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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **CHAPTER 1: YOUR WAY**

**\*\*\*\*\* |**

## **CHAPTER 2: BEING REALISTIC**

**\*\*\*\*\* 6**

## **CHAPTER 3: UNDER PRESSURE**

**\*\*\*\*\* | 14**

## **CHAPTER 4: JUST BUSINESS**

**\*\*\*\*\* | 19**

## **CHAPTER 5: SEARCHING**

**\*\*\*\*\* 26**

## **CHAPTER 6: UNVEILED**

**\*\*\*\*\* 34**

## **CHAPTER 7: COME BACK...**

**\*\*\*\*\* 47**

## **CHAPTER 8: BRIGHTER DAYS**

**\*\*\*\*\* 59**





# YOUR WAY

## CHAPTER I

"I don' like it," Luigi tossed the script onto the table, leaning back in his chair. The pages of it ruffled in the breeze of the open air at the top of the Empire State Building. Other people stood around them and sat in other tables, but they were just background noise to his conversation with his brother.

"I know," Mario huffed, sitting across from Luigi. "Ya didn' like th' last one *either*." He crossed his arms and glared at his twin. "You keep tellin' me it's *wrong*, but yer not sayin' *why*."

"'Cause it doesn' *work*!" Luigi told him, lurching forward a bit as he spoke. "I didn' agree with th' script ya went with with with-th' with th' play, *either*. *None* o' this is *anythin'* like what we *actually* went through."

"I *know*, it's *better*!" Mario argued. "I already spoke with th' Princess, an she's fine with it! It ain' our *world* Luigi, an they're okay with it, so wha's th' hangup with you?"

Luigi shook his head. "It just feels... childish, is all. Th' play, this movie script... It's just so... *weird*, considerin' what we went through was pretty excitable already."

Mario grabbed the script, flipping through some of the pages. Then he sat it back down, staring at the title. **Super Mario Bros.** "It's not like I wrote this myself," he finally said after a long pause.

"It's not like I didn' say something sooner," Luigi

spat. "I' been sayin' since th' beginnin'; I don' like this idea."

"But *why*?" Mario pressed.

"*Because--!*" Luigi hung his head, rubbing the back of his neck as he tried to think of the nicest way of saying his thoughts. "... We shouldn've... we... We shouldn'a said anythin' in th' first place." He looked Mario in the eye. "Should'a just come home... an an left that place behind."

Mario watched his brother's hands shake as he clenched his fists.

"It wasn' some fun adventure," Luigi said bluntly.

"It wasn' some-some... *dream* y' can just turn into an *act*."

"Calm down Lu," Mario said.

Luigi shook his head, sitting back again. "No, ya know what? I haven' signed that contract yet, an I don' think I'm gonna."

"*What!?*" Mario snorted. "You serious?"

"You wanna turn that *nightmare* into a joke?" Luigi got up abruptly, knocking his chair back. "Have it your way."

Luigi stormed off, leaving Mario sitting there alone.

Mario sighed. *Could'a said somethin'*, he thought. *Could'a just said it was that traumatizin'. I would'a dropped it forever ago.* He rested his face in his hand and flipped the corners of the script.

"But I already signed," Mario muttered. *What do I tell 'em now?*

---

A week later and Mario found himself at Princess Toadstool's castle. He came here often to think, finding that it was actually easier to think away from the busy city. Luigi didn't come here though, and at least Mario finally knew why.

The air was warmer here though. Even though it

was almost the end of winter back in Brooklyn, it was still summer here as if that's just the way it was all year round. The Toads had gotten everything put back together, for the most part, and the Princess was technically now a Queen.

*I suppose I should stop callin' ya Princess then,* Mario thought.

"Mario?" Peach asked, stepping out onto the terrace behind him.

Mario looked over his shoulder at her. "Princess," he bowed. "I mean, Queen."

Peach smiled. "Call me what you like," she curtsied before coming to stand beside him. He leaned on the banister as she twirled her parasol in her hands. "And what brings you here today?"

"That movie I been tellin' y' about," Mario started. "Turns out, Luigi never wanted anythin' t' do with it in th' first place, an never said a word."

Peach tilted her head. "But it sounds like so much fun! We don't have things like that here, movies. And, what was it you called them? Any May?"

Mario laughed. "Anime," he nodded. "Yeah, I guess y' guys focused on teleportation an magic instead o' entertainment." He shook his head, quietly muttering to himself. "Maybe *we* focused on th' wrong thing..."

"Why does he not want to join us?" Peach asked.

"Apparently, he doesn't remember this place like I do," Mario answered. "I *thought* he did... I remember 'im bein' excited when we discovered th' healin' mushrooms, an th' fire flowers... But, I guess he was just puttin' on a face."

Peach nodded. "He put on a good one," she smiled. "As a noble, we have to put on a good face all the time, even when faced with difficulty. Your brother would make a good noble, I think."

"Yea'," Mario chuckled. "Yea' he would." He looked at the ground several stories down.

"Something else is wrong?" Peach asked.

"Probably," Mario answered. "But I came here t' work out my problems, not dump 'em all on you."

"You saved the eight worlds of my Kingdom," Peach told him, smiling and lightly punching his shoulder. "We are friends! What troubles you?"

Mario smiled back. "... Luigi's opted outta this movie thing... But uh, I already said I'd do it. An it's kinda a big thing back on my world... It's not somethin' I can just back outta without goin' through a lot o' legal trouble."

Peach considered that for a moment. "Can you do the movie without him?" she asked. "This movie hasn't been made, yes? Can you rewrite your script and offer a different story?"

Mario stared at the Toad City, nodding. "I think I have t'," he sighed. "But honestly, we've already written' t' darn thing so many times..." Mario pulled out his phone. He didn't exactly have cell service across space, but he did keep a running tally of how many times he'd revised the script. "Sixty three. I've rewritten this script sixty three times."

"So what's one more?" Peach asked.

"...Yea'," Mario started a new tally, labeling it **Super Mario Bros. 64**

He looked at it for a moment, knowing he couldn't keep it like that anymore. If Luigi was out, it wasn't exactly a story about brothers anymore. He erased that part, and stared at the latest pending title.

**Super Mario 64**

He looked up at Peach. "Y' wouldn' mind helpin' me write this thing, would ya?"

Peach laughed. "I've learned a lot about movies since this project of yours started," she beamed. "I would *love* to help write it!"

Mario backed away from the ledge, looking out



now at the hill where he'd last seen the King of the Mushroom Kingdom. "Aiight... Let's get t' work then."

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## **Chapter 1: Your Way**



# **BEING REALISTIC**

## **CHAPTER 2**

"It's actually a pretty okay start," Mario sighed, setting his notes aside and picking up what they'd settled on for the final draft. "But... It's not even four full pages."

"Should it be longer?" Peach asked, sitting across from him. They were both on the floor with a pile of papers spread out around them. The rest of the room was mostly empty. "I don't know what else I could add though."

"Yeah tha's th' problem ain' it?" Mario read over their very short opening scene. "Good rule o' thumb is a page equals a minute... so we got about three an a half minutes o' script so far."

Peach considered that for a moment, looking at her thumb. "Should we use smaller pages then?"

"What?" Mario chuckled. "Tha's... tha's not how it works, no."

"I'm sorry," Peach said sadly. "I guess I thought I knew more than I did. I don't get what EXT or ENT means, or who Camera is, or how to, well... write a story... I think I'm more useless here than I thought I would be."

"I didn' understand how t' write a script either 'til I googled it," Mario laughed. "But yeah... M'startin' t' think I should just hire someone else. I don' think *either* of us is equipped t' do this job."

Peach looked at all the notes scattered across the floor, and finally got her feet. "I think we're going about this the wrong way," she decided. "We will return to

Brooklyn and find someone who speaks script!"

Mario didn't have a chance to argue before Peach had already left.

---

"CUT!!"

The break bell rung and the actors cleared the set. Crew came to help them out of their spacesuit costumes and Director Donnie took his seat in the Director chair as he absentmindedly spoke to his assistant about his thoughts so far.

He was particularly pleased with how the scene went, but for the most part they were small things that would go unnoticed or could be edited out in post. His assistant took note of his remarks so she could give them to the editor later.

"Ey Donnie!"

Donnie looked over his shoulder and saw the head cameraman walking towards him. He waved. "Hey Colby! What's up?"

Colby took off his hat and looked at the set. They were cleaning up after the last explosion. "Well, uh, Reeve said he doesn't like the safety conditions."

"Again?" Donnie huffed. "As much as that guy complains I should just recast him..."

"You probably should," Colby agreed. "The bastard's gonna ruin the whole thing."

"If I weren't so busy I'd just play the part myself." Donnie flipped his hair out of his eyes dramatically. Considering he looked to be only twenty despite being in his mid forties, it wouldn't be too unbelievable to see him still play an action hero like in his younger days. The only problem was that he was too busy being the Director/Producer.

"As much as it would make things easier, it would also make things harder." Colby tucked his hat into his belt and shooed away the Assistant Director. "All I said to the guy was that he needed to learn to stay in shot, and he went off on me. Again."

"Look," Donnie sighed, getting out of his seat. "I'll talk to him. I want to do re-shoots of that scene anyway. This time we'll make the fire a little smaller so he's not afraid of burning."

"Tony's not gonna like that," Colby grunted. "He's pretty picky about his script getting messed with."

"I know," Donnie started walking away, grabbing his jacket off a rack as crew dodged around him. "I'll talk to him too."

Donnie left the studio and made his way across the lot to the Cast trailers. The lead actress was standing outside her trailer on a smoke break, as usual, but did little more than nod in Donnie's direction as he passed.

He knocked on Benjamin Harker's trailer.

Ben opened up with a very angry expression, but he sighed with relief as he it was Donnie. "Good, just the guy I wanted to see."

"And why is *that*?" Donnie asked, crossing his arms.

Ben didn't take the hit and threw full force into his next tantrum. "This cameraman's a *dick*! I've talked about time and time again, but the safety standards here are *ridiculous*! I'm not gonna stand in fire! I don't care if I'm an inch off screen, that inch is the barrier between life and *death* man!"

Donnie rubbed his face, more than annoyed at the whining tone this man always spoke with. "You know... we're not too far into this project to drop your ass in the dump right this second."

Ben froze. Donnie always had this chilling voice he

used when he was absolutely done with someone, and that was it. Very, *very* few, have every made it back after he used that voice.

"Uh, w-ah..." Ben wasn't sure exactly what he did wrong, so there was nothing he could think of to fix things.

"Your suit," Donnie hissed. "Is flame retardant. You are wearing... a *helmet*..." He balled his fists and glared at the impudent man who continued to make things more and more difficult. "You are not standing *in* the fire... You *are*, *fired!*"

"What!?" Ben squawked. "No, look I'm sorry! You want me to stand in fire? I'll stand in fire! I'm sorry, I am!"

"GET. OUT!" Donnie stared down the actor, pointing in the general direction of anywhere else. "Pack your things, and get *off* my set!"

Without waiting for an answer, Donnie stormed off.

"You really need to learn to shut up," the smoking actress laughed. "I'd get moving before he sends an escort."

Ben slammed his door shut.



Luigi hung his backpack on the wall as he closed the front door behind him. Sitting down at their little dining room table, he finally let himself collapse from exhaustion. Ever since Mario agreed to do the movie, Luigi'd needed something to keep his mind off things. So he kept up the job of plumber.

But, it was a lot of work for one man. He was glad at least that the house was quiet when he got home for work, he could take naps without interruptions. So long as Mario was working on the movie, he spent more time out than he did at home.

Letting his hat fall off his head as he laid his face flat on the table, he let out an annoyed sigh.

On one hand he enjoyed the free time, but on the other hand he mostly just spent that time thinking over what had happened. Everything about the Mushroom Kingdom was just... impossible. From the flora, to the teleportation, to the people... And the creatures there, the Koopas and Goombas and Lakitu and whatever else...

But there was one scene in Luigi's head that played over and over and over...

The final fight with the villain King Koopa... Bowser...

They'd fought so many monsters, saving the eight worlds of the Mushroom Kingdom, but none were as powerful or terrifying as King Bowser. Like a cornered sickly dragon, this abomination of a creature used every ounce of his strength to not only tear apart the Kingdom, killing its inhabitants, but in the end... after all Mario and Luigi had done together, all they'd faced... to think that--

Luigi nearly jumped out of his skin as his phone rang in his pocket. Removing his dirty gloves he answered the phone.

"\*Hello Luigi!\*" his mother said from the other side.

"Ey no yea'," Luigi rubbed the bridge of his nose, leaning on his elbows on the table. "Wassup?"

"\*Are you okay?\*" Pauline asked. "\*You sound tired. Did you just get off work?\*"

"Yup," Luigi nodded. "Figured I'd sleep for a bit, haven' gotten there yet though. Y' need anythin'?"

