving time for civilization and populations to reestablish themselves on the islands of the Great Sea, the events of the *Wind Waker*(WW) take place.

13. THE ERA OF THE GREAT SEA AND THE HERO OF WINDS (ADULT TIMELINE)

Shortly before we see Link at the beginning of the game, a few years at max, Ganondorf somehow manages to escape from Hyrule, creates a portal to the Forsaken Fortress, and takes control of it. It is here that he establishes his rule and starts his search for the descendent of Princess Zelda and awaits for the time a Hero arises in order to get both the Triforce of Wisdom and Courage, finally completing his quest he started in *OoT* to reunite the Triforce. He sends out the Helmaroc King, a giant bird, to search the islands of the Great Sea for young girls with pointy ears (Hylians), in hopes of finding Zelda. After these antics and more, people begin to fear this Fortress, spreading rumors of a dark evil that lies within.

On Outset Island though, another amongst the lands floating on the Great Sea, Link and his family live. On his 16th birthday, presumably, Link gets the Hero's Clothes, which is a green tunic. This is tradition amongst the inhabitants of Outset Island, where, at the same age as the Hero of Time, the children dawn green clothing for a day to celebrate the Hero, and aspire to find heroic blades and cast down evil, instilling them with courage.

Also for his birthday, Aryll, Link's sister, gives him her telescope. Using the scope, Link spots the Helmaroc King flying through the sky, with Tetra in his claws. Tetra's pirate ship is following closely behind, shooting cannon balls at the bird to try to rescue her. The pirates finally land a hit, causing the bird to drop Tetra into the forest on Outset Island. Link then decides to go and rescue her. Before heading off into the woods though, Link gets the Hero's Sword and the Hero's Shield, which is a family heirloom and said to have been used by the Hero himself.

After finding Tetra and getting her out of the forest, the bird comes back, but this time, picks up Aryll and takes her away. Link asks Tetra and basically forces her to take him with them so he can find and rescue his sister, thus beginning his adventure. Tetra, the captain of this group of pirates and who turns out to be Zelda, takes Link to the Forsaken Fortress, where the bird seems to be from, and launches him ashore. Link sneaks his way to the top of a tower and sees his sister, as well as other girls who are imprisoned. Unfortunately, that pesky bird comes back before Link can free the girls, and he gets tossed into the waters, rendering him unconscious; which happens quite frequently in the series; poor kid.

Link awakens to find himself in a talking boat, the King of Red Lions, who just so happens to be Daphnes

Nohansen Hyrule. There isn't any explanation of exactly how he became a boat, or how his spirit inhabited the boat, etc, but we'll just go with it. He says that he was watching Link since he went to the Forsaken Fortress to rescue his sister, saying doing such a task could give him the courage to stand up to anything, thus making him worthy of the title of Hero and the Triforce of Courage. He then mentions Ganon, and how it is the same Ganon as the one from *OoT*, who tried to cover the land in darkness and became the emperor of the Dark Realm.

Later, the King gives Link the Wind Waker, a conducting baton used long ago by the King himself when people played music in prayer to the gods. Back then, it allowed one to borrow the power of the gods simply by conducting.

Using the baton to control the winds, Link makes his way to Dragon Roost Island, where the Rito tribe lives. Interestingly, it seems that the Zora somehow evolved into the Rito, who can pluck a scale from Valoo to grow their wings. Valoo is a dragon and the Sky Spirit who also resides on Dragon Roost. The King of Red Lions tells Link to get Din's Pearl, one of three pearls that will help him gain access to the Tower of the Gods. It seems that Ganon desires these pearls as well, so time is of the essence. After defeating a monster that was sent to the island by Ganon, the prince of the Rito gives Link the pearl, which he treasured greatly.

The next pearl, Farore's Pearl, is guarded by the Great Deku Tree on Forest Haven Island. This could be the same Deku Tree from the beginning of *OoT*, but it is more likely to be the Deku Tree Sprout that we see later in *OoT*. Here, we see another transformation made by the races of Hyrule to adapt to this new watery environment. The Kokiri have evolved into the Koroks, which look like little imps with leaves as faces. Every year, these Koroks gather to perform a song, which causes seeds to sprout from the Great Deku Tree. The Koroks then take these seeds around all the islands of the Great Sea and plant them, hoping that lush forests will take root and one day, bring the islands together, connected by earth and grove.

Jabun (Lord Jabu-Jabu?), the Water Spirit holds Nayru's Pearl, the last of the three. Link and the King go to Greatfish Island to get it, but the island has been destroyed by Ganon. Luckily, they learn that Jabun escaped just before the attack, and is now hiding in Outset Island, where Link is from. They go to Outset and find Jabun, who then gives Link the final pearl.

It is interesting to note that all three of these creatures, including the king himself, while also speaking Hylian almost exclusively, which is now a dead language, are searching for the Hero of Time. Valoo does in fact call Link a Hero for saving him, but not the Hero of Time. The Deku Tree notices Link's green tunic, and wonders if the King has finally found the Hero of Time, but because Link doesn't understand the ancient Hylian language, he dismisses him as the legendary Hero. Jabun also mentions to the King that the reason the King sought out Jabun must be because he has found the Hero of Time. The King assures him though that he has not, nor does the current Link have any connection to the Hero of Time. However, the King believes he has great courage, and should be tested by the gods. It's just interesting that everyone is obsessed with this legendary hero, and they don't apparently know any other tales of other past Links.

Having the pearls, Link sails to three islands to place them in ancient statues' hands. This causes the statues to explode the rock and dust that has formed on them, revealing their true beauty. The statues then shine a bright light on each other, in the shape of the Triforce, which causes the Tower of the Gods to rise from the depths of the sea. This also breaks the curse that Ganondorf had placed on the world,

making perpetually night, casting the land into darkness. The Tower of the Gods was a place the gods of the ancient world prepared to test the courage of men, and only one who overcame the trials would be worthy of being the true hero who could wield the Master Sword. It's hard to say when exactly this Tower was created though. It would have had to have been after *SS* when the first hero arrived and the Master Sword was created, and could have possibly been sometime after *OoT*.

