

Zelda & Leo
Justin A. Kraft

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Sure. It doesn’t mean that I’ll answer it, though.”

“I figured as much, but I’ll ask anyway. You know that I have feelings for you, but I have no idea if you have feelings for me. My question is, do you have feelings for me, but are afraid, or not ready to act on them, or do you not feel the way I do?”

“You know I can’t answer that, Leo. I’m not entirely sure myself what feelings I have for anything or anyone. I enjoy spending time with you, I think you’re a great guy, but I’m just not sure how I feel. This is all so new and different to me.”

“Well, I probably knew that before I asked. I just hoped that the answer would be different, though.” Leo shook his mane briefly, and turned around. “I guess I can wait. I enjoy spending time with you too much to walk away now. You’re a part of my life now, Zelda. I can’t let go of that.”

“I know, and you are a part of mine, too. I just worry. Take your friends, for instance. They would like me, but entirely for the wrong reasons. Your friend Felix called me a ‘tasty bit of tail’ the other day. I just don’t know how to respond to that.”

Leo shook his large golden mane. “I know he can be a little blunt at times, but, in his defense, he was hungry when he said that.”

“What about my friends? They could never trust you. One moment you are out with me, and the next moment you were off chasing Sandy!”

“I know, and I’m sorry about that. You’re the only one I could be with, though. Sandy was just a means to fulfill a desire. It had been weeks for me. You

don't know how hard it is to control myself around you. I never want to hurt you, but sometimes, just sometimes, I want to grab you and rip you to shreds! I never would, though. It would be like ripping myself to shreds. I can see what you mean, though. Perhaps we aren't meant to be. Surely there has to be something there, though, after all, we are together for now."

Zelda shifted her weight on her hooves. "Leo, we had the moment, that's all. I don't think there's any long-term future for us, and I need to get out and start seeing the plains before I get to old. I need to find someone who can run with me and keep me company. I need someone who will keep watch over our foal and me, and protect us. I need someone who will be there forever, not just until another tasty morsel comes along."

"But Zelda," cried Leo, standing up on his four, immense paws, "We have so many things in common!"

"I'm sorry, Leo, we're just too different for the things we have in common to make up for."

Zelda turned and started to lope off down the hill, but Leo called after her, "Wait! What about that watering hole? Remember? There were a bunch of crocodiles in the water, and you and I ran around the pond, teasing them. They kept snapping at you, then they'd snap at me..."

Zelda stopped and turned, her stripes rippling as her muscles tightened. "Yes, Leo, those were fun times, but that was all they were. Just fun times. I'm sorry, Leo, I really am." Zelda turned once more, and trotted off into the sunset to re-join her herd.

“But, Zelda... I love you.” Leo managed to get these words out, but just too late to be of any use. He sat down on the hot sand and watched as Zelda sped up to a gallop, and disappeared into the horizon.