"\*Well I just heard on the news there was a car accident on Myrtle Ave,\*" she sounded stern, like it was the most important thing in the world. "\*Are you okay?\*"

"Myrtle is like six blocks from where I work, mom," Luigi sighed. "And I didn' even go t' th' office today, I worked from th' van. Goin' from place t' place."

"\*Oh okay,\*" Pauline laughed. "\*Sorry, I worry.

Was Mario working today?\*"

"Ah no, he went to the castle yesterday, hasn't come back yet I think." Luigi knocked on the table, loud enough that Pauline could hear it on the other end. "Ahh I gotta get that mom, I'll see ya in a bit, k?"

"\*Okay, see you later,\*" Pauline hung up and Luigi sat the phone on the table.

Then he smashed his head down next to it.

*Why'd y' have t' go an agree t' make that stupid movie?*

For a few minutes he just lay there, until his neck started hurting and he had to sit up anyway. Still, he wasn't sure what to do after that. It wasn't like he could just crash and call it a day now, he was wide awake with thoughts of what they'd gone through still spinning through his head.

So he decided enough was enough. He hadn't been back to the Kingdom in a long time, and maybe this was the time to do that. There wasn't exactly a plan for when he got there, but he didn't care. Maybe he was going to talk them out of it, maybe he was going just to go back, or maybe he was hoping something else would happen.

Either way, he wasn't about to just sit at home doing nothing.

—

"Wooooow," Peach stared in wonder at the movie set. It wasn't for the movie they were going to make, but it was still so different that she couldn't help standing in awe of it all. "What are those! And those! What's that! Mario, look! Look!"

Mario kept trying to keep her on track as he led her through the lot, answering as many questions as he could. At least he was finally able to show her what a camera was, though she still didn't quite understand how it worked.

She thought hard about how a device that small could capture a scene so perfectly, and ended up distracting herself the rest of the way. She nearly fell over herself when Mario finally stopped.

"Mario!" Donnie exclaimed. "Already finished that script?"

"Not quite Donnie," Mario sighed. "Tha's what I want t' talk about."

"Not backing out are you?" Donnie joked.

"Not at all," Mario laughed. "But I felt it would be best after all if I'd brought in someone a bit more professional."

"I knew you would," Donnie shrugged. "I've got someone in mind I can send out to help you later today. He's not that busy since his last project went under."

"It's not that uh, space movie," Mario huffed. "Luna Rising? Was it?"

"No that one has it's other problems," Donnie grumbled. "No I mean the writer for Alcatraz Storms."

"Tsk," Mario crossed his arms. "I had high hopes for that."

"As did I," Donnie said sadly. "Anyway! Who's the lady you've got with you? That's quite a dress for just someone out and about."

Peach wasn't even wearing her more glamorous clothing, but to be fair everything she wore was fit for a princess.

"This is Ms. Toadstool," Mario answered before she could say she was a princess. He still hadn't really told anyone about the Warpzone, and he didn't feel like causing an incident right now. "She's gonna help with th' creative aspect."

"Yup!" Peach said cheerfully. "Who are you?"

"Oh right!" Mario laughed. "Y' haven't met yet. This is th' guy in charge of th' whole project. Peach, meet



Director Donnie Feldman."

Donnie Feldman reached out to shake her hand. "It's a pleasure to meet you, milady."

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## **Chapter 2: Being Realistic**



# **UNDER PRESSURE**

## **CHAPTER 3**

The Mushroom Kingdom looked a lot different from what he'd remembered. It'd been months since the last time he was here. After their great adventure had been turned into a family friendly stage play, it just didn't feel right to come back... or, maybe he just didn't want to remember it all.

Toads walked through the streets of the now flourishing Toad Town, and the castle standing beyond the city was as grand and magnificent as always. And as Luigi made his way up the steps to that castle he took solace in knowing that at least it was looking better than when they found it.

Though, before he could reach the front door of the castle, he was stopped. "Ah! Sir Luigi! Nice of you to come back after so long!"

Luigi looked up to the balcony above him to see Toadsworth leaning over the rail. Luigi tipped his hat to him. "Are Mario an th' Princess here?"

"Oh?" Toadsworth chuckled. "Not at all! They left not too long ago, urgent business I think!"

Luigi felt like he got the wind knocked out of him. "Seriously...?" He shook his head, turning back. "Aiiight, well, thanks anyway."

"Ah-sir!" Toadsworth called. "Something troubles you?"

"Not exactly," Luigi sighed. "Just thought I could'a

caught him before he left is all."

"I see," Toadsworth nodded. "Still, come on inside young sir! It's a long walk here and a long walk back! You should take a moment to--"

"I'll be fine," Luigi answered. "It's not that far."

"Hmmm," Toadsworth narrowed his eyes. "If you have the energy, then perhaps you wouldn't mind helping with me with an errand or two?"

Luigi stopped. "What kind of errand?"

"As you know, when you defeated the evil King, his dark magic that had slowly been turning the Kingdom into a wasteland, was quickly righted by our own fair Princess's magic." Toadsworth looked out at the Kingdom, and saw how nothing was like those dark days. "But before King Koopa came, there were troubles as well. It seems that putting things back the way they were had a few unintended side effects."

"The Koopas are back?" Luigi asked, crossing his arms.

"No," Toadsworth admitted. "But the Piranha Plants are growing in numbers, and some of are old war-machines seemed to have turned against us, malfunctioning. I was wondering if you would assist in doing something about that."

Luigi faced the city, wondering if he should just call it quits for today. It'd already been a long day of plumbing around Brooklyn... but for some reason, hearing that Mario wasn't here made him angry. It was frustrating, the whole thing.

Chopping some plants and breaking down some machines sounded like a great idea right about now.

"Yea'," Luigi finally answered. "Yea', just point my in the right direction."

"Splendid!" Toadsworth exclaimed. "Follow me to the fields behind the castle!"

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Several hours of exposition, intense writing, dialogue testing, and note taking later, they finally decided... everything they'd written so far was a bad idea.

Turns out their was either not enough story, or too much story, to put into a movie.

The writer they'd been set up with, George McFlatt, was impressed by their imagination, not knowing that 90% of it was absolutely real. But after a while he'd thrown out an idea that seemed to stick. If writing it as a movie wouldn't work, could they write it as a TV show instead?

Mario called up Director Feldman and asked his opinion and the following day Feldman said the Producers would be okay with it, but that it meant working on a tighter budget. Everyone agreed, and got to work on a new script.

A few days later they received an estimated budget from Topo Production Studios and everything starting falling into place. Every now and then they'd hit a wall where the ideas they had just simply wouldn't fit in the story, or incorporating them would go over budget.

Peach however, was adamant they keep her power star idea. She wanted them to be the things Mario had to collect in order to save the Princess and defeat Bowser. Not entirely sure where that story-line would lead them, they did convince McFlatt to include the idea to the script.

After all was said and done, and a few weeks had passed, they had a pilot and eighteen episodes. The Producers green lit the direction, and everyone got to work making the script a reality.

And even though he hadn't been a part of the process thus far, Mario felt Luigi should at least know that things were starting production.

Mario waited atop the Empire State building again, looking out over New York.

"S'been a while," Luigi said, sitting down at a table.

Mario sat down across from him, and handed Luigi the Pilot script. "It's a TV show now, allowed me t' be a little more creative."

Luigi looked at the first page, but he didn't care much for actually reading it. "Good job."

"... Tha's all?" Mario scoffed.

"You wanted somethin' else?" Luigi huffed.

"Well I knew y' wouldn't be exactly *excited*," Mario admitted. "But I expected more than 'Good job,' ya know?"

"I know," Luigi sighed. "... It's... been a long time since we've spoken. In that time I've done a lot of thinkin'..."

He fell quiet, looking down at the city out of the corner of his eye.

"'Bout what?"

"I think pops would be proud o' you," Luigi said. "And I know mom's on board..."

"So you've changed your mind?" Mario asked.

"No," Luigi shook his head. "But I realized something important..." He got up and put his hands in his pockets, standing by the low wall and listening to the city sounds. "Mom an pops... they aren't even really our parents, are they?"

"Excuse me?" Mario growled. "How could you--"

"We were delivered by *Stork*, Mario." Luigi hissed. "A legitimate Stork, dropped us off at our parents... We came from somewhere else, Mario..."

"... What's your *point*?"

"I dropped th' Plumbing business," Luigi answered. "Y' didn' even notice, y' never asked... An I think... I think..."

"Ey, Lu," Mario sat a hand on his brother's

shoulder, and he could feel him shaking.

Luigi pushed Mario's hand away. "Don't 'Lu' me..." He started walking away. "I get y' don' understand, an tha's fine... but don' expect me t' follow you."

Mario stood there, alone, script rolled up in his fist. *Even if y' don' consider them our parents... aren't I still your brother?* He looked down at the script, hating the fact Luigi wasn't a part of it.



Production ran smoothly, and Mario did his part playing the hero well. Peach enjoyed acting as herself, pretending not to be herself, and they'd even hired a team of professional Practical Artists to work on all the monster effects.

And months later, it was time for the Pilot to air.

Peach joined Mario and Pauline for the premier, but none of them had heard from Luigi since his last meeting with Mario. They were all worried about him, and had tried getting ahold of him, but he'd shut them out completely.

Despite this, they attempted to enjoy Mario's hard work on the series anyway.

They all sat down, and started the first episode of **Super Mario 64**

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### **Chapter 3: Under Pressure**



# **JUST BUSINESS**

## **CHAPTER 4**

Luigi stood alone in the cemetery, looking down at his father's grave. The last time he was here was when they'd met with Pauline... before all this started. After that...

"Just another thing y' never told us," Luigi spat.

It wasn't that he didn't understand their decision to keep it a secret. Until they fell into the Mushroom Kingdom, he didn't think either himself or his brother would believe it. He didn't hate them for not telling them sooner... he hated the situation itself, and how it was beyond anyone's control.

He knew, that if things could've been different, they'd have done everything they could to keep things from going as sour as they had. It wasn't like Mario "Jumpman" Mario and Pauline had *wanted* to fight a talking Gorilla, or deal with a corrupt mayor trying to take over Italy. And he doubted they wanted for their children to be delivered via stork, or to travel to save eight different planets.

It felt random... like a bunch of unrelated situations they just happened to be thrown into... and then for their old man to die like he did, for his own brother to make some joke of it all, and for their mother to be okay with it like it was just time to move on already... None of it made sense, it didn't feel right.

But one thing stuck out in Luigi's head, a detail that wasn't only painfully obvious, but was something that he'd already spoken to both Pauline and Mario about during

production so long ago. The guy who was putting this whole thing together... the guy in charge of the Topo Production Company...

Everything about him just felt skeevey. The kind of man with a long shadow. He'd fire actors because they looked at him wrong. He'd cancel projects because he felt it was boring. It was all or nothing with someone like him, everything had to be perfect, or else. After having spoken to several people who'd previously worked with Donnie Feldman, they all had the same thing to say:

"Watch your back."

And there's the set up. Were they really supposed to believe it was all that easy? Getting their play onto Broadway was already something they didn't expect to go over so well, and the movie deal being practically handed to them... That doesn't just happen, right?

... But the worst of it was, his brother and mother weren't the least bit worried.

They kept telling him to calm down. Just accept that good things happen. That, after all they've done, maybe this was the universe's way of saying "I'm sorry, whoops!" But, with all that's happened, was he really expected to believe that?

No matter what they told him, it still didn't sit right with Luigi. No matter how he looked at it, he could tell, something was out of place. Too much had happened throughout their lives for this to be so simple.

There was a plot here... and he would do everything he could to uncover it... even if Mario wouldn't.

He looked down at the grave of his father, wondering what he'd say. "But you're not our father... are you..."

---



PILOT: CASTLE UNDER SIEGE

SCENE 7

[EXT] PRINCESS PEACH'S CASTLE - DAY

The sky takes up the screen, a few clouds rolling passed. A letter fades in, partially transparent, and it is read in PEACH's voice.

[PEACH] Side view close up, to the right of the letter  
"Dear Mario: You have been a faithful ally to my kingdom,  
saving us from certain destruction by the hands of the Evil  
King Koopa, Bowser. Though I do not know which world  
you hail from, I, as well as my people, require your help  
once more. Please, return to my castle. Yours truly --  
Princess Toadstool"

At the bottom of the letter it is signed "*Peach*"

Both the letter and PEACH fade out and the camera pans down to show the top of the castle from behind. Camera winds down the tower, panning out as it gets lower and shows the front of the castle in it's entirety. Camera then turns around to the path leading up to the castle.

(Slow dramatic music plays quietly)

In the center of the path, a large green pipe comes out of the ground. A light flashes from inside, and out steps our hero, MARIO. He fixes his hair under his hat, and looks up at the castle, camera moving behind him.