Link enters the Tower to face the trials, and after succeeding, makes his way to the top where he rings a bell. This signifies that he has completed the trials, and in so doing, a portal of light is created in the water below. This portal brings the King and Link to the bottom of the sea, where Hyrule has been sealed. Link enters Hyrule Castle, which is lifeless and frozen in time. After entering the secret room beneath the statue of the Hero of Time, Link pulls the Master Sword from its resting place. This causes color and life to return to the castle, but also unlocks Ganondorf's true power that was sealed away.

Link then heads back to the Forsaken Fortress, with the Master Sword, to rescue his sister. Once he gets to the prison block, Tetra shows up to lend a hand and break the girls out of their cell, and as pirates, also plans to ransom them back to their parents, except for Aryll of course. Link then goes to take out the Helmaroc King to stop further kidnappings, and afterward, meets up with Ganondorf. Ganondorf smiles, knowing the power is gone from the Master Sword, leaving Link defenseless. About to be sworded, Tetra comes in to distract Ganondorf, however, he grabs her, and finds out that she has the same blood as Zelda, making her the new Princess; the one he has been searching for. Luckily, the Rito, along with Valoo, come to rescue the bunch and burninate Ganondorf's hideout.

Link and Tetra set off to Hyrule Castle, where the King tells Tetra who she really is; the last of Zelda's ancestors. With Tetra's necklace and the other piece from the King, the Triforce of Wisdom is reassembled, transforming Tetra into her Princess garb, although, she is the same person in body and mind. Tetra, or now Zelda, stays within Hyrule while Link ascends to the surface to bring the power back to the Master Sword.



Pirate Tetra



Tetra transformed into Princess Zelda

It is learned here that because the sword has lost its power, it must mean that something has happened to the sages who infused the blade with the gods' power. Link then goes to the Wind and Earth Temples to check on the now dead sages. Laruto, a Zora, was the previous Earth Temple sage, and she informs

Link that in order to return the power to the Master Sword, he must find another sage to take her place; one that carries her bloodline. This person turns out to be Medli, a Rito. Link conducts a song, the Earth God's Lyric, in front of Medli which awakens her, filling her with knowledge of her ancestors and her task.



The Earth Temple Sages Laruto and Medli

The other sage that was killed by Ganondorf is Fado, the Kokiri. Again, Link must awaken another sage who carries Fado's bloodline, and this time, it is Makar, a Korok, who is awakened by playing the Wind God's Aria. After fully awakening both sages and clearing out the temples, Medli and Makar play their songs in prayer to the gods, thus reenergizing the Master Sword, filling it with sacred power; transforming it into the TRUE Master Sword.



The Wind Temple Sages Fado and Makar

For some reason, it is required that Link finds the 8 shards of the Triforce of Courage and reassembles it to get back to Hyrule. Link must first find the maps to where the shards are buried, get them translated, and can then acquire them. Once completed, Link brings the Triforce of Courage back to the Tower of the Gods and presents it to the goddesses. When this happens, the Triforce symbol appears on Link's hand, thusly declaring him a true Hero, to the surprise of the King, who then gives him the title Hero of Winds.

Link returns to the Castle, but Zelda is gone. Ganondorf has taken her saying that with his power restored they aren't safe anywhere. With the power restored to the Master Sword as well though, Link cuts through Ganondorf's barrier that was set around Hyrule Castle, thus allowing him access to Ganon's Tower. Link makes his way through the tower, eventually getting to both Zelda and Ganondorf. Ganondorf goes on to talk about how the islands are a joke, with everyone separated, and that their gods destroyed them. He then says that he had been waiting for a Hero, and that hopefully, he won't be disappointed with Link's strength. Ganondorf then transforms into Ganon, and a variety of other forms that Link dispatches, again, proving himself a true Hero.

Ganondorf retreats to fight in another location. He says that he already has the Triforce of Power and Wisdom, and all that is left is that of Courage. He says that he will not kill Link, and only wants the Triforce that dwells within. Using his powers, Ganondorf subdues Link and casts all three parts of the Triforce out, joining them. Standing a few feet away from the Triforce, Ganondorf wishes for Hyrule to return to the surface so he can rule it. Unfortunately, despite all his planning and knowledge, Ganondorf failed to actually touch the Triforce when making this wish, so it didn't come true. The King of Hyrule however, swoops in, placing his hand on the mystical item, and wishes for hope and a future for Link and Zelda, and that the land of Hyrule be washed away and that their destinies finally be fulfilled. Lastly, he wishes that Ganondorf drown with Hyrule.

Understandably upset, Ganondorf faces off against Link once more to show what future the kids have in store. Link steps up to the challenge though, with the battle ending in a fatal blow to Ganondorf's head with the Master Sword, turning him into stone. The King then addresses Link and Zelda, saying that both he and Ganondorf lived bound to Hyrule, wishing to have done something differently. He wants Link and Zelda to live for themselves, for the future. Then, the ocean spills into Hyrule, leaving the King and Ganondorf, with the Master Sword firmly in his brain. Link and Tetra float to the surface, where they are met by Tetra's ship. They then begin their journey on the seas to fulfill their newly discovered destinies of establishing a new Hyrule.

14. THE ERA OF THE GREAT VOYAGE (ADULT TIMELINE)

Shortly after *WW* ends, *Phantom Hourglass*(*PH*) begins, where we see Link, Tetra, and crew, sailing on the seas still searching for a new place to call Hyrule. There have been rumors going around about a Ghost Ship filled with treasure and lots of other ships going missing. Looking for riches, the gang goes in search of this ship, and finds it. Tetra jumps aboard and is promptly captured, so Link tries to climb aboard as well for the rescue, but falls. It turns out, this Ghost Ship is captained by monsters from another world in search of life force, which they use as energy. Being Zelda's descendent, Tetra has a sacred power within her that brims with this spirit, which the monsters were attracted to.

