

Sisters in distress: Zelda and Peach

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In a recent book chapter I investigate how Princess Peach develops into a full character in fan works despite the narrative thinness of her character in original Super Mario games. In order to provide a point of comparison and to pinpoint the specificities of particular game princesses, this paper focuses on princess Zelda. Studying Zelda in the respective Nintendo games and Zelda as created through fan fiction and fan art, I suggest Zelda as Peach's 'sister in distress' in three ways. First, Zelda and Peach share a number of characteristics known from the narrative stereotype of 'damsel in distress.' Second, Zelda and Peach often appear together in fan works, and later even in the official Nintendo games, creating a kind of friendship between them. Third, while Zelda and Peach are sometimes used interchangeably and reduced to signify their original damsel roles, fan works take the two princesses in significantly different directions building a hopeless but sexy Peach, whose powers lie in seduction and emotions and a more technically skilled Zelda, who may even take the form of a male character Sheik.