The whole thing is in ruins, smoke billowing out of holes in the brick. There are no TOADs around, and there are scorch-marks in the grass.

[MARIO]

"Princess... What happened to this place?"

Cut to the camera looking down on him as he makes the long walk to and across the bridge, then cut to behind him as he reaches the door. Camera stays behind him as he enters, and cuts to black as the door shuts.

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## CREDITS PLAY

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The pilot episode was a resounding success, and merchandise from the show could be seen in almost every shop. Everywhere you went, Mario's face was glued to some product. From hair gel to toothpaste, toilet seats and tape dispensers, even happy meal toys and full on action figures. Fans were eagerly taking apart it all and posting videos online talking about 'clues' they found about the coming story.

And of course, Mario was riding this high for as long as it would last.

Having done a few interviews before on talk shows and the like, he was already comfortable with the formula when his show became a hit. It felt like every day he was out talking with someone about something all related to the show. And of course, ever step of the way, right beside him was Peach.

Together with the other actors from the show they made panels at events like Comic Con, and after the second episode aired they were even walking the red carpet. The whole thing had blown up to something much bigger than any of them had really expected, and so fast that at a point it kind of became hard to keep track of.

With so many interviews asking the same questions, Mario let a few secrets slip once or twice. And a few days before the airing of the third episode, he let out one of the biggest secrets of all.

"What?" Mario scoffed, leaning back on the couch on the set of some up and coming reporter's talk show.

"You just said the Mushroom Kingdom was *real*," Tristan chuckled.

"Well of course it is," Mario smiled, trying to think of a way to play it off without it showing on his face. Considering he was a performer, that wasn't exactly hard to do. "It's like how Lord o' th' Rings was real t' Tolkien, or how a fictional world is real t' *any* writer really. I don' see th' story as just a story, with characters on a set. They're people, in a world with rules an limits. Those rules an limits are a bit less restrained than our world, but if th' world doesn't feel real-- at least t' th' characters who live in it-- then I guess I haven't done my job well enough, have I?"

People bought it... to an extent... but the damage was done. From that point his fan mail was flooded with questions about where the Mushroom Kingdom really was, or at least what inspired it. These questions, he ignored as best he could.

But new questions started cropping up, questions that Mario wasn't prepared to answer at all.

Questions like; "How do we contact Peach Toadstool?" "What kind of a name is Toadstool?" "Is Peach from the Mushroom Kingdom?" "If Peach Toadstool is real, can't the kingdom be?" "Who is Peach anyway?"

"... Where did Peach Toadstool come from?"

That... was something he couldn't answer. After the show had finished production, Peach had returned to spending most of her time in her Kingdom. She returned for events and the like, but for the most part, she wasn't

staying anywhere fans could reach her.

He tried to explain that she just didn't want to be bothered, or that she just wasn't fond of being in public, but again... the damage was done.

And it wasn't long... before the rumors reached the wrong ears.

"It's honestly getting a little out of hand," Donnie said, sitting down with Mario for a meeting. "The fact that it's gotten to the point where she can no longer come to public events speaks for itself." He laced his fingers together, staring down Mario from across the table. "And quite frankly I'd like some answers myself."

"She likes her privacy," Mario answered. "You know how she is--"

"But I don't."

Mario shook her head. "I don' see how it matters. She wants to be left alone, and can y' blame her?"

"I don't think you understand," Donnie said, his voice low. It was the same low tone Mario had gotten used to hearing him use on people he ended up firing, the voice employees couldn't come back from. "I'm running a business here, and as a business owner, it's my business... to *know*, who I've *hired*. I've been lenient, Mr. Mario, *very* lenient."

"I get it," Mario huffed. "I do, an--"

"I want her contact information on my desk by the end of the day," Donnie hissed. "And if she truly doesn't have *any* form of electronic communication, than make something."

Mario narrowed his eyes. "An if I don'?"

Donnie sized him up, watching him. Mario was one of the few people he knew who wasn't fazed by his tone. He barely even flinched. "You and her are strange," he mumbled. "Anyone else, I'd threaten to rip their paycheck away from them, fire them... But this girl of yours, she

doesn't even take money for this job."

"We didn' expect this t' blow up," Mario explained. "She came in t' do this just for fun, and her contract reflected that."

Donnie shifted in his chair, placing his hand over his mouth and thinking. "And as far as volunteering goes, I was fine with that. It's easy enough to write off someone who barely makes an appearance..."

"An when you think of it that way," Mario added. "You could say she's not even really an employee of yours."

Donnie's hand twitched, but it hid his scowl well enough.

"So you don' need anything from her," Mario finished. "Let her be." He stood up, tipping his hat. "I look forward to the next episode, boss."

"Mario," Donnie said as Mario reached the door. "I'm not your enemy--"

"Never said you were," Mario looked down at him from across the room. "An I ain't yours, right?" He didn't wait for an answer.

Left alone in the office, Donnie turned in his seat and looked out the window. *What are you hiding?* he wondered, getting out of his chair. Folding his hands behind his back he stood by the window. *Who are you, Peach Toadstool? To have such an... odd, name... To have no... place of origin...*

*What are you hiding... Mario?*

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## **Chapter 4: Just Business**



# **SEARCHING**

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## **CHAPTER 5**

EPISODE 7: BOWSER IN THE DARK WORLD

SCENE 9

[EXT] BOWSER'S DIMENSION - DARK

The ground beneath their feet falls apart, brick by brick tearing away into the void below. Spiked balls of steel circle around them from the aether. In the center of the platform lays BOWSER, wounded, but as yet undefeated.

MARIO, still tired from their previous fight, moves in for the final blow. Pushing up his sleeve, flames spark at his fingertips.

[BOWSER] laughing and coughing

"Ohh... You're one step closer... but still a thousand steps behind..."

BOWSER grunts as he gets to his feet, staring down the lowly human.

[BOWSER]

"But this step... while not your last... will only bring you closer to your own end."

MARIO stares up at him, sheer determination burning in his eyes as flames engulf his fist.

[MARIO] winded

"So long as my journey ends... with you in a can of turtle soup... I'd be fine with that..."

[BOWSER] amused

"Stubborn... to the last!"

Attempting a final strike of his own, Bowser lashes his tail out like a whip. But MARIO kicks off the ground before the attack could hit. Jumping into the air, getting as close as he could, MARIO let the flames catch his whole arm and delivered the final blow to BOWSER'S head.

In a flash of light and sparks, glowing dust that hung in the air, MARIO crashes into the ground.

And as he steadies himself, letting the flames die, he turns to see his opponent evaporate into little twinkling lights. In his place, was a shining golden star, hovering just a foot off the ground.

MARIO reaches for it.

[BOWSER] off screen

"Stubborn... but foolish."

MARIO flinches.

[BOWSER] off screen

"It is *your* end you walk towards... but it is the end of a path, by *my* design."

Shocked that he hadn't actually defeated BOWSER, MARIO falls to his knees, staring at his reflection in the

star's surface as BOWSER's laughter echoes around him.

---

## End Credits

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Luigi looked out at the Atlantic, the onboard TV going to commercial after the latest episode. He absentmindedly clicked it off.

"I guess y' kept *that* part," he mumbled, watching the ocean waves.

He was glad to be lucky enough that no one was seated next to him, he didn't want to be bombarded with questions about the similarities between him and his brother. He'd had enough of that just trying to get through the airport, and that was already something he'd never liked.

Of course, after everything, being afraid of flying seemed--

Luigi shook, every nerve in his body suddenly firing all at once. he grabbed his arm, slamming his eyes shut.

"Sir, are you alright?"

Luigi took a deep breath and looked up at the flight attendant. "Not a fan o' flyin'."

"Ah, first time?" she smiled.

"Been on planes since I was a kid," Luigi chuckled. "Guess it just never stuck."

"Yeah it's like that sometimes," she nodded. "Some people are better at getting over it than others." She backtracked immediately. "I didn't mean to sound rude, sorry. If you need any help--"

"I'll be fine," Luigi sighed. "I'll get *over* it."

The flight attendant went red in the face, then



almost entirely forgot her blunder. "Wait you look like that actor that's really famous, ah, Mario... Mario?"

"Yup," Luigi nodded. "That uh... that'd be my brother. Just saw his latest episode..."

His tone made it obvious, but she still felt inclined to ask. "Are you two not on good terms? Is it because he killed you off?"

"Y' don' hold back do ya?" Luigi laughed. "He killed me off when I left... And no... we're not... on good terms."

"If you don't mind one more question," she stammered. "Ah, what brings you to Italy?"

Luigi looked back out the window. "I--"

The attendant's pager beeped, calling her away. "Sorry," she apologized. "I have to go. It was really nice meeting you though, I hope you make up with your brother soon!" And then she was off.

Alone again, or as alone as he could be in a nearly full plane, Luigi turned his attention back to the black TV screen.

*What brings me t' Italy?*

...

*I'm goin' home... I'm lookin' for answers...*

*And I ain't leavin' 'til I find 'em.*

—

"An *here*," Mario grunted, shoving a door open. "Are th' spoilers for th' next episode."

The film crew laughed as he led them further into the warehouse. From wall to wall cluttered all the props and costumes used throughout the series. As massive as the room was, due to all the things blocking their way there was very little walking room.

Still, Mario led the Behind the Scenes crew through

the mess. After stumbling over a box of spilled scarves, the cameraman nearly jumped out of his skin, coming face to face with a giant blue dinosaur.

"Ah, tha's Dorrie," Mario chuckled. "Big ol' animatronic. Swims around in th' sewers under th' castle."

"The sewers?" the woman with the mic asked. "That's episode eight?"

"Well, it's not th' sewers o' th' *main* castle," Mario explained. "A different castle on a different world, it's just th' sewers is where th' story takes place."

"Ah," the cameraman mumbled. "Well, can these worlds be a little less creepy?"

"Nope," Mario said proudly.

He motioned for them to continue following, and led them through the mess. Occasionally they'd ask him about one of the props or costumes, but this wasn't what they were here to see. This was the back of the main set hanger, basically the back door to the castle. The exterior was shot on location elsewhere, but the interior was all built here.

And Mario opened the back door to that set, the main chamber of the Toadstool Castle. He knew it wasn't a perfect recreation of the real thing, but no one on this planet would know that. And besides, when the film crew entered with shocked expressions, it was worth the effort to bring some part of that world here.

"Pretty great yea'?" Mario chuckled, hands in his pockets as he looked around the room. "Just like a real castle... at least from th' *inside*. You go out an it's all just rigging."

The woman with the mic ran a hand over the bricks that made up the walls of the staircase to the upper level. "Spared no expense I see."

"Luckily another project of mine fell out at around the same time." Everyone turned to the front entrance as

Donnie entered. "Saw the lights on in here, was wondering what happened to the tour." He smiled, shaking hands with the woman. "Finding everything all right?"

"It's a lot more impressive than most sets we've walked through," the woman admitted. "It feels less like a high budget TV show and more like a movie lot."

"We might've gone over budget once or twice," Donnie joked.

"It's a good thing we've got other resources," Mario laughed. "I'm still makin' *bank* on merch deals, an this guy *does* make movies."

Donnie bowed dramatically. "I am indeed rich."

"Yeah," Mario chuckled. He clapped his hands. "So! Tha's about all we can show ya. Any last minute questions?"

The woman nodded. "Actually I was wondering--"

"That *ain't* about Peach," Mario added.

"Ah..." she reconsidered her question, finally smiling a little awkwardly. "Then no, I think I've seen everything I could want to see here. It's an incredible world you've--"

"Outright *denying* questions about her now?" Donnie asked.

Mario gave him a sour look, holding it for a few moments before shrugging it off. "Maybe there's just nothin' left t' say about her."

Donnie huffed.

"What's... was there a falling out with, uh, Ms. Toadstool?" the woman asked.

"No," Mario answered, glaring back at Donnie. "Some people just respect privacy."

"I can respect privacy," Donnie corrected. "But there's more to it than that, isn't there?"

"Keep it up, Feldman," Mario warned. "I'll file for harassment."

"Against who?" Donnie scoffed. "According to everything in the world, this Toadstool of yours doesn't even exist. She'd have to show her face in court, she'd have to say *something* about who she is, and then it would become public record. I doubt you'd risk that, if you're so keen on keeping her locked away."

"Ha!" Mario exclaimed. "That's your plan here? What is *on* your ass that you're just refusin' t' leave her alone, eh? Either pester me until I cave, or force her out into the open? Wha's a *matter* with you?"

"Are you still rolling?" the woman whispered. The cameraman nodded.

"My problem," Donnie hissed. "Is that there's something going on with this whole thing, and I don't like being kept in the dark." He looked directly at the camera. "In the contracts, Mario claimed ownership to the whole thing. It's produced by my studio, but Mario made it clear the whole thing was his. Fine, creators and writers do that all the time, it's fair that their worlds be kept under their name."