This game actually takes place in some alternate world, and it seems as though nobody outside of Link and Tetra know what happened. During the ending, the two wake up on the Ghost Ship, with their crew saying they had been asleep for about ten minutes and that was that. Because the game actually takes place in another world, I won't spend too much time with it, but I'll go over the main events.

After Link fails to get on the Ghost Ship to save Tetra, he washes up on the shore of some island. A fairy named Ciela, who is actually the Spirit of Courage and Time, wakes him up. Unfortunately, Ciela lost her memory a long time ago and doesn't know who she is. When she woke up on this very beach, a man

named Oshus, who she calls Grandpa, “found” her. We go see Oshus, who is actually the Ocean King who protects the seas, and he tells us to look for a man named Linebeck who can direct us to the Ghost Ship.

Years before these events, an evil monster named Bellum attacked. The Ocean King struggled in a battle with Bellum, but his evil was so dark, it drained the Ocean King’s life force. Using this life force he took, Bellum was able to spread his evil. The Ocean King was then imprisoned in his own Temple, along with the Spirits of Power and Wisdom. Luckily though, Ciela, the Spirit of Courage and Time, split her soul and escaped. The Ocean King then did the same, turning himself into a man named Oshus.

Linebeck is trapped inside the Temple of the Ocean King. He was looking for treasure, but got stuck. Link saves him, and Linebeck lets him know about the temple, and how it has been cursed to suck the life out of anyone who enters. Link explores the temple further to find a Sea Chart, which allows him to search different areas of the waters. Taking a closer look at the map, Link discovers the Isle of Ember, which they travel to. Ciela tags along with Link and Linebeck, who supplies the boat, on their way to the Temple of Fire, where, after defeating a boss, they free Leaf, the Spirit of Power, who is symbolized by Din’s emblem.

Leaf informs Link that once he has rescued all three Spirits, with Courage and Wisdom to go, he will be able to find the Ghost Ship. Link returns to the Temple of the Ocean King to find more clues, and Oshus shows up to help. He gives Link the Phantom Hourglass, which is filled with golden magical sand, called the Sand of Hours. This sand is made of Force Gems of the Ocean King, and with the Phantom Hourglass, Link’s life will not be drained while he is in the Temple. Link gathers more Sand of Hours from the bosses he defeats in future dungeons, allowing him to delve deeper into the temple.

After exploring that temple and finding another Sea Chart, Link and gang go to the Wind Temple and free Neri, the Spirit of Wisdom. The next stop is the Temple of Courage, where he frees the Spirit of Courage, who doesn’t say anything or appear to have a personality. In actuality, this fairy is Ciela's clone and only holds the power of the spirit, while Ciela is the real deal. With Oshus’ help, Ciela and this doppelganger combine to form one, the true Spirit of Courage, who can sense evil, including the Ghost Ship.

Link, with the help of the Sprits, finds the Ghost Ship and climbs aboard, without falling off this time. He finds Tetra, who has been turned to stone, having had her life force drained. Link takes her off the Ghost Ship and back to Linebeck's. Then, Oshus reveals himself as the Ocean King. He tells Link to retrieve the 3 pure metals he long ago gifted to the tribes of the world. Using these metals, Link can forge the Phantom Sword, which will be able to defeat Bellum.

After going into the Temple of the Ocean King again, Link confronts Bellum, and almost defeats him, causing the entire Temple to come crashing down. Luckily, the Ocean King teleported Link out in time, and having weakened Bellum, Tetra’s life force slowly returns. Bellum isn’t done yet though, and he takes Tetra again and escapes on the Ghost Ship. Link follows, climbs aboard again, and finally dispatches Bellum using the Phantom Sword.

The Ocean King returns to his true form as a giant white whale, and ensures Link and Tetra that the Ghost Ship will no longer haunt their world. Link and Tetra then awaken on the Ghost Ship, with their own pirate ship right beside with the crew waiting, and saying it had only been 10 minutes.

After the events of *PH*, Link and Tetra go on to explore the oceans, and finally find a continent where they create the New Hyrule. This place is inhabited though, and not without its history of battles with

evil.

15. THE ERA OF HYRULE'S REBIRTH (ADULT TIMELINE)

Long ago, the very first settlers of this new land came, and followed the spirits of good. Everything was peaceful for a time, but soon, the evil Demon King Malladus rose to power, destroying everything in his path. It's hard to say when this occurred, but I would guess sometime between the time of the Hero of Legend in *Skyward Sword* and the Hero of Time in *OoT*, when there didn't exist an incarnation of evil; after Demise and before Ganondorf. The spirits of good faced him in battle, and after what seemed like an eternity of war and bloodshed, the spirits subdued the Demon King, and with their remaining power, buried his spirit in the ground. They built shackles to imprison him and a tower that acted as a lock. These shackles cover the land to this day and act as railroad tracks, called the Spirit Tracks. The tracks lead to four temples which send a flow of energy to the Tower of Spirits to keep Malladus trapped. With their own power depleted, the spirits of good left for the heavens, entrusting the land to the people. It's possible, but not necessary, that these people were the Lokomos. If not, then the Lokomos took the reins at some point later. At any rate, the Lokomos do act as Servants to the Spirits, protectors of the temples and Spirit Tracks, and watch over mankind.