"That's not an argument," Mario growled. "But thanks I guess."

Donnie jabbed a finger in Mario's face. "But you don't seem to *act* like it's your world! You keep talking like it's a real thing! Like you're waiting for pieces of the story to develop so you can write them down!"

"You know Peach was on the writing team too, right?" Mario asked. "Of course on occasion we had to wait for her input sometimes--"

"The show's already done filming," Donnie growled, closing in. "And you're *still* acting like the world is real."

"And like I've said before," Mario shoved Donnie's arm out of the way. "It's not."

They both stood there, neither willing to move, both

waiting for the other. The camera focused on them, but no one spoke.

Finally, Mario stepped back. He let his fists relax, and took a deep breath. "You're goin' crazy, Feldman. You're seein things that ain't there..."

"Don't turn this around on me," Donnie spat. "You know exactly what you're doing."

Mario shook his head. "I keep sayin' I ain't your enemy... I keep tellin' you there's nothin' where you're lookin'... but you just can't let go. There's no secrets, aiight? Just a girl, that wanted to help write a story, and be left alone. Is that so hard t' believe? Is that harder t' believe than other worlds o' magic existin' outta nowhere?"

Donnie straightened up, sticking his chin out and giving a slight nod. "Turn the cameras off."

"But-"

"Shut it *off!*"

The cameraman pulled away, lowering the camera. Him and the woman stepped back, expecting a full on fight to break out. But what happened instead...

"You came from Italy," Donnie said quietly.

"... Yea'," Mario mumbled. "So?"

Donnie stepped forward again, and his menacingly low tone, the tone his employees feared hearing, he said the last thing Mario expected to hear. "The rest of the world seems to have forgotten about that horrible night... With the castle in the sky... But I didn't."

... Mario flinched.

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## Chapter 5: Searching



# **UNVEILED**

## **CHAPTER 6**

After landing in Italy, Luigi was off the plane and out of the airport as fast he could be without running people over. And with all of the arrangements already made before hand, he was soon in a rented car driving through Verona.

Having been here so many times, he knew his way around. But with his thoughts focused on everything he planned to speak about, his mind shifted into autopilot and almost drove him back to their family home in the city. Not wanting to go down that road just yet though, he set back on course.

There'd be time later for that. Right now, he had an appointment.

Luigi drove up to the Palazzo Barbieri, the town hall of Verona Italy. For a moment he sat in his car, staring at the building. There were so many questions he wanted to ask, and he was still having trouble narrowing it down. He didn't want to waste anyone's time, his own or the mayor's.

As he got out of his car he tried prioritizing those questions. From the events relating to his and his brother's births... to the mess his parents got into with Colepepper... to the strange incident with the castle in the sky... Each topic could easily lead into a rabbit hole of dead ends and cover ups, which he wouldn't be able to go through or verify until well after this meeting. He'd have to pick something, and hope it led him in the right direction.

He entered the building, signed in, and sat down in

the lobby waiting to be called up. And as he waited, he speculated where each path would take him. Which topic would be hardest to investigate? The castle in the sky, probably. There's less of a chance of people knowing what happened in the first place. And as much as the whole thing bugged him, finding out the truth of his birth felt--

Again he jolted, every nerve twitching. It felt like flying. Like being really high up with nothing below. Like all the air was being ripped from his lungs as he fell.

Forcing himself to move on before he made himself pass out, he moved on to the last topic. Colepepper and the gorilla. Would that information be public records? Would Colepepper have covered everything up?

"Luigi Mario?" a secretary called.

Luigi got up and was led to the Mayor's office.

"Thanks for havin' me," Luigi said as he entered.

"No problem," Mayor Valerio smiled. "Please, take a seat."

Luigi sat down, his thoughts still screaming in his head.

"So what can I help you with?"

Luigi nodded, trying to do a bit of last minute organizing. He took a deep breath, looked up at the Mayor, and all his thoughts finally screeched to a halt, one standing out. "I guess I'll start from th' beginning," he decided at last. "I gotta lotta questions, sir. But uh, I think..."

"Let me ask you this," Mayor Valerio said calmly. "What was so important, you set up a meeting with *me*?"

"... I wanna know," Luigi started. "... What happened, t' Hollen T. Colepepper?"

---

Late in the afternoon, Mario sat on his mother's couch, watching commercials on the TV while he waited

for her to return. As soon as she heard he was coming she started her four hour spaghetti recipe. Mario had offered to help, but Pauline had always had her way of things; other people in the kitchen just tended to get in the way.

When she finally came back, Mario went to the pull the little table over to the couches, turning off the TV.

"What were you watching?" Pauline asked.

"Ah, uh a Dr. Pepper or McDonald's commercial I think."

"That stuff'll make you fat, you know."

"I know," Mario chuckled. "But tha's not why I'm here."

Pauline nodded glumly. "You said you had something important to say."

"Yea'," Mario sighed. "First, th' obvious."

Pauline shook her head. "I haven't heard from Luigi. I've tried calling him... but..."

"Yea'..." Mario stared at his food. "He's actin' like a kid. Holdin' a grudge against no one... I don't get him."

"I don't blame him," Pauline said. "He has every right to be angry. So do you."

"At th' circumstances, maybe," Mario agreed. "But t' shut us out like this? Even me?"

"He just needs time to figure it out," Pauline told him. "I'm sure he'll come back, when he's ready."

"I guess," Mario accepted. "But tha's not exactly what I'm here t' say either."

"Then what?" Pauline asked, finally eating.

Mario begrudgingly started to eat too, but for once he didn't have much of an appetite. "I'm startin' t' think... maybe he was actually right."

Pauline froze, staring up at him. She didn't say anything, but she was clearly expecting an explanation.

"I think he's right," Mario repeated. "Just... for the wrong reasons." He tried to correct the words in his head,



hoping to explain as best he could. "It hurt him more than I thought it had at first. When we started this whole thing, I didn't realize how bad it was for him t' think about it. I think tha's why he doesn' want anythin' t' do with it."

"So then, why is he *right*?" Pauline asked.

Mario leaned back on the couch, staring at his plate. "There're a lotta questions I just can't answer, an they're gettin' harder t' avoid... I'm sure you've heard by now th' big push th' fans have been makin'."

"They want to know the truth," Pauline nodded. "And you still can't tell them."

"Luigi was right," Mario sighed. "Because this whole thing... puts the Mushroom Kingdom at risk. We know what would happen if th' world found out that there was a whole kingdom spanning across other worlds. We'd take over. And th' door bein' here in th' states... they'd monopolize on it."

"Sounds like you already know what to do," Pauline frowned. "So... did you come here for my advise? Or, are you here because you hope I'll talk you out of it?"

Mario was silent

---

"Well, a lot happened in Italy after Colepepper's run," Valerio answered. "He left office early and there was a scramble to fill the space."

"A lot happened?" Luigi asked. "Like what?"

"I have no idea," Valerio admitted.

"A lot like, a flying castle?" Luigi pressed. "I know that happened around th' same time."

Valerio shrugged. "Colepepper did a lot of shady stuff though, I wouldn't be surprised if it finally came back to bite him."

"What did he *do*, exactly?"

"Sadly, most of what he did I'm not at liberty to say," Valerio stood and walked towards a filing cabinet. "But there are other things that I suppose I can at least tell to the son of some of his victims."

Luigi narrowed his eyes, then figured it made sense. "Y' did your research before I showed up."

"Anyone requests a meeting with me," Valerio said, pulling out the file he sat aside earlier. "I put them through a background check. And *you* Luigi Mario, son of Mario Mario and Pauline Mario, brother of Mario Mario II, are indirectly linked to a major incident regarding the Mayor, Hollen T Colepepper."

Valerio sat down, and handed the file to Luigi. There were stacks of documents, news clippings, and plenty of photographs. But, it was all vague, like they told of things Colepepper had done, but without proof or even details. It was basically a bunch of plot outline notes that someone forgot to expand upon.

**Colepepper faces serious allegations...** No proof, no names, no story. Just the headline. It was like if you asked a child why they didn't like someone, and they answered with "They were mean!" And then if you asked why they thought that, they'd just repeat "Cause, they're *really* mean, I swear!"

"This doesn't help in th' slightest," Luigi sighed.

"Actually, I was hoping you'd help me fill in some of those blanks," Valerio said, lacing his fingers and resting on the desk. "I was hoping your parents might have said something."

"Y' know *I* can play that game too y' know?" Luigi chuckled. "I wanna know what *you* know first."

"Everything *I* know is in that file," Valerio answered. "Anyone else who knows more refuses to step forward. But my *hope* is that I know more than I realize, I just need someone else to connect the dots."

"Aaight," Luigi sighed, closing the file. "My father was in th' circus business-- take me seriously, please."

Valerio held up a hand in surrender, promising not to laugh.

"Colepepper was th' man who *owned* my father's circus," Luigi explained. "According t' my father, Colepepper had a tendency t' make outrageous demands. Until my mother explained, I never knew *how* outrageous. In short, Colepepper had been poaching talking gorillas from somewhere-- don' ask, I don' know-- an pawning them off on people for experimentation. My father's circus was one such testin' ground. Passed that though, I don' know th' rest. Just that soon after, the man disappeared, an some castle appeared in the sky over this city."

Valerio nodded solemnly. "If that's all true... which I really wish it weren't... Then I actually have something to ask of *you*."

"An what would that be?"

"Everyone knew Colepepper as a criminal," Valerio said quietly. "But most of his actions-- obviously-- weren't public record. And while his operations have been shut down, I think there's still things we could learn from what he left behind."

"... An what would *that* be?"

Again, Valerio stood up. "I only really looked into any of this when you called to set this up," he crossed the room again, this time stopping at a wall. "But the more I learn... There's something I want to do." He looked at a picture on the wall. "It would attract too much attention if I announced it, and it'd be too dangerous alone..."

Luigi leaned back a little, looked passed the Mayor at the picture. It was an old faded photograph of what he assumed was Valerio's family. A quick glance around the room and he noticed that the little boy was clearly Valerio, but the parents only showed up in that one image.

Valerio stood with his hands behind his back, still looking at the photo. "His laboratories are still standing, though abandoned. If you would be brave enough, I think you'd find your answers there." He finally turned around. "Looters make it difficult to get close... Some of them can be armed. I didn't think much of it before now, but if you're willing, I think we could both use some answers."

That feeling like flying came back to him, except this time Luigi felt the addition of a gun being held to his head. It was nauseating... but he didn't come all this way to chicken out. He'd fought worse before, right?

"I don' exactly have magic flowers this time though," Luigi muttered under his breath. "An a bullet's harder t' dodge than fire..." He smiled, briefly, wondering how his own world somehow felt scarier than the fantasy worlds he'd traveled.

"Well?" Valerio asked. "What do you say?"

Luigi got up. "Yea'," he huffed, reaching his hand out. "I think I'd like t' find those answers... for *all* of us."

Valerio smiled, shaking his hand.

---

It was the following day, and Mario still wasn't sure what he was going to do. He knew what he *had* to do, he just wasn't sure if he was willing to go through with it.

After sitting around forever, watching the series he made with his copies of the episodes, he found himself walking the path through the sewers. Absentmindedly, almost, but he knew it was where he was supposed to be going. He returned to the Kingdom, the lush green fields spreading out around him, the castle in the distance. Soon he was standing at the bridge to that castle, looking up at it.

Toads played and laughed in their little croaking voices as usual, running through the little streets of their

town not to far away. He could hear them from here, just on the other side of the hills. It just made him feel guiltier about the whole thing.

He entered the castle, eventually finding Peach standing on the back balcony, looking out over the gardens.

She turned her head, giving a slight smile. "Don't look so dreary," she told him. "I could feel your sullen mood when you entered."

Mario walked up beside her.

"What troubles you?" Peach asked.

"Some bad news," Mario answered. "Still not quite sure how t' say it."

"Then I'm here when you are ready," Peach smiled.

They stood in silence for a while, watching the wind blow through the leaves in the trees. He tried to let his thoughts wander away from why he was there, but no matter what he just kept circling back around.

"I screwed up," Mario admitted, his voice loud in his own ears.

"How so?" Peach asked calmly.

The way she spoke always made Mario laugh. It was like, in the tone of her voice, somehow she knew. She always spoke so softly, like the worst news of all wouldn't be enough to shake her.

"This whole film deal," Mario sighed. "I shouldn've made it."

"You're afraid your people will find us," Peach nodded, putting her cheek in her hand and resting on the low wall. "That they'll attempt to invade my Kingdoms."

*So she does just know things*, Mario chuckled. "I guess it was too much t' ask, t' keep this world a secret, an tell th' world about it at th' same time."

"It wouldn't be easy," Peach agreed. "I have seen your world, if only a corner of it. It is... very interesting, to say the least. Not as colorful, but... loud, and exciting, and

wonderful in ways my worlds are not."

She stood up straight, looking out at the distance. At the edge of the gardens, far away, Toads patrolled the border. Peach narrowed her eyes, wondering what thoughts her people were thinking.

"My people have always focused on... expansion," Peach explained. "We practice magic, and construction. Your people, have much less space. But you've made the most of it. Our worlds or so different. Of all the worlds I now rule, I've never seen a world like yours, a world which shuns the impossible for practicality, until they can make the impossible a reality with their own hands... It's incredible."

"I'd love to see my world through your eyes," Mario smiled. "You make us sound great."

"You have seen pieces of eight of my Kingdoms," Peach told him. "I have seen a single corner of yours." She turned to face him, drawing his attention.

It was funny, he thought, how impossible *she* was. Like a princess from a fairy tale, unreal to the point of ethereal. "So what are you saying?" Mario asked.

"I know what you've come here to ask," Peach said. "And I'm asking you, please... don't break the connection between our worlds just yet."

---

First thing in the morning, Luigi headed out from his hotel to make the long drive to the location of the building Valerio had given him.

A long, multi-leveled building a few miles outside Modena. A lot of windows were smashed in, the door was gone, furniture was in piles of scrap outside... the whole place was trashed. There weren't any other structures nearby and the parking lot was empty, it just sat on it's own

on the edge of a slanted cliff. On the bright side, there didn't seem to be anyone else nearby either.

Just in case though he'd bought a knife and a new flashlight. He tucked his knife into his belt and held his light at his side as he entered.

Too be honest though, there wasn't much to see. Blood stains, piss stains, food stains. There were empty cans and bottles strewn about the place, tipped furniture, and plenty of loose documents, but nothing worth looking at. According to Valerio, this was Colepepper's last known location before his disappearance. He'd made quite a show of his coming here, and then... he was gone.

But if he'd left anything behind, it would be here.

So he walked deeper into the facility, clicking on his flashlight when it finally became too dark. None of the lights in the building were powered anymore, and the light from the windows didn't reach the inner halls. The further in he went though, the less damage he found. Furniture still intact, just dust, doors unbroken, and supplies in their proper place. In fact, it looked less like the place had been ransacked and more like something...

"Somethin' tore through here," Luigi mumbled.

Finally he reached a dead end. A big, high ceilinged office at the end of a hall. It looked like the CEO's place, wide wooden desk in the center, creaky leather chair behind it, and bookcases full of books and personal trinkets. On the back wall though, behind the leather chair, Luigi saw something interesting, and the desk was a single unopened folder.

---

"If I could anymore of you," Peach continued. "I would ask that you give things a chance. Perhaps, they won't develop the way you expect. Perhaps your people

will greet mine in peace."

Mario shook his head. "Maybe you're right."

"I am," Peach smiled, turning away again.

"God, aren't you great," Mario laughed.

"I am," Peach nodded, still smiling.

Mario took a deep breath and pushed himself away from the balcony wall. "I just hope this thing back home'll blow over soon..."

"They're still asking about me?" Peach asked. "I suppose that's natural."

"I'm just worried about things escalating," Mario sighed. "If that happens..."

Peach looked over his shoulder at him, before looking back at the gardens. "If you feel as though there is no other alternative... If you feel it gets to the point where you must act... If it is *I* who made a mistake in convincing you to hold off... then yes." She lifted herself up, and sat on the low wall.

"If you find yourself at that point," Peach pulled a pendant from around her neck. "Then on the side of the Warp Zone you choose to remain, throw this to the void beyond it."

Mario reached out and held the glowing black star in his hand. "What is it?"

"Power Stars are an ancient magic," Peach explained. "Something even my own people have forgotten. They are what power the Warp Zones. *This* is a Ztar, and will cancel the connection... permanently."

Mario held it with both hands, a feeling like it was glaring at him. "If I carry it with me through the portal--"

"It will have no effect until you decide to use it," Peach promised. "Just... promise *me* you won't use it without... saying goodbye, at least."

"Of course," Mario nodded. "... I promise."

Hoping things would get better soon, he clutched



the star by his side, and made his back to the Warp Zone.

---

Luigi shone his light on the massive painting of Colepepper's family. The man himself stood beside his wife, and his wife held a child. Even in that painting Colepepper looked evil, a cruel sneer on his lips.

He turned his attention to the unopened folder. It was an eviction notice, and the files documenting the termination of Colepepper's organization. They were all clearly marked as the copies for this facility, and that there were copies of them that should've been in the stake of papers the Mayor gave him... but he didn't recognize these.

None of it was redacted either, every word was clear and visible. Why wouldn't these have shown up somewhere else? Why would they be sitting out in the open here? Why would this be covered up?

And then he saw the paper at the bottom of the stack. Hollen T. Colepepper's death certificate.

"Dead under natural circumstances," Luigi read. "Hollen Tiziano Colepepper is survived by his son, Donald Verulo Colepepper, and wife Lara Onesta--"

Luigi froze, reading that last name. The name that finally connected the dots.

"Lara Onesta... Feldman." Luigi dropped the folder, everything making sense. "Donald Colepepper... is Donnie Feldman..."

---

Mario stared at the Ztar as he walked back to the Warp Zone, hoping more and more he wouldn't have to use it.

"Hey Mario."

Mario stopped dead, eyes wide.

"I guess dear old dad was right."

Mario forced himself to look up. His head wouldn't move, he didn't want to believe he'd been that foolish. He couldn't believe he'd slipped up and done exactly the thing he'd been trying to prevent. But he looked, and he saw, and there in front of the Warp Zone...

Donnie Feldman leaned against the large green pipe, waiting for him.

"There really are worlds waiting for us to explore them," he smiled brightly, tipping his hat. "Thanks."

---

## **Chapter 6: Unveiled**



# **COME BACK...**

## **CHAPTER 7**

*What could he possibly be planning?*

Luigi tucked the folder under his arm and started back through the halls.

*What does he have t' gain by this?*

He clicked off his flashlight as he hurried to his car.

*Does he even know?*

He started his car, pulling out his phone.

*It doesn' matter... either way, there's trouble.*

As he got back onto the road he dialed the mayor's office. Of course, it went to an automated message, but he figured he still had to say something.

"Sorry I didn' getta chance t' come back," Luigi stammered. "I found somethin', an realized I shouldn've gone this far from home. The place is open, abandoned, an there ain' anyone near it. If you want t' check things out yourself, then go ahead, but... I gotta go fix things. I'm sorry I couldn' find whatever answers *you* needed, but they're there when you need 'em."

With that, Luigi hung up, and made his way to the nearest airport. Hopefully there'd be an easy flight out of here to Brooklyn.

---

"... Wha'?" Mario stumbled back a bit, staring at Donnie.

"I wonder," Donnie chuckled, looking up at the clear blue sky and the castle on the horizon. "Where *are* we exactly?"

"Nowhere what matters t' *you*," Mario spat. "It's all a bad dream creep, go back th' way ya came."

"No," Donnie said simply. "I don't think I will. I think I've stumbled upon your precious Mushroom Kingdom." He stepped down from the Warp Zone. "I think I'll stay a while, get to know the locals. Maybe find out more about this world you... *made up*."

Mario grit his teeth, standing in front of him. "You won' get far," he growled, pushing up his sleeves. "Y' found out th' truth, so let's turn around, an go home. Be content with this."

Donnie looked at him, then it dawned on him. "You think--" He started laughing. "No no no, sorry, I forgot you actually bought *into* my obvious lie."

"What're you talkin' about?" Mario hissed.

Donnie put his hands in his pockets, a smug look on his face. "When I saw your play... And I saw your name attached to it, I knew it couldn't be a coincidence." He walked a few paces away, staring at the ground. "My dad, when I was very young, would tell me stories about worlds we couldn't possibly imagine. He promised me he'd find them, and take me to them."

He stopped, his tone dropping, a dark scowl on his face. "So imagine that," he whispered, barely within earshot. "Imagine a little boy, old enough to understand this world, being told that his dad wasn't coming home. The last thing he said to me...?" He glared up at Mario. "*I found it*."

Mario took a few steps back. "An... what does that have t' do with *me*?"

"Everything!!" Donnie exclaimed, his cool cracking for a moment. He took a breath, but his fury didn't lessen. "Your dad killed mine, Mario. But when I found you, and

you were telling of worlds, and doing things no one had seen before... I *knew*... And when you introduced me to that princess-- cause she *is* a princess, you can't deny that now." He pointed at the castle. "I knew... You'd found something too."

"So y' waited," Mario nodded. "Waited for me t' lead y' to it."

"Yup," Donnie smiled. "And it all went according to plan."

"I'll admit," Mario growled. "If I'd known y' were planning somethin', I would've expected you t' wait until at least th' show was done airing. So good job catchin' me off guard."

Donnie bowed. "I've got one more surprise in store though," he took off his jacket, tossing it onto the ground. Facing Mario, he pulled out a gun. "For my father, you son of a--"

***BLAM!!***

Mario had dashed forward and Donnie fired as a reaction. But it wasn't good enough. Mario had already been preparing himself to fight, he was ready to move. And before Donnie could react a second time, Mario had kicked the gun out of his hand.

It skid across the ground and Mario leapt at Donnie. Donnie threw up his arms as Mario punched, then Donnie threw a punch of his own. Mario grabbed his arm and punched him in the throat. As Donnie doubled over Mario put a knee to Donnie's gut. But Donnie grabbed Mario's leg and pushed off it, ramming his head into Mario chin.

Mario stumbled backwards and Donnie threw another punch. Mario blocked it, but the second hit got him in the side of the head.

"I want you t' think for a moment," Mario growled, backing away. "You got so caught up in this world bein' real, you forgot..."

"Forgot *what*?" Donnie barked.

Mario jabbed a finger in his face. "That if this world is real... then so are th' monsters."

For a brief moment Donnie was caught off guard. Mario slammed a fist into his face, knocking him on the ground. Blood poured from his nose, and he was in pain, but he wasn't unconscious yet.

Mario stood over him. "I've fought *dragons* you mother, y' think y' can stand up t' *me*?" Kneeling down, he raised a fist. "I don' know what you're on about our dads, but... *You*, don' get t' touch this place."

"Mario," a calming voice said. "It's okay... let him go."

---

Luigi was on a plane as fast as he could, already putting his bags away while he waited for his own mom to answer the phone. The flight attendant was warning him to put away his phone, but there was a really bad feeling in the pit of his stomach he just couldn't shake.

Part of him hoped he could just wait, but the other part knew he couldn't. Twin's intuition, he figured.

"*Luigi!?* *Luigi are you all right? We haven't from you in so--*"

"Yea' yea' mom, I'm fine," Luigi said hurriedly. "Is Mario with you?"

"*No, he went back to the uh... the place.*"

"Well I need you t' go find him," Luigi said, sitting down. "He's in more trouble than I thought."

"*What happened Luigi? What's wrong?*"

"Feldman is Colepepper, mom... Feldman, *is*, Colepepper. I don' know what it means... but it can't be good."

"*Cole... But...*"

"If he's at, the uh, y' know the place... I need you t' get him. You remember where we showed you?"

"Yeah... Yeah I remember."

"I'll get there as soon as I can--"

"Sir we're taking off--"

"I'll explain as soon as I get back, there's a lot t' talk about."

"I'll see you, then."

Luigi hung up and Pauline was left standing stunned in her living room. She knew Luigi tended to overreact to things a bit more than most, but this was one time she actually might've been more afraid than he was.

So she listened, and moved quickly out of her apartment. It wasn't exactly close, but considering where it was she couldn't really bring her car anyway. Besides, in Brooklyn it was easier to go on foot to avoid the traffic, especially at a time like this.

And as fast as she could, she made it to the sewer access that would take her to the Warp Zone. She'd never gone further than this before, but she knew the directions from what Mario and Luigi had told her before.

*Why did it have to be in a sewer though?* Pauline huffed as she climbed down. She had no idea how her sons could bear being down here at all, let alone frequent this place. Not that that mattered, not right now. Taking shallow breaths and cupping a hand over her mouth and nose, she followed the path as instructed.

"He said it'd be here."

Pauline stopped and peeked around the corner.

"All I see is a hole."

There were two people standing by the Warp Zone, they just clearly didn't know it. The problem was, they were holding recording equipment... They were here to document it.

*Colepepper's?* Pauline thought. Thinking quick, she

wiggled a chunk of brick from the wall and threw it down the hall.

"Whoa!" one yelled out. "Down that way! Hurry!"

Pauline stood flat against the wall, just out of their light's reach. They ran down the sewer and turned the wrong corner. Knowing she didn't have much time...