It isn't said, but it seems as though what are called the 'spirits' in the game are actually the goddesses, Din, Farore, and Nayru. There is no mention of the gods in these games, and I think one reason may be to try to separate the lore between the handheld games and the console titles. The only real clue that the spirits and goddesses are the same is near the end of the game, when the character Byrne says to Zelda that her "body has the sacred power of the spirits". We know though that the Zelda bloodline has the sacred power of the goddess Hylia. Also, in *PH*, there are those 'spirits', but they represent courage, wisdom, and power, just like the goddesses.

After some unknown amount of time, the Hero of Winds and Tetra, with their pirate crew, arrive at this continent, after sailing the seas for awhile before and after the events of *PH*. They meet with Anjean, a Lokomo native, and become friends. Anjean allows Tetra and Link to found New Hyrule under the condition that her family protects the land for all time. Then, Anjean gives Tetra the Spirit Flute; one of the sacred instruments that the Lokomo use to generate energy that powers the Spirit Tracks. Having created a pact with the native people, Tetra and Link start building Hyrule Castle close by the Tower of Spirits. We don't know much about the creation of Hyrule at this point, but 100 years later, the kingdom seems to be going strong, and the soldiers wear uniforms that pay tribute to the Hero of Winds' outfit, which was what he wore to represent the Hero of Time.

It is at this point, 100 years after the founding of New Hyrule, that the game *Spirit Tracks*(*ST*) takes place. This is the 3rd generation of Hylians to live on the land. The first featured Tetra and the Hero of Winds, the second is unseen, and the third is currently living.

A new Link is currently the roommate of Niko, who was a part of Tetra's pirate crew. We don't know if Tetra and the Hero of Winds are still alive, but it's possible. Also, we don't know if this current Link has any affiliation with the Hero of Winds. Obviously, this Link becomes a hero during the events of *ST*, but if he were directly related to the Hero of Winds, then why is he not living in the castle or at least have met the current Princess Zelda before? Anyways, Link is going to Hyrule Castle today for his graduation ceremony in becoming an official train engineer. Princess Zelda does the honors of awarding Link with an engineer certificate, but also a secret letter.

In the letter, Zelda asks Link to meet her at her room. Once in the room, Zelda tells Link about Chancellor Cole, who seems to hold a seat of power at the castle and over Zelda herself. Cole forbade Zelda from leaving the castle, but she wants to check on the Tower of Spirits as it seems the Spirit Tracks have been vanishing. Anjean lives at this tower still, and Zelda wants to ask her what is going on. Link agrees to use his train to take her, and he pilfers a recruit uniform as a disguise, which is the same outfit that the Hero of Winds wore, to sneak Zelda out of the castle.

They head out to the Tower of Spirits, but suddenly, the tracks disappear. Just then, a dark, sinister cloud forms over the tower and destroys it, separating it into disjoint floating sections. Chancellor Cole shows up and shoots a ball of magical energy at Zelda, separating her spirit from her body. Cole and his muscle, Byrne, take Zelda's lifeless body and leave. They want Zelda's body because her bloodline is from the royal family of ancient Hyrule, which can be used to resurrect Malladus with the sacred power that flows through her veins. On a side note, Byrne used to be Anjean's apprentice, but eventually got frustrated with serving the spirits and desired to become even more powerful than them. For this reason, he quit the spirits' service and joined with Cole to resurrect the Demon King who he believed would grant him power. Zelda's spirit meets Link back at the castle, where she gives him the Spirit Flute that her grandmother Tetra gave her, and they make their way again to the Tower of Spirits.

At the tower, they meet Anjean, who allows them to use the Spirit's Train for their travels, seeing as how Link's train was destroyed. Anjean mentions how her strength alone is now maintaining Malladus' shackles, and how they have to revive the Spirit Tracks so the energy can once again flow. Also, Zelda kind of wants her body back. Her body and the spirit of the Demon King are at the top of the tower, however, it needs to be repaired before they can get up there. In order to do so, they must mend the Spirit Tracks, visit each of the four temples, and restore the flow of energy to fix each floor.

First, Link and Zelda work together to get a Rail Map from the tower, which restores some of the tracks. This allows them to visit a Lokomo, where the two of them can play a duet using the sacred instruments to restore the tracks further that lead to the area's temple.

After revitalizing the energy flow from each of the temples, Link and Zelda go to the top of the tower and face off against Byrne. They defeat him, and continue onwards where they find Malladus, who has been resurrected in Zelda's body. Malladus isn't used to his new body yet though, so he and Cole escape to the Dark Realm using the Demon Train.

Luckily, Byrne realizes his folly and helps Link and Zelda. First, Anjean directs them to find the Bow of Light which was used in the battle between Malladus and the Spirits of Good in the past, and is now protected in the Sand Temple. This bow might help in exercising Malladus from Zelda's body. Anjean also gives Link the Lokomo Sword, which was also used in the battle against Malladus and only ever wielded by the Spirits. Byrne then lets Link know about the Compass of Light, which he can use to find the portal to the Dark Realm.

After getting equipped with all of these goodies, Link and Zelda head for the Dark Realm. They meet up with the Demon Train and destroy it, giving them time to focus on the possessed Zelda. They shoot her/him with the Bow of Light, and Malladus' spirit leaves Zelda's body, giving Zelda time to reinhabit it.

At this point, Malladus needs another body to possess, so he takes Cole's, and uses him to transform into a giant pig-like beast with orange hair, very similar to Ganon. Fortunately, Cole's body is rejecting

Malladus' spirit, probably because it isn't powerful enough and doesn't have the sacred power that Zelda did, and so he doesn't have much time. It is a moot point though, because Zelda and Link defeat Malladus anyways. Zelda channels her sacred power and combines it with the music from the Spirit Flute, which calls upon the powers of all the Lokomos to reveal Malladus' weak point. Zelda shoots this spot with the Bow of Light and Link stabs the crystal on Malladus' forehead with the Lokomo Sword, dealing a final blow that causes the gem to crack, making the Demon King explode.