"*You'll expect something like a Stargate,*" Mario had told her. "*And... it is, ours is just, a while under ground.*"

"*There's a big hole,*" Luigi explained. "*You kinda have t' jump into it.*"

"Here's to stranger things," Pauline vaulted over the edge of the pit, praying to god it wasn't bottomless.



Mario stood over Donnie. "I've fought *dragons* you mother, y' think y' can stand up t' *me*?" Kneeling down, he raised a fist. "I don' care what my dad did t' yours... *You*, don' get t' touch this place."

Pauline stepped out of the Warp Zone, looking at them. Seeing him now, it was obvious Donnie was a Colepepper. Aside from the name, he wasn't even trying to hide it. Same scowl, same suit, and thinking back he kind of acted the same from what little she'd seen of him in person.

But seeing him now... it wasn't him, it was his son.

"Mario," a calming voice said. "It's okay... let him go."

Pauline stayed by the Warp Zone, but all three of them looked up to the hill to see the Princess walking towards them. She was the only one who saw Pauline, but she didn't acknowledge her.

*It's the same, isn't it?* Pauline thought, looking at them. Mario, Peach, and Colepepper. *Just like us...* She



kept out of view, watching.

"This ain't your fight, Princess," Mario huffed. "He's got beef with my old man, an he ain't here t' make nice."

"So," Donnie spat. "You really *are* a Princess..."

"What do you want?" Mario growled, still sitting on him. "What did my dad *do*?"

"Does the name *Colepepper* ring a bell?" Donnie growled, trying to push Mario off.

Mario slammed his fist down on Donnie's chest. "The guy that blackmailed and tried t' kill *my* dad? He try t' kill yours too?"

"I'm his *son!*" Donnie threw Mario off, jumping to his feet. "And *your* father left *mine* stranded on an island!"

"You're Colepepper's..." Mario scoffed. "... What?" He laughed, holding his arms out and looking totally lost. "Where did *that* come from? Why try to kill *me* then!?"

"Because," Donnie grit his teeth. "Your father... *killed, mine.*"

"... But he didn'," Mario chuckled. "*Your* old man is responsible for th' injures that killed *mine*, an he also blackmailed half of Italy int' doing his *dirty* work!"

"Liar!" Donnie roared, jumping at Mario.

Mario threw an upward punch, connecting to Donnie's jaw and flipping him backwards. He hit the ground flat on his back, several teeth cracked.

"Mario," Peach started.

"This is between me an him," Mario sighed. "Y' can't magic this away like Bowser."

"So he was real," Donnie grunted. "There really are... monsters."

"Get up," Mario ordered. "... Get out."

Donnie looked up at him. "What?"

Even Peach was confused. "Are you letting him go?"

"Yea'," Mario nodded. "I've made my decision..." He looked at Peach, holding out his hand. "I'm sorry I was right... I'm sorry my brother was right, an I didn' listen..."

"What are you doing?" Donnie mumbled, trying to stand.

Peach backed away, a sad look on her face. "You really mean... to close the portal?"

"I don' have a choice," Mario said. "If creeps like him can find it... it's only a matter o' time before someone even worse--"

"Hey hold on!"

"Shut it," Mario glared. "... Goodbye, Princess."

Colepepper pushed along the ground, staggering to his feet. "What are you talking about? Closing the portal?"

Mario grabbed Donnie's shoulder and pushed him towards the Warp Zone. "Go ahead an tell whoever you want about this place... It won' be around much longer."

"You can't be *serious!*" Donnie exclaimed. "You want to lose a place like *this!* Think of the possibilities!"

"It's not our land t' *use!*" Mario shouted. "This is why I kept it secret in th' first place!"

"Why turn it into a show if you wanted to keep it secret!?" Donnie yelled back. "You *wanted* people to find out!"

"Why *agree* t' turn it into a show if y' just wanted t' *kill* me!?" Mario countered. "Turns out we *both* make bad choices!!!"

"Then I'm not leaving," Donnie hissed.

"Then I'll drag your ass out," Mario threw another punch, startling Peach.

It hit Donnie's arm as he threw it up to defend, but the force pushed his own fist into his face. It didn't do much but it knocked him off balance. Mario used that to kick out his legs, but as Donnie hit the ground he spun, knocking down Mario.

"Mario!" Peach exclaimed. She aimed a hand at Donnie. "Leave him alone!"

"Stop!" Mario spat, his knee cracking as he stood. "I told you... this is personal."

Peach hesitated and Donnie swung his arm to try and grab hers. He missed as she pulled back, and staggered right into Mario's knee. Donnie grabbed Mario's shirt and pulled them both down. Hitting the ground, Donnie landed on top, but Mario could still use his arms.

Donnie cracked a fist against Mario's skull, and Mario reached out and grabbed Donnie by the neck.

"Mario! let me help!"

"I'm *fine*!" Mario shot a knee up, right to Donnie's crotch, and spun. Slamming Donnie's head down, Mario took one last hit before Donnie's head hit the ground.

Donnie was unconscious, face down in the dirt. Mario rolled over, trying to breathe as he lay on the ground.

Peach dropped to his side. "Are you alright?"

Mario half smiled. "Yea'... yea' I'm fine..."

**\*\*CRACK!!\*\***

Peach and Mario both looked up in surprise at the sudden loud noise. They saw a group of people standing in front of the Warp Zone; Pauline, and two strangers. In front of them, a camera lay in pieces on the ground.

"*Mom!*?" Mario exclaimed. "What are y' doin' here!?"

"Luigi called me in a blind panic," Pauline laughed. "Found out Feldman was Colepepper and told me to go find you."

Mario sighed and lay flat against the ground.

"You did great though!" she said cheerfully. "Really taught him a lesson!"

Peach smiled, helping Mario stand. Back up, he took a better look at the strangers... Nobodies. Just creeps hired by Feldman to get proof of the Mushroom Kingdom.

"Sorry t' say you're goin' back empty handed," Mario said, walking over to them and staring at the busted camera. "Now *get out*."

They nearly tripped over themselves jumping back through the Warp Zone.

With them gone, Mario looked back at Donnie. "Mom... Help me get this guy out of here..."

"Do you really still mean to close the portal?" Peach asked. "Maybe better people will--"

"My world doesn' have rulers like you," Mario said. "We have conquerors and politicians, people who'll either convince you to give up your land, or take it by force. An yea', you have magic... but you've been invaded before. My people won' be so nice about it."

Peach nodded, looking away. "Then... thank you." She looked out at the green plains of her world. "Thank you for saving my people... thank you for showing me a corner of your world..." She looked back to him, smiling as bright as ever. "Thank you, and... thank your brother for me, as well."

"I will," Mario promised. He looked at Donnie still laying on the ground. "Now... Let's finish this."

He walked over to Donnie, and knelt down to roll him over. As soon as he was on his back, Donnie threw a punch straight up, clocking Mario in the face and throwing him back.

"Mario!" Peach exclaimed.

"Stop him!" Pauline shouted.

Donnie launched himself into a roll, grabbing his gun off the ground. Without even slowing he took a sharp turn and dashed towards the Warp Zone. Pauline tried to stop him, but he barreled through, grabbing her and throwing her in.

Mario moved as quickly as he could, but he couldn't catch him before the gun was aimed at him. Donnie stood

there, in front of the portal, gun in hand. "I'd love to say something generic, like; You haven't heard the last of me... But I'm afraid this is the end of you. You're dead here, Mario. But I hope you know the rest of them will follow too."

Mario grit his teeth, and put his hand in his pocket. For a moment, everyone was still. He and Donnie locked eyes, but neither of them moved. "Y' know... I'm gettin' sick of crap like you... And y' know what sucks the most?"

Donnie narrowed his eyes and suddenly Mario jumped towards him. Donnie fired, but again he missed. This time though, Mario wasn't aiming for him.

"What!?" Donnie growled.

He was too slow to stop the strange glowing star from flying passed him. He spun around, watching it enter the portal. It flashed, and pushed everyone back.

The pipe collapsed, sending debris flying out like a tidal wave. Dirt and rock swept up into the air and blasted out at them.

Peach raised her hands quickly, parting the damage around herself and Mario. It wasn't much, but it was enough to block their vision. It didn't last long either, and by the time Mario was back on his feet it was starting to die down.

The dirt faded from the air, and they saw Donnie lying on the ground, white smoke trailing off of him. A large chunk of the pipe had skewered him, pinning him to the ground. This time... he wouldn't be getting back up.

"... I really was hopin' I wasn' your enemy." Mario mumbled. "I really was..."

---

As soon as he landed in New York he made his way to Brooklyn. From there he was running through the streets.

He kept calling his mom and Mario, but neither of them were picking up. The feeling in his gut just kept getting worse.

By the time he made it to the sewer he was sweating and panting. He couldn't even tell why anymore. At first he thought it was just his usual panicking, or a bad feeling... But this was worse, much worse. He could feel something gripping him, pulling at him. Even as his legs tired he still moved as quickly as possible.

Then as he got closer to the Warp Zone, he heard something. Crying.

"Hello!" Luigi called. "Ey! Who's done here!?"

He turned the corner, and found his mom sitting by the edge of the pit, sobbing.

"Ey!" he dropped down next to her. "What happened?"

"Mario," Pauline choked.

Luigi felt boneless as he looked into the pit. There... there was ground there... The hole was gone. The Warp Zone... was closed.

"Wait... Mom... What happened?"

Pauline shook her head. "I... I don't know."

---



# **BRIGHTER DAYS**

## **CHAPTER 8**

EPISODE 19: BOWSER IN THE SKY

SCENE: 7

[ENT] BOWSER'S THRONE ROOM

BOWSER, much older and weaker than his clones, sits on his throne. He holds himself, tired, defeated, as he looks on at MARIO who stands before him. Once again they've faced in battle, and once again MARIO was the victor.

Furious, BOWSER pounded a fist on the arm of the throne he'd retreated to. His castle slowly crumbles around him.

[BOWSER] struggling to breathe

"Nooo! It can't be!... You've really beaten me, Mario...?"

[MARIO]

"That's the end, Bowser. No extra lives, no tricks, no more last ditch efforts. Accept it... it's over."

BOWSER shook his head, turning his gaze to the cold floor.

[BOWSER] withering

"My troops... my Kingdom... I can feel it slipping away..."

[MARIO] walking to BOWSER

"It was never yours."

[BOWSER]

"I wish you could see this world as I do, Mario..."

BOWSER fights to correct himself in his chair. He watches chunks of brick fall away from his castle, a clear sky shining through the darkness.

[BOWSER] numb, slow, a little sad

"At least, watch it with me... See what you have... taken from me..."

MARIO turns and stands beside BOWSER, looking up at the sky. The room they're in is nearly gone now, barely any wall left just behind them. The Mushroom Kingdom can be seen from where they are. Peace, is at last returning to the land.

[MARIO]

"If only you could see what you took from *them*."

He looks back at BOWSER, the dragon turtle's crippled body retreating into its shell. Hollow, it clatters to the floor, cracking. Taking out the letter he'd kept in his pocket all this time, he sets it on the throne. It was his, after all; a trap to lure MARIO here.

Then he walks away, returning to Peach's castle far below.

—



SCENE: 8

[EXT] CASTLE BRIDGE - DAY

MARIO lands with his feet on the ground, standing in front of the bridge leading up to the castle. He looks up, staring at the stained glass window that stood above the grand entrance. It was an image of the Princess herself, and in the air in front of it a ball of light began to glow.

All around him, the power stars that he'd collected from each world begun to spin in a circle. They flew up to the ball of light, adding to it's glow. It grew and grew, until suddenly it shattered.

And there, floating down towards him, was PRINCESS PEACH, free at last.

TOADs began climbing out of the water, shaking themselves off as their curses broke. Free from their brick prisons, as the PRINCESS was freed from hers.

PEACH lands in the center of the bridge, TOADs gathering around her. MARIO takes off his hat, waiting for her, a sign that she was okay. At last, she opens her eyes, and smiles across at MARIO. He smiles back.

[PEACH]

"Mario!"

She looks around at the castle.

[PEACH]

"The power of the stars is returned to the castle... And it's all thanks to you."

She turns back to him, walking through the crowd of TOADs.

[PEACH]  
"Thank you, Mario!"

[MARIO] holding out his hand  
"I'm just glad you're okay."

PEACH smiles, taking his hand.

[PEACH]  
"We have to do something special for you..."

MARIO laughed.

[MARIO]  
"Same old Princess, the past already behind you."

PEACH spun around, addressing her people.

[PEACH] clapping her hands together  
"Listen, everybody, let's throw a celebration... for Mario...  
and for the return of the Kingdom!"

She leads her people back towards the castle, but MARIO stays behind for a moment. He looks up at the sky like he did from BOWSER's throne room, but the camera focuses down on him, slowly zooming out as though looking down on him from the sky.

[PEACH] off screen  
"Mario!"