After seeing the courage and strength of both Link and Zelda, and having destroyed Malladus, Anjean declares that the protection of the Lokomos is no longer needed, so they depart for the heavens, leaving Zelda and Link to watch over the land. Thus, the Adult Timeline comes to an end, leaving this new Link and Zelda pair to protect New Hyrule.

16. THE ERA OF LIGHT AND DARK AND THE HERO OF ESSENCES (ALTERNATE TIMELINE)

The final split in the timeline is officially stated as the Hero of Time failing to stop Ganondorf during the events of *OoT*, but I'm going to reword it to the Hero of Time simply not existing. Again, this timeline comprises of all the Zelda games prior to *Ocarina of Time* being created, plus the Oracle games, and the split was created more so as a way to make these games fit into the newer story told in *OoT*. Saying that the Hero of Time died against Ganondorf is one way to make it kind of work, but saying that he never existed at all is better I feel.

This timeline starts with the introduction of Ganondorf, the same one from *OoT*, but changes up the story a bit. It says he, along with his gang of thieves, discovered a gate to the Golden Land, or Sacred Realm, by accident. Ganondorf then got his hands on the Triforce and wished to conquer the World, turning the Golden Land into a place of evil; the Dark World. However, he couldn't figure out how to return to the Light World.

Some time after his wish, evil power began to flow from the Golden Land, and greedy men were drawn to it to join Ganon's army. Black clouds permanently darkened the skies over Hyrule, and many disasters started occurring. The King of Hyrule then sent out the Seven Wise Men, or Sages, and the Knights of Hyrule to seal the entrance to the Golden Land. While this was occurring, the Wise Men were also searching for a worthy person to wield the Master Sword, although they turned up unsuccessful. Ganon, fearing both of these events, sent an evil horde of monsters to attack Hyrule. The Knights tried to protect the Wise Men, and many were lost in the battle. Luckily though, the Knights' struggle allowed the Wise Men enough time to seal Ganon in the Golden Land, bringing peace back to Hyrule. This event became known as the Imprisoning or Sealing War.

Many centuries later (or three or four generations), with the people living in peace and the memories of the Imprisoning War lost, nobody was prepared for the new disasters that were coming. Uncontrollable pestilence and drought ravaged the land. After much debate, the King of Hyrule ordered an investigation of the Imprisoned Dark World, which used to be the Golden Land, but the Wise Men's seal appeared to be intact. The King offered a reward to anyone who could figure out the source of these troubles, and one man named Agahnim, secretly a member of the Tribe of Evil working for Ganon, came forward and stopped the disasters with a previously unknown form of magic. As a reward, the King appointed Agahnim chief adviser and heir to the Seven Wise Men, and all of Hyrule celebrated his success.

However, after gaining this position of power, Agahnim starts showing his evil side, attempting to revive Ganon. Agahnim then eliminates the King and takes his place. In order to free Ganon from the seal in the Dark World, he needs to capture seven maidens of the descendants of the Wise Men and use their life force to break the seal. Agahnim, posing as the King, offers rewards to the people of Hyrule if they know the whereabouts of these descendants. After a while, the people grow very suspicious of Agahnim and fearful of his magic. Agahnim has captured six maidens so far, and the final seventh is Princess Zelda. By using her, along with the other maidens, Ganon can break free of the seal and make Hyrule, the Light World, his own. It is at this point that *A Link to the Past* (ALttP) takes place.

One night, Zelda telepathically calls to Link, asking for help. Link gets out of bed to find his uncle mysteriously leaving the house, fully equipped with the sword and shield. Link follows his uncle to the Castle and finds him in the sewers, clinging to life. He then reveals that he is one of the last remaining members of the Knights of Hyrule, a group fated to save Zelda. Link takes up his uncle's gear and makes his way through the castle to Zelda, who is locked in a dungeon cell. They escape the castle through a hidden passage that leads to the Sanctuary. There, Link learns that he must find the village elder, Sahasrahla, who is the only one who might know where the Master Sword rests, which is the only weapon that can defeat Agahnim.

Sahasrahla, who went into hiding because he is also a descendent of the sages, tells Link that he must acquire the three Pendants of Courage, Wisdom, and Power, which are required to wield the Master Sword. He also says that three or four generations ago, the Knights of Hyrule protected Hylian royalty and the Pendant of Courage. Whenever disaster would arise with the royal family, a Hero would emerge from the bloodline of the Knights of Hyrule.

After obtaining the three pendants, Link makes his way to the Master Sword, which lies in the Lost Woods. Unfortunately, it is at that moment that the Agahnim's soldiers find Zelda, who had been hiding in the Sanctuary. They capture her and take her to the Castle. Link quickly follows, and confronts Agahnim to try and stop him from finishing his ritual to break the Wise Men's seal. However, Link is too late, and Zelda is transported to the Dark World and the seal is broken. Link defeats Agahnim, but he draws Link into the Dark World.

Now, Link needs to rescue the Seven Maidens from the Dark World, whose power can break the barrier surrounding Ganon's hiding place. Also, he will need to get the Triforce, which is the only thing that can save and restore the Light World. To help him, he will need the Moon Stone, which will allow him to maintain his true form in the Dark World, instead of transforming into a rabbit.

After saving the maidens and Zelda, Link uses their power, combined with his courage, to open the way to Ganon's Tower. The Blood of the Hylia had grown thin over time, and they needed the power of Link's courage to help, as they didn't possess the same great power as their ancestors, the Wise Men.

Link gets to Ganon right before he is able to pass into the Light World. Having never seen a Link before, he is surprised that a mere boy could cause him so much trouble. Using the Master Sword and Silver Arrows, Link defeats Ganon. Link goes into the next room where the Triforce lays. The Essence of the Triforce speaks to Link, and tells him that he has totally destroyed Ganon, and soon the Dark World will vanish. Not having an owner now, the Triforce waits, so Link grabs it and makes an unknown wish. However, during the credits, we see things are returned to normal in Hyrule, so that was likely Link's wish. The King of Hyrule returns, and the descendants of the Wise Men come out of hiding. Also, Link's uncle, who looked like he died, heals. Then, Link places the Master Sword back in its pedestal in the Lost

Woods to sleep again, forever.

After a bit of time from the events of *ALttP*, Twinrova, Ganondorf's surrogate mother, starts working on the Dark Rites of the Gerudo to revive him by lighting the three flames; the Flame of Destruction, Flame of Despair, and Flame of Sorrow. Once these Flames are lit, Twinrova must offer a sacrifice, which is to be Zelda, which will revive the Evil King Ganondorf. To help get these Flames lit, Twinrova sends out the Sorceress of Shadows, Veran, and the General of Darkness, Onox. These mighty foes go to the lands of Labrynnna and Holodrum to capture the Oracles of Time and Seasons to cause sorrow and destruction throughout the land, which will cause the Flames to light.

It is at this point that Link finds himself drawn to Hyrule Castle by the Triforce. The Essence of the Triforce again speaks to Link, asking him to accept its quest to stop Ganondorf from being revived, and then transports him to the lands of Labrynnna and Holodrum. At the same time, Zelda senses the same danger, and sends Impa to these lands to bring the Oracles to Hyrule for protection. Here, the events of both *Oracle of Ages*(*OoA*) and *Oracle of Seasons*(*OoS*) take place. First, we'll look at the events that occur in Labrynnna.

After being teleported by the Triforce, Link awakens in the woods of Labrynnna, and hears who he believes is Impa being attacked. He rescues her, and then leads her to the singing Nayru, the Oracle of Ages. It isn't quite clear if this Nayru is actually the same as the goddess, but we'll assume that it is. At this point, Veran, the Sorceress of Shadows reveals that she has possessed Impa, and now takes aim at Nayru, taking over her body. Veran then uses Nayru's time traveling abilities to go 400 years in the past, which messes with the present, creating all sorts of distortions and destroying the land and creatures that inhabit it.

Link then treks to the Maku Tree for advice, but she mysteriously vanishes. It turns out that in the past, Veran and her minions are causing quite the disturbance. Link then travels back and forth through time to quell Veran's evil deeds, firstly, with saving the Maku Tree. The Maku Tree informs Link that he'll need to collect the 8 Essences of Time in order to fully restore her memories, thusly allowing her to provide him with the Maku Seed. Using this seed, Link can break Veran's barrier to gain access to her.

While Link is collecting the Essences, Veran is causing lots of trouble in the past. She uses Nayru to infiltrate the royal castle, manipulating Queen Ambi. She also uses Nayru's power to create an endless day. She then makes the Queen continue to build her tower at a frantic pace, leading the townsfolk to deem it the Black Tower.

Midway through his adventure, Link faces off against Veran, who is still possessing Nayru. Link exorcises Veran from Nayru's body, but then Veran takes control of the queen directly. Nayru teleports Link back to the present. Link then goes back to finding the last of the Essences, and then goes to the top of the Black Tower to face off against Veran again. Link defeats Veran for the last time, but unfortunately, the sorrow that Veran brought to the world during her spree of evil was enough to light the Flame of Sorrow; one part of the Dark Rite to revive Ganondorf.

In the other land of Holodrum, events are unwinding quite similarly. Link awakens in the forest and is drawn to the music of Din, the Oracle of Seasons. Unfortunately, it is again at this time that Onox, the General of Darkness finds Din and takes her away via a tornado. After Onox imprisons Din, the seasons in

Holodrum get all out of whack, which drains the life from the land. Link makes his way to a male version of the Maku Tree, who tells him that he needs to find the 8 Essences of Nature to break the shadow barrier where Onox is hiding with Din.

After much destruction in the land due to the tumultuous changing of the seasons, the people start to lose hope. Then, Princess Zelda appears to try to revive their spirits. Unfortunately, it isn't enough, and the Flame of Destruction is lit.

Link continues his quest to get all of the Essences of Nature, and once that is complete, the Maku Tree gives him the Maku Seed, giving him access to Onox. Link then saves Din and defeats Onox, but it is not a time for celebration. While Link was distracted by this task, Twinrova came and captured Zelda; the only person giving the people of the lands any hope. With this act, the people lost all faith, thus lighting the Flame of Despair.

Before the Dark Rite could be completed, with Zelda being sacrificed to revive Ganon, Link shows up. He stops the ritual and defeats Twinrova. However, Twinrova chooses to sacrifice herself to revive Ganon. Luckily, Twinrova's body doesn't have the sacred power that is in Zelda's blood, so the Ganon that is revived is a mindless, raging beast that Link easily incapacitates. Thus, the revival of Ganondorf has failed, Link is named the Hero of the Essences, and peace is restored to the lands.

At the end of these adventures, Link takes off on his boat to get away from Hyrule and embark on a quest for enlightenment and wisdom. After months of difficult travel, this journey comes to end and he sets sail back to Hyrule. On his way back though, a storm starts brewing, and his ship is destroyed. In the tussle, Link blacks out. While unconscious, Link has a wild dream about the island of Koholint; where *Link's Awakening*(LA) occurs.



The ending scene of the Oracle Series



The opening scene of Link's Awakening

In this vision, Link washes ashore on this island, where a woman who shares a striking resemblance to Zelda, named Marin, wakes him up. On the center of this island, atop a mountain, is a giant egg. In this egg sleeps the Wind Fish, and it is Link's goal to wake this creature up, which will allow himself to awaken. In order to wake up the mystical Wind Fish, Link must collect 8 siren instruments from

nightmare creatures who have taken control of this dream.