MARIO nods to himself and takes a few steps back,

towards the castle. He turns around and follows PEACH as the camera turns away from him, facing up to the sky.

[FADE OUT]

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---

Over two months had passed, since the Warp Zone had closed.

The show continued airing as normal, but people were getting more and more confused. Peach had already started refusing to appear in public, but with the sudden disappearance of both Mario-- the show's lead-- and Donnie-- the producer-- there was a notable panic. No one knew what happened, no one knew what to think.

But Luigi knew. Or at least, he suspected. Pauline had explained to him the events prior to the portal's closing, and he knew Donnie had had something to do with forcing Mario to make a move from that side.

It didn't matter though. Mario might be stuck on that side, but there was still so much they didn't know. He'd gone back, looked more into the research Donnie's father had done.

Eventually, he convinced Pauline to tell him more about Kong Country. But even with Colepepper's extensive research notes, there was nothing telling of some way to access a Warp Zone there.

During the two months that Mario was missing, Luigi sailed all over the world, using Colepepper's notes as a map. There were so many islands, some of which he couldn't get to or even find.

It was insane, to think that there was so much just on their own world that was constantly just out of reach of prying eyes.

Of course, this wasn't even the beginning for Luigi. Because for the Mario Brothers, all their greatest adventures... start with a letter in the mail.

Sitting in his hotel room in some far corner of Russia, he noticed an envelope slide under the door. He checked the hall, but no one was there. Then he picked up the letter and returned to his desk.

Inside, he found two things. A brochure... and a map.

The map lead to some island in the middle of the Atlantic, somewhere he'd tried to get before. But what seemed odd was the notice at the bottom of the brochure.

"To Mr. Luigi Mario," Luigi read. "Congratulations on winning... your own private mansion..."



---

## Chapter 8: Brighter Days



# **A CASTLE UNDER SIEGE**

## **PILOT**

SCENE 1

FADE IN:

[EXT] PRINCESS PEACH'S CASTLE - NIGHT

(Slow heavy drumbeat)

Camera is low to the ground. The sound of heavy footsteps beat the grass flat as the KOOPA soldiers storm the castle grounds. Camera cuts to an above shot to see them from behind as they line up across the hill. Camera continues panning upward to show the army of TOADS waiting on the bridge to the castle doors.

Cutting to a shot facing the KOOPAs, there is a rumbling. The screen shakes slightly with every step, until finally a set of horns are shown coming up behind them. Cut to a close up as KING KOOPA slowly enters the screen.

With the castle reflecting in his eyes, KING KOOPA nods. The castle lights up, bursting into flames.

Cut to a zooming out establishing shot, showing the castle on fire. The TOAD army runs forward, throwing fireballs at the enemy while the KOOPAs do the same. In a close up of the battle TOADS are beaten and magically turned into bricks while the KOOPAs continue their stampede. The

sounds of battle roar as the TOADs are quickly defeated.

From a low ground shot, the camera focuses on the bridge. KOOPAs are tossing the bricks over the side, into the water. Then the KOOPAs part and make way for their king.

Only seeing KING KOOPA from behind, the large and terrible beast makes his way across the bridge.

[KING KOOPA]

"Princess... your days have finally run out..."

KING KOOPA pushes the castle doors open, barely able to fit as he passes through them. They creak shut behind him as his KOOPA troops disperse.

Pan out and up towards the sky to see the smoke cloud the stars. Timelapse to day to show the sun rising over the clouds.

—

SCENE 2

[EXT] BROOKLYN - DAY

(Opening Credits play during this sequence)

(Slow melancholic music plays)

Camera hovers over the city, watching the traffic crawl. Cut to a low shot in the streets as the crowds of people go about their days. Pan right and up as a letter floats through the air, carried by the wind. A few people acknowledge it as it flies by, and eventually it gets whisked away by the

force of a car driving passed.

Following it as the letter trails through the streets, the camera swerves between people until getting caught on someone's back. They turn and reach for it only for the letter to fly away again. A gust of wind takes it upwards and the camera tracks it from ground level as it continues down the street. It starts to fall back down and flies towards an open academy door as a couple walks through it. The door shuts and the letter slams into it, then peels away and slowly flutters to the ground as a black car drives up, parking beside it.

Camera zooms in on the letter by the base of the car as the door opens. MS. ALMA steps out of the car, stepping on the letter, and the camera pans up to show her face as she shuts the door. The camera zooms out and pans around her as she goes to enter the academy.

(Music and credits end here)

—

### SCENE 3

[ENT] BROOKLYN COLLEGE - DAY

MS. ALMA walks into the office, stiff with a stern face.

[MS. ALMA]

"I'm looking for a Mr. Mario."

The secretary looks up from their computer for a brief second before looking back down at it.



[SECRETARY]  
"Name please?"

[MS. ALMA]  
"Ms. Alma."

[SECRETARY] Pressing a key on the office phone  
"Mr. Mario, a Ms. Alma to see you."

[MARIO] Over the phone  
"Of course, send her in."

The secretary motions towards the hall leading to the faculty offices.

[SECRETARY]  
"Office 22-1."

MS. ALMA nods and walks down the hall, camera staying where it was behind her, but follows her before cutting to MARIO in his office.

He sits behind a small desk in a small room. Camera pans around the room slightly and MS. ALMA enters. MARIO stands as he removes his glove to shake her hand.

[MARIO]  
"Howdy. Mario, head of janitorial services. Are you with the... uh..."

[MS. ALMA]  
"Atrophia Funeral Home, yes."

She doesn't shake MARIO's hand.

[MARIO]  
"Something wrong?"

[MS. ALMA]  
"They told me over the phone you worked at the Brooklyn College, I'd assumed you'd be a little less..."

[MARIO]  
"Of a lowbrow worker?"

MARIO sits back down.

[MARIO]  
"I guess we're skipping the pleasantries."

[MS. ALMA] Sitting down  
"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you."

[MARIO]  
"Don't worry about it. What brings you by? Something change that you couldn't say over the phone?"

[MS. ALMA]  
"Nothing so dramatic. Arrangements have been made, I'm just here to bring over the paperwork for you to sign."

[MARIO]  
"Ah."

[MS. ALMA]  
"They should've told you I was coming. But then again, they said you've been avoiding going in to fill them out."

[MARIO] As MS. ALMA pulls out the paperwork

"Yeah... I've been a little busy."

[MS. ALMA]

"I'm sure you have."

Camera pans behind MARIO as MS. ALMA hands over the papers. A picture is shown clearly on MARIO's desk, showing him with his brother.

[MS. ALMA]

"Mr. Mario?"

[MARIO]

"Yeah, sorry."

[MS. ALMA]

"I understand the transition can be difficult--"

[MARIO]

"No, it's not--"

[MS. ALMA]

"Especially if it's family--"

[MARIO]

"I'm fine."

MS. ALMA is silent, still holding out the papers.

[MARIO] Taking the papers

"I'll fill these out and drop them off later. Thank you for stopping by."

[MS. ALMA] Standing

"Of course."

She walks to the door to leave, but stops in the doorway and looks back at him.

[MS. ALMA]

"It's a little cliché to say it, so most people prefer we don't, but in all sincerity, we are sorry for your loss."

Before MARIO can answer MS. ALMA is already gone. MARIO looks down at the papers for a moment before setting them down. He then moves his hand towards the picture frame to pick it up, but stops himself just before touching it, laying his hand on the desk instead and giving a heavy sigh.

—

SCENE 4

[ENT] MARIO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Camera faces the door from inside the apartment, all the lights are off. A shallow dripping from leaking pipes can be heard from somewhere nearby, and the door opens as MARIO enters. He hangs his jacket on the wall and flips on the light switch.

Camera follows him as he walks through the apartment, stepping into the kitchen. He opens the fridge, pulls out something to drink, then returns to the living room. As he tosses the papers from MS. ALMA onto the coffee table he moves to sit down, but hears a knock at the door.

Stopping just over his seat he huffs and sits down his drink, going back to the front door. There, on the ground, he sees a letter. It looked like it was stepped on once or twice, it

was dirty, and the corners of it were burned.

But the mushroom wax seal was still intact.

MARIO, recognizing the mark, grabs the letter off the ground and quickly throws open the door. Looking both ways down the hall, he sees no one.

Slightly shaken up, MARIO shuts the door and stares at the letter as he goes to sit down at the little table in the kitchen.

[MARIO]  
"... Princess...?"

MARIO continues staring blankly at the letter, then looks through the doorway to the coffee table in the living room where he can see the papers for his brother's funeral.

Finally, he pulls a small knife from his pocket, and breaks the seal on the letter.

—

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## SCENE 5

[EXT] MUSHROOM KINGDOM - DAY (DREAM)

(Celebratory music plays)

Trumpets sound off as the parade fades in. The screen is blurred with lights blinding the frame. Camera pans over the mass of TOADs as they cheer and watch the parade

pass the castle. As the castle comes into view the camera pans out and there are three figures seen standing above the castle's bridge.

Confetti slowly falls through the air as the camera cuts to a closer shot of two of the three figures. MARIO and the PRINCESS stand waving to the crowd and celebrating with the parade. Then the camera begins to rotate around MARIO, turning towards his brother. Only seen from the side and slightly from behind, a dark shadow covers MARIO's brother's face.

(Music cuts abruptly)

Screen shakes as the camera cuts to MARIO being pinned to the wall by the giant hand of one of the KOOPA KIDS. Looking over the KOOPA KID's shoulder from the front, MARIO's brother leaps out of the darkness with a magic wand, slamming into the KOOPA KID's back.

(Music continues)

Cut back to the celebration as the parade continues, camera watching it from behind MARIO. The TOADs down below dance in front of the bridge as the parade circles back around. Fire works explode in the air.

(Music cuts again)

MARIO and his brother take turns fighting back against the KOOPA KID. The young dragon defends himself as MARIO throws fire and his brother attacks with the magic wand, his face always concealed.

Cut back to the parade as white noise drowns out the music. MARIO grips the ledge of the balcony, looking sick, and

beside him the image of his brother begins to distort.

A pounding sound shakes the screen as it cuts back to the fight. With the KOOPA KID defeated on the ground, the MARIO BROTHERS turn to face a looming figure mostly hidden in the darkness. Fire blasts towards them and the camera hard cuts to the PRINCESS resting her hand on MARIO's shoulder.

(Music continues)

MARIO pushes her away, stumbling back into the darkness as KING KOOPA's fist slams down in front of him. Fire spins around him and a face begins to image from the flames. MARIO grits his teeth and summons his own flames in his hand, facing down the dragon.

But it's not KING KOOPA who emerges from the fires, but instead the shadowy figure of MARIO's brother. Face still hidden, his eyes glow as his figure begins to grow to impossible size.

MARIO trips backwards and falls through the air.

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SCENE 6

[ENT] MARIO'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

MARIO startles awake in his bed, throwing himself forward towards the camera as he holds his head. Camera cuts to further away as MARIO calms down, car lights moving across the room from the open window.

Shifting his blankets to the side, MARIO moves to sit on the edge of the bed, looking at the PRINCESS's letter

sitting open on his nightstand.

[MARIO]

"... You're overthinking things again..."

Grunting as he stands, MARIO picks up the letter and pulls a corner of it out of the dirtied envelope. Deciding against reading it, he drops his arm to his side, and looks to his bedroom door.

He sighs, giving in to the letter's summons.

[MARIO]

"... Fine... I guess I had to go back sometime."

Cut to out in the hallway as MARIO exits his room, fully dressed. He walks down the hall towards the front door and as he reaches for his hat hanging on the wall he looks towards the living room. Camera focuses away from him and onto the funeral papers.

Turning away from them, MARIO opens his door, and walks out.

Cut to black as the door slams shut.

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SCENE 7

[EXT] PRINCESS PEACH'S CASTLE - DAY

The sky takes up the screen, a few clouds rolling passed. A letter fades in, partially transparent, and it is read in



PEACH's voice.

[PEACH] Side view close up, to the right of the letter  
"Dear Mario: You have been a faithful ally to my kingdom,  
saving us from certain destruction by the hands of the Evil  
King Koopa, Bowser. Though I do not know which world  
you hail from, I, as well as my people, require your help  
once more. Please, return to my castle. Yours truly --  
Princess Toadstool"

At the bottom of the letter it is signed "*Peach*"

Both the letter and PEACH fade out and the camera pans down to show the top of the castle from behind. Camera winds down the tower, panning out as it gets lower and shows the front of the castle in it's entirety. Camera then turns around to the path leading up to the castle.

(Slow dramatic music plays quietly)

In the center of the path, a large green pipe comes out of the ground. A light flashes from inside, and out steps our hero, MARIO. He fixes his hair under his hat, and looks up at the castle, camera moving behind him.