After collecting all of the instruments, Link makes his way to the egg and plays the song, which causes a doorway to open in the egg. Link steps inside to find the ultimate nightmare, who made the Wind Fish sleep endlessly so they could take control of Koholint Island. After defeating this final nightmare, Link meets the Wind Fish, who is a technicolor flying whale. He tells Link that he has been asleep for quite a long time. When he awakens, the island shall vanish, like a dream. Thusly, both the Wind Fish and Link wake up together. Link, floating on a piece of his destroyed boat, looks up and has his spirits raised by seeing the Wind Fish in the sky.

17. THE GOLD ERA (ALTERNATE TIMELINE)

Some unknown amount of time after this, but probably not too long, the King of Hyrule used the Triforce to maintain peace throughout the land. After a fruitful reign, the King was getting old, and fearing the end, decided he couldn't find another worthy of passing on the Triforce to. Therefore, the King decided to split the Triforce into its three parts, leaving the Triforce of Power and Wisdom in the kingdom, but hiding the Triforce of Courage in the Great Palace in the Valley of Death. He also created a binding force that barred entry to the Great Palace, that could only be shut down when a person defeats the guardians in the other 6 palaces around Hyrule and places a crystal in the corresponding statues. The King then cast a spell on all of Hyrule, which would make a crest of the Triforce appear on a young man's hand who had the right character, had many kinds of experiences, and who reached a certain age; thus making him worthy of the Triforce.

He took these six crystals, with the scroll of his instructions, and entrusted them to Impa's family to be passed down for generations until a worthy person who could wield the Triforce was found. Before his passing, he told Princess Zelda this secret.

The prince though, who was to become king, learned that he would not be inheriting the Triforce and became furious. He searched across the land for the missing parts of the Triforce, but could not find them. He then heard that the King had told his younger sister, Zelda, about it, and began interrogating her, but she would not talk. Frustrated, the prince then asked his magician to question Zelda, and even after threat of an eternal sleep, she would say nothing. Angered, the magician began to cast this spell, and surprised, the prince tried to stop him, but it was too late. The magician fought off the prince and cast Zelda into a sleep that she could not be awoken from. The power of this magic was so strong, that it weakened the magician, causing him to die soon afterward. The prince then placed Zelda in a secret room within the castle, hoping that one day she would awaken. In his grief over this tragic event, the prince also ordered that every female born into the royal family must be given the name Zelda.

18. THE ERA OF DECLINE AND THE HERO OF HYRULE (ALTERNATE TIMELINE)

An unknown amount of time later, long enough for the memory of the Triforce of Courage to be lost, the land of Hyrule fell into an Age of Chaos. During this time, a new Ganon, Prince of Darkness, led an attack on Hyrule, seeking to rule the world with fear, turning everything to darkness. After entering Hyrule, Ganon got his hands on the Triforce of Power, and his rule began, making him the King of Evil. Fearing his wickedness, Princess Zelda split up the Triforce of Wisdom into 8 pieces and spread them across the land so Ganon couldn't get his hands on them. She also commanded her nursemaid, Impa, to search the land for a person with enough courage to defeat Ganon. Ganon grew very angry after hearing this news and

imprisoned Zelda and sent a search for Impa.

Impa fled as fast as she could, evading Ganon's minions, but eventually was surrounded. It was here that a young boy, Link, came to her rescue and fought off the monsters. Impa told Link of her plight, and so Link decided to take up the task of defeating Ganon. First though, he had to collect the 8 fragments of the Triforce of Wisdom to help him battle the evil beast. These are the events of the first Zelda title, *the Legend of Zelda(LoZ)*.

After braving the lands and fighting his way through 8 dungeons, Link finally collects the last piece of the Triforce. He then goes to Death Mountain where Ganon is hiding. He uses the power of the Triforce of Wisdom to make Ganon visible, and then fights him, eventually exploding him into ashes via the Silver Arrows. Link then retrieves the stolen Triforce of Power and frees Zelda, making him the Hero of Hyrule and returning peace to the land. Link then keeps the two pieces of the Triforce and heads off on adventures unknown, seeking new countries.

Many seasons passed, and Hyrule was on the road to ruin yet again. Ganon's previous rule left behind chaos and disorder, and monsters loyal to him remained in Hyrule, waiting for his return. These monsters soon learn that they can resurrect their fallen king by using the blood of Link. Fortunately for these monsters, Link has been in Hyrule trying to help with its restoration.

On his 16th birthday, the crest of the Triforce appeared on Link's hand. Worried, Link went to Impa, who was shocked at seeing this symbol. She then took Link to a room in the castle behind the "door that does not open". This door can only be opened by a secret that is kept in Impa's family. Inside the room is where Zelda I laid, lifeless. Impa then tells Link the story about Zelda and how she came to be in this condition, and then gives Link the six crystals and scroll from the King who hid the Triforce. The scroll was written in a language no one could read, but using his inherit power, Link managed to understand the text. He learned about the Triforce of Courage and how the King hid it and that he had to traverse the 6 palaces to gain access to the Great Palace. These are the events of *LoZII: The Adventure of Link(AoL)*.

Impa begged Link to find the Triforce of Courage and combine the pieces, and using its magic, break the curse placed on Zelda I to wake her up. Link takes on this quest, and after a long struggle, traveling all around Hyrule, Link defeats the guardians and places a crystal in each palace, and makes his way to the Great Palace. There, he defeats the Thunderbird, the last guardian, as well as Dark Link. After doing this, a keeper of the Triforce comes out and presents Link with the Triforce of Courage, the final piece.

Link makes his way back to Hyrule Castle where Zelda I lays, and uses the power of the complete Triforce to wake her up. Having done so, and reunited the Triforce, peace returns to Hyrule. This is the end of the alternate timeline.