The whole thing is in ruins, smoke billowing out of holes in the brick. There are no TOADs around, and there are scorch-marks in the grass.

[MARIO]

"Princess... What happened to this place?"

Cut to the camera looking down on him as he makes the long walk to and across the bridge, then cut to behind him as he reaches the door. Camera stays behind him as he

enters, and cuts to black as the door shuts.

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## **CREDITS PLAY**

# **BOB-OMB BATTLEFIELD**

## **EPISODE I**

SCENE 1

[ENT] BOB-OMB BUNKER - NIGHT

Starting in darkness, explosions can be heard in the distance accompanied by the sound of concrete breaking and dust falling. Pan downward through the ceiling of the underground bunker to see ADMIRAL BOB pacing a small room, papers and maps spread across his desk and floor.

As the room shakes, dust falls from the ceiling. The door opens and ADMIRAL BOB stops pacing as one of his soldiers walks in. He stammers a bit, huffing and staring at the ground.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"Speak soldier! What in the world is going on out there!?"

[BOB-OMB]

"We've just received word, Admiral! The Princess has been taken! Our men are trying to hold them off, but the Koopa--

"

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"The Koopa forces have returned!?"

[BOB-OMB]

"Yes, Admiral."

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"What? Are you certain?"

The BOB-OMB nods solemnly before backing out into the hall.

[BOB-OMB]

"Admiral! It's worse than we were prepared for. You *need* to see this!"

ADMIRAL BOB quickly follows his soldier as they run through the bunker. Other BOB-OMBs join them, worried but ready for action. Cut to outside with the camera facing the exit door as ADMIRAL BOB steps out.

In a close up ADMIRAL BOB looks worried, then terrified as the camera moves to pan up and around behind him to overlook the battlefield. The KOOPA TROOPS are attacking, and with them are dark blue BOB-OMBs.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"... So their defeat did not last... I was afraid of this."

Cut to ADMIRAL BOB turning and heading back inside the bunker. A soldier tries to stop him but he keeps walking.

[BOB-OMB]

"Sir! Where are you going!?"

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"Order all troops to evacuate the local civilian area. Any

soldiers in the field need to keep fighting. Just hold out a little longer."

[BOB-OMB]

"We're just going to wait without a plan!?"

ADMIRAL BOB turns to glare him down.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"The plan *is* to wait! If King Koopa is attacking again, then *they* can't be far behind."

ADMIRAL BOB slams the bunker door shut behind him

—

**\*\*\*OPENING SEQUENCE\*\*\***

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SCENE 2

[ENT] PEACH'S CASTLE - DAY

MARIO looks up at the interior of the castle.

Camera pans around the lobby, showing each of the doors MARIO eventually travels through, and the elegance of Mushroom castle. It also shows how empty the castle is and some battle damage.

MARIO walks a bit into the lobby, his steps echoing as he looks around, a little confused.

[MARIO]

"Hello!? Anyone home!? I got your letter!"

MARIO pulls the letter out of his pocket, waving it in the air in front of him as if that emphasized his point. Camera slowly rotates around him as he walks out into the middle of the lobby.

[MARIO]  
"Princess! ... Hello!?"

[KING KOOPA] Off screen  
"Welcome."

MARIO looks around frantically, but finds nothing.

[MARIO] Furious  
"... King Koopa."

[KING KOOPA] Off screen  
"No one's home... Now get out... and don't come back..."

MARIO balls his fists, crumpling the letter in his hand.

[MARIO]  
"Where's the princess!? What did you do with her!?"

[KING KOOPA] Off screen  
"Why don't you come find out for yourself?"

Camera faces MARIO and pans to the right as a castle door creaks open. Lights flicker from the chandelier above and the torches along the walls, and BOWSER laughs evilly.

With the Camera low to the ground behind him, it watches MARIO as he starts for the door, tucking the letter into his pocket. Pan left through wall as screen fades to black.

Fade in to a dimly lit room as MARIO slowly opens the door and steps inside. Torches flicker beside the door, and there's a faint whispering. MARIO approaches the center of the room, walking down the steps, as he views the painting.

The BOB-OMBs march across the oil painting as the paint ripples slightly.

[MARIO]

"Wh-what is this?"

[KING KOOPA] Off screen

"You wanted to know what happened to your princess..."

MARIO steps up onto the low platform and reaches his hand out to the painting. As his fingers touch the surface, the painting ripples like water.

[MARIO]

"That ain't solid."

[KING KOOPA]

"Go ahead... Have a taste of my world."

MARIO pushes his hand through the painting, watching it de-materialize in front of him. Taking only a brief moment to consider, MARIO walks through the painting. The camera pans around him, moving through the wall and fades to black.

—

SCENE 3

[EXT] BOB-OMB BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Fade in with the camera coming out the other side to see an empty field with MARIO re-materializing from nothing.

MARIO looks down at himself to make sure he's still all there, then the camera moves behind him and he looks out over the battlefield. It's a warzone, a deep crater beside a tall mountain. Explosions go off in the crater, and on one side of it are the Red BOB-OMBs and on the other side are the Dark Blue BOB-OMBs.

Ducking down on the edge of the hill, MARIO watches from afar as the fight continues. The Blue BOB-OMBs hide behind cover as the Red BOB-OMBs launch themselves and explode on the other side of the shields. The Blue BOB-OMBS respond by throwing smaller bombs at the enemy.

[MARIO]

"What happened to this place?"

MARIO scans the area, looking for some sort of base of operations, and eventually got up to turn around. In the distance to the right there is a tall mountain, and to the left on the horizon there's a village, behind him are Blue BOB-OMBs gathering in front of a bunker door set into a hillside.

Mario walks towards them cautiously to get a closer look. He accidentally steps out too far and they spot him. In a knee-jerk reaction MARIO almost just ducks for cover again, but figures he's already been caught and stops, raising his hands in surrender as he approaches the BOB-OMBs.

[MARIO]



"Can someone tell me what's going on here?"

The BOB-OMBs stand at attention, one stepping forward.

[BOB-OMB]

"Mr. Mario! Admiral Bob is expecting you inside, sir!"

[MARIO]

"Expecting me?"

The BOB-OMBs stand aside and the door is opened for MARIO to enter.

[BOB-OMB]

"Please, hurry inside. The Admiral will explain everything."

[MARIO]

"Yeah? He better."

MARIO entered the bunker, BOB-OMBs stepping in behind him and closing the door.

—

SCENE 4

[ENT] BOB-OMB BUNKER - DAY

Back in his office, ADMIRAL BOB is looking over his maps, muttering to himself. Again his door is thrown open by one of his soldiers, though this time the soldier is a little more composed.

[BOB-OMB]

"Admiral, Mario of the Super Mario Brothers has arrived."

[ADMIRAL BOB]  
"Only Mario? What of his brother?"

[BOB-OMB]  
"I don't know sir."

ADMIRAL BOB pulls himself away from his desk and starts across the room.

[ADMIRAL BOB]  
"Then let's hope he can explain."

Cut to a meeting room, large round seats of metal fit for BOB-OMBs arranged in a circle along the walls. MARIO sits in one of these seats, waiting. For a moment, his hand begins to move towards his pocket, where he still keeps PEACH's letter, but then the door opens.

The two BOB-OMBs beside the door stand at attention as ADMIRAL BOB enters the room.

[MARIO] Standing up and holding out his hand  
"Admiral Bob, I assume."

[ADMIRAL BOB] Shaking MARIO's hand and sitting  
down  
"Indeed."

[MARIO] Sitting back down  
"I was told you were expecting me."

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"I was, as well I was expecting your brother."

[MARIO]

"Yeah, well... he couldn't make it here today. My question is, how did you know *I* was going to be here?"

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"Because Lord Bowser, King of the Koopas, has returned. I knew you would be here to fight him, we have already prepared to assist you-"

[MARIO]

"Wait you're not... You're not on his side?"

ADMIRAL BOB turns his gaze away from MARIO, sighing sadly before looking back up at him.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"We've never met, Mario "Super" Mario, though you fought my kind in your previous attempt to defeat King Koopa. He had taken many of my people, and turned them against themselves. Those, were who you fought. But Bob-Omb kind are not the mindless drones you saw before, I assure you."

MARIO sits back in his giant seat, shifting uncomfortably in the chair made for something much bigger than him.

[MARIO]

"And uh, how did he manage to do that? I mean I know he has power... and a lot of it... but mind control? I thought he ruled using fear."

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"He doesn't use magic, no. Not for this."

[MARIO]  
"Then how?"

[ADMIRAL BOB] Sadly  
"...We are, *mechanical*, beings... Sometimes... all it takes is  
a hard factory reset."

[MARIO]  
"I'm... I'm sorry to hear that."

[ADMIRAL BOB] Sitting up straight  
"But onto more pressing matters. I expected the aid of the  
Super Mario Brothers, yet here you are, alone. Is he off  
somewhere else? Am I correct in assuming King Koopa is  
attacking the other worlds as well?"

[MARIO]  
"It's hard to believe King Koopa would still have that kind  
of military power, but considering how quickly he got back  
up after his last defeat... As for my brother, no... He didn't  
come with me this time. This time, it's just me."

[ADMIRAL BOB] Nodding  
"Very well. If that's the case then we should move even  
faster, before the Koopa forces and reset Bob-Ombs  
become too much for even *you* to fight."

[MARIO]  
"Yeah, we should. But I have one last question... The  
Princess... do you know if she's here? Or where King  
Koopa might've taken her?"

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"No, no I do not. That being said, I know where we can find your answer. While my soldiers hold the line here, *we* must move the battle to the mountains, where King Koopa's generals lie in wait."

[MARIO]

"We?"

ADMIRAL BOB stand up, his joints squeaking and his old metal clanking.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"I would like to assist you in saving my people, as I couldn't before."

[MARIO] Standing up

"If you can keep up, then by all means, but don't push yourself."

[ADMIRAL BOB] Laughing

"Not to worry, Mr. Mario! There's some fuel left in these old gears yet!"

[MARIO] Nodding

"Alright then. Take me where we need to go."

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SCENE 5

[EXT] BOB-OMB BATTLEFIELD - DAY

MARIO and ADMIRAL BOB stand on top of the hill above the Bunker. ADMIRAL BOB's eyes focus on the tip of the mountain in the distance, like binoculars. He points

at a small speck at the mountain's peak.

MARIO struggles to see the speck, but the camera zooms in to show a black round object.

[ADMIRAL BOB] Off screen

"That... is King Bob-Omb..."

[MARIO] Shocked

"King?"

ADMIRAL BOB nods.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"He was taken by the Koopas as well... But that will not be our first trial, just our last. Before him, we must travel through the battlefield."

[MARIO]

"Sounds like we don't have time to waste. Let's get moving."

Camera sits behind them, watching as they make their way down the hill towards the mountain. As they move out of frame, the camera shifts slightly, focusing again on the speck on the mountain.

The black orb moves a little, turning slowly as it sits up. As it comes into clear view, even from a distance you can see the giant BOB-OMB's crown and eyes. The screen cuts to black as it's eyes slam shut.

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SCENE 6

[ENT] MUSHROOM KINGDOM - DAY (MEMORY)

Everything is shot from MARIO's POV.

Beginning in darkness, details of the tunnel can barely be seen. MARIO throws his arms out, trying to grab at the sides of it, and behind him he hears his brother screaming.

Light starts to enter the tunnel and it becomes clear they're in a pipe. A moment later and they are thrown from the pipe, horizontally, and slide across the ground. MARIO lands on his hands and knees, breathing hard, and looks over to see his brother face down in dirt.

[MARIO]  
"... L... Lu..."

MARIO presses his palm into the ground and blinks. When his eyes open he's shaking hands with the MUSHROOM KING. MARIO looks up to see the King's face.

[MUSHROOM KING]

"Thank you! Thank you so much for coming to my aid!"

[MARIO]  
"Hey no problem, just tell us what we gotta do."

[MUSHROOM KING]

"Save the Princess, my daughter, and save the eight worlds of my Kingdom."

MARIO turns around to see his brother turned around, fists up and preparing to fight KOOPAs that have them surrounded. They are outside now, and there is smoke in

the air. Turning to face back in the direction of the MUSHROOM KING he instead sees the rest of the KOOPA army.

Behind the army, a large figure emerges, the first KOOPA KID, LARRY KOOPA.

LARRY raises a magic wand over his head -- the same wand MARIO's brother held in the last memory -- a sadistic and crazed smile on his face, laughing. He slashes the wand and a bright light blinds the screen.

—

SCENE 7

[EXT] THE BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Camera stares up at KOOPA THE QUICK (abbreviating to K QUICK) before showing a close up of MARIO laying injured on the ground beneath him.

[ADMIRAL BOB]

"Mario!"

MARIO is grabbed from behind and thrown sideways as K QUICK's fist smashes into the ground. ADMIRAL BOB