19. THE SACRED REALM THEORY

The last topic in this paper is about the Sacred Realm, which was the original resting place of the Triforce, laid there by the goddesses after creating the earth and leaving for the heavens. The Sacred Realm was created in the spot where the goddesses descended onto the land, and it seems to have mystical properties. For one, in *OoT*, it is said by Zelda that the Sacred Realm reflects what is in the heart; if an evil person enters the realm, then it will become full of evil, but if a pure soul enters, it will become a paradise. Also, the Sacred Realm is referred to as the Golden Land in *A Link to the Past*, but they are most definitely the same.

The first time I believe we see the Sacred Realm is in *Skyward Sword*, but it is referred to as the Silent Realm, where Link performs his trials to prove himself worthy. In order to enter this realm, Link stabs his sword into the Trial Gate, which has an emblem of a single Triforce. This teleports Link to the Realm, which is said to call out to his mind alone, and is the domain of the spirit. In these areas, Link doesn't have access to any of his weapons or items, because it is his spirit that is in the realm.



Link, thrusting his sword to enter the Silent Realm



Link, within the Silent Realm

Later in the game, when Link goes to retrieve the actual Triforce, he enters a very similar realm. First, he again stabs his sword into a certain location, this time adorned with the symbols of the goddesses. Then, he is teleported to a realm that looks exactly like the Silent Realms; everything is covered in a blue light and Link doesn't have access to his weapons. These realms are identical to each other in every way, and in these later ones hold the Triforce pieces, which are said to lie in the Sacred Realm. For this reason, I believe the two are actually the same.



Link, entering the Sacred Realm



Link, within the Sacred Realm

In *Ocarina of Time*, when Link lifts the Master Sword from the Pedestal of Time, his spirit is teleported to the Sacred Realm, where it waits for 7 years for Link to become of age. It is very clearly stated that it was his SPIRIT that was trapped in the Sacred Realm, which correlates to what was said in *SS* about the Silent Realm. Also, Link enters the realm by way of the sword, just like in *SS*.

Also in *OoT*, after Ganondorf has entered the Sacred Realm and obtained the Triforce, it is said to have been transformed into the Evil Realm, due to Ganondorf's wicked heart. This is mentioned in more detail in *A Link to the Past*, after Ganondorf is again sealed in the Sacred Realm, which becomes the Dark World. Half of the game in *ALttP* is actually played in this Dark World, so we get to see some of its features. For one, it is a mirror image of Hyrule. The entire geography of the Dark World is 90% the same as in the Light World, which is what the normal Hyrule is referred to as. There are some minor differences in the layout, and some different structures, but they are nearly identical. This is also true of the Dark World from *Four Swords Adventures*. This brings more credence to the earlier theory that the Silent Realm is also the Sacred Realm, as those trials from *SS* take place in the same geography as the real-world places Link travels to. Also in *ALttP*, there are various portals that give access to the Dark World, and the same is true of the Silent Realms.

Another interesting tidbit about the Dark World shown in *ALttP* is that the people who go there are transformed into creatures. For one, Link is transformed into a man-rabbit. With the help of the Moon Pearl though, he is able to maintain his human form. This fact is a little interesting and leads me to believe that the Twilight Realm from *Twilight Princess* is actually the Sacred Realm as well. With the Twilight Realm, we see again, an exact mirror of the Hyrulian landscape, and also, like the Dark World, Link is transformed into a wolf-beast and can't maintain his human form. With the Light Spirits having to seal the Twili in the Sacred Realm, it could easily have been transformed, just like with Ganondorf. In *TP*, there is always the dichotomy of the Light World of Hyrule, and the dark, Twilight Realm. Light and Dark, which is the same as in *ALttP*, with its Light and Dark Worlds. The only issue with the theory that the Sacred Realm and the Twilight Realm are the same is that this would mean the Twilight Realm had replaced the Sacred Realm for a long time, even before *OoT*. With the timeline, it could work and make sense; it fits, but it's a bit of a stretch to believe. This would mean the Twilight Realm existed for a very

long time, although, that would give time for both the Twili to evolve into their current form from the dark interlopers, and have a royal family establish itself, and we do see Midna as the Princess of that family.

In *Four Swords Adventures*, the Dark Mirror is one item that is used to access the Dark World, which again, is a reflection of Hyrule, and I have already mentioned how the Dark Mirror and the Mirror of Twilight share almost every characteristic with each other, including accessing this Dark World, or Twilight Realm.

The last correlation between these realms is with the Silent Realm and Twilight Realm. In the Silent Realm, it is required of Link to obtain 15 goddess tears to fill the Spirit Vessel, which allows him to complete the trial. In the Twilight Realm, it is required of Link to fill the Vessel of Light with 15 Tears of Light from the Light Spirits to revive them, bringing Light back to the area. This is just another similarity between the seemingly different realms, making them all feel the same.



The Spirit Vessel



The Vessel of Light

So, for the reasons stated above, I believe all of these realms are actually the same; the Sacred Realm. Unfortunately, it would seem then, that much of the existence of this would-be paradise world has been spent as a prison and dark world, filled with evil.

20. CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed this essay that covered the entire span of the Zelda timeline. I tried to make sense of everything and bring it all together, and hopefully I did just that. In truth, I was never planning to write anything this big, but there was more to talk about and discuss than I originally thought. I had a great time writing it though and playing the games. I recommend each and every one of them to you guys. If you haven't played one, then definitely go out and experience it for yourself. Future games have plenty more to offer, and hopefully some of those gaps in the timeline will get filled, without making other crazy branches. Personally, I want to see something in the Adult Timeline with New Hyrule and see what happens there. Until next time, keep on gaming. Oh, and if you happen to find any mistakes in this paper, or want to just talk about the timeline or gaming in general, feel free to hit me up on my email listed at the top, or leave a comment on V-F-H.

Fun Facts:

Number of times used the word 'Hyrule': 159

Number of times used the word 'Triforce': 176

Number of times used the word 'Ganondorf': 181

Number of times used the word 'Zelda': 230

Number of times used the word 'Link': 530